

**TOWARDS A
CARIBBEAN MULTI-COUNTRY ASSESSMENT
(CMCA): A Base Document for Stakeholder and
Partner Consultations**

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**Based on “The Caribbean and the Post-2015 Agenda”, by Ransford Smith, Final Draft
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Common Multi-Country Assessment (CMCA) analyses the main development challenges facing the Caribbean region within the context of the Post 2015 agenda and human rights commitments, the outcome of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing states (The Samoa Pathway) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The CMCA will provide a foundation for the region to identify its strategic priorities and goals underpinned by national analysis and consultative processes. The proposed SDGs and targets, as well as other internationally agreed goals, conventions and treaty obligations provide a framework for national planning and strategies.

The CMCA will provide the basis for policy dialogue and design of the United Nations Multi Country Sustainable Development Framework (UNMSDF) as the collective and integrated response of the UN system in the Caribbean. It seeks to strengthen regional and national capacity for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. Also, it supports the governments in developing appropriate mechanisms for tapping into the contributions of other actors in delivering shared national sustainable development priorities.

The regional approach through the UNMSDF will lighten the burden on national governments and prompt a more coherent response to regional and national challenges, needs and priorities. This approach is expected to lead to better strategic positioning to leverage regional resources, and serve as a resource mobilization framework while strengthening capacity to support implementation and monitoring. It will also increase UN integration, coordination and coherence.

The post-2015 sustainable development agenda presents a major opportunity for Caribbean countries to reverse decades of lagging economic performance and make the transition to balanced, holistic, and people-centred growth and sustainable development.

The broader scope that is characteristic of the SDGs is particularly important for the Caribbean. Despite middle income status and moderate to high human development classification, the region has experienced poor growth performance over several decades and unsustainable levels of debt. The region also has one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy, youth unemployment, rising crime and gender based violence. Non communicable diseases and climate change also present major challenges. The region can benefit from SDG goals that serve to strengthen economic performance, promote inclusive and transparent governance, support gender equality and sustainable development, and promote beneficial engagement with the global economy.

While the Caribbean has made progress in important areas of its development priorities, progress has been slow and in some areas there have been reversals. The region has lagged not only in terms of absolute growth, but also relative to other developing countries, falling well behind growth rates in East Asia and Africa in every decade since 1970.

This high level of accumulated debt contributes to poor regional GDP performance and diverts resources to amortization and interest payments- away from health, education, infrastructure, administration of justice, social protection, food and nutrition security and other areas that are drivers of growth and development.

Poverty and growing income inequality represent major challenges with joblessness and vulnerability disproportionately affecting marginalised groups. While the region has made significant advances in addressing gender inequality, this goal remains a major challenge, with cross cutting negative impacts. In spite of higher education levels among females, the female labour force participation rate is lower than the male labour force participation rate and the incidence of unemployment among females is higher than among males. This is exacerbated by high levels of adolescent pregnancy and youth unemployment. The result is that the Caribbean suffers both ‘feminization’ and ‘juvenilization’ of poverty, with the flip side of high levels of crime involving youth. Changes in the demographic structure and larger numbers of elderly also present challenges in terms of dependency ratios and the wellbeing of the elderly.

The prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is widely seen to be the primary health challenge as the region looks beyond 2015 and in spite of successes in reduction of rates of new HIV/infections, HIV/AIDs remains one of the major health challenges. Cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and mental health issues are some of the major health challenges as well.

While there is equal access to education, there are substantial deficits in the education sector. Tertiary education often does not respond to the needs of the labour market. Early childhood development and education present significant challenges and opportunities to the region. In several Caribbean SIDS less than 50% of the population aged 25 years or older has received at least secondary education and a high proportion of females aged 15-19 are hampered by adolescent pregnancies. There is also a challenge presented by a high rate of male school dropouts.

Climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and reducing the cost of energy and strengthening sustainable agriculture and food security represent major challenges and keys to sustainability and growth.

The analysis emphasizes that while the SDGs are discrete goals with proposed indicators for monitoring, unless they are approached as interconnected and interdependent, the region will fail to realize the goals and turn around present negative trends. The CMCA addresses core elements of the way forward, and building on the Secretary General’s report, analyses the Caribbean relevance of the SGD Goals clustered under the themes Dignity, People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnership.

Within the framework of strengthening governance, improved data and monitoring systems for building effective partnership and leadership in implementing and monitoring the SDGs are assessed as important regional priorities, which present the Caribbean an opportunity to regain the momentum of economic and job growth, human development and security and gender equality which once made the region a model among developing countries.

The Caribbean is at a crossroads in its development path and commitment to the SDGs can support the arrest and reversal of a downward spiral. The UN is committed to partnership and supporting the region in achieving common priority sustainable development goals.

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide an assessment of the challenges and opportunities that the evolving Sustainable Development Framework presents to the Caribbean region, drawing on available analyses and existing policy documents at national and regional levels. The final document will become an instrument for further consultations with stakeholders and partners leading to the formulation of the UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (UNMSDF) for the Region. The Caribbean is defined for the purposes of this paper as the fourteen members of the Caribbean Community excluding Haiti, who are members of the United Nations¹. While the analysis primarily focuses on CARICOM members, the paper incorporates research relevant to the British and Dutch overseas territories making the overall results more generalisable.

“The advantage of economic growth is not that wealth increases happiness, but that it increases the range of human choice. These words were written in 1955 by Arthur Lewis, a Caribbean scholar and Nobel laureate in economics who made an important contribution to the development debate and development policy in the Caribbean and elsewhere. It is a profoundly people-centred approach to economic growth that prefigured the later debates on human development. If people are generally regarded as the centre of the development process in that their freedom of choice, standard of living and general wellbeing are the purpose of development and their participation, creativity and power in society, the economy and polity are the primary drivers of these outcomes, then these truths are important in Caribbean countries, which are generally characterized by small size and limited natural resources².”

The post-2015 sustainable development agenda presents a major opportunity for Caribbean countries to reverse decades of lagging economic performance and make the transition to balanced, holistic, and people-centred growth and development.

The necessary scaling-up of the MDG framework will require that the sustainable development goals – which will anchor the post-2015 development agenda - are capable of promoting structural change, competitiveness and output gains while advancing social and economic development and meeting environmental concerns. They must also address the unfinished business of the millennium development goals, primarily in the area of human development.

The broader scope of the SDGs is particularly important for the Caribbean. Despite middle income status and moderate to high human development classification, the region has experienced poor growth performance over several decades and unsustainable levels of debt. The region also has one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy, youth unemployment and gender based violence. Non communicable diseases and climate change also present major challenges and there is a high and increasing food import bill estimated at USD5.0 million. The region can benefit from goals that serve to strengthen economic performance, enhance

¹ Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

² UNDP Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012

governance, support gender equality and sustainable development and promote beneficial engagement with the global economy.

Consistent with Rio+20 and other globally agreed outcomes, including those particularly relevant to SIDS, a transition by the region from the low-growth trajectory that has obtained for decades must be towards sustainable and inclusive growth and development, which not only improves economic performance, but conserves the environment, reduces poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition and income inequality, strengthens resilience, and promotes social inclusion.

If national, regional, and global resolve and resources can be mobilized around a set of SDGs with transformational potential, Caribbean development could in the near future attain an historic turning point.

II. CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Caribbean countries emerged from colonialism through a struggle for human rights and equality for all and have been signatories to the major human rights instruments including the Convention to end discrimination against Women and the Convention on Rights of the Child. They are also signatories to the ILO Decent Work Agenda. The region has a strong history of democratic governance and constitutions that protect the human rights of citizens.

One of the major trends in global development strategies is the convergence of four important tributaries: (i) economic growth, (ii) social development (iii) environmental sustainability and (iv) transparent governance and human rights.

The World Bank pointed out some time ago that economic growth is a recent occurrence in human history.³ For millennia human beings made little progress in increasing productivity and changing significantly their material well-being. The combination of capital and technology changed this dramatically two hundred years ago in Britain. Since then, punctuated by recessionary periods of varying degrees of severity, the global economy has expanded, with a particularly sharp growth spurt occurring since 1950. But growth has been uneven across countries, and many former colonies, especially, have found the going hard. Arthur Lewis, the St. Lucian Nobel Prize winner in Economics, in his path-breaking 1955 study, *The Theory of Economic Growth*, drew attention to structural rigidities, both institutional and technological, which set developing economies apart from more advanced industrial nations. Other development theorists and models, popular in the 1950s and 60s, pointed to the constraints imposed by limited capital accumulation in particular in developing countries. This led to emphasis on the mobilization of domestic savings, investment, and external capital flows to propel growth and development. There was also increasing recognition of the importance of investment in human capital and the United Nations played an important role in propagating this through its Development Decades, the first of which was promulgated in 1961, following an influx of post-colonial developing countries to UN membership. The First Decade set a target of

³Economic Growth in the 1990's: Learning from a Decade of Reform, World Bank, 2005.

5 percent annual growth in developing countries and international cooperation toward reducing and eliminating illiteracy, hunger and disease.⁴

The UNDP's Human Development Report of 1990 coincided with the launch of the Fourth Development Decade. It proclaimed the "rediscovery" of "the essential truth" that people must be the centre of all development.⁵ This seminal report also observed that while there is "no automatic link between economic growth and human progress" it appears that "growth is crucial for sustaining human progress in the long run" and added that both growth and human development are important if imbalances that hamper further progress are to be avoided.⁶

The SDG paradigm balances the growth agenda, with the recognition of the physical limits of natural systems and the environment and is fully tempered by sustainability.

The decoupling of socio-economic development from environment degradation will require changes to production systems and the deployment of new technologies across the globe, but particularly in industrialized countries and high carbon emitters. Agenda 21 (Chapter 4) had noted that "the major cause of continual deterioration of the global environment is unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries". More recently, the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, in endorsing the call to hold the increase in global average temperature to 2 degrees C above pre-industrial levels, cites as the most important contributors to a low carbon trajectory: sustainable transport, infrastructure, energy efficiency and the transition to renewable energy, sustainable agricultural practices, tackling forestation and increasing re-forestation, and food security, taking into account the value of natural resources and bio-diversity."⁷

The challenge will be to ensure an equitable approach to implementing the changes that are required. The capacity building needs of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, as well as others similarly situated, will require particular attention. Examples of important initiatives in this regard, include the Ten year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10 YFP), adopted at Rio +20. These encompass objectives that decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and support capacity building and access to financial and technical resources by developing countries. Another example is the currently underfunded Green Climate Fund, established at Cancun in 2010 in furtherance of the earlier decision by member states at the Copenhagen Summit to mobilize US \$100 billion annually to support transformation and strengthen resilience.⁸

⁴General Assembly Resolution 1760 (xv1) of 19 December 1961.

⁵ Human Development Report 1990, UNDP, pg.42.

⁶ Ibid, pgs. 42 -43.

⁷ Report of the High Level Panel, pg. 17.

⁸ By December 2014 pledges to the GCF amounted to US\$10 billion. The Fund will seek to provide a minimum of fifty percent of its adaptation resources to particularly vulnerable countries, including small island developing states.

The new development agenda will entail “integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their inter-linkages so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.”⁹

Priority areas relating to SIDS were identified in the Barbados Plan of Action (BPOA) and elaborated upon in the Mauritius Conference and Strategy. These include: climate change and sea-level rise, natural and environmental disasters, management of wastes, coastal and marine resources, freshwater resources, energy resources, tourism resources, biodiversity resources, national institutions and administrative capacity, regional institutions and technical cooperation, transport and communication, science and technology, and human resource development. The BPOA identified as well cross-sectoral areas for attention. These were capacity building, institutional development at the national, regional and international levels, cooperation in the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, trade and economic diversification, and finance.

The SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (Samoa Pathway) adopted at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing in Samoa in September 2014 sets out the most comprehensive set of priorities of the three SIDS conferences

The Pathway, drawing on the two earlier Conferences and the outcome of the Inter-regional Preparatory Meeting¹⁰ for the Third Conference, identifies interconnected of priorities. The following areas were identified: inclusive and equitable growth with decent work for all, sustainable development and poverty eradication, sustainable tourism, climate change, sustainable energy, disaster risk reduction, oceans and seas, food security and nutrition, water and sanitation, sustainable transportation, sustainable consumption and production, management of chemicals and waste, including hazardous waste, health and non-communicable diseases, gender equality and empowerment of women, social development, culture and sport, promoting peaceful societies and safe communities, education, biodiversity, desertification, land degradation and drought, forests, invasive alien species, partnerships, financing, trade, capacity building, technology, data and statistics, institutional support¹¹, monitoring and accountability.¹²

⁹ General Assembly Resolution A/Res/66/268 of 11 September 2012 – ‘The Future We Want’.

¹⁰ See ‘Outcome of the Inter-regional Preparatory Meeting for the Third International Conference on SIDS,’ Bridgetown, 26-28 August, 2013.

¹¹ The UN Secretary General is requested to conduct a comprehensive review of UN system support for SIDS and report his findings and recommendations to the 70th session of the UNGA.

¹² The UNGA, ECOSOC, and their subsidiary bodies, are called on to monitor the implementation of the BPOA.

III. CARIBBEAN AT THE CROSSROADS: MAIN CHALLENGES

The Caribbean SIDS have higher per capita incomes and rank more highly on the human development index than most other SIDS. They share many of the challenges faced by SIDS and face many serious development challenges. These challenges include slow and volatile economic growth, high and rising levels of unemployment; significant levels of poverty; inequality of income and wealth; underachievement of the MDGs in relation to health and increasing trend in NCDs, poor access to basic services, gender equality, and environmental sustainability; acute vulnerability to natural hazards and substantial risks ensuing from climate change and rising sea levels. These are compounded by governance challenges including weak implementation.

A. ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

1. Lagging economic growth

The Caribbean has experienced moderate to low economic growth for several decades. As shown below – Table I – average growth in the region, since 1970, has fallen well below 3 per cent, the growth rate at which output doubles at the end of a generation (i.e. every 25 years).

Table I: Developing Country Growth: 1970- 2012

	1970-1980	1980-1989	1990-2000	2002-2012	1970-2012 (Ave)
Caribbean	2.3%	0.6%	2.4%	2.0%	1.82%
Africa (developing only)	4.3%	1.8%	2.6%	4.9%	3.4%
Asia (developing only)	6.2%	5.3%	6.2%	7.3%	6.25%
East Asia (developing only)	7.8%	9.7%	8.1%	8.4%	8.5%
Least Developed Countries*	1.8% **	2.2%	3.1%	6.5%	3.4%

Source: World Bank. Real GDP Growth Rates. * Tabulated using UNCTAD data. **Data only available for 1971-1980.

The Caribbean has lagged not only in terms of absolute growth, but also relative to other developing countries, falling well behind growth rates in East Asia and Africa in every decade since 1970, as well as behind the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) since 1980. Ruprah et al have also found that the Caribbean has performed poorly even relative to other small island developing states.¹³ The strongest regional economic performers since 1990 have been Belize, Guyana, St Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago. (Table II)

¹³ Ruprah, Inder, Karl Melgareja, Ricard Sierra, 'Is there a Caribbean Sclerosis? Stagnating Growth in the Caribbean', Inter-American Development Bank, Washington DC, 2014.

Table II: Caribbean Community Members Growth Rates

	Population (2012 est.)	GDP Per Capita - 2013 (cur.US)	GNI Per Capita Ranking (2013)	Real GDP Growth: 1990-2000*	Real GDP Growth: 2002-2012*
Antigua and Barbuda	89,069	US\$13,342	78	3.4	1.6
The Bahamas	371,960	US\$22,312	53	3.1	0.2
Barbados**	283,221	US\$14,917	65	1.8	1.2
Belize	324,060	US\$4,894	126	4.5	3.9
Dominica	71,684	US\$7,175	103	1.9	3.1
Grenada	105,483	US\$7,890	97	3.6	1.2
Guyana	795,369	US\$3,739	138	5.4	3.4
Haiti	10,173,775	US\$820	189	-0.7	1.1
Jamaica	2,707,805	US\$5,290	120	1.2	0.2
St. Kitts and Nevis	53,584	US\$14,133	71	4.8	1.7
St. Lucia	180,870	US\$7,328	102	2.8	2.7
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	109,373	US\$6,486	108	3.0	2.0
Suriname	534,541	US\$9826	92	0.9	4.8
Trinidad and Tobago	1,337,439	US\$18,373	63	4.6	4.0

Source: World Bank - World Development Indicators. *UNCTAD. **Barbados GDP data is for 2012.

However, despite the region's generally poor economic growth performance over the past three decades, all Caribbean countries, with the exception of Haiti, are classified by the World Bank as having either high or middle income status. Most countries in the middle income grouping are classified as upper middle income – Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname. Five countries are classified as high income – Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago. Furthermore, again with the exception of Haiti, Caribbean countries are relatively well-placed on the Human Development Index, with the majority of countries ranked in the top half of the Index.¹⁴

Box 1: Caribbean Human Development Ranking - 2013

¹⁴ The Human Development Index takes account of life expectancy, mean years of schooling, expected years of schooling, and gross national income per capita.

Country	HDI Ranking (2013)
Antigua and Barbuda	61
The Bahamas	51
Barbados	59
Belize	84
Dominica	93
Grenada	79
Guyana	121
Haiti	168
Jamaica	96
St. Kitts and Nevis	73
St. Lucia	97
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	91
Suriname	100
Trinidad and Tobago	64

Source: UNDP: Human Development Report (2014).

These achievements are, to some extent, the consequence of relatively solid regional institutional legacy in areas such as health, education and the administration of justice, and reflect as well the strength of a regional democratic tradition to which social welfare has been integral. The region also experienced moderate economic growth performance in the immediate post-independence years. However, particularly since the 1970s, the region's human development gains have been threatened not just by low growth but by cyclical volatility and frequent exogenous shocks, such as the oil price increases of the early and late 1970's, the regional debt crisis of the 1980's, and the Great Recession of 2008.¹⁵

The Caribbean has also experienced in recent years its particular version of the 'middle income trap'. As larger economies, mainly in Asia, have expanded their manufacturing base, and as changing global trade rules have led to the erosion of preferences, the region has found it difficult to compete in both traditional export agriculture markets and in the production and export of low and intermediate value-added manufactures.

Many countries of the region have responded to these developments by increasing their reliance on services, particularly tourism. But the transition from primary agriculture to services, leapfrogging an intermediate stage, has not been driven by structural transformation, and consequently has not been accompanied by significant diversification of output or competitiveness in value-added services, notwithstanding the enormous importance and potential of tourism.

¹⁵See for example Mercer-Blackman, Valerie and Karl Melgarejo, 'Spill-overs of Global Shocks over Caribbean Countries : So Large that there is Little Room to Manoeuvre – An Impulse Response Analysis', Policy Brief, IADB, 2013. The authors look at the importance of external macro-variables, like output changes and commodity prices, in explaining GDP changes in Caribbean economies. They estimate that during 2007- 2011, the cumulative output lost relative to the counterfactual of no global meltdown was, in the Bahamas, Barbados and Jamaica, 22.4 per cent, 14.5 per cent, and 16 per cent of GDP, respectively.

Table III: Structure of Caribbean Economies, 2010

Countries	Agriculture (% of GDP)	Industry (% of GDP)	Manufacturing (% of GDP)	Services (% of GDP)	Exports (% of GDP)	Imports (% of GDP)
Antigua and Barbuda	2.0	19.9	1.9	78.1	46.3	56.5
The Bahamas	2.2	15.2	3.5	82.6	41.5	50.1
Barbados	3.0	23.2	7.9	73.8	47.3	52.4
Belize	12.1	22.7	14.3	65.2	61.9	69.8
Dominica	13.3	14.9	3.5	71.9	31.7	54.4
Grenada	5.3	13.9	4.5	80.7	20.7	49.2
Guyana	21.0	33.1	4.1	45.9	84.6	119.2
Haiti					12.3	62.3
Jamaica	6.3	22.4	9.2	71.3	26.3	44.5
St. Kitts and Nevis	1.7	16.4	5.5	81.8	26.2	43.2
Saint Lucia	3.2	16.6	3.9	80.2	47.2	60.3
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	6.9	19.2	5.2	73.9	26.5	57.5
Suriname	10.9	37.8	22.7	51.3	30.4	45.2
Trinidad and Tobago	0.6	52.4	5.3	47.0	63.7	36.7

Source: Caribbean Community Secretariat: Regional Aid for Trade Strategy – 2013–2015, pg. 4. Based on data from World Databank Data on agriculture, industry, manufactures, and services for Barbados are from 2009; comparable data for these sectors in Haiti was unavailable. All Belize figures are from 2008. Export/import data for both Guyana and Suriname are from 2005, and for Trinidad and Tobago, from 2008.

By 2010, services accounted for more than seventy percent of GDP in most Caribbean countries, (Table III above). According to CARICOM data, member states earned US\$10 billion in 2011 from the export of services, a more than doubling of earnings from two decades before. Notably, of the US\$10 billion in services exports, travel contributed 71.3 percent. Other services contributors were all below a ten percent export earnings threshold : transportation – 9.5%; other business services – comprising research and development services, professional and management consulting services, and technical, trade-related and other business services – 8.5%; and telecommunications, computer and information services – 3%. Overall, services categories, with the exception of travel, exhibited negative or a very small positive balance in the regional current account,¹⁶ contributing to the continuing imbalance, which in the case of regional goods trade, amounted in 2011 to over US\$5.6 billion¹⁷. The region's low level of external competitiveness is reflected in the persistent current account deficits which averaged 13.2 percent of GDP for the period 2001–2010, with members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) averaging 24.3 percent.¹⁸

¹⁶ It is noted that these include some of the services identified by the Strategic Plan For the Caribbean Community 2015–2019 as key economic drivers to be unleashed – financial services, ICT services, professional services, construction services, education services, health and wellness services and cultural, entertainment and sporting services.

¹⁷ Caribbean Community Secretariat, CARICOM Statistics on International Trade in Services, 2006–2011.

¹⁸ Caribbean Community Secretariat, Caribbean Community Regional Aid for Trade Strategy 2013-2015, Georgetown, pg.4. Only energy producer, Trinidad and Tobago, generated a surplus during this period. Members of the OECS: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The region's continuing low growth-high debt trajectory will inevitably compromise and erode its human development gains if not reversed through structural transformation accompanied by sustained and inclusive growth and development.

2. Debt

There are two indices – other than world class sprinters per capita – in which the Caribbean is undisputed world leader: one is debt to GDP ratio and the other is migration of the educated.

The high level of accumulated debt throughout the region is a consequence of the financing of current account deficits over time, the deficits being a symptom of the region's lack of competitiveness and a result of fiscal imprudence. As of 2013 nine Caribbean countries – St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, St. Lucia, Belize, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Barbados, Grenada, and Jamaica - had debt to GDP ratios that exceeded the accepted critical threshold of 60%, and several rank among the most highly indebted countries in the world, with debt ratios of well over 100% of GDP.

Table IV: Caribbean Debt - 2013

Country	% of GDP
Jamaica	143
Grenada	116
Barbados	108
St. Kitts and Nevis	100
Antigua and Barbuda	95
Belize	76
St. Lucia	74
Dominica	73
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	73
Guyana	58
Bahamas	56
Suriname	37
Trinidad & Tobago	33
Haiti	20

Source: Caribbean Development Bank Annual Report 2013, page 28.

Despite several debt rescheduling and debt exchanges since 2010¹⁹ - and before - the debt profile of the region has not changed substantially. In fact, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) in its 2013 Annual Report observes that fiscal performance deteriorated in six of nine most highly indebted members between 2012 and 2013, resulting in increased indebtedness ranging from 2.8 percentage points in Dominica to 10 percentage points in Barbados.

¹⁹ Antigua and Barbuda – debt exchange and rescheduling, 2010; Belize – debt exchange 2012; Grenada – debt rescheduling and exchange, 2013; Jamaica – debt exchange 2010, 2012; St Kitts and Nevis 2012. It should be noted that Haiti has received substantial bilateral debt relief (2009) and Guyana remains the only country from the region to receive debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and Multilateral Debt Relief (MDRI) Initiatives. In early April 2015, the Government of Grenada announced that it had reached agreement in principle on financial terms that will apply to restructuring of its US and EC dollar bonds due in 2025. According to the Government of Grenada news release, the terms agreed in principle would result in a 50% reduction in principal amounting to 19% of Grenada's GDP. See Government of Grenada press release dated April 08, 2015, 'Grenada and its bondholders reach agreement in principle on key financial terms for restructuring'.

This high level of accumulated debt contributes to poor regional GDP performance and diverts resources to amortization and interest payments - away from health, education, infrastructure, administration of justice, social protection and other areas that are drivers of growth and promoters of inclusiveness. Although available data do not indicate a drop in social protection and safety nets, these expenditures are heavily dependent on external financing, which indicates that they are highly vulnerable. In the case of the most highly indebted regional economy, Jamaica, in the 2015–2016 Budget Estimates of Expenditure tabled in Parliament in February this year the country allocated J\$310.2 billion or approximately 47% of projected Expenditure to servicing debt²⁰: in the same Estimates spending on education was reduced by 3 percent – from J\$83.8 billion to J\$81.3 billion. Debt service obligations have been beyond the fiscal capacity of some SIDS and foreign direct investment has been decreasing in many SIDS since 2009²¹.

It is generally accepted that, at levels above 60%, debt has a negative effect on growth. Greenidge et al have estimated annual and cumulative real GDP loss for Caribbean countries since 1980. The authors find a substantial level of foregone output over several decades that has been due to high debt levels: as much as 519% of GDP in the case of Guyana and 161% in the case of Jamaica.

Table V - Public Debt: Estimated Loss in Real GDP Growth (In Percentage Points)

	Annual Percentage Points Loss In Real GDP Growth	Cumulative Loss in Percentage Points of Real GDP Growth (since 1980)
Antigua and Barbuda	3.31	102.59
Bahamas, The	n/a	n/a
Barbados	1.65	32.98
Dominica	1.12	23.38
Grenada	1.59	25.37
Guyana	16.76	519.70
Jamaica	5.22	161.97
St. Kitts and Nevis	5.44	76.46
St. Lucia	.51	4.62
St Vincent and the Grenadines	.37	5.50
Suriname	53.74	322.43
Trinidad and Tobago	.42	6.26

Source: Greenidge et al (2012)²².

Not surprisingly, given the region’s burden of debt, a recent study – Ruprah et al, ‘Is there a Caribbean Sclerosis?’ - found that while in 1980 Caribbean GDP per capita was four times higher than the GDP of other small economies, by 2012 this ratio had fallen to less than parity – at 0.94. The authors suggest that, absent reform, the trend will continue, and project

²⁰Minister of Finance and Planning Budget Presentation for the 2015 – 2016 fiscal year, pg. 31.

²¹ Bourne, Compton, Financing for Development Challenges in Caribbean Paper prepared for UNDP Trinidad June 2015

²²Greenidge K, G.R. Craigswell, C. Thomas and L. Drakes “Threshold Effects of Sovereign Debt: Evidence from the Caribbean”, IMF Working Paper, WD/12/157, International Monetary Fund, pg. 14. (NB. Haiti and Belize not included)

Caribbean GDP to fall, in a business as usual scenario, to .89 of the GDP of other small economies by 2018²³.

The Caribbean, given its huge public debt, faces a development conundrum. High debt levels undermine growth. But in the absence of significant debt relief which, so far, has not been forthcoming for Caribbean middle-income economies, **broad based economic growth** remains the only viable path to meaningfully reduce debt. With domestic borrowing already high – accounting for more than half of the public debt in high and moderately indebted Caribbean countries – to break with the current low growth trajectory requires the injection of new and affordable external development financing and, importantly, not only an injection of new flows but for these flows to be accompanied and complemented by raised levels of fiscal prudence on the part of Caribbean governments, and by strengthened debt management and improved mobilization of domestic revenue.

3. External Financing

The Commission on Growth and Development²⁴ several years ago compared and assessed the economic performance of so-called ‘success stories’ – economies that had achieved high, sustained growth in the post-war period. Third on a list of five shared characteristics identified by the Commission was “muster[ing] high rates of saving and investment”.

The Caribbean Development Bank has called attention to the low savings rate in the Caribbean. According to the regional bank, at an average of 15% of GDP over the past decade, the Caribbean savings rate has been only half the average in other emerging and developing economies.²⁵ The accumulation of debt and reliance on capital inflows to sustain aggregate demand and finance investment and consumption has been one consequence of this inadequate or low level of mobilization of domestic resources. Given this situation, access to external financing that will not aggravate the regional debt burden is of utmost importance for the region. Yet the augury is not good.

With strategic regional considerations deriving from the Cold War dissipating, and with global attention focused on poverty reduction, as shown by the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, the Caribbean, as a mainly middle income region, is at severe disadvantage in the competition for grant and concessional development resources – both bilateral and multilateral. During the period 2000 - 2010, concessional development financing to the region has fallen drastically, even while, in the same period, development assistance has increased considerably in real terms.²⁶ The fact is that the bases on which traditional donors allocate

²³Ruprah, Inder, Karl Melgareja, Ricardo Sierra, ‘Is there a Caribbean Sclerosis? Stagnating Economic Growth in the Caribbean’, Inter-American Development Bank, p.54.

²⁴The Commission, chaired by Nobel Laureate Michael Spence, and sponsored by a number of leading development agencies’ presented ‘The Growth Report: Strategies for Sustained Growth and Inclusive Development’ in 2008.

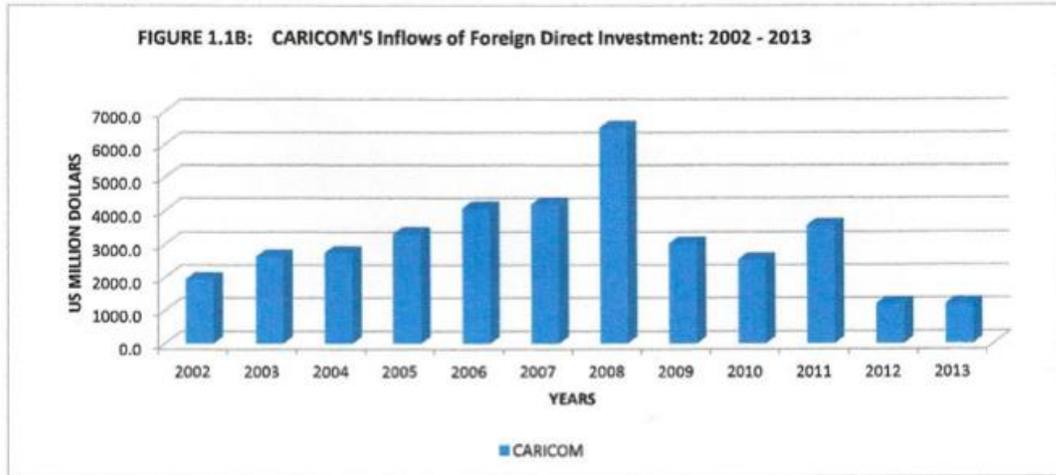
²⁵CDB Annual Report 2014, pg. 13. The exceptions to the low propensity to save are cited to be Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago and Haiti.

²⁶Since the 2000 Millennium Development Summit, net ODA flows to developing countries has increased from US\$84 billion to US\$134.8 billion, in 2013. However, only five donors – Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom – have exceeded the target of

development funding have not been favourable for middle-income developing countries with moderate to high human development. At the same time, FDI flows to the sub-region have been volatile, rising during the decade preceding the financial crisis of 2008 but yet to recover after falling off precipitously since then.²⁷

While several Caribbean countries have in recent years borrowed in the private capital markets, small size and modest debt ratings, serve to accentuate risk premiums and, as well, the existing debt stock-pile makes this an unattractive if sometimes necessary option. The difficulty in attracting external private flows can be attributed to constraints relating to diseconomies of scale and small market size, although poor macro-economic environment, non-competitive domestic cost structures, and regulatory burdens in some countries in the region are undoubtedly important factors. The volatility in external flows reflects heavy dependence by the region on a few source countries and the concentration of these flows in a few sectors – most FDI going in recent years to tourism, mineral extraction and asset privatization.

Figure 1: CARICOM: Inflows of FDI 2002 – 2013



Notes: 2011 - Excludes Guyana
2012 and 2013 - Excludes Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago.

Source: Taken from CARICOM Secretariat’s Foreign Direct Investment Inflows of Member States: 2002-2013, March 2014.

A major challenge for the Caribbean is increasing access to external resources for development in an international climate that has not been receptive so far to the ‘special and particular’ circumstances of the region – one beset by structural, geographic and environmental vulnerabilities, now lagging in economic performance, and where the capacity to maintain the gains of the past and to transform the lives of citizens going forward may be in doubt. The SDG

disbursing 0.7 per cent of gross national income as aid. Report of the Secretary General, Follow-up to and Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, A/69/358, pgs 10 – 11.

²⁷Foreign Direct Investment inflows to the region peaked US\$6.5 billion in 2008 then declined to US\$1.2 billion in 2012 - a decline of more than eighty per cent. Caribbean Community Secretariat, Foreign Direct Investment Flows of CARICOM Member States: 2002 – 2013.

paradigm could conceivably encourage a review of current perspectives on assistance to the region and be a timely catalyst for national, regional and international action.

4. Infrastructure

Modern and efficient physical infrastructure is recognized as a fundamental requirement for increasing productivity and strengthening competitiveness. This is due to infrastructure's role as a productive input as well as its ability to raise total factor productivity.

As a consequence, within the region, there is full recognition of the importance of giving priority to infrastructure development as a "key growth driver."²⁸

According to the World Bank: "Many Caribbean Governments face common challenges in delivering the quality, efficient, accessible infrastructure needed to support sustainable and inclusive growth. Energy costs in many Caribbean countries are among the highest in the world, and are vulnerable to oil price shocks. Transport services, crucial for the competitiveness of small island nations, are typically expensive – often reflecting diseconomies of scale, but also suffer(ing) from underinvestment, inadequate maintenance (exacerbated by exposure to natural disasters) and operating inefficiencies. While telecommunications markets are competitive, gaps in service such as high-speed broadband constrain development of new industries. Most governments are aiming to overcome these challenges in the face of tight resource constraints."²⁹

The OECS and Eastern Caribbean countries face particular infrastructural and connectivity disadvantages due to their spatial location within the region. This contributes to high logistics costs. Addressing infrastructural deficiencies related to the region's port, air, maritime, road, rail, irrigation and drainage, energy and gas pipeline, and public service facilities (hospitals and schools), will be critical to reducing costs, creating a single ICT space, and improving productivity and competitiveness. In this regard, the development of the region's air and maritime infrastructure and services will be critical for improving the accessibility and mobility of people and goods, enhancing competitiveness, improving market access, improving the reliability, efficiency, safety and security of regional transportation systems, establishing an integrated airspace, and harmonizing the regulatory, institutional and administrative environment (CARICOM Strategic Plan, 2015-2019). While the region's road network, with a few notable exceptions, can be considered satisfactory, port and logistics related infrastructure will require considerable upgrading and modernizing, especially given the objective of taking advantage more fully of the region's strategic location and potential to be a major transportation and trans-shipment hub.

ICTs are an important tool for achieving the entire SDG agenda; apart from its vital role in the economic sphere, ICTs can help alleviate poverty, improve the delivery of education and health care, make government services more accessible and responsive, and improve timeliness of disaster and emergency responses. ICTs can also enhance public participation which further strengthens the democratic process.

²⁸ Caribbean Community Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019, pg. 37.

²⁹ 'Caribbean Infrastructure PPP Roadmap', World Bank, March 2014, pg.7.

According to the recent MDG report 2015, mobile-cellular and Internet penetration rates have grown strongly, but the digital divide between the rich and the poor is growing. Estimated number of mobile-cellular subscriptions has grown almost tenfold in the last 15 years, from 738 million in 2000 to over 7 billion in 2015. Internet penetration has also grown from just over 6 per cent of the world's population in 2000 to 43 per cent in 2015. As a result, 3.2 billion people are linked to a global network of content and applications, including user-generated content and social media.

Notwithstanding, internet use and quality of access remain a major challenge in many lower-income countries, particularly small island and landlocked developing States which contribute to the digital divide. For instance, just over one third of the population in developing countries uses the Internet, compared to 82 per cent in developed countries. Also, while the global mobile-cellular penetration rate was 97 per cent in 2015, it reached only 64 per cent in LDCs. In the Caribbean comparable rates are 40.3 per cent internet users and 64.2 percent mobile subscriptions in 2015, while subscriptions to fixed landlines remained virtually stagnant over the last 15 years - as elsewhere in the world.

The SDGs could provide critical support for the sustainable development of transport and other infrastructure in the region, especially given the high costs that are involved, and the need for an integrated approach, the latter being particularly important in light of the region's environmental vulnerability.

5. Labour Markets, Demographic Shifts and Decent Work

The Caribbean is a common and conducive social, economic and environmental space, home to a highly educated and skilled workforce. It seeks to overcome the constraint of size and relative dispersion by building and participating in regional and hemispheric value chains in skill and knowledge intensive goods and services destined for domestic and regional consumption and for larger markets to the North and South.

Poverty, joblessness, and exclusion disproportionately affect vulnerable groups in the Caribbean, as elsewhere. One study notes that in many countries pockets of vulnerable communities live at risk in poor habitats with low income levels and possessing few physical assets.³⁰ There are significant income disparities across the region. For countries for which data was available, over the period 2006 – 2010 the share of the lowest quintile in national consumption ranged from a low of 1.6 percent in Antigua and Barbuda to 9.8 percent in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.³¹ This is the inherent nature of inequality and vulnerability - multidimensional and intersecting, and by nature spanning the social, economic, political, legal, cultural and environmental spheres. This multi-dimensionality invites a holistic response and solution.

There remain gender equality challenges in Caribbean labour. The female proportion of the population with at least secondary education is greater than males and graduation statistics from the University of the West Indies indicate that the female proportion of university graduates is

³⁰ Mendoza, Patricia and Sheila Stuart, Caribbean Millennium Development Goals Report, 2010, ECLAC, 2011, pg. 11.

³¹ CARICOM Regional Statistics.

larger than the male proportion. Gender differences show up as well in labour force participation and unemployment rates. The female labour force participation rate is lower than the male labour force participation rate, minimally so in Barbados but greatly (72.5% vs. 51.20%) in the case of Trinidad and Tobago. In the past twenty years, women in the Caribbean have made significant gains in entrepreneurship and increased employability. Despite these gains and strong representation in the public sector, women are still the highest represented group in low wage jobs and in the informal economy in the Caribbean. Many women start businesses, often in precarious contexts and without social protection, to meet their immediate needs for self-employment and warding off poverty. Unfortunately, they are not empowered to scale-up their businesses using technology or seek additional financing or credit. Nonetheless, the incidence of unemployment among females is higher than among males, minimally in the Bahamas but substantially in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. It is sometimes claimed that females are also more likely to experience job loss than males but no statistics are available for validating this claim. There is also not available a good enough body of data to investigate gender disparities in wages. However, information from the Trinidad and Tobago labour force surveys and the UWI tracer surveys of university graduates provide some indications that there are substantial pay differentials for equivalently qualified men and women in the same job and industry categories of work.

The data clearly demonstrate that men require lower levels of education to earn incomes similar to or more than women. This is an important factor in the apparent puzzle around male performance in regional educational systems and high levels of female poverty³².

The decent work agenda is also of critical importance to the region. Many women are employed as household workers and although there has been significant advocacy and CSO engagement to support these women there remains a major gap between the 3,600 Registered Jamaica Household Workers Union members and the estimated 100,000 household workers in Jamaica. Also, most countries in the region have not yet ratified ILO Convention 189 to promote “Decent Work for Domestic Workers”.

Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have committed to a Decent Work Agenda (DWA) with four strategic objectives. Creating decent and productive jobs; Guaranteeing rights at work; Extending social protection; and Promoting social dialogue. Perhaps the most significant challenge to the DWA in the Caribbean is the creation of employment in economic circumstances where it is difficult even to retain employment. Labour force participation rates are fairly high even though there has been a fall since the start of the economic crisis in 2009. For example, labour force participation rates are 62% in Trinidad and Tobago and 73% in the Bahamas. An effort to expand tertiary education enrolment would have also lowered labour participation rates in all the countries. Although, responsiveness of tertiary education towards the labour market needs, still needs improvement. Unemployment statistics are not uniformly or comprehensively available but for four of the five countries which have produced estimates for 2012 or 2013 unemployment rates range between 11% and 27%. Trinidad and Tobago is the exception with an unemployment rate of 4%. The incidence of unemployment is much higher among youths, i.e. 15-24 years old. Typically, about 26-38% of youths were unemployed in 2012. Moreover, the lack of statistics on a wider range of labour market

³²Rhoda Reddock. Gender and Decent work in the Caribbean 14.05.2014

indicators (a proper Labour Market Information System) hampers policy-makers to address job issues in a more systematic way.

Migration for work within the Caribbean presents an entirely distinct set of challenges.

Much of it consists of undocumented workers, i.e. persons who arrive for some ostensible purpose other than work but in effect join the domestic labour force. Many of these workers operate in the informal employment sector or in small establishments where compliance with labour standards is very difficult to monitor and effectuate.

Even for documented workers, there are the unresolved issues of portability of pensions and social security benefits and recognition of contingent rights.

Caribbean governments display strong policy ambivalence on the integration of Caribbean labour markets. The consequence of these three factors is that the domestic labour market in the main host countries might be quite variegated with respect to the application of the decent work principles adopted by all governments.

Human trafficking seems to be on the rise in the Caribbean. The US Department of State in its 2013 Trafficking in Persons Report places six Caribbean SIDS (Barbados, Guyana, Haiti, St Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago) on its Tier 1 Watch List and three others (Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica and St Vincent and the Grenadines) on its Tier 2 List. Several other publications identify human trafficking as a growing problem. The reports identify sex trafficking of men, women and children, trafficking in child labour, trafficking of adult labour and trafficking for domestic servitude as features of the Caribbean trafficking in persons³³. Human trafficking violates human rights, is a crime and contrary to principles of the decent work agenda encapsulated in labour standards and rights of work. Measures to address this phenomenon comprehensively should seek to strengthen the institutional capacity of criminal justice actors in the Caribbean, as well as build the capacity of law enforcement and health professionals in identifying and assisting victims of trafficking.

Despite the complaints which surface about the extra-regional migration experience and the need for closer involvement in monitoring, review and negotiation by Caribbean governments, their structured approaches may be useful guides to improving the experience of intra-Caribbean transient workers. A good starting point is recognition that temporary labour shortages of varying duration and sometimes repetitively do occur in Caribbean labour markets and that migrant workers can relieve those shortages to the benefit of host countries and sending countries. With this premise, potential host and sending countries can draw upon the specific features of the extra-regional managed migration schemes to fashion acceptable provisions about entry and exit, working conditions and wages, and social protection.

³³ “Exploratory Assessment of Trafficking in Persons in the Caribbean Region”, IOM 2010

6. Competitiveness, Science and Technology and Innovation

The Caribbean Community Strategic Plan 2015-2019 has acknowledged the importance of building technological resilience in order to ensure that member states become innovative and globally competitive. However, with an average internet penetration rate of less than 51 percent of the population,³⁴ low levels of innovation, and with no more than four (4) countries of the region in the top 100 of the Global Innovation Index³⁵ the Caribbean's overall performance in the areas of science, technology and innovation, has been unremarkable. The result is similar in regard to the 2014–2015 Global Competitiveness Index. Only three countries are ranked amongst the first hundred.³⁶ The other major competitiveness index – the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business – had no stellar Caribbean performer either, with the countries of the region distributed around the middle and lower half of the 189 country index, the exceptions being Jamaica, at 58 and Trinidad and Tobago at 79.³⁷

An evident requirement is to improve the regulatory environment and to increase expenditure on research, development, innovation and ICT. Average investment on research and development in the region has been estimated at 0.13 percent of GDP, which is well below developed country standards.³⁸ Despite the fiscal challenges, reversal of the region's underinvestment in STI will be necessary to spur competitiveness, promote innovation, and reduce dependence on foreign technology, management and capital. In the medium term, this will require access to increased levels of capital financing and an integrated, consistent policy framework implemented over time.

The educational system has remained largely unchanged since colonial times and maths and science have seen dropping performance rates across the region. The teaching methodology, an essential element of the system has also remained largely unchanged since colonialism. Creativity and innovation tend to be not encouraged. Focus on strengthening quality education and teacher retraining is an important part of the growth and ICT agenda.

³⁴ In 10 out of 14 CARICOM countries, internet penetration rates were less than 60 per cent of the population in 2012. World Development Report, 2014. Above sixty per cent were Antigua and Barbuda – 83.8%, Barbados – 73.3%, the Bahamas -71.7% and St. Kitts and Nevis – 79.3%. Other countries ranged from a high of 55.2% in Dominica to an outlying low of 10.9% - Haiti

³⁵ World Intellectual Property Organization, 2014. Barbados, 41, Guyana, 80, Jamaica, 82, Trinidad and Tobago, 90.

³⁶ World Economic Forum, The Global Competitiveness Report 2014-2015. Barbados, 55, Jamaica, 86, Trinidad and Tobago, 89.

³⁷ World Bank, Ease of Doing Business Report, 2015. Jamaica has moved from a rank of 90 in 2013. With the exception of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean countries appear to be stationary or drifting downward on this particular Index.

³⁸ Nurse, K., 2007

B. SOCIAL CHALLENGES

1. Poverty and Inequality

“The legacy of deep social problems such as high levels of income inequality, high rates of unemployment, high rates of rural and urban poverty, and communities with histories of social exclusion has continued to exert an influence until today.”³⁹ Among those who have experienced historical social exclusion are indigenous populations across the region. Indigenous peoples in the Caribbean are concentrated in Belize, Dominica, Guyana and Suriname and remain among the marginalized.

Thus despite progress in the area of human development, and moderate to high ranking on the Human Development Index, important social indicators reveal unacceptably high levels of unemployment, poverty, and crime, which point to social fissures. The region’s poor growth performance in recent years has worsened the situation of vulnerable groups. There is a substantial incidence of poverty and indigence and the persistence in many Caribbean SIDS, which is linked to income inequality particularly evident in the OECS. Children and adolescents are “over-represented” in the poor population (Minujín, Delamónica and Davidziuk, 2006), they are more dependent and less autonomous in the family context, and they are more vulnerable to the consequences of poverty and inequality.

Furthermore, a significant fraction of the region’s children and adolescents face adversities that not only have direct impacts during this phase of their life cycle, but lead to repercussions over the course of their future lives, as well as being transmitted to subsequent generations. The children and adolescents most affected are those who are trapped in situations of insufficient income and who are deprived of their rights to survival, shelter, education, health and nutrition, among other things.

Poverty, joblessness, and exclusion disproportionately affect vulnerable groups in the Caribbean, as elsewhere. One study notes that in many countries pockets of vulnerable communities live at risk in poor habitats with low income levels and possessing few physical assets.⁴⁰ There are significant income disparities across the region. For countries for which data was available, over the period 2006 – 2010 the share of the lowest quintile in national consumption ranged from a low of 1.6 percent in Antigua and Barbuda to 9.8 percent in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.⁴¹ This is the inherent nature of inequality and vulnerability, multidimensional and intersecting, and by nature spanning the social, economic, political, legal, cultural and environmental spheres. This multi-dimensionality invites a holistic response and solution.

³⁹Ibid, 15.

⁴⁰ Mendoza, Patricia and Sheila Stuart, Caribbean Millennium Development Goals Report, 2010, ECLAC, 2011, pg. 11.

⁴¹ CARICOM Regional Statistics.

Table VIII (page 57) provides the outcome of Country Poverty Assessments and national surveys of living conditions for Caribbean countries. Attention was drawn to issues relating to the timing of the surveys, most of which coincided more or less with the global financial melt-down of 2008, and its aftermath. Table VIII shows approximately a fifth to more than a third of the population in most countries living in poverty, the exceptions were Belize at 41.3 per cent and Haiti at 77 per cent, at one tail of the curve, and the Bahamas at 12.5 percent, and Suriname at 10.1 percent, at the other. Caveats regarding the comparability of poverty data notwithstanding, the proportion of the population living below national poverty lines in the Caribbean is, in several cases, as high as is to be found in parts of Asia, and exceeds the average poverty level for Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole.

According to the United Nations Technical Support Team (to the OWG): “Intersecting inequality reinforces the deprivations faced by specific groups and individuals and are closely related to marginal status in society e.g. based on gender, ethnicity, location, age, disability and indigenous identity.”⁴²

Women represent almost fifty per cent of the most vulnerable households. Poor women headed-households in the Caribbean tend to be much larger than those headed by men; have higher unemployment rates; and yet are equally seen to be both more resilient to natural disasters. In the Caribbean, tourism is one of the most important sectors for the region. Many poor women in tourism-dependent SIDS are employed at the lowest end of the industry, and since both natural and financial disasters typically do severe damage to the tourism industry, many are left unemployed because their skills are not easily transferable.

Thus environmental vulnerability and poverty intersect to place the urban and rural poor at risk in many coastal and low-lying communities in the Caribbean. Antiquated laws regarding sexual orientation contribute to poverty and unemployment and promote and reinforce exclusion. Age and disability – including increasingly as a consequence of the prevalence of non-communicable diseases – intersect to worsen the situation of many. In this regard it is noted that the demographic profile of the Caribbean is dynamic – improvement in healthcare and a falling fertility rate mean that there will be 142 older persons for every 100 children by 2040.⁴³ As Huenchuan notes: “Population aging in Latin America and the Caribbean will unfold faster than in other regions and the number of people whose needs will (need to) be met will exceed all expectations.”⁴⁴

Sustainable development will require measures to promote inclusion and access. These measures may include actions to climate proof vulnerable communities, provision of safety nets for the job insecure, and responsive social services, including but not confined to areas such as housing, health care, employment, and nutritional and food security. This will be even more necessary as the Caribbean economy transforms and labour market adjustments and dislocations occur. This will require as well the strengthening of social protection in the Caribbean.

⁴²Technical Support Team Brief to the OWG on Sustainable Development, ‘Promoting Equality, including Social Equity’, pg.1.

⁴³Huenchuan, Sandra, Ageing, solidarity and social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, 2013, pg. 31.

⁴⁴Ibid.

2. Social Inclusion and Equality

The promotion of social inclusion and equality is an important challenge facing the Caribbean region. It is a major challenge, given that the history of the region includes a prolonged period marked by the institution of slavery and by colonial domination: social, economic and political constructs to which exclusion and inequality were normative. Caribbean societies must grapple with the vestiges of this history. The UNDP's Caribbean Human Development Report 2012 notes: "Caribbean countries have a long history of inequality and discrimination....This historical pattern still affects the distribution of the protective power of the state and the way in which the rights of different groups, including the most vulnerable, are treated."⁴⁵ The Caribbean has made insufficient progress including poverty reduction, especially through employment generation, and improvement in the lives of slum dwellers. Migration has characterized the historical patterns.

Caribbean migration both regional and international continues to be a central feature shaping Caribbean development. In fact, the rate of migration in the Caribbean is one of the highest in the world. While the world average is 3% of the donor/sending country, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and St Kitts and Nevis which mirror the English Caribbean pattern have average rates above 40%. Many of the English speaking Caribbean islands have lost more than 50% of tertiary level graduates and 30% of secondary graduates. In 2010 close to 90% of highly skilled persons born in Guyana lived in OECD countries. Similarly, more tertiary educated persons were living outside Barbados, Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago than in these countries. The proportion of highly educated persons residing in OECD countries was also significant for Jamaica (46%) and Belize 34%⁴⁶ ⁴⁷. Nearly half of international migrants move within their region and approximately 40% move to a neighbouring country. 48% of all international migrants are women. This gender pattern is very different from the early industrial age of migration when the majority of migrants were men.

The economic implications of these movements for regional and international travel and tourism are evident. The role of remittances has been recognised as a key benefit of migration. Jamaica, Guyana and Haiti in the region are the largest recipients of remittances which contribute significantly to GDP. International financial institutions and Caribbean leaders have sometimes lauded and encouraged emigration as a means of gaining foreign exchange through remittances. A development policy, which plans on exporting key segments of a country's skilled people, such as nurses, teachers and agricultural workers actually risks treating people as commodities for export does not take account of the investment in health and education of these citizens from birth to adulthood including costs of loss of leadership, entrepreneurship, technical and creative skills in the homes, communities and at the national and regional levels.

The Caribbean must consider a viable option to the high level of migration of its tertiary educated without undermining fundamental rights and freedoms. One answer could be to create

⁴⁵ Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012, UNDP, pg.9.

⁴⁶ UNDESA Population division/OECD Oct 2013

⁴⁷ Caroline Bakker, Martina Eling-Pels and Michele Reis 'The Impact of Migration on Children' UNICEF Aug 2009.

an environment that encourages the educated and skilled to remain at home, recognising that vibrant and progressive societies are built by creative and dynamic people. Alternative and more immediate policy options could focus on supporting circular migration flows, better agreements for supply of labour, and engagement with diaspora to optimise transfer of skills back to their countries of origin. Providing Caribbean countries with training in labour migration management should also better equip them with the capacity to shape appropriate related policy options

Furthermore, as the Caribbean is the only region in the world that currently does not have a regional consultative process (RCP) for migration, the introduction of a RCP could greatly facilitate regional dialogue and cooperation on migration policy issues, as it has in other regions, especially as it relates to labour migration, migration and development, and security.

Children are very vulnerable and at risk in the Caribbean. Rates of interpersonal violence are extremely high in some countries and, equally alarmingly, appear to be on the increase even in those countries with traditionally low levels of violence.⁴⁸ Children are particularly at risk of violence. It is projected that at least one in every five girls in the Eastern Caribbean faces child sexual abuse.⁴⁹ Globally, reports show that child abuse and neglect occur across all socioeconomic groups and family structures. However, children from homes of low socioeconomic status, children from inner-city areas and children who have a parent with mental health problems or drug/alcohol problems are most vulnerable.⁵⁰ It is also widely known that children from minority groups; children with disabilities and children with absentee parents report higher experiences higher levels of physical and sexual abuse than children from the general population. A complicated migration context is increasingly evident in the Caribbean, necessitating a versatile response tailored to the individual needs of migrants in accordance with established international norms protecting the human rights of all persons, including children.⁵¹ Barbados reports younger children between birth to 9 years, as being most at risk of child abuse and neglect.⁵² Similar to the high levels of violence in homes and in the communities, some countries report high levels of violence in schools. For example, a Dominican study of violence against children reported high levels of exposure to violence, as well as a fairly high level of tolerance of violence – especially in the home and school and within the context of discipline and punishment.⁵³

⁴⁸ Krug, E.G., L.L. Dahlberg and J.A. Mercy (eds). 2002. *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: World Health Organization

⁴⁹ Jones, A., Ena Trotman Jemmott. 2010. *Perceptions of, Attitudes to, and Opinions on Child Sexual Abuse in the Eastern Caribbean*. Bridgetown, UNICEF

⁵⁰ Krug, E.G., L.L. Dahlberg and J.A. Mercy (eds). 2002. *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: World Health Organization

⁵¹ International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2010. *A Framework and Recommendations for Action on Children Affected by Migration in the Caribbean*, pg 9

⁵² Child Care Board of Barbados. 2011. *Child Neglect in Barbados: A Review of neglect cases reported to the Child Care Board April 2007 to March 2011*. Bridgetown: UNICEF

⁵³ Le Franc, E., P. Riley-Hunte. 2006. *Violence against Children: An evaluation of the Protective Environment: Participant Assessment Methodology*. Bridgetown, UNICEF

According to the 2006 Caribbean Study on Violence against Children, “as a result, many students no longer feel safe in their schools and some drop out or attend irregularly, though absenteeism may have other etiologies. Children can suffer emotional and psychological abuse at the hands of authority figures. Parents, teachers and school administrators are sometimes harsh in their choice of words when scolding a child. This can, in turn, lead to the child developing low self-esteem and other behavioural problems”.⁵⁴ Whatever the case, violence against children needs to be systematically addressed.

On the flip side, a cause for great concern in the Caribbean region is the **increasing incidence of youth crime**. In Jamaica, adolescents aged 13–19 years are responsible for a quarter of major crimes, including armed robbery, assault, rape and murder.⁵⁵ Major crimes committed in other CARICOM nations bear a similar bias to males, though the rates are less alarming. It is reported that adolescents view violence as a useful tool for survival and social mobility, and there is little faith evidenced by youth in the efficacy of justice, law and order. A common concern expressed is the recruitment of disaffected youths into crime by others in the community. Boys who drop out of school are easy prey to the criminal element in their community, and involvement in crime can provide these youth with the recognition and power that they have been deprived of in their homes and at school. The social exclusion of youth is reported by several authors and is characterized by limited educational and employment opportunities, an inability to influence decisions made both at the community and national levels and a feeling of powerlessness. Although the official statistics show that the majority of crime committed by young people is perpetrated by young men, reports also show an increasing level of involvement of girls in violence. The positive function of Adolescent Youth Friendly Spaces was shortlisted as a UNFPA Global Practice in reducing risks and vulnerability.

A major concern, in terms of policy and practice is that the response to youth crime is often punitive rather than rehabilitative. Holding youth trials in adult criminal courts, detaining children in adult correctional services and the long time period between arrest and sentencing are some of the reported problems in the current systems. The region lacks of a juvenile justice system. The detainment of children in adult jails often leads to children witnessing more violence and becoming the victims of violence in terms of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Several studies in the Caribbean have examined the risk factors associated with childhood aggression and juvenile delinquency. In one study utilizing the data from the PAHO/WHO 9-country study, the major risk factors for youth involvement in violence were found to be physical and sexual abuse, skipping school, and rage.⁵⁶ The strongest protective factor was school connectedness (liking school and getting along with teachers). Other protective factors were family connectedness

⁵⁴ Meeks Gardner, J., Aldrie Henry-Lee, Pauletta Chevannes, Joan Thomas, Helen Henningham and Charlene Coore, 2006 Violence against Children in the Caribbean: A Desk Review, pg. 44 accessed on 10 June via website http://www.academia.edu/1378596/Violence_against_Children_in_the_Caribbean_A_Desk_Review

⁵⁵ Meeks-Gardner, J., C. Powell, S. Grantham-McGregor. 2001. "A Case-Control Study of Family and School Determinants of Aggression in Jamaican Children" Final report prepared for the Social Policy Analysis Project and Institute for Social and Economic Research, UWI, Mona. Working Paper No. 6. Kingston: Policy Development Unit, Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ).

⁵⁶ Blum, R., and M. Ireland. 2004. "Reducing Risk, Increasing Protective Factors: Findings from the Caribbean Youth Health Survey". *Journal of Adolescent Health* 35: 493–500

(feeling cared for by parents and other family members, being paid attention to, and being understood) and religion (attending church and religiosity).

Youth unemployment is linked to risk factors associated with gangs, violence and crime. Youth are disproportionately represented in the prison population. The region has very high homicide and incarceration rates. Complete age cohort data on the prison population is not available but the prison population is drawn mainly from the youth, imposing high social and economic costs.⁵⁷ Alienation and deprivation amongst this group is exacerbated by other factors such as drug abuse, the spread of HIV/AIDs, and teen age pregnancy. Children with disabilities experience violence 3.7 times more often than children without disabilities⁵⁸.

Disability used to be seen as a physical or medical problem, and so a person with disabilities was expected to adapt to the rest of society. The approach today, however, is about making society offer ways to ensure equality, accessibility, reasonable accommodation and inclusion. This is in a first place a State obligation to ensure, but also a society-wide responsibility that must be assumed through the adoption of appropriate laws, public policies and implementation measures for all categories of differently abled people. Most countries in the region have at least signed, 7 ratified/ accessed the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006 and are bound to respective duties therein.

LGBTIQ : The Caribbean remains in many ways a very conservative space. As such across the region persons among the LGBTIQ community experience varying levels of difficulty in engaging fully in society. Some progress has been made for example in Jamaica, one the most insecure spaces in the region for those in the LGBTIQ community, the Jamaica Forum of Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG) held a week of activities in August 2015 to mark growing tolerance for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. In spite of small wins there is a dearth of research on the LGBTIQ community in the region and they continue to face significant challenges to their security, health and well-being.

3. Health and Wellbeing

⁵⁷ The CARICOM Commission on Youth Development, 2009, estimates the direct and indirect costs attributable to youth crime annually to be 2.8 to 4 percent of GDP. This related to four countries – Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and St. Lucia.

⁵⁸ Lisa Jones and others, “Prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies”, *The Lancet*, Vol. 380, Issue 9845, September 2012

The Caribbean has made moderate to good progress on the MDGs, particularly on reducing hunger, infant mortality, access to safe drinking water, reversing the AIDS epidemic and gender equity in education. Reduction of under 5 mortality is a success story worldwide, and the Latin American and Caribbean region has seen a reduction of 65% between 1990 and 2012, the largest decline in the world. Similarly, the Caribbean region has seen the sharpest decline (50%) in new HIV infections since the year 2000 to 13 000 [9 600-17 000] in 2014.⁵⁹ AIDS-related deaths in the region have fallen by 59% since 2005 to 8 800 [6 000–17 000] in 2014.

However, the Caribbean SIDS remain severely challenged with respect to the health status of their populations. Infant mortality rates in 2010 were between 17%-27% in six countries, but somewhat lower ie between 7%-14% in the other six countries. Mortality rates for children under 5 years of age remain between 16% and 31% percent in 8 countries and between 8% -12% in four countries. The region also has an exceptionally high rate of adolescent pregnancies. Guyana has the highest rate with 97 per 1000 births followed by Belize at 90 and Jamaica 72 per 1000 births. This is significantly higher than less developed regions overall at 53 per 1000 and the global average of 49 per 1000. (UNECLAC 2012)

Jamaica at Caribbean SIDS also have high rates of adult mortality rates between 115 and 286 per 1000 adults in twelve countries. Maternal mortality is also a serious problem with ratios in excess of 100 per 100,000 persons reported in Jamaica, Guyana, and Suriname and around 46-43 per 100,000 persons in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Belize, St Vincent and the Grenadines and the Bahamas. The deficiencies in health status reflect inadequacies with respect to human nutrition; disease prevention, treatment and cure; health systems capacity and fiscal constraints on public sector health expenditures.⁶⁰

The main risk factors for maternal mortality are poor access to and utilization of ante-natal care, low level of attendance by skilled health personnel at birth, and one of the highest rates of adolescent births globally. The Caribbean region scores poorly relative to other developing regions in regard to both unattended births and the proportion of births by women that are aged fifteen to nineteen. There is inconsistency in legislation in respect to age of consent, age to access SRH services and child marriage and reluctance to teach comprehensive sexuality education. At the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, the global community recognized and affirmed that sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are foundational to sustainable development. Twenty years later, it still holds true.

Importantly, four areas of continuing challenge relate to health: maternal mortality, neonatal mortality, which constitutes 50% of child mortality in the region, and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases. There appears to be a link between neonatal mortality and teenage pregnancies, both at a high rate in the region. Stunting prevalence has reduced in the region but remains above 10%. Micro-nutrient deficiencies remain a problem, in

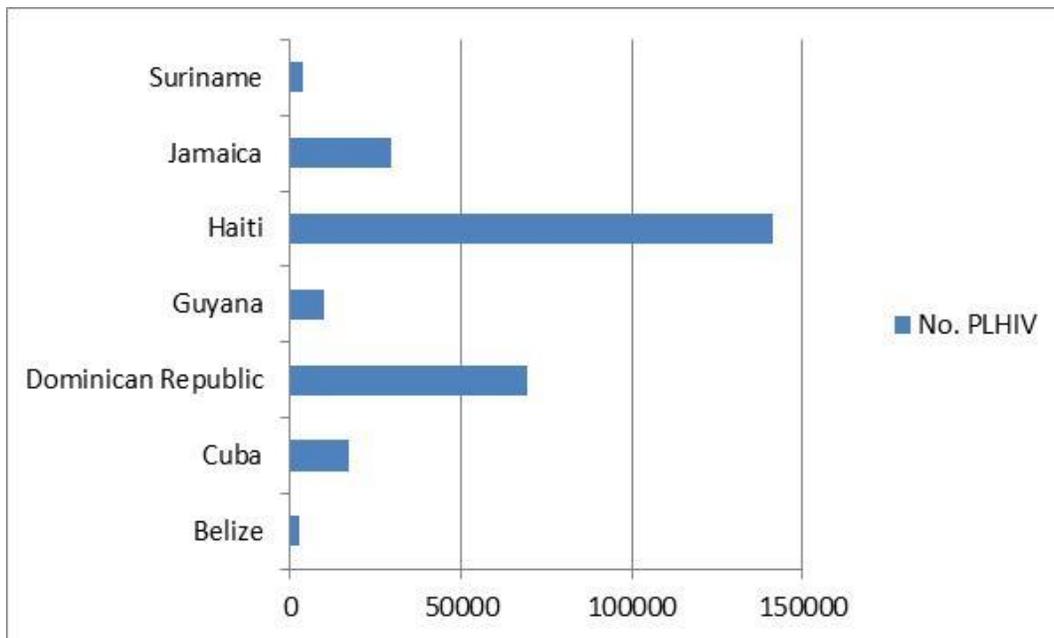
⁵⁹ UNAIDS 2015. How AIDS changed everything. MDG6: 15 years, 15 lessons of hope from the AIDS response

⁶⁰ Bourne June 2015, p. 11

particular iron deficiency. Lastly, non-communicable diseases are a key concern as voiced recently in the forum on non-communicable diseases in Barbados.

Despite the progress made, the Caribbean has the second highest HIV prevalence of all regions⁶¹. An estimated 280 000 people were living with HIV in the Caribbean in 2014, including equal numbers of women and men and 13 000 [11 000–15 000] children. An estimated 29 000 [23 000–37 000] were young people aged 15–24 years (53% female). Five countries account for over 90% of all people living with HIV in the region: Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago (Figure 3). Haiti alone accounts for nearly half of all people living with HIV in the Caribbean. Similarly, within countries there is also the need to identify populations and locations that bear the most burden of the disease.

Figure 2: Number of People living with HIV (all ages) by country, 2014



Source: UNAIDS AIDSinfo 2014

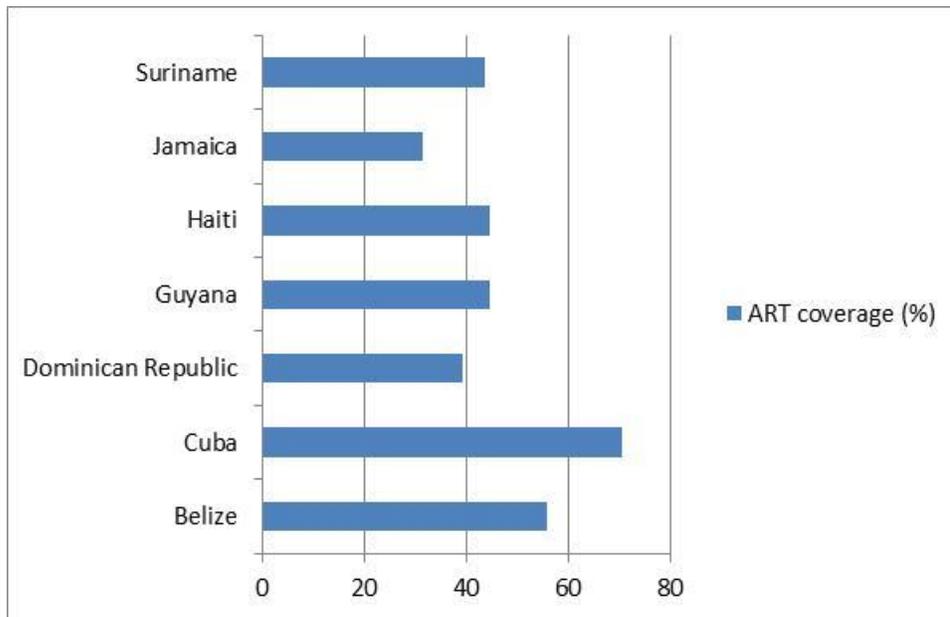
In 2014, 44% [33–53%] of all people living with HIV in the Caribbean received antiretroviral therapy⁶². HIV treatment coverage is notably lower for children than for adults, with only 36% [32–42%] of children living with HIV in the Caribbean in 2014 obtaining antiretroviral therapy

⁶¹ UNAIDS 2015. How AIDS changed everything. MDG6: 15 years, 15 lessons of hope from the AIDS response

⁶² UNAIDS 2015. How AIDS changed everything. MDG6: 15 years, 15 lessons of hope from the AIDS response

and 44% [33–54%] among adults. The ART coverage, based on the WHO 2013 guideline is under 50% except for Belize and Cuba⁶³ (Figure 4) indicating a major gap in treatment which is now regarded as both a prevention and treatment tool.

Figure 3: 2014 Antiretroviral Treatment Coverage by country based on the WHO 2013 guideline



Source: UNAIDS AIDSinfo 2014

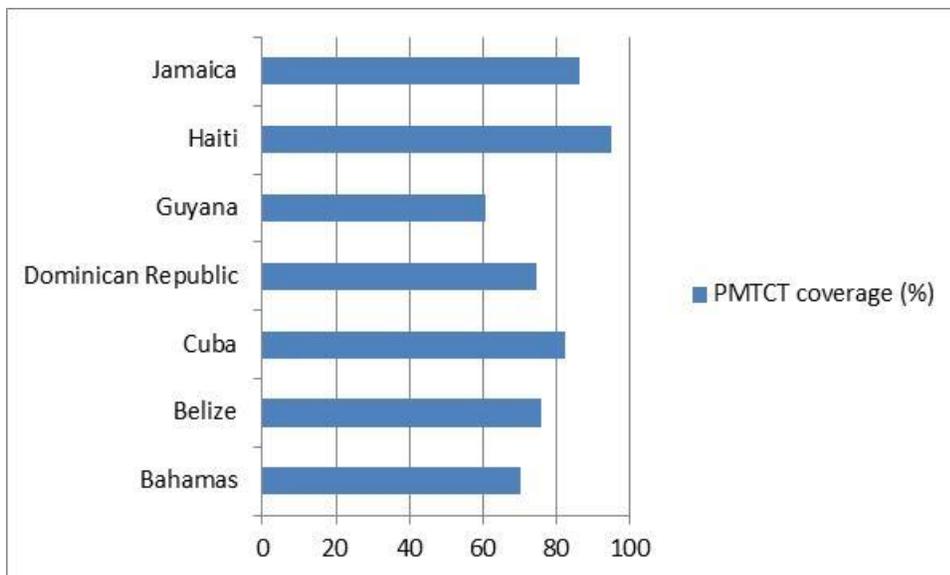
In Cuba and Jamaica, the proportion of people living with HIV who know their HIV status (92% and 72% respectively) is higher than in other regions⁶⁴. In these two countries, the cascades underscore the need to strengthen efforts to link people diagnosed with HIV to on-going HIV care and treatment.

⁶³ *ibid*

⁶⁴ UNAIDS 2015. How AIDS changed everything. MDG6: 15 years, 15 lessons of hope from the AIDS response

Among low- and middle-income countries, the first country validated to have eliminated mother-to-child HIV transmission was Cuba, while other countries show similar promise. Fewer than 500 [<500 – <1000] children were newly infected with HIV in 2014 in the Caribbean⁶⁵. In 2014, 89% [79–>95%] of the estimated 7,000 [6,000–8,000] pregnant women living with HIV in the Caribbean received antiretroviral medicines to prevent mother-to-child transmission. Although coverage of PMTCT is high (Figure 5), only one country (Cuba) has been accredited for elimination of mother to child transmission.

Figure 4: PMTCT in the Caribbean



Source: UNAIDS AIDSinfo 2014

Notwithstanding the important role the MDGs has played in focusing attention on these and other goals and targets, it is the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) which is widely seen to be the primary health challenge as the region looks beyond 2015. The NCDs include diabetes, strokes, hypertension, heart disease, cancers and chronic respiratory ailments. They account for sixty percent of all deaths worldwide. The Caribbean, the region of the Americas that is worst affected, is an epicentre of the disease. Seventy percent of deaths in the region are attributable to NCDs, and eight percent to communicable diseases. High prevalence of child overweight often leading to adult obesity is one of the underlying factors leading to the other ailments.

⁶⁵ UNAIDS 2015. How AIDS changed everything. MDG6: 15 years, 15 lessons of hope from the AIDS response

The triple burden of obesity, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies need intersectoral collaboration. The sub-region has, as a consequence, invested significant political capital in seeking to bring the growing incidence of NCDs to the attention of the global community. Barbados in 2015 hosted a regional summit on NCDs, which built on the 2007 Trinidad and Tobago summit, which agreed that collective action to manage and control NCDs was necessary and issued a Declaration - Uniting to Stop the Epidemic of Chronic NCDs.⁶⁶ One of the evidence based strategies to prevent NCDs is the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding, which is linked to lower adult obesity and diabetes. The sub-region through CARICOM, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), and interregional bodies such as the Commonwealth, played an active role in the successful initiative to convene a High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases in September 2011. Heads of Government adopted a Political Declaration which acknowledged that the global burden and threat of non-communicable diseases “constitutes one of the major challenges for development in the twenty-first century” and threatens to ...”undermine(s) social and economic development throughout the world...”⁶⁷

The human and economic costs of death and disability associated with non-communicable diseases are a tremendous burden on governments and the wider society. The World Bank has pointed to the cross-cutting nature of this impact – individuals and families, health systems, and the wider economy. One study indicates that the annual cost of treating a diabetic in the Eastern Caribbean ranges from US\$322 to US\$769, and that for NCD patients in poorer households in St. Lucia, health care may account for more than forty percent of their per capita expenditure.⁶⁸

Amongst the major impacts of NCDs cited by Chao⁶⁹ are: on households and individuals – reduced income, reduced well-being, increase in disability and premature death; on health systems – high medical treatment costs and increased consumption of NCD-related care; on economies – reduced labour supply, reduced output, lower tax revenues, lower returns on human capital investment; increased public health and social welfare expenditures.

The prevalence of NCDs serves to undermine work force participation and productivity in a sub-region that is falling behind in competitiveness. It has been estimated, for example, that in Jamaica, in 2008, the average economic burden per person was about J\$70,000 or US\$608 and that the economic burden of NCDs amounted to three percent of GDP, without including Government or insurance expenditure.⁷⁰ NCDs are also an important social challenge. Caribbean countries will need to respond to the marginalization resulting from disability, unemployment

⁶⁶ The Declaration pledged support for regional health institutions and agencies, and initiatives to prevent and combat NCDs. It declared the second Saturday in September “Caribbean Wellness Day”.

⁶⁷ Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases, para. 1.

⁶⁸ The Growing Burden of Non-Communicable Diseases in the Eastern Caribbean, World Bank 2010, p. 9

⁶⁹ Presentation by Dr Shiyao Chao of the World Bank, ‘Economic Impact of Non-Communicable Diseases in the Caribbean’, Caribbean Health Financing Conference, Jamaica, Nov. 12 -13, 2013.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

and impoverishment caused by NCDs with appropriate policies, including social protection measures⁷¹ and with strategies of prevention and amelioration. The latter include promoting changes in life style and diet, entrenching socially the importance of physical activity, and reducing and eliminating tobacco and alcohol consumption.

Migrants remain particularly at risk from both communicable and non-communicable diseases, because of the discrimination they face when seeking access to basic health care, and also because of legal and socio-economic barriers that often impede their access to health services. Recognising the impact that overlooking migrants has on public health, and in order to promote the health of migrants, member states of WHO endorsed Resolution 61.17 on the Health of Migrants at the 61st World Health Assembly in 2008.⁷²

Given the continuing focus by the development community on communicable diseases, raising awareness further, and mobilizing global and regional attention and resources to the urgency and importance of preventing and combatting NCDs will continue to be challenging. Despite affecting a large proportion of the population in both the developed and developing world, and undermining the effectiveness of initiatives against communicable diseases,⁷³ NCDs are failing to concentrate minds in the same way that HIV, malaria and, more recently, Ebola, have done. This may partly be a result of the failure to bear inter-linkages fully in mind. While maternal mortality in the region is associated with hypertension and haemorrhage related to pregnancies, NCDs also play a role. Children that are malnourished will be susceptible to both communicable diseases and non-communicable conditions. The post-2015 sustainable development agenda provides an opportunity to embed action against NCDs more firmly in the global health and development framework.

The health inequities observed in the Caribbean are *avoidable* inequalities in health between groups of people within countries and between countries and have an effect on people's lives because they determine their risk of illness. Social determinants of health (SDH) are the causes of health inequities and influence health in many ways. Unlike diseases, SDH are primarily addressed through public policy and intersectoral work.

Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a policy strategy, which targets the key social determinants of health through integrated policy response across relevant policy areas with the ultimate goal of supporting health equity. The HiAP approach is thus closely related to concepts such as '*intersectoral action for health*', '*healthy public policy*' and '*whole-of-government approach*'. There are four types of HiAP strategies⁷⁴.

- *Health at the core*: Health objectives are at the centre of the activity, for example tobacco reduction policies or mandatory seat belt legislation.

⁷¹ Jamaica established the National Health Fund in 2003, funded in part from taxes on tobacco products. The NHF assists patients in meeting the cost of drugs for specific chronic illness.

⁷² "International Migration, Health and Human Rights" IOM 2013

⁷³ An example is MDG 5 on reducing maternal mortality.

⁷⁴ Baum F. et al "Evaluation of Health in All Policies: concept, theory and application", Health Promotion International, Vol. 29 No.S1 2014

- *Win-win*: The aim is to find policies and actions that benefit all parties, such as providing healthy school lunches that promote learning and health.
- *Co-operation*: Emphasis is on systematic co-operation between health and other sectors which benefits the government as a whole. Health seeks to help other sectors meet their goals as a central aim and health is advanced through systematic, on-going co-operative relationships.
- *Damage limitation*: Efforts are made to limit the potential negative health impacts of policy proposals, such as restricting the sale of alcohol in a new urban development.

Since health is a precondition for wellbeing and productivity, and many of the Social Determinants of Health are closely linked to the SDGs, reducing health inequities should be an integral part of intersectoral planning in the Caribbean.

4. Education Access and Quality

There are substantial deficits in the education sector where in several Caribbean SIDS less than 50% of the population aged 25 years or older has received at least secondary education with a high proportion of females aged 15-19 hampered by adolescent pregnancies. Because the Caribbean region as a whole does not seem to have approached reform in a truly systemic manner, the knock effect of problems in one sub-sector creates other problems in another – inattention to early childhood development is impacting performance in primary, the deficits in primary education translate into weak performance at secondary and the absence of core competencies required for excelling at tertiary education⁷⁵. In this regard, the response should be anchored on four ‘foundational’ pillars, namely: agreeing on a philosophy of education in the contemporary Caribbean; establishing a seamless education system; making learning fun; and, attuning assessment to key competencies and global competitiveness⁷⁶. Doing so would require: effective leadership and management, policy development and sound planning frameworks and capacity.

The percentage of persons aged 25 years or older with a bachelor’s degree was less than 5% in some countries and not more than 11% in the three best performers in the 2013. (Bourne June 2015)

Early Childhood Development and Education present significant challenges to the Region.

The foundation for good human capital development starts with early investments in children. The early childhood development sub-sector in the Caribbean faces two main challenges. First, it is mostly privately provided; largely under-funded and unregulated; and faces dearth of data. The World Bank (2011) notes that the ECD sector is not as well documented as other sectors, making it difficult to determine for instance, the level of enrolment, inclusive of the 0-3 age

⁷⁵ Jules, D. n.d. (1) Education: The Anchor for Caribbean Sustainability. A presentation; Jules, D. n.d. (2). Development of a CARICOM Strategic Plan for Primary and Secondary Education Services in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business.

⁷⁶ *ibid*

group in structured settings, as a result of difficulties in capturing data from the private sector. Nevertheless, available data reveals that while there has been much progress in primary education, there are still challenges with participation in pre-primary level. The scant available data shows that while countries have made progress in universal primary and secondary education, challenges remain in the early childhood development (ECD) sub-sector. Enrolment in ECD varied across countries. While some territories such as Montserrat have high GERs of more than 130%, others like the Virgin Islands record only 71.60%. Some countries have adopted a universal access policy but even then, there is mixed progress with strategies for increasing access - opening of new centres, including utilizing available spaces in Primary schools. In the Eastern Caribbean, for example, ECD participation rates range between 71% to 96.5% for the three year olds and only 17% to 31% for the zero to two year olds (UNICEF, 2014b). Expansion of services is being supported through community based programs (Reaching the Unreached and Early Childhood Health Outreach initiatives).

While the proportion of children in first grade of primary school with ECD experience is not yet established, the largely private nature of early childhood services has significant equity implications. The findings of an evaluation commissioned by UNICEF revealed an inadequate reach in targeting of services to the most vulnerable, mainly due to limited government investment in these programmes⁷⁷. As a result the estimated proportion of children from the poorest communities accessing quality ECD is at the 50% baseline level. The quality of ECD services is also not up to standard.

In Guyana, 61 percent of children aged 36-59 months are attending an organised early childhood education programme. Urban-rural, coastal-interior and regional differentials are notable – the figure is as high as 68 percent in urban areas, compared to 59 percent in rural areas, and 64 percent in coastal areas, compared to 49 percent in interior areas. Among children aged 36-59 months, attendance to early childhood education programmes is most prevalent in Region 5 (70%), and least prevalent in Region 1 (18%). A very small differential by sex exists, but there are relatively large differentials by ethnicity of household head, with 72 percent of children living in households with an African household head having the highest attendance to early childhood education programmes, and those living in Amerindian headed households having the lowest attendance (40%).

The development of ECD policies, standards and regulatory frameworks to support comprehensive and holistic early childhood services (ECS) is a slow process. While the region has done well in both universal primary and secondary education, with good gross and net enrolment rates, there are notable gap between enrolment and attendance notable in both primary and secondary levels. Average enrolment in primary is 92.7% against attendance rate of 89.0% while in secondary, the enrolment and attendance rates are 91.8% and 86.7% respectively⁷⁸. This results in negative ratio of 3.1% and 5.1%. Though basic education is free, ancillary costs

⁷⁷ UNICEF. 2015ab. Evaluation of the Pilot of the Early Childhood Outreach Programme in St. Vincent & the Grenadines

⁷⁸ UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS). 2013. www.uis.unesco.org

(books, uniforms, meals, transportation (and increasingly... after school lessons) add to parents' costs⁷⁹.

Whereas most countries in the region have attained universal primary and secondary education, there are indications of systemic inefficiencies resulting in the phenomenon of over age students, repetition and drop out. The age distribution of students shows higher percentage of early enrolment and the growth of overage students towards the end of primary and secondary schooling. The data clearly reflects significant inefficiencies in the education systems.⁸⁰

While the data have traditionally presented a high enrolment rate, there does seem to be significant loss of students starting at age 12. The loss gets worse at age 13, narrows at 14 and significantly increases and peaks at age 17. This is the critical transition to tertiary education and skills training. What is not known so far, and which will become clear as the study progresses, is who these students are. The likelihood is that they are those who come from the slightly lower SES groups.

Children with disabilities face particular challenges entering mainstream education both in terms of infrastructure and adequately trained staff. Migrants may also face challenges accessing education due to issues of stigma and discrimination, and in some cases as a result of language barriers.

Women have equal access to education and represent the majority of tertiary level graduates... This is particularly the case in education where women constitute a majority of tertiary graduates, raising concerns regarding male underachievement in the Caribbean education system.⁸¹ The proportion of women twenty-five years and older who have achieved at least a secondary school education is generally high. In 2010 that percentage was 89.5 in Barbados, 74 in Jamaica, and 67.6 in Trinidad and Tobago. Guyana, at 42.6 percent, was closer to the Latin American average of 50.5. While boys are more likely to drop out of the formal school system, the data show that they tend to take advantage of courses in IT which is a fast growing area of employment.

The goals and methodology of the educational system have not changed significantly since colonial times. Educational methods have failed to keep up with technological advances and changing social realities in the region. Many boys are voting with their feet and many girls who remain in the school system are staying the course largely because they are socialized to be more disciplined and not because they find the experience engaging or empowering since there is little room for creativity and innovation. Subjects like ethics and civics, which promote more civic responsibility and better governance are on few school curricula.

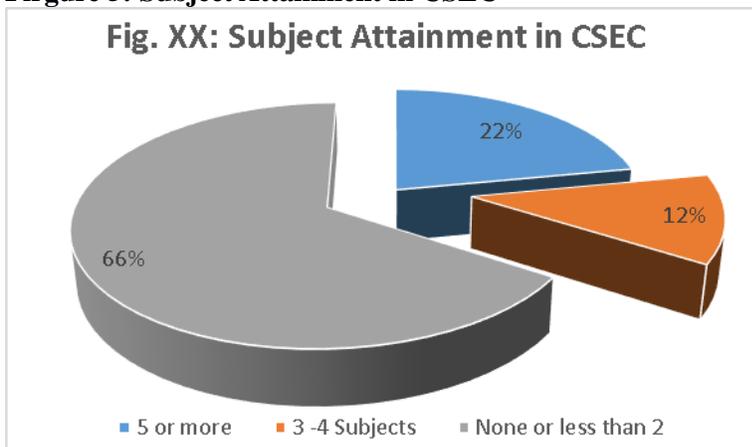
⁷⁹ Jules, D. 2014. *Redefining Caribbean Education: An Urgent Imperative*. Presentation to the CARICOM Heads of Government. HR Cluster

⁸⁰Seven country analysis (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Turks and Caicos Islands). Source: UNICEF Out of School Children's Initiative (OOSCI) Study

⁸¹ Data for ten Caribbean countries for the periods 2005-2006 to 2011-12 show that in several countries twice as many women as men are enrolled in tertiary education: Barbados -238 percent, Jamaica – 210 percent; Suriname – 200 percent. For other countries the percentages are: St Kitts and Nevis – 192.5 percent; Dominica – 169 percent; Belize – 166 percent; Antigua and Barbuda – 160 percent; Trinidad and Tobago – 163 percent; Guyana – 103 percent; and St. Vincent and the Grenadines – 90 percent.

The World Bank has drawn attention to major issues attending Caribbean education. The average pass rates on core subjects such as Mathematics and English Language are low – less than fifty percent. More than two decades ago the World Bank Task Force on Caribbean Education 2020 observed in regard to secondary education in the region that “.....an analysis of subject areas being pursued raises questions as to whether a sufficiently large number of students are acquiring competencies in areas which would enable them to function effectively in the twenty first century analysis of students sitting CXC examinations in 1998 shows less than 20 percent taking science subjects, fewer than fifteen percent foreign languages, just 10 percent in food and nutrition, and 7 percent in information technology, an area of importance in the services sector.”⁸²

Figure 5: Subject Attainment in CSEC



BOTTOMLINE:

**FAILURE IS
SYSTEMIC**

Only About 40% of the eligible cohort are entered for CSEC exams every year

Source: Jules, 2014

Twenty years later, the concern regarding educational quality and relevance in the region has not subsided.

Figure 6: Inequality in Caribbean Education Systems

⁸² In ‘Development of a CARICOM Strategic Plan for Primary and Secondary Education Services in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy – Concept Paper’, by Dr. Didacus Jules, Caribbean Examination Council, pg.10.

Inequity in the Caribbean Education Systems	
Unequal provision	Resourcing differential: public-private, rich-poor, male-female, campus-noncampus (tertiary), Staffing quality; elite-non-elite, migrant-national; minority-non-minority, etc.
Socio-economic status	Cultural impact: education in the home; Nutritional status; job market aspirations and placement
The digital divide	Access to technology at home and at school Extent of pedagogical incorporation

Source: Modified from Jules (2014)

5. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

The Caribbean Human Development Report 2012 observes that while women have made important advances in education, labour force participation, political participation and equality before the law, gender inequalities persist. It notes that the economic sectors that have traditionally provided employment and contributed to the livelihoods of poor women and their families have undergone significant decline. It posits that these economic factors, together with other outcomes of gender inequality, such as the gender employment gap, the gender pay gap, occupational segregation, and the burden of unpaid work, contribute to the marginality of Caribbean women and further observes that “the significant rate of poverty among women, coupled with their dependent status within countries and in the region, has had long-term negative effects, not the least of which is the intergenerational transmission of poverty and inequality.”⁸³

- The success of women in tertiary education (a minority) has overshadowed the situation of the majority of women who are still part of the working poor.
- These women are the mothers of the young men who are dropping out of school and being attracted to criminal and gang activity.
- Attention to decent work for women and support to them as workers and parents would positively impact young men, young women and our societies in general. (Rhoda Reddock)

Against this background, it should be of concern that the Caribbean indices for women's political representation lag both the wider region and diverge from global trends. In 2014, the share of parliamentary seats occupied by women in the Latin American and Caribbean region was 29 percent.⁸⁴ The global average was 22 percent. In the Caribbean, the sub-regional average was 15 percent and only two countries exceeded the Latin American and Caribbean average- Guyana (31 percent) and Grenada (33 percent). Trinidad and Tobago was 29 percent. All other countries fell

⁸³ Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012, UNDP, pgs. 18 -19.

⁸⁴ World Bank, World Development Indicators.

below the regional and global averages – the outliers being Belize (3 percent), Haiti (4 percent) and St. Kitts and Nevis (7 percent).⁸⁵

The low level of female representation in national parliaments in the Caribbean is particularly noteworthy when comparison is made with strong performers in this area among developing countries, such as Cuba (49 percent) and Rwanda (64 percent). This is also a particularly anomalous situation given the high level of enrolment over several decades of women in the region's secondary and tertiary educational institutions. It even more striking as women formed a significant part of the Independence movement in the Caribbean and are often described as the foot soldiers of the political parties

Equally of concern is the female unemployment rate in the Caribbean. Data available for eight countries show that in 2011, female labour force unemployment averaged 12.4 percent. By comparison the proportion of the female labour force unemployed in the Latin American and Caribbean region as a whole was 8.4 percent, in East Asia and the Pacific, 3.9 percent, and in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), 6.6 percent.⁸⁶ The proportion of the female labour force unemployed is not only consistently higher than for men but compares unfavourably with the wider region and regions external to it. The social and economic implication of this is compounded by the large number of households in the region that are headed by women⁸⁷ and – as is also the case in other regions – by their much lower rate of labour force participation.⁸⁸

Gender dynamics significantly drive and influence expectations and outcomes for boys and girls in all spheres of the society. Traditional gender roles and expectations for boys and girls exist in the home and are perpetuated in school and the broader society⁸⁹. These contribute to the number of systemic inequalities which results in boys and girls being disadvantaged to realizing their full potential.

The dropout rates of boys in secondary school and the disproportionate representation of girls at the University level have tended to be used as an indicator that the major challenge of gender equality is no longer women's empowerment. It is important to address the issue of boys dropout rates from secondary schools and their low level of enrolment at university levels. It is equally important to address the fact that in spite of girls higher education levels, they have higher

⁸⁵ At elections in February 2015, one woman was among the eleven successful candidates elected to the St. Kitts and Nevis parliament.

⁸⁶ World Bank, World Development Indicators. Female unemployment data was available for the Bahamas (14.1%), Barbados (13.5%), Belize (17.0%), Guyana (13.8%), Haiti (7.9%), Jamaica (16.7%), Suriname (10.0%), and Trinidad and Tobago (6.2%).

⁸⁷ CARICOM Secretariat Statistics database - Women and Men in the Caribbean Community: Facts and Figures, 1998 –2005. Data on the distribution of heads of household, by gender, in six countries, taken from the 2000 round of census, show that almost forty percent of households (37.2%) was headed by women. The caveat is offered that while in some cases women may be de facto heads of households they are not reported as such and consequently their headship roles and responsibilities are underreported. The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, St. Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

⁸⁸ In 2012, 76 percent for men and 55 percent for women in the Caribbean. This is the proportion of the working age population working or looking for work. See Human Development Report, 2014 for data for Caribbean countries, except Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis.

⁸⁹ USAID. A Gender Analysis Of The Educational Achievement Of Boys And Girls In The Jamaican Educational System 2005:

unemployment levels and make up the majority of the poorest which fuels intergenerational poverty.

The economic disempowerment of women continues to be a widespread social and economic occurrence across societies at different levels of development. The World Bank noted in 2011 that throughout the world women consistently trail men in formal labour force participation, access to credit, entrepreneurship rates, income levels, and inheritance and ownership rights.⁹⁰

Beyond being “manifestly unfair”, the World Bank describes this as bad economics – under-investing in women puts a brake on poverty reduction and limits social and economic development.

Finally, the UNDP’s Gender Inequality Index suggests substantial regional ‘foregone achievement’ due to gender inequalities. This occurs in the areas covered by the Index – reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market participation.⁹¹ The crosscutting impact of gender equality, and its importance to the post-2015 development agenda, is the strongest possible basis for further action by Caribbean countries on gender equality, both as a goal in itself and as a mainstreamed and critical dimension of inclusive and sustainable development.

Within this area gender-based violence is a major concern and challenge. The promise to end violence against women and girls has been made and reaffirmed as a core dimension of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees the right of everyone to life, liberty and security of person. Violence against women and girls is however, a global pandemic, with up to seven (7) in ten (10) women facing physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner during their lifetime. Further, it is estimated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) that globally about 4.5 million, mainly women and girls, are forced into labour as victims of sexual exploitation. The roots of such violence are in gender inequality and can be prevented. It occurs in all countries, contexts and settings and is one of the most pervasive violations of human rights. This is in spite of the fact that 187 countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The UN Commission on the Status of Women highlights the fact that particular groups of women and girls are exposed to an increased risk of violence, including those in rural areas and urban slums, and those who suffer multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as women and girls with disabilities, women and girls living with HIV, widows, and indigenous and migrant women and girls. Sexual violence is also linked to the high level of adolescent pregnancies in the region.

Violence against women reflects this inherent inequality in gender relations and is rooted in women’s continuing status of underclass in many regions of the world. The WHO’s 2013 first of its kind study concluded that violence against women was a public health problem of “epidemic

⁹⁰ World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development, 2012. Also World Bank Issue Brief on ‘Gender Equality’, updated August 2011, pg.1.

⁹¹ According to the 2014 Human Development Report, The Bahamas scores .316, Barbados - .350, Belize - .435, Guyana - .524, Haiti - .599, Jamaica - .457, and Trinidad and Tobago - .321. The global average is .451, which indicates a loss of 45.1% across all three dimensions covered by the Index due to gender inequalities.

proportions”⁹² The WHO study found that one in three women globally reported having experienced physical and/or sexual partner violence, or sexual violence by a non-partner. The proportion of women in the Americas region reporting having experienced violence was 36.1 percent.⁹³ Intimate partner violence in the Caribbean was estimated at 27.09 percent – just above the global average of 26.4 percent, but almost twice the East Asia prevalence rate of 16.3 percent. In regard to non-partner sexual violence, the Caribbean prevalence rate was found to be 10.32 percent – three times the lowest prevalence rate, South Asia at 3.35 percent.

It is relevant to recall in this context that the Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012, cited earlier, noted that “region-wide research reports and surveys by governmental organizations and NGOs providing services to women report increasing rates of violence against women.”⁹⁴ In the survey conducted for the Human Development Report, self-reporting victims of domestic violence ranged from 17.3 percent of respondents in Guyana to 5.9 percent in Jamaica. An interesting finding regarding gender violence in the region is its linkage to the inability to fulfill or meet expectations regarding gender roles.⁹⁵ The significance of this is the fact that in the case of a large proportion of women in the Caribbean the ‘gender role’ has historically included ‘breadwinner’, even if this has mainly been in lowly paid jobs outside the home. The region’s lagging economic performance will have made it both more necessary and more difficult for women to fulfill this role, suggesting a potential trigger for gender violence.

According to the University of the West Indies (UWI) Institute of Gender Studies, domestic violence accounts for between thirty (30) to fifty (50) percent of all murders in many Caribbean countries. The cultural stereotype of an aggressive male is drilled early into Caribbean boys. A study of more than one thousand high school boys and girls in six Caribbean countries demonstrated that both boys and girls believe that aggression is a normal aspect of masculinity. The promise can only be delivered if our boys and girls are provided a more balanced model of masculinity.

There has been some progress in CARICOM, particularly with regard to services and responses, but implementation has been slow and uneven across countries. In spite of this progress gender-based violence remains nationally and regionally a challenge to citizen security in the Caribbean. There is a high societal tolerance of gender based violence. Violence against women and girls destroys lives, homes, communities, costs billions in health care and slows development. Citizen security approaches in the region too often give limited consideration to GBV, sexual violence and violence against women and girls as “serious” citizen security issues. The sustainable development agenda provides ample opportunity to address these issues

6. Food and Nutrition Security

⁹² Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partners violence and non-partner sexual violence, WHO, 2013, pg.35.

⁹³ The Americas includes the Caribbean. Two Caribbean countries, Haiti and Jamaica, were included in the intimate partner survey, while Belize and Jamaica were included in the non-partner sexual violence estimates.

⁹⁴ Caribbean Human Development Report 2012, pg.29.

⁹⁵ Cited in Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012 as a finding of several studies, pg.30.

The Secretary General of CARICOM, in launching the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan in October 2011, offered the view that the region must take swift and decisive action to achieve and maintain food and nutrition security.⁹⁶ The CARICOM Action Plan, a component of the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy, was adopted by the 38th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development. It mandates the members of the Caribbean Community to put in place national food and nutrition security policies directed at improving access by the most vulnerable groups to sufficient, nutritious, and safe food.

Importantly, as well, and of relevance to this regional goal, the CARICOM Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019 recognises the central role of agriculture both to food and nutrition security and as a potential driver of regional growth.⁹⁷

An important challenge facing the region is realizing the cross-cutting and full potential of agriculture. The Caribbean has arguably neglected the role of agriculture. The importance that is being attached to sustainable agriculture, its linkage with food and nutrition security, and with other objectives, provides the opportunity within the context of the post-2015 development agenda to focus attention on developing and strengthening sustainable agriculture, taking into account its interconnected social, economic and environmental linkages.

The breadth of those linkages is indicated in a relevant UN Issues Brief. “Besides water, energy, land and climate, almost all priority themes identified by Rio + 20 are also of relevance to sustainable agriculture, including employment, education, health, bio-diversity and sustainable consumption and production, gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the special concerns of Africa, LDCs and SIDS.”⁹⁸

Agriculture is an important part of many of the SIDS economies, and contributes critically to the local food security. Central to food security are land-use policies because of the high demand for space on most islands. In future, ecosystem based approaches can help to move the region to not only an adequate food supply but also the provision of high quality, safe, nutritious food produced by small-scale and subsistence farmers using low-input, organic methods, adapted to local conditions. Sustainable agricultural practices are critical in the Caribbean context as agricultural run-off (pesticides and fertilizers along with eroded soil/sediment) are the major sources of non-point run off impacting of coastal and marine ecosystems.

Organic agricultural policies which are based on participation and public-private partnerships can help ensure that smallholders are integrated into markets. Moreover, the diversity of food cultures, traditional knowledge and nutritional security are safeguarded by organic agriculture. Another contribution to food security can come from agritourism, which connects sustainable agriculture with tourism. AgroSandals, in Jamaica, aims for sustainable agriculture while linking agriculture with tourism and culture, in association with the private sector, community members and government agencies. Programmes so far have reported good returns: in Jamaica, for

⁹⁶ CARICOM Regional Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2012–2020, Foreword of the Secretary General of CARICOM.

⁹⁷ CARICOM Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019, vol. 1, pg. 17.

⁹⁸ Technical Support Team Issues Brief on ‘Sustainable Agriculture’, DIESA/UNDP, pg.6.

example, farmers' sales income increased more than 55 times in the first three years of the initiative, from USD 60 000 to USD 3.3 million.

Table III (p. 8) indicates that in 2010 agriculture accounted for less than 10 percent of GDP in most Caribbean countries. This is far less than the 30 percent which on average the sector contributes to GDP in developing countries. It is important to note however that while agriculture's contribution to GDP exceeds 10 percent in only four Caribbean countries – Belize (15.3%), Dominica (17.2%), Guyana (21.9%), Suriname (10.9%) - more than sixty percent of the Caribbean population remains rural - the highest proportion of rural population being interestingly in the country with also the most substantial industrial sector, Trinidad and Tobago.⁹⁹ It is also of import that the proportion of the population engaged in agriculture remains significant in almost all Caribbean countries. This ranges from an outlier high of 57.7 percent in Haiti to a low of 2.3 percent in The Bahamas. With the exceptions of The Bahamas, Barbados (2.5%), and Trinidad and Tobago (6.2%), almost a fifth of the population in other Caribbean countries remains engaged in agriculture.¹⁰⁰

Furthermore, women comprise on average 43 percent of the agricultural work force in developing countries, ranging from 20 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean to over 50 percent in East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. While the proportion of women in the agriculture labour force in the Caribbean is, at 5.9 percent¹⁰¹, significantly less than is the case for developing countries, and indeed lower than the Latin American and Caribbean rate, both their generally lower rate of participation in the labour force and the slowing momentum of economic growth in the Caribbean make agriculture still an important area for female economic and livelihood engagement.

The changing structure of Caribbean output and trade has been towards services largely at the expense of agriculture, with insufficient attention to, in particular, the development of agro-industry. In this regard, the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan notes that, through the development of agro-industries, forward and backward linkages can be created and access to markets, finance and technical assistance facilitated for small-holder producers in the region, promoting their inclusion in modern and efficient value chains. Importantly as well, agriculture has proven more resilient and less volatile than other sectors- such as tourism - during global downturns, making the strengthening of the sector an important strategic goal for small open economies. According to the FAO, as well as being a motor for sustainable economic growth, particularly in rural areas, agriculture offers an important haven against global economic and financial turmoil, often more effectively than other sectors.¹⁰² It is noted in this regard that the most resilient Caribbean economies in the sense of retention of growth momentum during the period 2002 – 2012 were the four with the largest agricultural sectors as a proportion of GDP -

⁹⁹World Databank <http://data.worldbank.org> Trinidad and Tobago's rural population – 91% in 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Food and Agriculture Organisation Statistical Yearbook 2014 – Latin America and the Caribbean Food and Agriculture, pg.22.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pg.4.

¹⁰² FAO Statistical Yearbook 2014, Latin America and the Caribbean Food and Agriculture, pg. 20.

Belize, Dominica, Guyana and Suriname, and oil and natural gas producer, Trinidad and Tobago.¹⁰³

The sustainable development paradigm provides an opportunity for focusing on the renewal of the agriculture sector in the region as well as the green economy, with the objectives of diversifying the income and employment base of economies and improving the food security and nutritional status of the Caribbean people.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY and NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

In response to the economic and social challenges facing the Caribbean region, some of the development choices and responses have contributed to or exacerbated the extent of environmental degradation and compromise future sustainable development. In fact, the close linkages between the state of the environment and development in the Caribbean are a result, among other things, of the heavy dependence on their limited natural resource base; susceptibility to the vagaries of international trade; high transportation and communication costs; grave exposure to natural hazards; small domestic markets; and high import content and dependence on a narrow range of export products. In all countries, there are situations related to overexploitation of local resources, poor land use, unplanned coastal development, uncontrolled mining, pollution from land and marine based sources and activities that are driving changes such as the loss of biodiversity; the spread of invasive alien species; deforestation; the loss of soil productivity and food insecurity; diminishing sources of freshwater; coastal erosion and the spread of vector-borne diseases.

On the other hand, as countries continue to improve their standard of living and develop their economies, consumption and disposal patterns change. In fact, changes in people's living conditions, population growth, increased urbanization and increasing affluence have given rise to lifestyles that contribute to environmental degradation, resource depletion and an increase in waste production (for example, an increase in the purchase of goods packaged in cheaper, non-biodegradable disposable material). Consumer goods and products often generate significant amounts of waste of various forms and, in many Caribbean countries, domestic waste comprises the largest proportion of total solid waste generated, followed by commercial waste. With under-developed infrastructure and inappropriate waste management, the risk of direct impacts on human and environmental health increases. A strong driver of both consumption and waste production in the Caribbean is tourism¹⁰⁴. Major waste streams from this sector include waste and wastewater from cruise ships, yachts and hotels, packaging wastes especially from imported food and drinks, construction waste and e-waste from renovation of hotels. In the Caribbean, annual tourist numbers of more than 75 million night stays, are estimated to generate as much of 166 million tons of waste.

¹⁰³ See Table 11, pg.4 and Table 111, pg.7.

¹⁰⁴ Nicholson-Doty, B. 2013, *State of the Industry Report*, Paper presented at the Caribbean Tourism Organisation headquarters on February 14, 2013.

The disposal of growing levels of imports of non-biodegradable materials, and industrial and agricultural chemicals pose an increasing challenge in the region. There remains a growing problem with the disposal of e-waste and non-degradable waste, and with managing pesticides and other toxic chemicals, especially those accumulating from pollution on land and in the ocean. Marine plastics, in the form of microplastics and beads, are of particular concern at the global level; not only are they taken up into the food chain, but they are also a source of heavy metal contamination when deposited on beaches around the world¹⁰⁵. However, there is not yet full understanding of the dangers being posed by microplastics and beads in the Caribbean context and more assessment is needed to measure and evaluate both the occurrence and the risks to Caribbean peoples.

Waste management imposes complex challenges to the Caribbean countries. Traditionally, many countries had only open dumps and burning. In some countries, in response to this, there have been investments in the development of sanitary landfills (mainly in large urban centres) with incineration being used for special wastes, hazardous wastes, medical wastes or ship-generated wastes. Challenges to waste management include infrastructure for collection, storage and transport especially in the rural areas and the space for suitable landfills particularly in the small islands. There are also several governance related issues on appropriate solid waste management policy, legislation and enforcement including the poor management of the landfills (as shown by the recent fires in Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad, among others). Additionally, recycling is generally not well developed in most countries because of the low levels of recyclable waste, a lack of a recyclables market, the need for expensive transportation for any recycled materials, the cost of recycling technologies, and limited human capacity. There has not been sufficient research into how these challenges regarding waste management affects health and by extension the care economy and labour force participation.

On the other hand, most of the countries in the region have a high dependence on fuels imports. The production of electricity by power companies consumes the largest amount of fossil fuels making them the greatest contributors to global warming and climate change in the region. Despite the fact that the global contribution of the region to greenhouse gases emissions is very modest, per capita emissions are high in many of the Caribbean islands (often >2.0 metric tons of carbon per person per year). This provides a clear opportunity to reduce intensity of GEI emissions, especially by changing the energy matrix to a larger share of renewable energies and improving energy efficiency in domestic and productive sectors.

1. Disaster Risk Reduction

The Caribbean region is disproportionately affected by natural hazards (e.g. earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and landslides), and hazards due to the poor management of industrial activities and disposal of chemicals, waste and pollutants. Jamaica has a history of destructive earthquakes and sits only slightly further down the same fault that caused the 2010 Haiti earthquake. Disasters in the Caribbean in the last three decades have consisted of: geological events, such as the earthquakes in Antigua and Barbuda in 1975 and a volcanic eruption in Montserrat in 1995; the undersea volcano, Kick'em Jenny off the coast of Grenada recently

¹⁰⁵ UNEP 2014b, *UNEP Year Book 2014: Emerging Issues in our Global Environment*, United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi, Kenya.

becoming active with several surrounding islands under orange alert, and hydrometeorological events such as hurricanes and tropical storms. Being situated among major international transportation routes exposes also Caribbean residents to the threat of pollution of marine environments. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, petrochemicals industry implies a risk of oil spills both on land and in shallow water. Furthermore much of the Caribbean is currently being affected by a severe drought, which directly affects water availability and food security with wider economic and environmental impacts.

Disasters, the occurrence of which appears to be increasing according to the IPCC, have a far greater effect on people in the Caribbean SIDS and LLCS compared to other areas of LAC in terms of proportion of population affected and GDP, setting back economic development gains. In fact, the Caribbean region is one of the most hazard prone regions in the world. The estimated average annual losses from tropical cyclones are significant. Hurricane Tomas on Saint Lucia in October 2010 was estimated at 43.4% of GDP, nine times agricultural GDP, three times tourism GDP, 62% of exports of goods and services, 19% of gross domestic investment and 47% of public external debt¹⁰⁶. It has been estimated that in the Caribbean, changes in annual hurricane frequency and intensity could result in additional annual losses of USD446 million by 2080, incurred mainly from business interruption to the tourism sector¹⁰⁷.

In the case of storms, islands are often at a distinct disadvantage, because the eye of the storm can exceed the size of a whole island. Even for more developed islands such as Jamaica, the size of storms represent a significant risk. Hurricane Ivan killed 17 people and left 18,000 people homeless, creating damage with a total cost of USD360 million; in Grenada it caused nearly USD1 billion of damage.

Between 1990 and 2014, 328 disasters caused by natural hazards were recorded in the Caribbean - approximately thirteen each year.¹⁰⁸ According to the World Bank the Caribbean's population and assets are amongst the most exposed to natural hazards in the world. Grenada is cited as incurring an estimated annual loss in GDP of 9 percent due to disasters, which are also a major contributor to that country's accumulated debt. The Caribbean region as a whole is estimated to have lost approximately US\$9 billion in a four year period between 2007 and 2011.¹⁰⁹

In this vein Rasmussen found, in comparing the frequency of disasters in the period 1970 to 2004 relative to land area, that all six Eastern Caribbean states* rank among the ten most disaster-

¹⁰⁶ UNECLAC 2011, *Saint Lucia Macro Socio-Economic and Environmental Assessment of the Damage and Losses Caused by Hurricane Tomas: A Geo-Environmental Disaster: Towards Resilience*, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

¹⁰⁷ UNISDR & OHRLLS 2013, *Addressing Risk, Harnessing Opportunity: Building Disaster Resilience in SIDS*, UNISDR and OHRLLS, Geneva, Switzerland.

¹⁰⁸ Emergency Disasters Database (EM-DAT). According to the EM-DAT database, a disaster fulfils one of several criteria: ten or more people killed, 100 or more affected, a state of emergency declared, a call for international assistance is issued.

¹⁰⁹ "Resilient coastal cities: the economic, social and environmental dimensions of risk" in *Making Reforms Work in the Caribbean*, World Bank 2014, pg. 74.*Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines

prone countries in the world.¹¹⁰ He concludes, based on data since 1970, that a disaster causing damage of more than 2 percent of GDP can be expected to affect an Eastern Caribbean island once every two and a half years. In fact, the Eastern Caribbean has, not infrequently, experienced much more crippling damage than this – in the aftermath of Hurricane David in 1979, Dominica’s GDP plunged by 17 percent and Hurricane Ivan in 2004 caused damage in Grenada that exceeded 200 percent of GDP. This disproportionate impact is a recurring feature of disasters caused by natural hazards in small island states – a consequence of their small size, lack of economic diversity, population density, and the skewed distribution of population and assets toward vulnerable areas, such as along coastlines.

A significant proportion of the urban population in some Caribbean countries also live in informal settlements, some of which are below five metres in elevation. (Table VII, p. 42)¹¹¹. While all segments of the population will be affected by disasters, children need to be singled out as a special population in need of care and protection during natural disasters and emergencies.

Schools normally bear the brunt of disasters when they strike since they are used as temporary shelters which disrupt learning. However, a recent study showed that schools are ill-prepared to handle disasters, and most territories lack disaster preparedness policies and plans for the education sector¹¹².

Hazard exposure is not limited to the islands. Guyana suffered devastating flooding in 2005 affecting 39% of the population¹¹³. Belize has suffered numerous hurricane strikes¹¹⁴. Both Belize City and Georgetown concentrate a significant proportion of the population of the two countries in coastal cities highly exposed to flooding and below the level of the sea. Suriname also experienced major flooding in 2009, with widespread dislocation and loss.

Being situated among major international transportation routes also exposes Caribbean residents to the threat of pollution of marine environments. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago and to a much lesser extent Suriname and Belize, the petrochemicals industry implies a risk of oil spills both on land and in shallow water. The proximity of Venezuela's oil industry to Guyana and the southern Caribbean also implies a potential risk. Guyana is currently exploring for oil following some positive initial exploratory activities, potentially leading to the start of an oil industry in a country without previous experience and potentially without regulatory frameworks to guarantee environmental safeguards. Countries such as Jamaica and Guyana have a developed mining industry. In the case of Guyana there has been at least one cyanide spill from the gold mining industry into the largest river in the country, called an "ecological disaster" by the Prime

110 Rasmussen, Tobias, 'Natural Disasters and their Macroeconomic Implications' in *The Caribbean from Vulnerability to Sustained Growth*, IMF 2006, p.188-192.

111 "Resilient coastal cities: the economic, social and environmental dimensions of risk" in *Making Reforms Work in the Caribbean*, World Bank 2014, pg. 74.

112 UNICEF ECA. 2015b. *Assessment of the Status of School Safety Planning in OECS Territories*. Unpublished report

113 <http://www.unocha.org/cap/guyana-floods-flash-appeal-2005>

114 <http://www.gfdr.org/sites/gfdr.org/files/documents/Belize-2010.pdf>

Minister¹¹⁵. Moreover, mercury has been linked to gold mining in the Region for centuries, however, a full awareness of its significant negative impacts has only come about in the last 50 years or so. Mercury is highly persistent in the environment and is highly toxic especially in its methylmercury form through which it enters the food chain. This persistence means that, even if action were taken today to stop its use, its negative impacts will continue to be felt for many decades to come.

Renewed emphasis on planning and decision-making processes has led to the development of a Comprehensive Disaster Management Framework. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, created in 2001, has recently updated the regional strategy (2014-2024) with emphasis on “strengthening regional, national and community level capacity for mitigation, management and coordinated response to natural and technological hazards, and the effects of climate change”¹¹⁶.

Implementation of the plans remains an important imperative with Disaster Risk Reduction mainstreamed throughout the policy spectrum beginning with community education and integration in the educational sector.

2. Climate Change and Variability

The islands of the Caribbean are not considered to be major global producers of greenhouse gases. Yet, they are among the planet’s most vulnerable countries regarding climate change¹¹⁷. Affecting all aspects of the environment are local and regional meteorological changes associated with global climate change. The threats include sea level rise, extreme storm events and droughts, coastal erosion, inundation, saltwater intrusion into groundwater systems in low-lying atolls, coral bleaching, ecosystem destruction, ocean acidification, adverse effects on crops and fisheries and increases in vector-borne diseases. Climate change is already having a significant impact on these countries which is unlikely to abate. The implications of sea level rise in particular will have negative impacts on virtually all sectors -including tourism, financial services, agriculture, fisheries, water supply and sanitation, infrastructure and ecosystem health- (IPCC, 2014) and put in risk progress made towards sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The climate outlook for SIDS differs considerably depending on their topography and location. Low-lying islands are highly vulnerable to extreme weather events and sea-level rise¹¹⁸. Under

115 <http://www.gammathetaupsilon.org/the-geographical-bulletin/2000s/volume43-2/article3.pdf>

116 CDEMA 2014. Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management: Strategy and Results Framework 2014-2024. Barbados.

117 IPCC 2014, ‘Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part B: Regional Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’, in C.B. Field, V.R. Barros, D.J. Dokken, K.J. Mach, M.D. Mastrandrea, T.E. Bilir, M. Chatterjee, K.L. Ebi, Y.O. Estrada, R.C. Genova, B. Girma, E.S. Kissel, A.N. Levy, S. MacCracken, P.R. Mastrandrea & L.L. White (eds) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

118 Woodroffe, C.D. 2008, ‘Reef-island topography and the vulnerability of atolls to sea-level rise’, *Global and Planetary Change*, vol. 62, no. 1–2, pp. 77-96.

the latest IPCC scenarios for a global average temperature increase of approximately 4°C, sea level rise could be as much as one metre by 2100 and higher levels thereafter (IPCC, 2014). Although the severity of this threat will vary among the Caribbean countries, the resulting effects will be coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion into coastal agricultural lands and aquifers, an escalation of the frequency and intensity of hurricanes and tropical storms, an increase in the frequency and severity of coastal inundation and flooding, and disruptions in precipitation and potable water supplies. Critical infrastructure and vital utilities will be at severe risk, and the countries will be required to consider costly adaptation measures to protect vulnerable population and infrastructure as a major share of the population lives in areas very close to sea level. Climate change induced migration, already a reality in certain parts of the world also presents a possible risk to the Caribbean.

The impact of climate change directly affects livelihoods in the Caribbean, particularly women and men who are involved in agriculture and depend on the natural environment for their economic security. Given the high vulnerability in the Caribbean to economic shocks and natural disasters, equitable access to social protection becomes paramount in order to strengthen resilience against the impact of these events. Experience shows that the resiliency of households and communities depends greatly on the resilience of women. Social, economic and environmental policies, programmes and finance, therefore, need to incorporate and benefit from this know-how, while also supporting women and their families as they face today's unprecedented challenges to sustainable development.

Climate change is also having an impact on island ecosystems: terrestrial, marine and coastal. Mangroves are undergoing seaward extension, because of increased sedimentary run-off and reefal accretion, as well as loss due to sea level rise. Antigua and Barbuda are currently losing 1.5-2% of their mangrove ecosystems due to a 3-4 mm sea level rise; a projected sea level rise of 10 mm per year would mean the disappearance of mangroves by 2035¹¹⁹. Ocean warming is causing changes in fish migratory patterns because of shifts in ocean currents, with economic implications for key fisheries. Repeated thermal stress is causing widespread coral bleaching¹²⁰ and reduced reef calcification; and ocean acidification is affecting the viability of reef ecosystems¹²¹. Terrestrial systems are also widely affected by changes in rainfall patterns and increasing air temperatures, which are causing the loss of vital ecosystems.

In the Caribbean, the main risks to be confronted, in addition to more intense hurricanes, include sea level rise, sea water intrusion and compromised water resources, degradation of coral reefs and marine eco-systems, beach erosion, and inundation and flooding, especially but not exclusively of coastal areas. The threat to the region goes beyond its natural attributes like coral

¹¹⁹ UNFCCC 2005, *Climate change, Small Island Developing States*, Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC), Bonn, Germany.

¹²⁰ Oxenford, H., Roach, R., Brathwaite, A., Nurse, L., Goodridge, R., Hinds, F., Baldwin, K. & Finney, C. 2008, 'Quantitative observations of a major coral bleaching event in Barbados, Southeastern Caribbean', *Climatic Change*, vol. 87, no. 3-4, pp. 435-49.

¹²¹ Hoegh-Guldberg, O., Mumby, P.J., Hooten, A.J., Steneck, R.S., Greenfield, P., Gomez, E., Harvell, C.D., Sale, P.F., Edwards, A.J., Caldeira, K., Knowlton, N., Eakin, C.M., Iglesias-Prieto, R., Muthiga, N., Bradbury, R.H., Dubi, A. & Hatzitolos, M.E. 2007, 'Coral Reefs Under Rapid Climate Change and Ocean Acidification', *Science*, vol. 318, no. 5857, pp. 1737-42.

reefs and beaches; it encompasses livelihoods, infrastructure and habitat. More than 50% of the Caribbean population live within 1.5 kilometres of the shore¹²² and a significant proportion of the urban population in some Caribbean countries live in informal settlements, some of which are below five metres in elevation. (Table VI)

In addition, tourism and agriculture, the two sectors most vulnerable to the impact of climate change, account, on average, for seventy six percent of GDP in the region and the major share of employment.

Table VI: Caribbean Population living in Urban Areas, Informal Settlements, and Below Five Metres Elevation

	Urban Population (as % of total pop-2012)	Percentage of population living in informal settlements (2005)	Percentage of urban population living below five metres elevation (2012)
Antigua and Barbuda	29.87	47.9	15.50
Bahamas, The	84.85	n/a	23.55
Barbados	44.91	n/a	.92
Belize	44.59	47.3	17.36
Dominica	67.30	n/a	3.05
Grenada	39.49	59.0	1.92
Guyana	28.49	33.7	11.81
Haiti	54.64	70.1	2.44
Jamaica	52.16	60.15	3.08
St. Kitts & Nevis	32.11	n/a	9.46
St. Lucia	16.97	11.9	.84
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	49.70	0.00	0.00
Suriname	70.12	38.9	62.04

Source: Turn Down the Heat: Confronting the New Climate Normal', World Bank, pg. 43. (N/A denotes data not available.)

Another avenue of adverse impact of climate change is health. Both vector borne and water borne diseases have been found to be climate sensitive. In addition to death, injury, economic loss and social dislocation resulting from extreme weather events, Caribbean countries, even under the scenario of temperature increase contained to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, will face the prospect of increased transmission of insect and rodent borne and water-borne- diseases. These include malaria, dengue, leptospirosis and cholera.¹²³ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its Fourth Assessment Report also draws attention to this causative factor. "Many small island states lie in tropical and sub-tropical zones with weather conducive to the transmission of diseases such as malaria, dengue, filariasis,

122 'Small Islands: Climate Change 2007 – Impacts, Adaptation, Vulnerability', Contribution of Working Group 11 to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, pg. 689.

123 'Climate Change and Human Health Risks and Responses: Summary', WHO 2003, pg. 37

schistosomiasis, and food and water-borne diseases”.¹²⁴ The Report notes that because climate related health impacts are complex and far-reaching the true health burden is rarely appreciated.

Children are known to be at greater risk from environmental hazards because of their physical size, immature organs, metabolic rate, behaviour, natural curiosity and lack of knowledge and they can even be exposed to harmful environmental hazards before birth.¹²⁵ The potential far-reaching and wide ranging impact of climate change on the region bring to the fore the linkage between social vulnerability, adaptive capacity and resilience. The World Bank cites the typology developed by Manesh et al¹²⁶ which identifies three key elements of vulnerability – spatial and physical vulnerability; socio-economic vulnerability, and political/legal vulnerability. The overarching point is that the capacity of individuals and communities to adapt to climate change is determined by access to resources and to political power. In the Caribbean, people living in coastal areas and in informal settlements could be described as spatially and physically vulnerable. This is compounded as well in many cases by vulnerability due to lack of access to resources and to decision-making structures, a consequence of factors such as poverty, gender, age and disability. The result is diminished capacity on the part of those affected to take initiatives or influence decisions that might build resilience or adaptive capacity, such as investment in infrastructure, in education and training, disaster relief and risk reduction planning.

A priority for Caribbean SIDS is to implement practical adaptation measures at all levels – from community to national. There is a need to develop integrated, well planned and coordinated adaptation action and adaptation projects, and to improve funding for adaptation-related activities through existing and new international official development assistance and private sector mechanisms. Many short-term adaptation activities in the Caribbean may be very easy to implement. These may include: adjusting and implementing building codes; restricting construction in areas susceptible to coastal flooding.

It is critical, however, for the Caribbean to avoid investing in ineffective measures, such as rebuilding in areas known to be particularly susceptible to extreme events - a recurring characteristic of the Caribbean. Long-term solutions to address climate change issues must begin with a sound regulatory framework that establishes minimum performance standards. This approach has to include an incentive system that sends the right signals to individuals. Building in highly hazardous areas must be totally discouraged both by regulations and by appropriate risk bearing. People who build on flood plains, on steep slopes, or along erosive shorelines should be discouraged from doing so. Table 15: The vulnerability of SIDS to climate change, climate variability and sea-level rise featured prominently in the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA). Due to the concentration of population, agricultural land and infrastructure in the coastal zones, any rise in sea level will have significant and profound effects on their economies and living conditions, threatening the very survival of certain low-lying countries. Damage to coral reefs, affectation to subsistence and commercial fisheries production, saline intrusion are

¹²⁴Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report: Working Group 11 - Impacts, Adaptation, Vulnerability, Chapter 16.4.5, IPCC, 2007

¹²⁵UNICEF, UNEP, WHO. 2002. Children in the New Millennium: Environmental Impact on Health 2002.

¹²⁶ ‘Turn Down the Heat; Confronting New Climate Normal’, World Bank 2014, pg. 22.

also highlighted, as well as the increased frequency and intensity of the storms that may result from climate change.

The action recommended to be taken by the international community and outlined in the Mauritius Strategy to address the threat posed to SIDS by climate change, reinforces the contents of the BPoA and the Samoa Pathway. Action includes developing, transferring and disseminating to SIDS appropriate technologies and practices to address climate change; building and enhancing scientific and technological capabilities (including in SIDS), and enhancing how national, regional and international global atmospheric observing systems are implemented.

3. Natural resources (terrestrial, coastal and marine resources and ecosystems)

There is wide recognition of the importance of natural resources to livelihoods for Caribbean communities and awareness of the critical role of ecosystem services in maintaining them is growing, as well as the relevance of integrating the values of these services in policy and investment decision processes. For example, for many SIDS, the marine area within their Exclusive Economic Zones far exceeds the land area. Apart from holding important resources such as natural gas and minerals, they support extensive fisheries that are an important community source of income. Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis are among the world's most dependent countries on reef fish and seafood consumption¹²⁷.

The Caribbean region can claim high biological diversity per unit of land as well as a very high level of endemism (attributed to the diversity of microclimates and ecosystems found in tropical regions) and a high extinction rate. In the Caribbean, 54 per cent of vertebrates (excluding fishes) and 59 per cent of plants are thought to be endemic.

This unique biodiversity, however, is being lost due to unsustainable natural resource exploitation, poorly managed tourism, mining, land and marine-based pollution, habitat destruction and conversion, diminishing sources of freshwater and increased eutrophication, natural events such as hurricanes, climate change, and the introduction of alien species. Though tourism has been one of the major sources of revenue for protected areas management, it has simultaneously become the greatest threat to protected areas in the insular Caribbean. In consequence, the proportion of threatened species the Caribbean is 8% of plant species and 7% of animal species¹²⁸.

More than 100 environmental conventions are of some relevance to the Caribbean. Among the regional ones, the Cartagena Convention on the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean and its three protocols are key. Despite a high commitment of the countries in the region to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) as witnessed by the high level of signing and ratification, many do not have the required financial and human

¹²⁷ Burke, L., Reyter, K., Spalding, M. & Perry, A. 2011, *Reefs at Risk Revisited*, World Resources Institute, Washington, DC.

¹²⁸ IUCN 2014, *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Washington, DC.

resources to ensure compliance with the large number of conventions to which they subscribe. In order to tackle the problems associated with the cross-cutting nature of some MEAs, a number of countries have established national mechanisms to coordinate their implementation. The regional bodies such as the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), the Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) have established a number of specialized institutions and units, some of them related to the environment. Each regional body has a mechanism for coordinating its environmental programmes, and some routinely participate in the coordinating mechanisms of the others (for example, ACS with the Secretary Generals of the other bodies within the Meeting of Ministers; OECS Environment and Sustainable Development Unit [ESDU] reporting to the Council for Trade and Economic Development, which is responsible for CARICOM's Sustainable Development Work Programme).

Due to the economic slow-down experienced in Latin America and the Caribbean, many of these regional bodies face financial constraints in meeting their objectives. There are a number of environmental programmes and information networks in the region. The majority of these programmes focus on sustainable management of coastal and marine areas. Several agencies in the Caribbean also have education and awareness programmes and related activities, including the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA), UNEP-CEP (Caribbean Environment Programme), the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Managers (CaMPAM), as well as a regional arm of the global SIDSnet. Substantial work is needed to reduce duplication of effort, improve integration, and strengthen existing networks and programmes in the Caribbean SIDS and LLDCS.

3.1 *Land Use Planning*

What is certainly limited in the Caribbean SIDS is land that is available for development activities. Even though the region is blessed with a lower proportion of land with severe agricultural restrictions — almost 4 per cent less than the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) average — poor land use and land management practices as well as heightened land use conflicts have led to degradation of a number of ecosystems. Current planning and policy practices result in the conversion of land from its natural state to other uses, with limited appreciation of the loss of the future value of the land as regards the natural goods and services it can provide.

Land degradation is also a key concern in the region. Loss of productive areas for food production and forests is being driven by growing populations, displacement of settlements and land tenure conflicts, mining, and illegal logging. The changes in land use witnessed in the region over centuries have had the most dramatic impact on forest ecosystems. Fuelled by the need for land for transportation infrastructure, agriculture, housing and industrial development, past and continuing deforestation has left the region with forest covering only 19 per cent of total land area. Expansion of road networks and improvement in road surfaces in general continue to allow improved access to more remote forest areas and timber resources, leading to further deforestation. Despite the critical condition of forest resources in the region, accurate data on the extent of these remaining forest types and their dominant species in the region are still

unavailable. There are some localized conservation efforts to protect this valuable ecosystem — for example, in Trinidad and Tobago — but they are far from sufficient to turn the current trend of decline around. Farmers, including women farmers, are at the forefront of experiencing the ever-present threat of climate change impacts and natural disasters, including land degradation. Women farmers' access to knowledge and skills acquisition on sustainable land management and climate change adaptation is of critical importance to the resiliency of vulnerable communities.

3.2. Coastal and Marine Resources

In the Caribbean fish provide a vital resource for poor communities in ways which do not always appear on the national accounts. It is estimated, for example, that fish products account for seven per cent of the protein consumed by people in the Caribbean region. Fishing is also a significant provider of jobs and income in the Caribbean. It is estimated that more than 200,000 people in the region are directly employed, either full-time or part-time, as fishers. In addition, some 100,000 work in processing and marketing of fish, with additional job opportunities in net-making, boat building and other supporting industries (CARSEA).

The region is a biogeographically distinct area of coral reef development within which the majority of corals and coral reef-associated species are endemic, making the entire region particularly important in terms of global biodiversity. The status of marine ecosystems around the region varies greatly, ranging from pristine to highly degraded. Overfishing and the depletion of stocks often occur where management and enforcement are insufficient. Reduced fish catches result in reduced incomes, exports, and food for local communities. Additionally, certain practices, such as trawling and dredging, may result in physical damage to fisheries, other non-target species, and marine habitats. The Caribbean has experienced significant coral reef degradation, including from algal smothering due to the loss of herbivorous fishes, pollution from increased suspended solids and chemical compounds, overexploitation and habitat conversion and destructive fishing practices¹²⁹. Sedimentation negatively impacts coral reef ecosystems.

Changes in reef fish communities throughout the Caribbean have also been reported, characterized by the reduced abundance of large-sized carnivorous reef fish such as snappers and groupers due to overharvesting. Marine invasive species have become a focus of concern in many SIDS. In less than a decade, the Indo-Pacific lionfish (*Pterois volitans*) has become widely established in the southeast United States and throughout the Caribbean. This highly predatory fish is spreading rapidly and reducing the abundance of key herbivores, thus altering fish communities in reefs. Lionfish occupy the same trophic position as economically important species (e.g. snapper and grouper) and may hamper stock rebuilding efforts and coral reef conservation measures. Longer-term impacts of lionfish abundance could be growth rate reduction of the wave-breaking reef crests, which help to protect coastlines from erosion. Across the Caribbean, people are being encouraged to consume lionfish as a means to lower their numbers.

¹²⁹ Gardner, T.A., Côté, I.M., Gill, J.A., Grant, A. & Watkinson, A.R. 2003, 'Long-Term Region- Wide Declines in Caribbean Corals', *Science*, vol. 301, no. 5635, pp. 958-60.

Mangrove forests, another important ecosystem, are also in decline because of coastal development and clearing linked to charcoal production.

Trade in high quality beach sands, both legal and illegal, has reduced the total size of some islands, e.g. Barbuda, impacting adjacent coastal areas and associated infrastructure. This threatens future tourist development. Unmitigated sand mining also results in increased turbidity that could smother marine organisms and ultimately lead to beach depletion¹³⁰.

These declines in the health of marine and coastal ecosystems, as well as overcapitalization and overfishing, unregulated and illegal fishing by local fleets and reflagging of vessels and migration of fleets, will all affect the long-term viability of the Caribbean fisheries. While the fisheries of some countries appear to be in good condition, catches were reported to have levelled off in others, and were even in decline in Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis.

Other specific issue of special importance in Caribbean SIDS is related to the fact that nutrient and wastewater run-off, in addition to marine litter, travel quickly through the terrestrial and marine environment within a very short space of time, impacting the health of these ecosystems and their fisheries. The use and management of land and water resources have a direct and immediate effect on the health and vitality of marine resources, so it is important to link water and watershed management with the management of coastal areas. This is necessary in order to support livelihoods and ecosystems services of both terrestrial and marine environments. Hence in SIDS, integrated water resources management must adopt a 'source to sea' approach as an integrating framework¹³¹.

Concentration of socio-economic activities within the coastal areas means that activities on land are likely to have an impact on coastal and marine ecosystems. Land degradation associated with human induced behaviour such as unsustainable farming techniques, habitat destruction, deforestation, and exacerbated soil erosion, results in sedimentation of reefs, seagrass beds and coastal wetlands. This is particularly evident during periods of heavy rainfall when large quantities of terrestrial matter are carried to the marine environment via the rivers, streams and gullies. Although almost 70 per cent of the Caribbean Region population lives in coastal cities, towns and villages, there is only limited investment in waste management systems. Coastal areas are being contaminated with solid waste, sewage, industrial effluents, chemical run-off from agriculture, and wastes from the transportation sector

The close relationship between tourism, the region's major economic sector, and the natural resource base demands a good natural capital sustainable management capacity, and it is the prime necessity for the continued longterm economic viability of these small island states.

4. Energy

130 Young, R. & Griffith, A. 2009, *Documenting the global impacts of beach sand mining*, Cullowhee, NC, United States.

131 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (2012) *Integrated Water Resources Management Planning Approaches for Small Island Developing States*. UNEP, Nairobi, Kenya.

A 2013 World Bank study¹³² acknowledges that the power sector is integral to economic development and inclusive growth in the Caribbean region. It further concludes that the high cost of electricity is not only undermining the region's competitiveness and growth, but is also creating hardships for citizens. In regard to competitiveness, a sector such as tourism, for example, is placed at a disadvantage when nightly room rates can include as much as US\$14 to US\$18 of electricity costs.

But given the importance of energy to modern daily life it is the ordinary citizen in particular who faces, across a range of goods and services, a constantly escalating and volatile cost structure linked to energy prices. Given electricity rates of more than US\$0.40 per Kwh in 2011, the high cost of electricity imposes severe hardship and a disproportionate burden on the poor, with average pass through rates of between 45 to 65 percent of the cost of providing electricity. The energy "crisis" also negatively impacts the more vulnerable members of society, with the average low-income household estimated to spend 7% to 11% of its income on electricity.¹³³

The energy challenge facing the Caribbean is a result of the region's heavy reliance on imported fossil fuels - for up to 95% of energy needs. The region is also faced with a high rate of electricity consumption. As a consequence, the cost of electricity throughout the region is amongst the highest in the world, and is second only to access to finance among the operational challenges cited by regional businesses, particularly those involved in tourism, which contributes more than 70% of regional income.¹³⁴

Renewable energy currently represents less than 3% of the Caribbean's total electricity consumption. The diversification of the region's energy mix into geo-thermal, solar, wind, biomass, hydro-power, and other green electricity sources, is among the most urgent challenges facing the region. This will help to conserve the environment, strengthen productivity and competitiveness, and improve the lives of the poor. This will also be consistent with meeting the ambitious target set in the CARICOM Strategic Plan 2015- 2019 which is to increase the share of renewable energy in the region's total energy supply mix to 20% by 2017.

Many countries in the region are now pursuing domestic renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind for a more sustainable power production system. For example, Saint Lucia has embarked on a sustainable energy programme, with targets of 35% renewable energy generation and 20% reduction in energy consumption in the public sector by the year 2020. This includes a multi-pronged approach to facilitate the development of renewable energy resources, primarily in the areas of solar, wind and geothermal, and energy efficiency strategies. The Barbadian government's National Strategic Plan of Barbados for 2006-25 is designed to increase renewable energy supply, with a particular focus on raising the number of household solar water heaters by 50 per cent by 2025. This is being done by stimulating the construction of solar water houses, public education and local skill enhancement in the sector and energy efficiency schemes.

132 Jayawardena, M. et al, 'Promoting Growth in the Caribbean: Geothermal Renewable Energy' in Making Reforms Work in the Caribbean: A collective action approach to Growth, World Bank, 2014.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid.

Additionally, financial incentives to manufacturers have supported Barbadian companies to expand their markets to other countries stimulating economic growth.

Technical solutions exist to increase energy conservation and energy efficiencies across all sectors in the economy and some have been deployed. Energy efficiency in the region is an area with considerable potential due to the region's high energy costs and the availability of abundant indigenous renewable energy resources. Advances on specific energy efficiency legislation have been limited as well as the establishment of legal requirements to pursue efficiency of utilities. Even though there are businesses that are taking steps to benefit from energy efficiency and savings, there is still a lot to do from the policy side and regarding public awareness and involvement. The Efficient Appliances and Equipment Global Partnership Programme, led by UNEP, provides a global platform to accelerate the transformation of the market to energy efficient appliances and products. By joining this alliance, countries in the Caribbean may access technical assistance to promote the adoption of energy efficiency policies and implement national and regional strategies to sustainably transform the market.

Deployment of renewable options has significantly avoided emissions and their environmental impacts¹³⁵. Taking advantage of smart technologies in the energy sector can form part of the solutions to address human well-being. Other options linking agriculture (e.g. bagasse, ethanol production from sugar cane), forestry, and the waste sector in waste-to-energy conversion technologies exist but are limited due to available land and financing.

Harnessing the abundant indigenous renewable energy resources would reduce foreign exchange expenditure on energy production over the long term. In addition, the utilization of renewable energy resources may provide more local employment than is currently provided by fossil fuel-based systems. Reducing the importation of energy resources and hence foreign exchange outflows would reduce the region's vulnerability to the vagaries of the global economy. Furthermore, the potential to reduce environmental impacts would help to maintain or improve ecosystem condition and its capacity to continue to provide the goods and services needed for economic development. This would also increase ecosystem resistance to the likely impacts of climate change, within certain limits, and to continue to provide those services such as storm protection that would reduce the vulnerability of human settlements and infrastructure to global climate change.

Nevertheless, while islands have potential renewable energy resources, they have been slow in exploiting these to replace imported fossil fuels. This is due to the high cost to local economies, existing investment in fossil fuel-based infrastructure, and lack of appropriate policy, legislation and regulations to facilitate renewable energy development. The challenges to advance renewable energy penetration further can be attributed to technical constraints (e.g. intermittence of supplies, meeting base load), finance and investment (e.g. high capital cost of investments, sunk investment in fossil fuel technologies), appropriate scales (e.g. smart technologies, waste-to-energy conversion technologies) and lack of enabling institutional frameworks.

The proposed Goal 7, by the OWG, speaks specifically to "by 2030 expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing

135 Jensen, T.L. 2000, *Renewable Energy on Small Islands*, Forum for Energy and Development, Stuttgart, Germany.

countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing states.” (Target 7-b). The Caribbean should seek to ensure that access to finance and to technology – the two most important constraints to the supply of modern and sustainable energy services – are explicitly included as areas to be addressed, especially in regards to LDCs and SIDS. The dilemma facing these countries is that unless special measures of assistance are put in place, reducing the use of fossil fuels and increasing renewable energy in the energy mix can be more expensive in the short to medium term, involving, for example, significant investment upfront in new technologies. Thus, already vulnerable economies will be at further competitive disadvantage. It is very important therefore that technologies be widely shared and that the cost of accessing innovations be linked to the benefits and cost of climate change rather than to fossil fuel.

5. Sustainable Agriculture

Agriculture in the Caribbean has been in a state of decline, in terms of both productivity and competitiveness. Historically, Caribbean agriculture consisted of the production and export of traditional bulk commodities, notably bananas and sugar, as well as rice, coffee and cocoa. This activity was based on preferential trade arrangements with the European Union, under the Lomé Conventions and The Cotonou Agreement. With the removal of preferential access based on quotas for traditional crops and other reforms to the EU’s trading policies, as well as the increased pressure of globalization, Caribbean agriculture has struggled to compete internationally, and has experienced considerable reductions in the production of crops for local consumption as well. Agriculture is also a key source of employment in many Caribbean countries, accounting for approximately 16% of the overall employment in the region — 30% in Guyana, 25% in Dominica, 20% in St. Lucia, and 18% in Jamaica. Continued decline in agriculture will therefore have significant impacts on the economic and social viability of rural communities; and if left unchecked, will likely result in deterioration of real incomes and an increase in poverty rates in rural communities¹³⁶.

As the impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly visible, it will be imperative to engage directly with farmers and communities to determine how best to manage ecological risks and to share research findings with practitioners.

The “vision” for the sector exists primarily on paper, lacks strategy or direction, and attempts to address all things at once without the required budgetary commitments. To date, a policy framework on agricultural sector development lacks direction, is at best confused, or is missing altogether—planning units and extension services having been decimated some time ago. There is a lack of prioritization in agriculture relative to other sectors generally, meaning that ministries of agriculture are consistently massively overworked, understaffed, and under-budgeted. For example, the allocation of funds to the agricultural sector in Jamaica as a percentage of the government’s total budget over the last five years has averaged 1.1 %, as opposed to an average

136 Nidhi Tandon: Sustainable agriculture for the Caribbean IDB, UKAID Canada 2015

of 11.0% for education, 4.7 % for health, and 6.6 % for national security.¹⁹ In the last five years, agriculture has remained under 2% of total budget allocation in Belize.

There are weak to non-existent science and technology and research and development arms to complement and support agriculture, effectively meaning that well-meaning policy statements do not translate into a structured approach to the different scales of farming in these countries. There is an over-reliance (if not dependency) on donor aid and technical inputs, which continue to play a powerful role in determining what is grown, how and for whom. This could lead to crops for ethanol placing even further pressure on existing land tensions in the very near future, since there is high interest in producing alternative energy in the Americas. The marketing and trading system favours international export markets or tourist markets over domestic or regional markets, requiring production at scale in order to minimize costs

Organic agriculture in the region needs substantive legislative and institutional strengthening. Organic agriculture, the world's fastest-growing of all sectors in agriculture, has its roots in traditional agricultural practices in small communities. Shifting to organic farming is an attractive option for small farmers in the Caribbean as the demand for organic produce and products continues to grow as people become more selective in the quality of produce they consume. It is necessary to implement supporting policies and farm-level training towards comprehensive management practices and specific measures to control the use and application of pesticides in the agricultural sector. Strengthening the organic sector will require strengthening measures to control agro-chemical use.

The region needs to reallocate budget commitments towards agriculture, with explicit components for small-scale food production. Appropriate resources need to be dedicated towards the recommendations outlined above. Agriculture's share of government spending around the world is far lower today than it was in the 1980s and early 1990s. Shares tend to be smaller in developing countries (less than 10%) and higher in developed countries (greater than 20%). The structural adjustment programs imposed on Caribbean economies mean that budgetary resources to agriculture have been cut back to less than 5% of the total budgets. Spending on agriculture per agricultural population has increased in all regions except for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Government needs to consult with stakeholders to define policies that support local innovation and human capital investments. Innovations in the sustainable agriculture sector are few and far between. They are hampered by policies that impact them directly and indirectly— both policies that stand in their way and policies that do not yet exist to support them. Public policy needs to determine in the first instance how to secure sustainability by mitigating risk, and in the second instance how to promote resilience and vibrancy through market-based fiscal and monetary incentives for new industry links with agriculture. This will also mean more affordable financial and banking services, access to low-interest loans linked to farming seasons, and a review of the VAT levies on agricultural inputs combined with capacity development of all stakeholders. Implement business models to attract private sector investment and participation. The Latin America Outlook - ECLAC 2013 report recommends that “in addition to long-term state policies, there is a need to encourage better agricultural practices and greater participation by the private

sector, with special emphasis on public-private alliances in the areas of research and agricultural extension.”¹³⁷

6. Water and Sanitation

Many countries are successfully investing money in improving and developing water and wastewater treatment infrastructure, and the increase in access to improved sanitation and drinking water in the region is a reflection of this (most countries report over 95 percent access to water supply). The problems now being encountered include quality of service, maintenance and operation of existing infrastructure, ageing infrastructure, high levels of unaccounted for water, quality of potable water and water supply to marginalized communities lacking the service. Despite the different national situations in terms of availability of freshwater resources¹³⁸ most countries are experiencing increasing shortages of freshwater and poor water quality due to human and animal waste, limited capacity of waste management as well as climate change drivers and impacts. Water resources management faces challenges that affect water availability and long-term freshwater security. Declining water quality has adverse impacts on human wellbeing and, furthermore, adequate freshwater is important for the health of the population, as well as continued growth of tourism, agriculture and other sectors of the national economies. Clean drinking water is a right therefore, the concern about access to and availability of clean drinking water and sanitation is a regional challenge and development priority.

Pressures on surface and groundwater are expected to increase in response to demographic and economic drivers. Increasing water demand to supply populations in cities as well as in areas for agricultural production has led to overextraction of water in many islands. For example, there is an increasing threat to streamflows caused when catchments are converted for development and agriculture. Additionally, the Caribbean population has more than doubled from 17 million in 1950 to 41 million in 2010, and population density has increased by more than 100 percent during the same period¹³⁹. However, as a general rule, water distribution infrastructure built in the 19th and early 20th century did not anticipate this growth. This has led to many cases of water stress and scarcity, particularly in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, and Saint Kitts and Nevis¹⁴⁰ and the decline of the remaining water resources due to pollution and saltwater intrusion. Since a high proportion of the population in many Caribbean States and territories live in urban areas, there is a two-fold challenge to delivering potable water to densely populated

¹³⁷ ECLAC, *The Latin America Outlook*, 2013

¹³⁸ Depending on the geographical and topographic characteristics, some islands have abundance of rivers and streams, others lack surface waters, and they in general have diverse conditions in terms of significant groundwater. In relation to Belize, Guyana, and Suriname all are continental countries and host major transboundary river systems as well as significant groundwater resources.

¹³⁹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Population Division (2013) *World Population Prospectus: the 2012 Revision*. UN, New York, NY, USA.

¹⁴⁰ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (2008) *Climate Change in the Caribbean and the Challenge of Adaptation*. UNEP Regional Office for Latin American and the Caribbean, Panama City, Panama.

communities, while addressing the stormwater and wastewater challenges typical of urban environments.

In the case of SIDS, they are particularly vulnerable to increased stresses on their water resources¹⁴¹ due to some of their unique features such as limited surface area, greater exposure to natural hazards, and highly permeable aquifers in close proximity to seawater¹⁴². Besides contamination by human and livestock wastes, deforestation, pollution from industrial and agricultural activities, losses from storage and delivery systems, sand and gravel mining from freshwater source areas, saline intrusion from over-extraction and rising sea level contribute to water quality and quantity stress.

The shared and multifaceted nature of water presents special challenges for its management and the problems faced. The professional and institutional stakeholders in the region clearly show no shortage of interest in water management and the potential threats to water security. However, overall the present institutional frameworks and enabling environments are increasingly ill-equipped to deal with this issue¹⁴³. Existing efforts have not proved sufficient and regional interventions have failed to get off the ground and national-level interventions have fared little better. A feature of water resources in the Caribbean is the diverse organisational arrangements governing management. Jamaica and Guyana have a ministry dedicated to water management, but in most states, water management forms just one part of a ministry portfolio, and often, responsibility is spread across more than one ministry. In most states, water service providers also undertake water resources management. This reflects a predominant supply-side paradigm that sees water resources as an integral extension of water supply services.

Integrated water management, including innovative approaches to water recycling will be key. The starting point will be to reduce the anthropogenic degradation and loss of freshwater resources through technical measures that target the reduction of wastage, seek to reduce chemical contamination from agricultural sources, reduce losses through deforestation, reducing leakage from storage and delivery systems through regular maintenance, and discouraging over-abstraction. As an alternative to costly wastewater treatment facilities, countries can consider low-cost options such as artificial wetlands. This has been implemented in some islands, for example, Saint Lucia through the Integrated Watershed and Coastal Areas Management.

141 Cashman, A., Nurse, L. and Charlery, J. (2010) Climate change in the Caribbean: the water management implications. *Journal of Environment and Development*, 19(1):41–67. Falkland, T. (1999) Water resources issues of small island developing states. *Natural Resources Forum* 23:245–260.

142 UNEP 2012, *Integrated Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (IWCAM) Atlas*, United Nations Environment Programme, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Nairobi, Kenya, Accessed on August 21, 2014 at http://www.iwcam.org/documents/gef-iwcam-atlas-2012.pdf/at_download/file.

143 Global Water partnership (2014) *integrated Water Resources Management in the Caribbean: The Challenges facing Small Island Developing States*. Accessed on July 13, 2015 at http://www.gwp.org/Global/ToolBox/Publications/Technical%20Focus%20Papers/04%20Caribbean_TFP_2014.pdf

Other response options could include reducing the degradation and loss of freshwater resources through technical measures, rainwater harvesting, stormwater planning, water reuse/recycling, building synergies between the water and energy sectors such as deep-water cooling, low-cost wastewater treatment facilities such as artificial wetlands, and integrated water and land management. Rainwater harvesting is mandated in some islands, where it is now compulsory for all new buildings to harvest enough rainwater to meet the needs of their residents. Although desalination is expensive due to its high energy demand, desalination and abstraction of water from deep aquifers are also measures for increasing the availability of good quality water and can be powered by renewable energy. Successful water management policies seek to balance the need for innovative management approaches to deliver a public service with the need for investment through privatization or commoditization of water.

D. GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

“Effective governance for sustainable development demands that public institutions in all countries and at all levels be inclusive, participatory and accountable to the people. Laws and institutions must protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. All must be free from fear and violence, without discrimination.”¹⁴⁴ Strong and legitimate institutions and inclusive systems of governance are crucial to providing citizen security, participatory leadership, and gender responsive administration of justice.

The Caribbean is generally strong on human rights legislation and has robust legislation and policy on key aspects of human rights and democratic governance. An excellent example is the role that the region played in leading the way in developing countries in legislation regarding violence against women. ‘All countries have signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) though only Antigua and Barbuda, Belize and St. Kitts and Nevis have signed and ratified the Optional Protocol. However, timely reporting and implementation remain a challenge for all countries in the region.’ While there is general need for strengthening and updating legislation and policies, implementation and monitoring remain significant challenges in effective governance.

1. Security and Safety

Several countries in the region are beset by high rates of violent crime and troubling levels of non-criminalized forms of social violence that are typically directed at members of vulnerable groups that historically have been marginalised. The negative impact of crime on development in its various aspects is well documented.. Crime, particularly violent crime, tends to have a negative impact on vulnerable economies such as those of the Caribbean. It erodes confidence in the future development of countries, reduces the competitiveness of existing industries and

¹⁴⁴ Secretary General’s Synthesis Report, para. 77.

services by, for example, imposing burdensome security costs, and may negatively alter the investment climate. Capital may take flight. Crime generates insecurities among the general population that tend to lead to loss of human capital via migration with the loss of skilled and educated citizens.. The quality of education and health care suffer because of the diversion of scarce resources to the control of crime. Crime destroys social capital and thereby retards the development process. If the purpose of development is to widen human choice, the elevated rates of violent crime in the Caribbean may be taken as evidence of problematic development paths that leave far too many behind because of rather limited choices and limited life chances.

There are rising rates of violent crime with Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago showing the highest levels and Suriname reflecting the lowest levels of crime. The CARICOM task force on Crime and Security highlighted threats from illegal drugs, the increasing involvement of youth in crime and increase in access to illegal firearms. The 2012 HDR reported different structures of crime in the region, with countries like Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda and St Lucia where property crimes such as burglary outstrip violent crime. The report highlighted that property crimes such as burglary are often associated with inequalities, especially relative poverty. (HDR 2012 Human Development and the Shift to better Citizen Security) Vulnerable groups face threats arising from discrimination, exploitation and displacement. Factors such as poverty, gender, disability age and sexual orientation tend to create vulnerabilities to discrimination and increased insecurity.

Gender based violence is an important dimension of human insecurity, where insecurity begins in the home. The cultural notion that males need to be aggressive fuels both male on male violence and violence against women. Children growing up in violent households and those growing up with poor single mothers also tend to be at risk of perpetrating violence in adulthood¹⁴⁵. Women living in poverty experience additional vulnerabilities, such as higher likelihood of experiencing violence, adolescent pregnancy and infant mortality. Children are also disproportionately affected by crime and violence, experiencing a range of physical, emotional and sexual abuse in homes and families, communities, schools and institutions. The high prevalence rate of sexual violence including adolescent girls contributes to adolescent pregnancies, serious health issues and related socio economic pressures. Sexual minorities are also targeted with violence towards sexual minorities tolerated and at times openly promoted There is also a higher vulnerability to violence experienced by the differently abled and elderly.

Strong and legitimate institutions and inclusive systems of governance are crucial to providing citizen security and justice and breaking cycles of violence.

Caribbean countries have generally strong social policy frameworks and safety nets for social security with many having departments and overlapping agencies in principal encompassing most categories of marginalised and vulnerable groups. However, they are not well targeted and with weak data and administrative systems are often not effective in providing protection and security. Another challenge is that they are often dependent on concessional and loan funding.

Effective citizen security implies profoundly changing this relationship between the state and the citizenry by making institutions more responsive and accountable to the people they serve. Such

145 Wiltshire, Rosina, Masculinity and Violence: Caribbean Youth Perspectives, 2012

a fundamental change entails greater social integration, which may be brought about by seeking to resolve the problems of social exclusion and marginalization among large sections of the populations—including state security practices that do not respect rights and unnecessarily stigmatize and criminalize—and by a greater emphasis on human development.

With the right mix of policies, high gender-based violence (GBV) can be controlled and prevented by interventions that interrupt the cycle of violence. Some forms of GBV, particularly domestic violence, tend to show histories and patterns of abusive behaviour that may be disrupted in their early stages before they degenerate into life-threatening and life-taking physical violence. This requires investments aimed at developing the capabilities of the responsible institutions of the state. Social cohesion is generally greater in communities that have no street gangs and less in communities that have street gangs. Street gangs are major contributors to the high rates of violence. This fact should inform policy. Social cohesion is promoted by socially integrative policies that give people, particularly young people, a sense of being valued and belonging to the community and the country regardless of ethnicity, gender, class, or other differences. Security efforts are more effective if the rights of the people are respected and the people are involved as active agents and co-producers of their own security. If they are to be effective, the policy-making and policy implementation processes and the state institutions that are responsible for public safety and the security of citizens must be trusted and have the confidence of the people. Trust and confidence rest on respect for rights and adherence to the principles of good governance, including accountability, transparency and participation. Processes that are open and participatory and institutions that are fair tend to reinforce public security in which levels of violence can be successfully turned around. There are many useful and instructive cases of countries that have been able to make considerable improvements in their security situations, thus reducing the levels of violence and insecurity

There is considerable popular support for social crime prevention. Caribbean populations, including in the most crime-affected countries, tend to have a strong sense of social justice that informs their thinking about crime prevention and crime reduction policies. Public policies that are oriented towards social justice are therefore likely to have broad public support.

Empowering young people by investing in their development should be a priority. It will also yield a high demographic dividend. Most Caribbean countries have young populations. There are large populations of youth at risk, some of whom may drift into self-destructive anti-social behaviour. It follows that investments in youth and, more specifically, investments in youth at risk or detached youth are likely to yield significant returns in terms of reductions in violence and crime and greater citizen security. Because violent crime is a drag on development, investments in the prevention of youth violence may, in turn, yield good results in human development. Opportunities matter. This is why the importance of social crime prevention is underscored, but a sense of belonging, participating in political and community life, being respected by others, and having one's rights respected matter equally; in the case of young people, they matter even more. Improving security therefore does not involve only the design and implementation of costly programmes. It requires adequate regard for the intangibles associated with how people are treated and with greater social integration and cohesion. Crime and insecurity are costly to sustainable development. Successfully meeting the security challenges of the moment requires the consistent adoption of an effective citizen security

approach. The trajectory of violence can be interrupted, and insecurity can be diminished. This has been achieved elsewhere and can be achieved in the countries of the region¹⁴⁶.

The homicide and incarceration rates shown in Table VII (p. 57) are shocking. In 2011, the global average for homicides per 100,000 population was 6.87. Only three Caribbean countries, Suriname, Haiti and Antigua and Barbuda, have a comparable rate. The global average for prison population per 100,000 citizens was 150.75 in 2013. Only Haiti does not exceed this and, the disparity in the size of population notwithstanding, St. Kitts and Nevis' rate, at 714, is comparable to the global outlier, the United States, which has a prison population of 716 per 100,000 citizens. The data, including on poverty and youth unemployment, suggest a regional social fabric under stress and one in need of remedial intervention. The Caribbean conundrum is that relative progress on the more prominent human development indicators, health, education, GNI, has contributed to global inattention to the region's social fragility, and until more recently, to the extent of its environmental vulnerability as well.

A more holistic and balanced approach at national, regional and global levels is required to remedy this and place the region on the path to inclusive growth, sustainable development and human security. The holistic framework being advanced in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and the thrust of broad global support and commitment it is mobilising provide a rare opportunity to the Caribbean to take bold transformative steps in addressing these challenges.

Table VII: Caribbean Cross-Section of Indices

146 Caribbean Human Development Report 2012, 11.

Country	Poverty (% of pop. below national poverty line)	Unemployment Rate	Youth Unemployment (% of pop. aged 15-24)	Homelessness (% of pop.)	Prison Pop. (100,000 of pop)	Homicide (100,000 of pop.)	Gender Inequality Index***
Antigua and Barbuda	18.3	10.2	n/a	9.394	403	6.76	n/a
Bahamas, The	12.5	14.0	30.8	0.573	444	36.58	0.316
Barbados	19.3	10.8	n/a	1.012	521	11.34	0.350
Belize	41.3	23.2	n/a	0.002	533	39	0.435
Dominica	28.8	14.0	n/a	7.416	391	22.4	n/a
Grenada	37.7	24.9	n/a	0.002	424	11.48	n/a
Guyana	36.1	10.7	n/a	1.359	260	17.19	0.524
Haiti	77	16.8	n/a	1.6	96	6.89	0.599
Jamaica	17.6	13.0	34	0.141	152	41.18	0.457
St. Kitts and Nevis	21.8	6.5	n/a	0.243	714	38.17	n/a
St. Lucia	28.8	21.2	n/a	0.229	317	25.25	n/a
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	37.5	18.8	33.8	0.002	376	19.2	n/a
Suriname	10.1	10.3	n/a	0.002	186	4.62	0.463
Trinidad and Tobago	17	5.9	10.5	0.017	281	26.4	0.321

Source: Human Development Indicators, UNDP 2014: CARICOM Regional Statistics Database¹⁴⁷

2. Institutional Transparency and Accountability

Information asymmetries, lack of transparency and accountability affect the quality of public services, justice and have a negative impact on development. According to Peter Eigen chairman of Transparency International, corruption is a major cause of poverty and a barrier to overcoming it. Within the Caribbean data availability to the public and regular reporting have represented challenges. Laws and policies relating to electoral campaign financing, monitoring and accountability are largely outdated and weak.

¹⁴⁷Data on poverty must be interpreted with caution because of definitional and methodological differences across countries and also because they relate to different years which, in some cases, immediately preceded or followed the onset of the global economic crisis that commenced in 2008 and severely affected Caribbean countries. Data for Trinidad and Tobago relates to 2005; Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana and Suriname – 2006; St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines – 2007; Grenada – 2008; Belize and Dominica – 2009; Barbados and Jamaica - 2010; Haiti – 2011; The Bahamas – 2013. It may be noted that Suriname's poverty rate fell from 73 percent in 2000 to the 10.1 percent shown in 2006. More recent data in the World Bank's database shows Haiti's poverty rate in 2012 at a much lower 58.5 percent, and Jamaica's remaining at 17.6 percent in 2012. All data on poverty was taken from CARICOM's Regional Statistics database on Caribbean-specific Millennium Development Goals Indicators for Caribbean countries. The data emerged from country poverty assessments carried out under the auspices of the Caribbean Development Bank and from national surveys of living conditions. Data on unemployment rates were also taken from the CARICOM database. The data spans the years 2006 (Guyana) to 2012 (The Bahamas). All rates relate to the period 2010 – 2012 except for Guyana; Haiti and St. Vincent and the Grenadines – 2007; Grenada – 2008, and Dominica – 2009. All other data in the Table taken from UNDP's Human Development Report, 2014.

Corruption figures for 2013 measured by people's perceptions and experience of corruption ranked Barbados at 17, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago at 85 and Guyana 124 out of a total of 174 countries. It is significant that Singapore which is often cited as a model of growth and development ranks at 7th place.

Several CARICOM members have been making significant strides in preventing and combating corruption. Jamaica, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda and other states have anticorruption and/or integrity legislation. The OAS Draft Model Legislation on the Registration and Regulation of Political Parties represents a foundation that is being built upon. Caribbean legislation to regulate party financing is minimal and generally not relevant to present day political social or economic reality. Issues that have emerged from electoral observer missions include challenges related to source of financing, accountability and transparency. In the absence of legislation and tracking mechanisms the sources of campaign funds are difficult to be determined. Citizens often have little access to information relating to campaign financing. Legislation on financing political parties and candidates needs to be introduced, updated and implemented throughout the region to improve transparency and accountability¹⁴⁸.

Effective data collection, timely dissemination to enable monitoring and strengthen civil society collaboration are important tools for greater transparency and accountability. While social partnerships involving public and private sectors and civil society exist in some countries, they need to be replicated region wide and used more systematically to strengthen inclusive and responsive governance. A major challenge is that civil society is relatively weak in many countries, partly as a result of the out migration of leadership and lack of capacities effectively to play its role in participatory governance

3. Data and Monitoring

The Caribbean is faced with significant data and monitoring challenges informed by limited human and financial resources and a lack of prioritisation of data expertise and sound management. While there exists capacity, this is weakened by a high turnover of personnel partially as a consequence of migration. Data collection is mostly ad-hoc and there is limited use of available technology for data upgrading and streamlining and integration for inter-sectoral synergies. In several countries, important data are still documented and retained in hand written volumes. The mainstreaming of disaggregation by key factors such as gender, ethnicity and urban/rural categories is limited and updated coherent social policy data limited. Strengthening of the administrative statistical systems is an imperative.

The United Secretary General's High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda called for a data revolution for sustainable development. As the report explains: "Data is one of the keys to transparency, which is the cornerstone of accountability.... To understand whether we are achieving the goals, data on progress needs to be open, accessible, easy to understand and easy to use."¹⁴⁹ The Independent Advisory Group to the Secretary General notes that a new

¹⁴⁸ Rosina Wiltshire Gender and Political Financing OAS 2013.

¹⁴⁹ United Nations Secretary General's High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, p. 55.

development agenda underpinned by the SDGs will require significant increase in the data and information that is available to individuals, governments, civil society, companies and international organizations to plan, monitor and be held accountable for their actions. A huge increase in the capacity of many governments, institutions and individuals will be needed to deliver and use this data.”¹⁵⁰ This data imperative is particularly important for the region.

The seeds of the data revolution were sown in the MDGs process. This process, with its targets, indicators and timelines, created considerable awareness of the importance of data and monitoring at all levels - local, national, regional, and global. For the first time, data came to be viewed in its true garb as an instrument of development and as a global public good. But despite new awareness that data is in fact the “lifeblood of decision-making and the raw material of accountability”,¹⁵¹ there were important shortcomings in the MDG process with regard to data. Foremost among these were insufficient attention to building national statistical capabilities, insufficient multi-stakeholder involvement - and thus buy-in - and lack of timeliness in the availability of data. The result was that indicators failed to serve as report cards and management tools at national, regional and global levels.¹⁵²

These shortcomings must be remedied. The first is particularly important for the Caribbean, where public access to official data remains limited. The Caribbean will need to significantly strengthen data generation and statistical capacity at national and regional levels, especially in light of the SDGs wider remit. Countries will need to invest resources in building statistical infrastructure and CARICOM’s Regional Statistics Programme should be expanded.¹⁵³ Despite some improvement, the absence of basic data, timely and disaggregated, on social, economic and environmental issues, and sectors, is evident to Caribbean researchers and must be also to policy and decision-makers. It is a truism that it is impossible to eradicate poverty if you do not know how many people are poor!

It is fully recognized, at the same time, that small size is counter intuitively a handicap in generating, interpreting and disseminating data. There may be fewer people to count but the sunken costs in statistical infrastructure - increasingly technology and high-level skills - remain, and this can be prohibitive, especially for small island states and Least Developed Countries. The High Level Panel on the post-2015 Development Agenda, in proposing a Global Partnership

150 Report of the Independent Advisory Group on a Data Revolution: A World that Counts: Mobilizing the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, pg. 4.

151 Ibid, pg.2.

152 Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Indicators and a Monitoring Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals: Launching a data revolution for the SDGs. Revised Working Draft 6, pg.18. It may be noted, for example, that detailed monitoring of MDG 8 did not commence until the MDG Gap Task Force was established by the United Nations Secretary General in 2007.

153 The CARICOM Secretariat’s Regional Statistics Programme undertakes statistical capacity building activities in member countries to enhance the availability and quality of data. Supported by bilateral and multilateral partners, progress has been made but “it is imperative to do more and do it fast”: representative of Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century (PARIS21), at Second High Level Forum on Statistics, St. Georges Grenada, 26 May, 2014. Statistical infrastructure denotes the ‘professionally staffed statistical services in a government or organization, a body of practice and documentation on statistical methods used in collecting and processing data including standard concepts, definitions and classifications, and practical experience in data compilation and dissemination.’ See UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, Statistics and Indicators for the post-2015 development agenda, pg. 8.

on Development Data that would bring together stakeholders, such as governments, statistical offices, international organizations, and the private sector, noted that more than forty developing countries lack sufficient data to track performance against MDG 1 on eradicating extreme hunger and poverty.¹⁵⁴

Another noteworthy initiative is the Partnership for the Development of Statistics in the 21st Century (PARIS21) Informing a Data Revolution Roadmap was launched in Spring 2015. It will seek to help developing countries meet the challenges of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and their data needs related to the SDGs by identifying and costing those needs, and by supporting the process of building capacity and putting in place the infrastructure and systems required to meet the data challenges of the future.

The Third International Conference on SIDS, fully cognizant of the challenges SIDS face in joining the data revolution, last September reaffirmed support for SIDS in strengthening their statistical systems, and in managing complex databases, including geo-spatial platforms. Importantly, the Conference called for a sustainable development statistics and information programme for small island developing states.¹⁵⁵ This is an initiative that should be pursued.

While global leadership is expected for a revolution that is global in dimension, it is very important that, given the many legal, ethical and cultural issues surrounding data-gathering, utilization, and dissemination, regional, sub-regional and national leadership be at the forefront of setting priorities, goals and strategies for the necessary expansion and development of the region's statistical infrastructure. Public awareness and stakeholder buy-in will be critical not only in regard to the development and implementation of the SDGs, but as well for modernization and gender responsiveness of statistical and data systems in the region, without which success and failure in regard to the SDGs will be indistinguishable.

IV. TOWARDS A CARIBBEAN FOCUSED SDG FRAMEWORK

Introduction

As indicated earlier, the United Nations General Assembly agreed that the Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals with its 17 goals and 169 targets would be the main basis for negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. The identification of Caribbean priorities for SDGs draws on the OWG report,¹⁵⁶ the Report of the High-Level Panel

¹⁵⁴ Report of the High—Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 development Agenda, pgs.23-24.

¹⁵⁵ Samoa Pathway, para. 113.

¹⁵⁶ The United Nations Secretary-General's Synthesis Report proposes a framework for categorising SDGs.

of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 Development Agenda proposals¹⁵⁷ that are most important to the Caribbean, as well as other regionally agreed instruments.

The MDG process, despite shortcomings, has proved to be a powerful tool for mobilizing and directing global and national resources and attention towards specific priorities. If this can be replicated by the SDGs, and if the priorities identified genuinely address Caribbean concerns, the SDGs are potential game-changers of regional development prospects. Of particular relevance to the region would be the ‘governance effect’¹⁵⁸ of a framework that establishes key long-term goals, meaningful commitments of international support and cooperation, and time-bound and measurable targets and indicators that are regularly monitored and reported on, and thus nationally, regionally and internationally transparent.

While the Caribbean has to address all SDGs, its efforts in attaining these goals must be informed by the challenges specific to the Caribbean identified in the previous sections. Therefore each goal must be addressed in ways focused on overcoming these challenges in order to achieve the SDGs in the region. The identification of capacity gaps of stakeholders including CSOs will be an important dimension of the stakeholder analysis informing the way forward.

The SDGs are clearly integrated within a holistic framework of human rights and human centred development. Any grouping therefore makes sense only for the practical purposes of highlighting closer circles of relatedness within the larger framework, without obscuring the interconnectedness of the goals. The framework for grouping the SDG goals that was suggested by The United Nations Secretary-General’s Synthesis Report serves this purpose very well and provides thematic foci for the list of goals reflecting closer relations within the groupings.

- (a) Dignity: to end poverty and fight inequalities
- (b) People: to ensure healthy lives, knowledge and the inclusion of women and children
- (c) Prosperity: to grow a strong, inclusive and transformative economy
- (d) Planet: to protect our eco-system for all society and our children
- (e) Peace: to promote safe and equal societies and strong institutions
- (f) Partnership: to catalyse global solidarity for sustainable development.

In this section the SDGs are grouped according to these themes. Each goal is then addressed and the interconnections highlighted as far as possible. The discussion focuses on the importance of the goal for the Caribbean and identifies existing decisions and policies in the Region that relate to it. Where appropriate specific actions are suggested that might increase the significance of a goal for the Region.

While the SGs report identified six themes it may be possible to further reduce these groupings into a smaller set of strategic priorities for the UN in the Caribbean. This assessment does not

¹⁵⁷ The Report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 Development Agenda, pages 30-31

¹⁵⁸ According to the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPCIG) the governance effect of the goal-setting paradigm is manifest in several ways: (i) communications or messaging device to express important priorities, raise awareness and mobilise attention; (ii) evaluative framework for monitoring progress towards important objectives; (iii) accountability framework to assess compliance with commitments made; (iv) planning targets to guide programming of resources, efforts and policy design. IPCIG, ‘Global Goals as a Policy Tool: Intended and

include an analysis of the appropriateness of the targets identified for the SDG goals. Subsequently, as part of the UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (UNMSDF) for the Caribbean, and based on this assessment and other sources, specific regional targets and indicators need to be developed for each goal.

A. Dignity: to end poverty and fight inequalities

The Dignity theme, groups together four of the goals that are most closely related to the eradication of poverty, including universal access to social infrastructure, such as water and sanitation and energy:

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

The reduction of poverty is the MDGs success story. The target of reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than US\$1.25 per day was achieved five years early, in 2010. Between 1990 and 2010, the absolute number of people living in extreme poverty fell by 700 million. In China alone - the ‘Atlas’ of poverty reduction - the proportion of the population living in poverty fell from 60 per cent in 1990 to 12 per cent in 2010.

However, despite what the United Nations Secretary General has accurately described as “remarkable progress”, outcomes on poverty have been uneven across countries and within countries. Unlike China, and with approximately the same initial starting point, between 1990 and 2010, Sub-Saharan Africa reduced poverty by only 8 percentage points, from 56 per cent of the population to 48 per cent. And while the poverty rate for Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole showed a reduction from 12 per cent to 6 per cent between 1990 and 2010, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report, 2011, noted that the proportion of people living on US\$1.25 per day in the Caribbean had fallen by just 3 percentage points between 1990 and 2005 – from 29 per cent to 26 per cent.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ United Nations Department of Public Information – DPI/2570E – July 7, 2011. The Caribbean Millennium Development Goals Report, 2010 (pg. 20) draws attention to the “inherently complex task of measuring advances in poverty eradication in the Caribbean region, made more complicated by the infrequency with which poverty assessments have been undertaken.”

The standard measure for assessing poverty in the region is the percentage of population below a nationally determined poverty line which, given issues of consumption patterns, food requirements, and shifting purchasing power of currencies, make comparisons across and even within countries difficult. More broadly, significantly different initial starting points in levels of poverty amongst countries will also have had an impact on outcomes, and should be taken into account in understanding progress and effort.

Despite the fact that the absolute number of poor in the region is small by global standards, poverty eradication is a challenge that should be taken seriously in the region for two reasons. Firstly, the proportion of people in the region who are poor is not insignificant, and secondly, and very importantly, poverty is closely related to other developmental maladies and especially to vulnerability and exclusion as well as crime and citizen insecurity. It should be noted that Suriname with the lowest poverty rate also has the lowest level of crime in the region.

Specific population groups, such as women, the aged, youth, persons living with disabilities, and persons living in remote and isolated communities – including indigenous people – are more likely to be poor. Poverty and inequalities are mutually reinforcing phenomena. It is important and welcome that the fundamental inequalities rooted in wealth and income disparities,¹⁶⁰ and their social and economic consequences, are once again coming to the forefront of global, if not, as needs more to be the case, regional and sub-regional consciousness and discourse. Data that is more than five years old in most cases and available only for a few countries show the poorest quintile's –twenty percent – share in national consumption to be only about 5 percent¹⁶¹.

Yet other inequalities are less focussed on in a concerted manner in the region. Despite small geographic size there is spatial disparity, related to the contrast between opportunities and services in rural and urban areas. Women, youth, the aged and people living with disabilities are groups whose exclusion and lack of access to power and centres of decision-making is reinforced by poverty.

The Caribbean's approach to and perspective on poverty eradication should take full account of poverty's linkage with other forms of vulnerability and exclusion. Poverty has been shown to be responsive to sustained economic growth. But more fundamentally, the intertwined challenges of poverty, inequalities and social exclusion, require a targeted multi-dimensional response, and the SDG's holistic framework facilitates this.

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

While food unavailability is the major problem in some regions, such as in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, CARICOM's Regional Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan (RFNSAP)

¹⁶⁰Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Report, 2014 estimates 'global wealth' in 2012 to be US\$ 223 trillion – US\$49,000 for each of the 4.59 billion adults on the planet, or almost US\$100,000 per couple.

¹⁶¹ CARICOM Secretariat Regional Statistics Database : St. Vincent and the Grenadines – 9.8 percent; Grenada – 7.3 percent; Jamaica – 6.6 percent; Dominica – 5.2 percent; Suriname 4.9 percent; Antigua and Barbuda – 1.6 percent; Haiti – 1.4 percent.

posits that food and nutrition security in the region is being compromised not by unavailability but through lack of access and by excessive utilization/consumption of sweeteners and fats and oils. According to the RFNSAP, “Food and nutritional security in the Caribbean region is mainly related to the capacity of people to obtain access to the food they need and to use it properly to maintain a healthy and active life. Its achievement requires effective demand for food. Thus poverty issues are central to addressing problems of food and nutrition security in the Caribbean.”¹⁶²

The linkages between sustainable agriculture, poverty reduction, and food and nutrition security are strong. Growth in the agricultural sector, on average, can be up to 3.2 times more effective at reducing \$1 dollar a day poverty than growth in other sectors¹⁶³ Income poverty is closely related to lack of access to food and thus to poor nutritional outcomes. Poor nutrition is linked to poor health, which is particularly relevant to the Caribbean and especially to the incidence of non-communicable diseases, which is substantial and growing. The FAO draws attention to the health implications of malnutrition: “Malnutrition in all its forms – undernourishment, micronutrient deficiencies, obesity and diet related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – imposes unacceptably high economic and social costs on countries. It is one of the greatest impediments to human and national development. Malnutrition adversely affects physical growth as well as cognitive development of the unborn and young children, undermining the capacities and capabilities of individuals and communities”.¹⁶⁴

Poverty, hunger and malnourishment can be addressed through strengthening the role of agriculture in the Caribbean economy. The sustainable development challenge facing this, and other regions, is to do so while minimizing environmental degradation and curtailing the pressure on natural resources, such as land, forests, and water. This will be possible only through goals and policies that promote action and incentivize changes in systems and practices relating to agriculture and food production, distribution and consumption.

These priorities are largely elaborated in the region’s own Action Plan, and by the FAO, WFP, and IFAD in the context of measures to strengthen the enabling environment for food security and nutrition. They include (a) public and private investments to raise agricultural productivity; (b) better access to inputs, land, services, technologies and markets; (c) measures to promote rural development; (d) social protection for the most vulnerable, including strengthening their resilience to conflicts and natural disasters; (e) and specific nutrition programmes, especially to address micronutrient deficiencies in mothers and children under five.¹⁶⁵ In this vein, the FAO emphasizes that eradicating malnutrition and its associated social and economic costs must begin with agriculture and food systems and requires, in addition to availability, attention to quality, safety, diversity, and nutritional content.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² CARICOM Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan, pg. 5.

¹⁶³ FAO Statistical Yearbook, 2012, pg.1

¹⁶⁴ FAO, ‘The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals : Nutrition’.

¹⁶⁵ FAO/IFAD/WFP, The State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2014, pg.1.

¹⁶⁶ FAO, ‘The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals: Nutrition’.

Social Safety Nets, which should act as a buffer against ongoing and future crises are not targeted at the most vulnerable and are not responsive to the needs of the poor including poor women, thereby increasing their vulnerability to the impact of economic and food crises and disasters.¹⁶⁷

Finally, given the intersection between poverty, access to food, and nutrition, social protection measures directed at risk-prone small-scale producers and vulnerable and marginalized consumers should be an important aspect of any policy framework to be implemented.

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

The management of water and sanitation to ensure access for all is a crucial element of any strategy to end poverty and reduce inequalities. It is for this reason that this goal is seen as part of this theme, rather than just the Planet theme.

Integrated water management reducing chemical contamination from agricultural sources, reduce losses through deforestation, reducing leakage from storage and delivery systems through regular maintenance.

Other response options could include reducing the degradation and loss of freshwater resources through technical measures, rainwater harvesting, stormwater planning, water reuse/recycling, building synergies between the water and energy sectors such as deep-water cooling, low-cost wastewater treatment facilities such as artificial wetlands, and integrated water and land management. This has been implemented in some islands, for example, Saint Lucia through the Integrated Watershed and Coastal Areas Management. Rainwater harvesting is mandated in some islands, where it is now compulsory for all new buildings to harvest enough rainwater to meet the needs of their residents. Although desalination is expensive due to its high energy demand, desalination and abstraction of water from deep aquifers are also measures for increasing the availability of good quality water and can be powered by renewable energy. Successful water management policies seek to balance the need for innovative management approaches to deliver a public service with the need for investment through privatization or commoditization of water.

The challenges that the Caribbean and SIDS face in achieving universal access to all essential services do not derive from large numbers, but from the special conditions and vulnerabilities of these island states and their limited resources base. The SDG framework will facilitate more consistent attention and integrated efforts in achieving inclusiveness and universality in the pursuit of sustainable development in the Caribbean.

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all

The rationale for dealing with the goal as part of the Dignity theme with its focus on poverty is the same as for the foregoing: The emphasis is on energy **for all**.

CARICOM's energy policy, adopted in 2013 set a target of 20% by 2017 for the contribution of renewable energy to the total electricity supply mix. As indicated earlier, the region relies on

¹⁶⁷ Governments of Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines, with support from UNICEF, UN Women (then UNIFEM) and the World Bank. (2009). *Social Safety Net Assessments*.

imported fossil fuel for 95% of its energy needs. Energy is an issue which, although not included in the Millennium Development Goals as a specific goal, has now received broad support for inclusion as a sustainable development goal.¹⁶⁸ The reason for this may be the universal recognition that no country has developed without access to reliable and affordable energy.¹⁶⁹ This fact and their dependence on fossil fuel indicate why sustainable energy for all as an SDG goal should be seen by Caribbean countries as one of utmost priority. The OWG in its Goal 7 has proposed that access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all be ensured. This is proposed against a background where, according to the World Health Organisation, 2.6 billion people still burn wood, coal, dung and other traditional fuel inside their homes, and millions of others consume large amounts of energy, in the process degrading the environment and destabilising the global climate.

The region has fundamental interest not only in its own pattern of production and consumption of energy, but in what happens globally. The proposed Goal 7, by the OWG, speaks specifically to “by 2030 expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing states.” (Target 7-b). The dilemma facing these countries is that unless special measures of assistance are put in place, reducing the use of fossil fuels and increasing renewable energy in the energy mix can be more expensive in the short to medium term, involving, for example, significant investment upfront in new technologies. Thus, already vulnerable economies will be at further competitive disadvantage. It is very important therefore that technologies be widely shared and that the cost of accessing innovations be linked to the benefits and cost of climate change rather than to fossil fuel.

Renewable energy currently represents less than 3% of the Caribbean’s total electricity consumption. The diversification of the region’s energy mix into geo-thermal, solar, wind, biomass, hydro-power, and other green electricity sources, is among the most urgent challenges facing the region. This will help to conserve the environment, strengthen productivity and competitiveness, and improve the lives of the poor. This will also be consistent with meeting the ambitious target set in the CARICOM Strategic Plan 2015- 2019 which is to increase the share of renewable energy in the region’s total energy supply mix to 20% by 2017.

The Caribbean should seek to ensure that access to finance and to technology – the two most important constraints to the supply of modern and sustainable energy services – are explicitly included as areas to be addressed, especially in regards to LDCs and SIDS.

B. PEOPLE: to ensure healthy lives, knowledge and the inclusion of women and children, and marginalised groups

¹⁶⁸ Technical Support Team Brief No. 14, page 99. The United Nations declared 2012 as International Year of Sustainable Energy For All, and 2014-2024 as the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy For All. Support for an energy SDG has come from, for example, the OWG on the SDGs, the Secretary-General’s High Level Panel on the post-2015 Development Agenda, the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative of the Secretary-General (SE4ALL), global thematic consultations on energy and the post-2015 Development Agenda, the United Nations Global Compact and the Monash Sustainable Institute.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

The **People** theme brings focus on the core rationale and elements of human centred development, with the wellbeing and full potential of all being the overarching goal.

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all women and girls

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Health remains a very important area of unfinished business for the Caribbean region, as for the rest of the developing world with the probable exception of East Asia. Globally, maternally mortality rates fell by 45 per cent between 1990 and 2013, far short of the MDG target of reducing maternal mortality by three-quarters. The Caribbean had 190 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2013, well below the 300 that were recorded in 1990, but also far exceeding the maternal mortality rates in some other developing regions, such as East Asia, which had 33 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2013. The maternal mortality rate for Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole was 77 per 100,000 live births, indicating the drag of the Caribbean sub-region on this particular indicator.

The Caribbean region scores poorly relative to other developing regions in regard to the proportion of births by women that are aged fifteen to nineteen.¹⁷⁰ There is inconsistency in legislation in respect to age of consent, age to access SRH services and child marriage and reluctance to teach comprehensive sexuality education. At the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994 and other review meetings, the global community recognized and affirmed that sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are foundational to sustainable development. The region needs to address the protection of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

Enshrined in national laws and supported by many international agreements, these rights include the right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly, without coercion or violence, the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so. It includes the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. These opportunities to make informed choices in respect of one's own sexual and reproductive health are also a prerequisite for the fulfilment of human potential and necessary for full participation in community life, particularly by those who are otherwise, socially or economically, at a disadvantage.

When an individual's reproductive rights are upheld, mutually respectful and equitable gender relations between women and men are more likely. And adolescents can avoid unintended

¹⁷⁰ Health data taken from Millennium Development Goals Report, 2014. In 2012, twenty six per cent of Caribbean births were unattended, the third lowest among eight developing country regions. Only one region, Sub-Saharan Africa, had more births to teen-aged women than Latin America and the Caribbean at 76 per 1000 births. By contrast, the rate in East Asia was 6 per 1000 women.

pregnancies and deal with their emerging sexuality in positive and responsible ways. It has been established that the dividend of universal access to SRHR will be paid in millions of lives saved, grief averted, individual suffering reduced and families kept intact.

It is necessary to consider gender equality as key to human rights-based health, aiming to remove the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination, particularly the cultural, social and economic barriers that prevent women, men and young people's access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Since 2011 the Caribbean has made significant progress with the lowest number of new HIV infections among all developing regions.¹⁷¹ There were an estimated 12 000 [9 400–14 000] new HIV infections in the Caribbean in 2013. This represents 0.55% of the global total for new infections.

As was indicated in Millennium Development Report, 2011, considerable progress has also been made in the region in treatment and in access to anti-retroviral drugs. Some Caribbean countries are on track to achieve elimination of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV and Congenital Syphilis by 2015. Others will require increased effort. All countries will need continued focus on the necessary interventions to maintain elimination status. Despite excellent achievement, specific interventions should be put in place to reach the 90-90-90 treatment targets by 2020 and stop HIV from being a public health threat in the region.

The AIDS response in the Caribbean has produced astonishing results. Nevertheless, the gap between achievements to date and the goal of ending the AIDS epidemic remains much too wide. In 2014, 44 percent of all people living with in the Caribbean received antiretroviral therapy, leaving a gap of over 50 percent. Maintaining today's response at the current pace is not enough to end an epidemic that is constantly evolving.

The specific barriers hindering returns on investments for the sustainability of HIV and AIDS include the capacity of individual countries to finance their own responses; reducing the costs of HIV prevention, treatment and care programmes; and eliminating punitive laws, stigma and discrimination. Stigma and discrimination and barriers to access of prevention and treatment interventions and services by LGBT and vulnerable populations are continued challenges to national and other responses to HIV and prevention of further transmission. Many countries in the Caribbean are extremely vulnerable to drops in external funding sources available for HIV programmes and the decline will affect the sustainability of many programmes.

The social and economic implications of the high rate of occurrence of NCDs, and why it is important for the region that its prevalence be reduced, were outlined earlier under Main Challenges. The linkage of the prevalence of NCDs with other health indices, such as maternal mortality, was emphasized, as also its broader implications for low productivity and output, impoverishment and marginalisation.

Health is thus important unfinished business for the region. Going forward it is even more pressing business. It is generally recognised that health is central to the enjoyment of all human

¹⁷¹ At.05 per 100 people (aged 14 – 49), in 2012, the highest rate outside of Africa. But a significant reduction on .12 in 2001.

rights, and to human capabilities and agency: influencing and being influenced by all three dimensions of sustainable development. The vulnerable and marginalised are, in particular, constantly beset by social, economic and environmental obstacles to living in good health. At the same time, investment in health correlates to reduction in poverty, diminished environmental degradation, and to improvement in education, in productivity, and in social, cultural and material well-being.¹⁷²

Specific interventions should be put in place overcome the barriers to attain the UNAIDS fast track¹⁷³ 90-90-90 treatment targets by 2020 and stop HIV from being a public health threat by 2030 in the region. To fast track the response in the region, UNAIDS recommends broadening testing options, applying flexible HIV treatment delivery, intensifying combination prevention, increasing program ownership, using innovation, real time monitoring and focus on the locations and populations with the highest HIV burden. Emphasis is also placed on addressing social and legal barriers and advances human rights and gender equality.

The Open Working Group's (OWG) proposed Goal 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, and its related Targets, accord with Caribbean concerns and priorities. It is particularly germane that Target 3.4 speaks to mortality from non-communicable diseases – reduce by one third by 2030 – and that Target 3c calls for increasing substantially health financing and the recruitment, development and **retention** of the health work force in developing countries, **especially in LDCs and SIDS**.

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all women and girls

Education is considered one of the core unfinished businesses of the MDGs. The 2014 Millennium Development Goals Report found that while there was marked decrease globally in the number of children out of school in the early years of this century, progress had then stagnated and currently almost 60 million children still remain out of school. Latin America and the Caribbean are cited as a region which though close to universal primary education, has seen little further progress since 2000. In the specific case of the Caribbean, enrolment in primary school increased only marginally from 93% to 95% in 2009.¹⁷⁴ The Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean's MDG state of play assessment, in 2010, found net enrolment rates had generally exceeded 90% since 2000, primary school completion rates were generally above 90% (exceptions – Suriname and St. Kitts) and near parity in gender education had been

¹⁷² One study attributes thirty to fifty per cent of the dramatic economic growth in South Asia to higher child survival and lower fertility rates. Bloom D.E, Williamson J.G, Demographic Transition and Economic Miracles in Emerging Asia, Cambridge, M A, 1997. Cited in United Nations Technical Support Team Issues Brief – Health and Sustainable Development.

¹⁷³ UNAIDS (2015). Fast-Track: accelerating action to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030

¹⁷⁴ United Nations public information release – DPI/2570E-July 2011.

achieved by 2007.¹⁷⁵ The average net enrolment rate for Caribbean countries, except Haiti, in 2010-2012 was 91.5 percent.¹⁷⁶

However, as outlined in the Main challenges, there are substantial deficits in the education sector where in several Caribbean SIDS less than 50 % of the population aged 25 years or older has received secondary education.

While the Caribbean must continue efforts to achieve universal primary enrolment and to reduce dropout rates, including among males, the broader scope in regard to education of the emerging post-2015 sustainable development agenda is fully consistent with the region's own priorities. The main concerns of the emerging agenda, incorporating but going beyond the thrust of the MDGs, are with (a) educational quality and learning outcomes; (b) the entire education chain – early childhood to expanded provision of and access to tertiary education; and (c) skills development relevant to job market and employment, including life-long learning, and technical and vocational training. Strengthening a focus on emotional intelligence and learning options promoting innovation and creativity are also essential elements in the relevance and quality of education.

According to the United Nations Technical Support Team, 114 countries will need 1.7 million more teachers by 2015.¹⁷⁷ Although countries in the Caribbean make significant budgetary expenditure on education the return on this investment directly to the education system, and socially, is diminished because of the high level of migration of tertiary graduates, including teachers. The High-Level Panel's Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda noted that "The quality of education in all countries depends on having a sufficient number of motivated teachers, well trained and possessing strong subject area knowledge."¹⁷⁸

The Caribbean must train and retain both teachers and graduates to build strong knowledge based inclusive, equitable, competitive, and stable societies. A global compact on international cooperation in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda would bolster the region's own considerable effort in the field of education and should acknowledge the importance of teacher retention. A global compact could include commitment to reducing proactive recruitment of education (and health) personnel, while respecting the right of individuals to migrate, and should contemplate budgetary support to Caribbean countries earmarked for improving remuneration and conditions of work as well as infrastructure in this area, and in health.

It is important that Caribbean responses to quality education for all include:

¹⁷⁵ Mendosa, Patricia and Sheila Stuart, Caribbean Millennium Development Goals Report, 2010, ECLAC Regional Headquarters, Port of Spain.

¹⁷⁶ CARICOM Secretariat Regional Statistics database. The enrolment rate in Haiti was 49.6 percent (2005-2006).

¹⁷⁷ Technical Support Team Brief, 'Education and Culture', pages 2-3. Estimate taken from Global Compact Policy Guide, Brookings Institution, 2012.

¹⁷⁸ High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda Report, pg. 37.

- a) Strengthening capacity at national and sub-regional level for effective schooling through
 - (i) Reform in teacher education and management
 - (ii) Strengthening the monitoring of and reporting on education sector performance using relevant a standardized monitoring and evaluation framework and a strengthened management information system (evidence generation for effective advocacy and programme design)
- b). Supporting high level policy work and targeted interventions in education and early childhood through:
 - i). Policy and standards development and implementation: early childhood development, second chance education (Increasing Access to marginalized and at risk children), class sizes and unfavorable PTRs, disaster risk reduction, positive behavior management, with systematic monitoring and evaluation components integrated in the process.
 - ii). Targeted Interventions for Males/Fathers - strengthening family support services with specific outreach initiatives for fathers, enhancing their capacity in positive child rearing.

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

The Open Working Group’s Report proposes a stand-alone goal on gender: Achieve gender equality, empower all women and girls.¹⁷⁹ Both the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda and Secretary General’s High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda underscore the central place of gender equality in the emerging Agenda, and draw attention to the crosscutting and intersecting nature of inequalities.¹⁸⁰

The region has committed to CEDAW and related instruments. The gender goal (and its nine targets), as set out in the OWG Report, should be fully supported by the region. From the Caribbean’s perspective, as posited earlier in this paper, available evidence and research show that despite progress, the region is lagging in critical areas of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. The three core areas identified by UN Women for action in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda are particularly relevant to the region: freedom from violence, gender equality in capabilities and resources, and gender equality in decision-making power and voice in public and private institutions.¹⁸¹

UN Women is cogent on this and is quoted at length: “First the new framework must address the debilitating fear or experience of violence. Because of the great physical and psychological harm

¹⁷⁹ Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, pg. 14.

¹⁸⁰ The Report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda emphasizes that a “people-centred agenda must work to ensure the equal rights of women and girls” (pg.17) and the UN System Task Team’s ‘Report to the Secretary General – Realizing the Future We Want For All’ offers that the “empowerment of women and girls and the protection of their rights should be centre-pieces of the post-2015 agenda.” (pg.25)

¹⁸¹ UN Women, ‘A stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment: Imperatives and key components in the context of the post-2015 framework and sustainable development goals’, pg.3.

to women and girls, this violence is a violation of their human rights, constrains their ability to fulfil their true potential and carries great economic costs for them and for society. Therefore a resolve to stop it must be a prerequisite for any future agenda. Second, the often skewed distribution of capabilities, such as knowledge, good health, and sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights, as well as resources and opportunities, such as productive assets, including land, decent work, and equal pay constrain women's empowerment and need to be addressed with renewed urgency. These are the basic foundations for sustainable development and realizing human rights. And third, the low numbers of women in public decision-making from national parliaments to local councils needs to be remedied to ensure that women's voices feature prominently in democratic institutions and public and private deliberations. The lack of voice in decision-making is found in the key institutions influencing public opinion and promoting accountability such as media and civil society. It is also found in private sector institutions such as in the management and governance of firms, and it has its roots in unequal power relations in the family and community. These three dimensions taken together affect women's and girls' safety, economic and social security and choices, and voices in shaping public policy priorities."¹⁸²

Agreement in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda on an overarching stand-alone gender goal, and on targets and indicators that will underpin it, should provide a useful policy framework for deepening and monitoring progress on gender in the region.¹⁸³ It should be noted that this will necessarily entail considerable deepening and broadening of the CARICOM Strategic Plan's focus on gender as a facet of mainstreaming inclusiveness in public policy by - "build(ing) the capacity of public sector officers to conduct requisite analyses, collect and use disaggregated information, and integrate gender/disability/aging sensitive approaches in policy, planning, implementation, budgeting and monitoring."¹⁸⁴

With regard to the challenges of violence against women, UN Women has advanced a 16-step policy agenda designed to support countries in delivering on the promise contained in the human rights frameworks. The agenda addresses issues related to justice, governance, access to services, capacity building for service providers, public awareness and social mobilization of young people, both male and female, as champions for change - all critical elements for stemming the tide of the pandemic.

Comprehensive legal frameworks, enforcement mechanisms and multi-sectoral services must not only respond to and protect women and girls from violence but also send a clear message that such violence is not acceptable and promote their enjoyment of their human rights.

¹⁸² Ibid, pg.3.

¹⁸³ The Open Working Group identified nine targets associated with the proposed gender equality goal. (OWG Report, pg.14). Eight indicators were proposed in the July 2014 Report by the Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network: see 'Indicators and a Monitoring Framework for Sustainable development Goals – Launching a data revolution for the SDGs', revised working draft, 25 July 2014, pgs. 59 – 62. UN Women has identified several targets and 32 illustrative indicators related to three areas – freedom from violence, capabilities and resources, and voice, participation and leadership. The illustrative list draws on the Minimum set of gender indicators developed by the Interagency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) and endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 44th session in February-March 2013. See UN Women, 'A stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment: Imperatives and key components', pgs. 4 -6.

¹⁸⁴ Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015 – 2019: Repositioning CARICOM (Vol.2), pg. 41.

Promoting and protecting the human rights of all women and girls and strengthening implementation of laws, policies and programmes, are essential for preventing and responding to violence against women and girls.

The Caribbean Joint Statement on Gender Equality and the Post 2015 and SIDS Agenda contended that “The emerging global development frameworks must address the structural foundations of gender-based inequality, including the recognition that inequalities are a consequence of the unequal relations of power. We are therefore asking that the global Post 2015 and SIDS frameworks take into consideration the social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS, and the resulting challenges for sustainable, human rights-based and gender responsive development.”¹⁸⁵

The Joint Statement addresses four major thematic areas: freedom from violence, accessing capabilities, economic empowerment and leadership, and presents a range of policy and action ideas for each of these that are both detailed and comprehensive of the holistic framework of the SDGs. The following sample contains some of the key ideas put forward:

Box 2: Sample of policy ideas from the Joint Statement of Caribbean Officials

Themes	Key policy ideas for consideration
Freedom from Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Address root causes of violence, including how women and men, boys and girls are differently affected by violence; ✓ Ensure that all measures are in place to protect vulnerable groups from all forms of violence, especially sexual violence, intimate partner violence and other forms of gender based violence (GBV). ✓ Address the vulnerability of small island states to transnational crime, including the drug trade and trade in small arms, by strengthening international and national treaties.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to Justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure the removal of all systemic barriers to the effective delivery of justice, especially delay, widespread withdrawal of charges and the inappropriate use of cash settlements.
Accessing Capabilities	

¹⁸⁵ With the support of the UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean, the Joint Statement was generated by high level government officials and civil society representatives from CARICOM countries, with inputs from regional inter-governmental bodies and international partners in the Caribbean. The Statement represents Caribbean voices and expectations in the emerging Post 2015 and SIDS global agendas as it relates to gender equality. UN Women country Office Caribbean, 2015, p.2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Utilise transformative approaches and methodologies that facilitate the development of self-esteem and confidence, autonomy, agency, leadership skills and the ability to participate fully in the life of a family, community and nation; ✓ Facilitate the development and implementation of public education programmes that promote gender equality, respect for human rights and a culture of peace; ✓ Ensure that socio-political and economic factors that negatively impact boys' participation in formal education systems are addressed, and that formal certification carries equal social and economic value for both sexes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provision of the widest range of affordable integrated sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services; ✓ Development of comprehensive health literacy programmes to support holistic, community led initiatives for healthy lifestyles; ✓ Provision of equitable access to reliable potable water and improved sanitation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food and Nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Address inequitable access to land, water, technology and markets that inhibits women's and youth's involvement in agriculture; ✓ Provide for gender sensitive public education and action on food and nutrition, to transform consumption practices.
<p>Economic Empowerment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support for poverty reduction through macro-economic reforms which reduce the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women and other vulnerable groups, including adolescent mothers, female heads of households, persons with disabilities, the elderly, indigenous peoples, domestic workers and rural women in particular; ✓ Support for gender responsive economic policies and practices, including support for the integration of women in non-traditional sectors, including through training in environmentally sustainable technologies; ✓ Strengthened partnerships, ensuring that no one is left behind as a result of enforced fiscal policies.
<p>Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Address the full national implementation of international commitments to achieve gender equality informed by the UN, and international and regional Conventions, treaties and agreements ratified by member states; ✓ Encourage and enable a critical mass of gender sensitive transformational leaders in all aspects of decision making, including at the level of the household, community, local government, trade unions, national government and international governance institutions; ✓ Encourage and enable youth participation and leadership at all levels, through school governance programs and the introduction of a civics curricula in schools.

Source: UN Women country Office Caribbean, 2015

Advocating and monitoring gender equality is not just about promoting the rights of women and girls. Gender equality also remains a cross-cutting dimension that is integral to the effective pursuit of all the SDGs and indeed of holistic people-centred development as such. The stand-alone goal notwithstanding this requirement for gender sensitive policy, planning and programming should inform the Caribbean's response to the SDGs.

Gender equality is essential to an equitable and sustainable future. It is important that policies, measures and actions in regard to gender include but go beyond mere formal commitment to international instruments. They must respond comprehensively and directly to the socio-

economic realities that are part of everyday life for women and girls. In the Caribbean, these include gender violence and economic disempowerment.

C. PROSPERITY: to grow a strong, inclusive and transformative economy

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Given a background of sector growth under-performance, high levels of unemployment and lack of competitiveness, as reflected by persistent current account and fiscal deficits, a Caribbean priority must be “to grow a strong, inclusive and transformative economy”. Goal 8 of the Open Working Group Report is: promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. The Caribbean would however consider as important elements the emphasis on achieving higher levels of productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, the strengthening and formalisation of micro, small and medium enterprises, full and productive employment, including for young people and people with disabilities, and sustainable tourism.¹⁸⁶

A demographic dividend can be realised if healthy educated young people can find decent jobs and are gainfully employed. By rapidly empowering educating and employing young people countries are likely to reap an economic and social dividend that will benefit current and future generations.

Given their size and structure, Caribbean economies will be more heavily reliant than others on trade expansion to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.” Trade now constitutes the major share of GDP in many developing countries and is a substantial share of GDP in most developed economies, but with an average trade to GDP ratio that exceeds 90 percent¹⁸⁷ the Caribbean is almost twice as reliant on trade as the rest of the global community.

A framework that includes improved fiscal and monetary policies, improved trade related and other physical infrastructure, focussed attention on the development of human resources through education and skills training to create a productive and flexible work force, and the enhancement of regulatory and governance institutions, will provide a strong supportive basis for trade expansion to occur as accompaniment to trade openness. These are essential “openness flanking

¹⁸⁶ Report of the Open Working Group, pages 15-16.

¹⁸⁷ Calculated from Table 111 – Structure of Caribbean Economies, 2013.

measures.” The holistic approach envisaged in the sustainable development framework provides scope for implementing growth enhancing measures but importantly as well also requires measures to promote inclusiveness and reduce the inequality that results from trade expansion and economic growth. The latter are equity inducing and are critical for economies relying on trade as the main engine for growth, given that in promoting growth, trade reallocates resources and engenders structural change with differing impact on the economy and population, depending on variables, such as gender, skill levels, and even spatial location, with urban and coastal areas often benefiting more from trade growth. The small size of Caribbean economies and the disproportionate role of trade in regional economies mean that these consequences will be even more pronounced. Training, re-training, and other forms of trade-adjustment assistance, as well as broader social protection measures, will be necessary for the displaced and for vulnerable and marginalised groups. Policy attention in the region will need to be directed towards labour market risks and their impact on women, and special attention given to the adjustment hurdles they and vulnerable groups, such as young people, face in finding employment and participating in economies in transition.

Caribbean SIDS are committed to a decent work agenda which if implemented comprehensively and effectively holds the promise of a much better quality of life for Caribbean workers and other residents. Intrinsic to its achievement is the revitalization of economic growth and the enablement of potential workers through education and training, adequate access to vital utility services such as water and sanitation, major progress in disaster risk reduction and management and the reduction of crime and insecurity to tolerable levels. Caribbean governments need to invest resources in strengthening public sector capacity of agencies central to labour market monitoring as well as broader social and economic monitoring and analysis; they also need to strengthen judicial administration and to build trust and capacity in institutions for tripartite deliberations and social dialogue. New agenda items such as child labour, human trafficking and intra-regional temporary migrant workers are deserving of focused attention¹⁸⁸.

The distinctive advantage of the SDG paradigm is that it will provide a framework for addressing both the specific and the cross-cutting challenges associated across all three pillars with economic growth and diversification in the Caribbean.

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Whether infrastructure is a separate goal or an instrument to achieve growth through other goals can be and is debated. The High-level Panel’s Report includes the proposal to strengthen productive capacity by providing universal access to financial services and **infrastructure** such as transportation and ICT. (Goal 8, Target 8c). The OWG Report has building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation as a single Goal 9. The Caribbean may find neither entirely satisfactory. As mainly small and relatively dispersed islands, infrastructure related to transport and communication is essential to economic development and to integration, regionally, and into the wider global economy. Given

¹⁸⁸ ILO Decent Work in Caribbean Small Island Developing States. UN Conference on SIDS Samoa 2014

its essential nature and huge cost, infrastructure may justifiably be identified as a goal by the region. However, the OWG’s linking of “resilient infrastructure” and “inclusive and sustainable industrialisation” will not be in the interest of small island developing and other small countries, who due to their size are unable to support large scale industrialisation, and who have in fact leapfrogged in many cases from agriculture to low-value added services.

The Caribbean should ensure that infrastructure, such as roads, ports – air and sea - and telecommunications are given clearly defined space in the SDGs, and their importance recognised not only in relation to industry but to services-based economies, and especially for those for whom a viable strategy will be insertion into regional and global value chains, including as goods and services clearing houses and logistic centres. The Caribbean needs to address challenges in ITC through appropriate policy development, legislation and regulations setting, capacity building, cyber security, infrastructure, climate change, rural connectivity, spectrum and broadcasting and broadband, among others. Special emphasis needs to be placed on LDCs and the vulnerable such as children, women and the disabled, as well as remote areas. ICTs need to be fully integrated in addressing the challenges posed by climate change and disaster risk reduction, which would be facilitated by low cost, reliable, and diverse satellite communications. Support for the ongoing efforts by SIDS of the Caribbean to utilize ICTs to fully integrate their societies into the regional and global economies is critical for their achievement of sustainable development. Collaboration with other UN agencies, private stakeholders, regional bodies and administrations are critical if ICTs are to make the strides necessary so that the Caribbean region achieves its fullest potential using ICTs as a fundamental pillar for achieving the SDGs agenda.

In this regard, it is noted that CARICOM’s Strategic Plan 2015-2019 pledges the region to developing air and maritime transport infrastructure and services, and to developing a single ICT space.

D. PLANET: to protect our eco-system for all society and our children

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| <p>Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p> <p>Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</p> <p>Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact (Acknowledging that the UNFCCC is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiation the global response to climate change)</p> <p>Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.</p> <p>Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</p> |
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The Secretary General’s Synthesis Report is cogent on this. “To respect our planetary boundaries we need to equitably address climate change, halt bio-diversity loss and address desertification and unsustainable land use..... We must protect our oceans, seas, rivers and atmosphere as our global heritage We must promote sustainable agriculture, fisheries and food systems.... Foster sustainable management of water resources and of waste and

chemicals...ensure sustainable production and consumption, and achieve sustainable management of marine and terrestrial eco-systems and land use...Most urgently we must adopt a meaningful, universal climate agreement by the end of 2015.”¹⁸⁹

The emerging SDG framework proposes a much more holistic and integrated approach to protecting and preserving the earth’s land and sea resources than is the case with the MDGs and its Goal 7 – Ensuring Environmental Sustainability. The SDG paradigm explicitly recognises that eco-systems – forests, wetlands, and oceans – and the preservation of bio-diversity, are important not only to environmental sustainability but to sustainable development in its various dimensions - social, economic, environmental. This is especially relevant for small island developing and coastal states that are both vulnerable to the advance of climate change and dependent on forests and oceans for livelihoods and way of life. These resources of nature also provide invaluable eco-system services, such as carbon sequestration and fresh water generation.

While the importance of activities such as fishing and coastal and marine tourism is well recognised, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) notes that the sustainable harvesting of marine resources on a broader scale presents a significant opportunity for environmentally sound inclusive growth and development in many small island developing states, whose oceans and seas constitute a much large geographic area than their inland territory.¹⁹⁰

In the Caribbean, for example, the Bahamas has developed an integrated marine policy framework to manage its ocean space and marine resources, while the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) has adopted the Eastern Caribbean Regional Oceans Policy to guide the development of marine resources in a sustainable manner.

It is also important to recognize that women are critical to the third pillar of the sustainable development triad. The United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Human Development Report 2012 drew attention to the intersection between gender equity and environmental sustainability. It emphasized, for example, the relationship between reproductive choice, population growth and the physical limits of the planet, and as well the positive relationship that appears to exist between the political empowerment of women and the pursuit of pro-environment policies in countries.¹⁹¹

As the Caribbean SIDS and LLDCS begin to take paths towards sustainable development, they face immense challenges ranging from fundamental assumptions about economies and lifestyles, a public that has a limited appreciation about the implications of environmental degradation and increasing environmental vulnerability on their lives, to heightened uncertainty about climate, natural productivity, human population and health, economic globalization, and security. Reversing the trend of increasing environmental degradation requires a change in lifestyle

¹⁸⁹ United Nations Secretary General Synthesis Report, para. 75.

¹⁹⁰ See *The Oceans Economy: Opportunities and Challenges for Small Island Developing States*, UNCTAD, 2014. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the sea confers rights to exploration and use of marine resources within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which stretches out to 200 nautical miles from the coast.

¹⁹¹ Human Development Report, 2011, *Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All*, UNDP, pgs. 61–64.

practices that reflects the reality of the region, rather than that of industrialized nations. The Caribbean SIDS and LLDCS must articulate national sustainable development visions based on wellbeing and the improvement of the human condition and fostering sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Sound environmental management will not be undertaken effectively unless the economic and social benefits of doing so are clearly identified and used to justify the required investment of human, institutional, financial and material resources. The likely repercussions for poor environmental planning or inaction will be severe and will risk the progress made so far. The region must articulate a clear, long-term course and vision for sustainable development at the national and regional levels, looking beyond the immediate benefits and taking action that will lead to a sustainable future. Strong commitment, informed decisions and innovative and visionary action are required at every level of society in the changing development paradigm. Public behaviour will not change unless individuals are made aware of the links between their behaviour and environmental degradation, and of the behavioural changes that they must adopt to mitigate the environmental degradation.

Climate change and disaster management must be integrated in risk management activities in the region. This includes using structured planning frameworks, strengthening the links between institutions at national and community levels to be better prepared for climate-related disasters and to build on existing mechanisms including early warning systems. In addition, a long-term outlook must be included to inform risk assessment, and to enable consideration to be given to the frequency of extreme events and worst-case scenarios. Caribbean SIDS must have a better understanding of current climate vulnerability and of how to manage risk (e.g. by developing and implementing early warning systems). Increased collaboration between the climate change and disaster risk reduction community on applying and exchanging methods and tools can help, as can more public awareness through education. New technologies and strategies should be used; building codes and standards need to be improved so that key sectors and areas such as the agriculture sector, water, health, infrastructure and biodiversity are included. Region-specific scientific information must be used to inform risk management options. An integrated approach to vulnerability reduction should be developed and implemented in key sectors, particularly agriculture, tourism and fisheries, to apply sustainable development planning, including local and national physical planning, tools such as geographic information systems (GIS) should be used. There should also be increased use of risk reduction financial instruments and incentives.

CARICOM's Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019 has recognized the importance of responding effectively and with urgency to the challenge posed by climate change. It prioritizes environmental resilience built around advancing climate adaptation and mitigation, disaster mitigation and management, and also strengthening the management of the environment and natural resources. Given its vulnerability, the region should continue to press for a more ambitious target than 2 degrees Celsius¹⁹² above pre-industrial levels in climate negotiations, including at the forthcoming Paris Conference at which it is expected that a legally binding climate instrument will be concluded for the period beyond 2020. The provision of adequate

¹⁹² At the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) of the UNFCCC, Parties agreed to the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions so as to keep the increase in global average temperature below 2 degrees Celsius, and to consider a 1.5 degree Celsius limit in the near future.

funding to the Green Climate Fund, the early operationalization of the Warsaw ‘Loss and Damage’ international mechanism, the Technology Mechanism, and the continued development and implementation in the region of National Adaptation Plans are in the region’s interest and should be encouraged and pursued.

There is no option but to climate-proof the region and its member states if the Caribbean is to negotiate the difficult road from vulnerability to sustainable development. Governments, civil society, the private sector and development partners need to work together to foster inter-sectoral cooperation at all levels to promote safe environments for all, especially children. Action, policies and strategies should be tailored to specific realities and designed to complement each other.

New approaches to planning, decision making and governance must be considered. For example, the use of economic instruments for environmental resource management is still in the early stages in the Caribbean, even though their potential for promoting sustainable development has been recognized. In the past, their use was limited and, in most cases, haphazard, with implementation taking the form of isolated initiatives rather than as a component of a coordinated strategy. However, Caribbean countries have begun to take a more coordinated and strategic approach, exemplified by green economy strategies being developed in Barbados, Jamaica and Saint Lucia, the recent National Sustainable Development Strategy of Belize and the agreement on developing a common regional vision on green economy.

Caribbean countries are also turning to innovative measures and technologies either to develop alternative resources for development activities or to manage existing resources. Useful technologies do not need to be complex, expensive or require major policy decisions for their adoption. Their value lies in the improved efficiency and/or reduced demand on scarce, human, financial, technical or material resources by generating multiple benefit streams. There is an opportunity for these countries to strengthen their capacity to select the technologies that are best suited to sustainable development, ensuring that they are neither unsustainable nor environmentally detrimental.

The cluster of five goals put forward by the Open Working Group (OWG) relating to habitat, environment and the eco-system are important to the Caribbean region, given the Main Challenges outlined earlier. They have direct implications for the future quality of life of citizens and for the speed and direction of travel in regard to sustainable development in the regional archipelago.

E. PEACE: to promote safe and equal societies and strong institutions

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

“Effective governance for sustainable development demands that public institutions in all countries and at all levels be inclusive, participatory and accountable to the people. Laws and institutions must protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. All must be free from fear and violence, without discrimination.”¹⁹³

The United Nations Development Programme’s milestone first Caribbean Human Development Report was concerned largely with the causes and consequence of high levels of crime and insecurity in Caribbean society, which though varying in degree and intensity from country to country, can be described as “a generalized Caribbean problem”.¹⁹⁴ Data provided earlier in this paper lend support to this conclusion (Table VII). The unusually high rates of incarceration, with youth the largest proportion of the incarcerated also require policy attention and action.

The UNDP Report emphasizes that the concept of citizen security is anchored in “those rights to which all members of society are entitled, so that they can live their daily lives with as little threat as possible to their personal security, their civic rights and their right to the use and enjoyment of their property.”¹⁹⁵ It notes that the idea that the state has an obligation to protect the citizen and to do so in ways that respect rights has universal appeal “and is particularly relevant in the Caribbean”.¹⁹⁶ Importantly the Report further states: “Strong and legitimate institutions and inclusive systems of governance are crucial to providing citizen security and justice so as to break cycles of violence.”¹⁹⁷

The Open Working Group (OWG), in Goal 16, captures important elements that relate to regional concerns. Goal 16 reads: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. A criticism that can be made is that the line of causation in this goal is

¹⁹³ Secretary General’s Synthesis Report, para. 77.

¹⁹⁴ Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012: Human Development and the Shift to Better Citizen Security, UNDP, pg.7.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, pg.8. Quoting the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights – Report on Citizen Security and Human Rights (IACHR - 2009).

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, pg.8.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, pg. 8. Taken from World Development Report 2011: Conflict Security, and Development; Washington DC: World Bank.

inverted, or, at a minimum, obscure: it should run from “building effective and accountable institutions” to “peaceful and inclusive societies.” However, this is debatable; effective promotion of peaceful inclusive societies might contribute to greater public support for building the requisite institutions. A linear causation assumption is not necessarily implied and not useful. Another concern is in regard to access to justice. It is important to safeguard the quality of justice to which all citizens should, rightly, have access. This can be done by ensuring (as a Target) judicial independence. Further, other desirable elements included in this goal, such as accountability, the rule of law, and substantially reducing corruption, will be better promoted and ensured through the additional guarantee of press freedom and an independent media, and through the promotion and encouragement of active civil society.

F. PARTNERSHIP: to catalyse global solidarity for sustainable development

Usually Partnership is construed as dealing with the commitments to share responsibility for the implementation of agreed goals, particularly the funding of the implementation measures. Also integral to the Partnership theme is the goal of reducing inequalities **among** countries. Sharing financial responsibility for the implementation of the SDGs will fall short of building the capacity of the less equal countries to sustain their development unless the underlying causes of the inequalities among countries are addressed. Hence the inclusion of this goal (10) among the SDGs and under the Partnership theme as well as the Justice theme is clearly indicated.

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
 Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Drawing upon the Open Working Group (OWG) Report on Sustainable Development Goals presented to the General Assembly and agreed as the main basis for negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda goals, this paper has identified and commented on goals that have particular relevance to the Caribbean. The view advanced is that these goals, their targets and indicators, could play a critical role in the framing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national and regional policy on sustainable development in the Caribbean in the years to come. This is desirable. It is the further view that the transformative potential of implementing policies in these areas will be heightened by the methodology of the SDGs - the associated targets and indicators providing a framework for mobilizing stakeholders and for monitoring, measurement, and accountability at all levels. The timeframe associated with the SDGs – until 2030 – would lend consistency and continuity to key policies, potentially in a hitherto unprecedented manner.

A critical element will be means of implementation, an issue on which there have been many inputs. The two main criticisms of the MDGs have been that (a) they are too narrowly focussed, and (b) means of implementation - resources and modalities – are vague or non-existent. This is to be rectified in the SDGs process, with considerable attention being devoted to means of implementation. Means of Implementation appears as the OWG’s Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

It is generally recognized that the financing requirements for the SDGs will be enormous. It is important to recognize as well that financing will not constitute the only means of implementation – other means include technology, which is particularly relevant to climate change and greening the economy, capacity building, trade, systemic issues related to a supportive international financial and trading environment, and multi-stakeholder partnerships. But financing on an unprecedented size and scale will be necessary for the success of the SDG agenda.

UNCTAD, in its World Investment Report, assumes SDGs that will address areas such as basic infrastructure, food security - agriculture and rural development - climate change mitigation and adaptation, and health and education. It estimates a financing requirement of US\$3.3 to US\$4.5 trillion a year in developing countries. At current levels of investment, the estimated annual funding gap is US\$2.5 trillion.¹⁹⁸ Others have made even more ambitious estimates of the requirements. The Report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (ICESDF)¹⁹⁹ observes that estimates are imprecise and vary widely. It further notes in its Report that estimates of annual investment requirements in infrastructure – water, agriculture, telecoms, power, transport, buildings, industrial and forestry sectors – amount to US\$5 trillion to US\$7 trillion globally.²⁰⁰

By contrast, for example, gross flows of foreign direct investment to developing countries in 2013 was US\$778 billion and net official development assistance (ODA) in the same year was US\$134.8 billion. It is evident that implementing the SDGs will require a step change in the mobilization of financial resources at all levels, and this in circumstances that are not propitious : a sluggish global economy and, in terms of ODA, a level which, though in 2013 was at its highest in real terms, had contracted in the two previous years. Progress in providing funding, for example, to the Green Climate Fund, established in 2010, with a target of US\$100 billion annually by 2020, has been very slow. At present the general trend for financing in the region has been the down-sizing of assistance. Also traditionally, investment has been low for cross cutting areas which are critical to the success of the SDG agenda. For example investment of the international community for gender equality has been minimal. In OECD-DAC reviews, only 5 per cent of all aid targeted gender equality as a principal objective in 2012-2013. When it comes to investing in women’s economic empowerment, the percentage was even lower – 2 per cent – and aid to economic and productive sectors has remained flat.

The UN Secretary General has suggested in his Synthesis Report that the means to finance the agreed upon goals will not be found in one solution, nor borne by one set of actors.²⁰¹ A new or updated financing paradigm is expected to emerge, set largely in the financing streams identified in the ICESDF Report: domestic public financing, domestic private financing, international public financing, international private financing, and blended financing. The expectations

198 World Investment Report 2014, ‘Investing in the SDGs’, UNCTAD, Geneva

199 The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing was established by the General Assembly with a mandate to develop options for a sustainable development financing strategy.

200 ICESDF Report, A/69/315*, pg.8.

201 Secretary General’s Synthesis Report. Para. 87.

regarding each stream and the balance to be sought will continue to be the subject of intensive discussions, including at the Third Financing for Development Conference (FfD) which took place in Addis Ababa in July, 2015. The grave danger in respect of the financing process is that the range of agendas and interests amongst members will distort expectations and judgement so much that what emerges lacks realism regarding the potential contribution of the various streams - including the mobilization of domestic resources in developing countries – thus endangering the entire edifice of the SDGs.²⁰²

The United Nations Secretary General has made several proposals on financing the SDGs, some of which the Caribbean may wish to note in particular. These are:²⁰³

- All developed countries should meet the target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) for Official Development Assistance,²⁰⁴ and levels of concessionality should take into account different development stages, circumstances, and multiple dimensions of poverty, and the type of investment made
- Countries should adopt their own national development financing strategies that take account of all financing flows
- Member states may wish to call on international financial institutions to consider establishing a process to examine the role, scale and functioning of multilateral and regional development finance institutions to make them more responsive to the sustainable development agenda
- More countries from the South to consider contributing to international public finance, with timelines to do so
- Strongly encourage countries to consider using innovative ways to raise additional resources to fund sustainable development at scale
- Enhanced international efforts to strengthen arrangements for transparent, orderly, and participatory sovereign debt restructuring.

The Caribbean region's structural and fiscal difficulties have been outlined, as well as its vulnerability. The Millennium Development Goals Gap Report, 2014 observes that for small states (as defined by the Commonwealth Secretariat)²⁰⁵ the ratio of public debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2013 was 107.7 per cent, compared to a ratio of 26.4 per cent for

²⁰² It is noted, in this regard, that the Elements Paper circulated in New York on January 21, 2015 by the co-facilitators as part of the preparatory process for the 3rd FfD Conference makes the point that although the financing needs for sustainable development are enormous, they can be met by mobilizing and effectively using all sources of finance. The Elements Paper also notes that "...domestic resource mobilization – public and private – is at the crux of financing for sustainable development". If a disproportionate share of the costs of financing the SDGs is to fall to developing countries, then this may beg the question of why agree on goals and targets in respect of policies at the **multilateral level** at all if international cooperation and assistance are not going to be central to their implementation.

²⁰³ Synthesis Report of the Secretary General on the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, pgs.20-25.

²⁰⁴ The scale of the financing needs of the SDGs will have no precedent. Development Assistance Committee members now contribute 0.30% of Gross National Income (GNI) as ODA, well below the United Nations target of 0.70% of GNI. If DAC members were to meet the 0.70 % target, ODA would more than double, to US\$315 billion, but this would hardly be a dent in the several trillion dollar funding gap of even the more conservative estimates of likely SDG requirements.

²⁰⁵ Includes all Caribbean states cited in this paper, except Haiti.

developing countries as a whole.²⁰⁶ The Gap Report also notes that, although considered (with landlocked countries) to be international priorities for assistance, aid flows to small island developing states fell, in 2012, for a second consecutive year – from US\$5.1 billion to US\$4.7 billion.

In light of this, priorities for the region should include supporting initiatives to review the role and functioning of the multilateral and regional development banks in support of sustainable development. This should entail the review of graduation criteria and limits on access to finance by middle income countries that exhibit known and recognized vulnerabilities. The need for debt relief and the constraints on mobilizing substantial new domestic resources should be concerns advanced in the context of discussions on a new paradigm for financing the SDGs. More than two decades after the Earth Summit, the special situation of Caribbean countries should be made clear.

The region's debt burden and fiscal constraints make it imperative that modes of financing the SDGs be non-debt creating or debt extinguishing. This must necessarily entail a greater role for the private sector, regional and extra-regional, in financing development through public/private partnerships, and must entail renewed efforts to attract direct investment, including from non-traditional partners and through South/South flows. But while pursuing these initiatives the region should actively seek an increased share of concessional development assistance and press for debt relief.

An innovative measure that should be considered by the international community for the Caribbean - which, except for Guyana, did not benefit from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPIC) or Multilateral Debt Relief (MDRI) Initiatives - is a debt for SDGs swap in which bilateral and multilateral creditors could agree to forgive portions of debt on condition that participating Caribbean governments invest in attaining agreed sustainable development goals and their associated targets and indicators. These resources could then be utilized for meeting social and environmental commitments or for leveraging private sector involvement in areas such as infrastructure development.

The region's scope for mobilization of significant additional domestic resources through taxation may be limited. ECLAC has recently pointed to "significant progress" made by the Latin American and Caribbean region as a whole in increasing tax revenue. This has risen from 14.4 percent of GDP in 1990 to 21.3 percent in 2013, narrowing the distance between the region and the OECD where the ratio was 34.1 percent in 2013.²⁰⁷ Caribbean countries, such as Barbados (tax to GDP ratio – 25.3 %), Jamaica (27.1 %) and Trinidad and Tobago (28.3%), have ratios that are comparable to major developed countries such as the United Kingdom (25.3% - 2012) and Norway 27.3 % - 2012).²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Millennium Development Goals Gap report, 2014 - The state of the Global Partnership for Development, pg. xii. Small states as defined by the Commonwealth Secretariat include all CARICOM members, except Haiti which, however is classified as a Least Developed Country by the United Nations.

²⁰⁷ ECLAC, Financing for development in Latin America and the Caribbean: A strategic analysis from a middle income perspective, pg.8.

²⁰⁸ World databank <http://data.worldbank.org>

Reducing avoidance and evasion, equity and fairness in tax systems, and efficiency and effectiveness in collection and expenditure of tax revenues are legitimate development and governance objectives for the Caribbean. But the emerging goals of the post 2015 development agenda will not be met without substantial financial, technical and policy support from the international community. The SDGs will be implemented primarily at the national level, but they are globally agreed goals and the outcome of a multilateral process. Ownership thus belongs as well fully and unambiguously to the international community and this should be manifest through the requisite tangible support – support that cannot be negated by a new development or financing paradigm.

In fact it is to be hoped that any new development or financing paradigm would address the root causes of the still increasing inequalities among countries and put in place key elements of a new order that would reverse this trend in the direction set by the SDGs (especially Goal 10).

V. CONCLUSION

The Caribbean Community's Strategic Plan, 2015 – 2019 identifies areas for priority action arising from its environmental scan of the region. These include – macroeconomic stabilization; youth development, entrepreneurship and innovation; human capital development; mainstreaming diversity; reduction in environmental vulnerabilities; diversification and development of energy resources; ICT access, and strengthened governance.²⁰⁹

The SDG paradigm and the SDGs outlined in this paper address these priorities. They are also aligned with the human rights commitments to which the governments are signatories. The proposed SDGs have been independently formulated through UN sponsored consultation processes, but are actually fully consistent with the regionally endorsed strategic directions. A framework based on data generation for evidence and results will improve the ability to assess and evaluate progress and take corrective action. It will also strengthen transparency and accountability. While national ownership is paramount, international cooperation and assistance must play a vital role in the SDG framework and, especially in the case of the Caribbean, much more so than has been the case in recent years which have actually seen the region increasingly marginalized.

The assessment will facilitate the engagement of policy makers and stakeholders in the region building on the opportunity that the post-2015 sustainable development agenda offers. It also provides the basis for the dialogue which will inform the UNMSDF for support to the region. The assessment identifies a diverse range of challenges and the UN will need to identify through deliberations those areas where it has a comparative advantage and can have the greatest value added. The region should fully engage in the preparatory and negotiating processes that will determine what the SDGs will be and how they will be financed. The crosscutting nature of the SDGs and the importance of deep ownership require full inter-Ministerial and interagency involvement as well as input and engagement by stakeholders and civil society

In particular, it must be emphasized that to implement, monitor and benefit from the SDGs the Caribbean will need to generate vastly more quality and timely data about its people, their livelihoods, habitat, circumstances, interests, ways of life than has hitherto been the case. The continued modernizing of statistical systems must be a regional and national priority, driven locally and engaging all stakeholders. The alternative of not having robust data is effectively to fly blind in a turbulent world.

Finally, the SDGs and the accompanying data revolution will require that new and additional resources are made available. The Caribbean has a strong case to be treated as a priority region for assistance. It should make that case. Developed partners, concerned with introducing a new financing paradigm, will promote the options of private flows and domestic mobilization of capital. The circumstances of countries in the region mean these options are of limited viability

²⁰⁹ CARICOM Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019 (Executive Plan – Vol. 1) pg. 5

for them. In general, this is the case with many Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries, and others similarly situated. While national ownership, responsibility and contribution are critical, the region must ensure that the international community is fully informed about the region's constraints and special situation as far as the SDGs and their means of implementation are considered. Most importantly, the Caribbean should make every effort to take full advantage of the unprecedented opportunity the post-2015 sustainable development agenda provides for the region's development transition.

The overall objective should be to ensure that social policies, in areas such as health, education, gender equality, workforce and employment, family and care, are anchored equally and fully into economic and environmental policies in a sustainable development framework. This will ensure that social policies are not merely 'accompanying', 'flanking' or 'compensatory' measures, but transformative drivers of sustainable development and of outcomes that are inherently equitable and inclusive. The Health in All Policies (HiAP) provides a useful model that should be applied in each sector within the holistic SDG framework.

ANNEX I: Proposals for Sustainable Development Goals by the Open Working Group

Goal	Description
Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all women and girls
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact ²¹⁰ (Acknowledging that the UNFCCC is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiation the global response to climate change)
Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

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