



UNITED NATIONS



Distr.
LIMITED
LC/MCCDCC.20/4
23 February 2022
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH
21-01012

**REPORT OF THE TWENTIETH MEETING OF THE MONITORING COMMITTEE
OF THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE**

Virtual meeting, 5 November 2021

CONTENTS

		<i>Paragraph</i>	<i>Page</i>
A.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	1-15	3
B.	ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK	16-25	4
	Place and date of the meeting	16	4
	Attendance	17-23	4
	Officers	24	5
	Documentation.....	25	5
C.	SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS	26-96	5
Annex 1	List of participants	-	23
Annex 2	List of documents.....	-	30

A. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) adopted the conclusions and recommendations below.
2. The meeting acknowledged the valuable work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean over the past year, in particular its foray into new areas such as the creative industries and information and communications technology (ICT) for development.
3. To advance an inclusive and sustainable recovery, the meeting challenged ECLAC and other development partners to reimagine the Caribbean economy and society and work to create a more progressive alternative to what has existed before the pandemic. In addition, the meeting challenged the subregion to recognize the important role of regional integration in helping it overcome the challenges presented by the pandemic.
4. The meeting noted that the Caribbean was facing a triple crisis: a health, economic and climate change crisis that needed to be addressed in a holistic and integrated way.
5. To address the health crisis, the meeting recommended that the Caribbean continue to advocate strongly for vaccine equity, while simultaneously working to combat vaccine hesitancy through education and awareness and encouraging countries to accept, for travel purposes, all vaccines that have been scientifically proven to be safe and effective. Going forward, the subregion should also invest in improved self-sufficiency in health, including the capacity to develop vaccines and personal protective equipment.
6. The meeting also recommended that the Caribbean revitalize measures to contain the epidemic of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which have contributed to high morbidity and deaths among persons infected with coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Measures included increased production and distribution of safe and healthy whole foods to reduce the consumption of imported processed foods and the use of tobacco excise taxes, improved regulation of salt and sugar content in foods and incentives to increase exercise and physical activity among the population.
7. To address the economic fallout from the pandemic and ensure a resilient recovery, the meeting recommended that the Caribbean develop a robust economic restructuring programme built on the upgrading of tourism, agriculture and other sectors to make them more competitive and diversify into new poles of growth such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, the creative industries and the blue, green and circular economies.
8. To leverage integration as a platform for inclusive growth, the meeting proposed that the region promote air and maritime connectivity, including improved logistics to allow for more integrated tourism and commercial sectors between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.
9. The meeting recommended that ECLAC undertake a study on the economic potential of the blue economy in the Caribbean with a focus on specific activities that could be developed commercially and in a sustainable manner.

10. To meet the financing requirements for undertaking the economic adjustment and recovery programme and also adaptation to climate change, the meeting reaffirmed the recommendation of the Prime Minister of Barbados that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) issue an additional US\$ 500 billion in special drawing rights (SDRs) per year, US\$ 2 billion of which would be allocated to the Caribbean. That should be bolstered by state-contingent debt instruments, including hurricane clauses and resilience bonds to expand the fiscal space for post-disaster recovery and reconstruction.

11. The meeting recommended that governments fully support the establishment of the Caribbean Resilience Fund as a key vehicle for raising finance at scale for a climate-resilient transformation and economic restructuring, and for debt relief.

12. The meeting recommended that the subregion place increased emphasis on resource mobilization and development cooperation for climate change adaptation in the associate members of ECLAC, most of whom are not covered by the Paris Agreement.

13. The meeting recommended that the subregion develop a robust, evidenced-based vulnerability index to take to the international community as a key determining factor in allocating concessional resources to small island developing States (SIDS).

14. The meeting proposed that the Caribbean develop a strong programme of advocacy, solidarity building and outreach to inform the international community of its inherent vulnerability and constraints and the need for support, even as it did the best with the domestic resources and capacity at its disposal.

15. The Monitoring Committee took note that in accordance with the established practice of rotation by country in English alphabetical order, Suriname was the next in line to serve as Chair of CDCC. The Committee therefore welcomed the announcement by the Government of Suriname that it would chair the twenty-ninth session of CDCC in 2022. The secretariat would consult with the Government of Suriname with a view to finalizing the date for the twenty-ninth session of CDCC.

B. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

16. The twentieth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of CDCC took place online on 5 November 2021.

Attendance¹

17. Representatives of 12 member States of CDCC attended the twentieth meeting of the Monitoring Committee: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

18. Representatives of six associate members were present at the meeting: British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Martinique, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands.

¹ The list of participants appears as annex 1 to this report.

19. Attending from the United Nations Secretariat were representatives of the Offices of the Resident Coordinators and the Department of Global Communications (DGC).
20. The following entities of the United Nations system were represented: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).
21. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended the meeting: the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).
22. The following academic institution was also represented: University of the West Indies (UWI).
23. Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Paraguay attended in the capacity of observers.

Officers

24. The officers elected to serve during the twenty-eighth session of CDCC presided over the Monitoring Committee, as follows:

Chair: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Vice-Chair: British Virgin Islands
Cuba
Dominica

Rapporteur: Montserrat

Documentation

25. A list of working documents submitted by the secretariat to the meeting may be found in annex 2.

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)

26. At the opening of the twentieth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of CDCC, statements were made by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC; Christian Guillermet-Fernandez, Minister ad interim for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, the country serving as Chair of ECLAC; Diane Quarless, Chief of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean; and Camillo Gonsalves, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of CDCC.

27. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that Latin America and the Caribbean faced unprecedented challenges stemming from the global pandemic. Nevertheless, the meeting provided an opportunity for the Caribbean to engage with the wider Latin American region to promote a better understanding of commonalities and differences in the development needs of the subregion. ECLAC was committed to implementing its strategy of “Caribbean first”. She thanked Minister Guillermet-Fernandez for playing a critical role in strengthening ties with the Caribbean. CDCC was the only subsidiary body of ECLAC whose mandate was defined geographically, to craft development solutions that were relevant to the Caribbean. Further, the opportunity for wider Latin American participation in the meetings of CDCC was a very meaningful development. The Executive Secretary expressed her pleasure in having Minister of Finance of Guyana as a guest speaker at the meeting, since the country was well placed to act as an influential gateway between the Caribbean and Latin America.

28. She noted that the leaders of the Caribbean were in Glasgow at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) to inform the world that Caribbean SIDS faced a genuine existential crisis if industrialized countries failed to heed the warnings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The most important messages emerging from COP26 were the need for dramatic reductions in emissions, adequate financing for adaptation initiatives, more attention to compensation for climate-induced damage and loss, and for enhanced access to concessional financing by small middle-income, vulnerable countries to support durable resilient recovery.

29. The Executive Secretary said that the previous day’s Seminar on Non-Communicable Diseases and their Impact on Sustainable Development in the Caribbean was timely, since they aggravated the health situation of persons with COVID-19. Caribbean governments needed to increase spending on health to the 6% of GDP recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). The Caribbean lacked the resources to manage the health and climate crisis it faced; and therefore needed access to long-term, low-cost financing. Caribbean governments and ECLAC had made efforts to find sources of innovative financing to fund development in the subregion. The Caribbean was calling for US\$ 500 billion in SDRs over the next 20 years to finance an urgent energy transition. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago had called for greater funding for adaptation and assistance for transitioning to a low carbon economy, given the increasing loss of coastline and damage to coral reefs and marine habits from climate change.

30. The Minister ad interim for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, said that “Caribbean first” was an important initiative for Costa Rica. He called for strengthened multilateral cooperation based on solidarity to deal with the pandemic and advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

31. The Chief of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean expressed the organization’s gratitude for the strong leadership that Costa Rica had provided during its tenure as Chair of the Commission, and for its interest in promoting enhanced linkage, integration and solidarity with the Caribbean. She said that the Caribbean looked forward to continued collaboration in the future.

32. The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines said that the pandemic was the worst economic crisis in the post-independence history of the Caribbean. In fact, in some countries from the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) GDP had declined by more than 20% in 2020. Many countries in the subregion were facing the prospect of a lost decade of economic growth. Compounding the challenge of the pandemic, the subregion faced the existential threat of climate change. The commitments at COP26 fell far short of what was required to ensure the survival of Caribbean SIDS. Furthermore, many countries in the subregion had been struck by hurricanes in 2021. The Caribbean was also challenged by developments in the global financial architecture,

such as the new global minimum corporate tax rate, which would decimate many of the competitive tax jurisdictions in the subregion. This was made worse by continued de-risking, loss of correspondent banking relationships and the flight of international banks, which increased vulnerability, owing to reduced diversity of banking in the subregion. The crisis had also exposed yawning gaps in inequality, social protection, and intensified the subregional debt crisis. The Minister called on the Caribbean to reimagine its economy and society after the pandemic to foster a more people-centred, Caribbean-specific society and to recognize the important role of integration in helping to overcome the challenges of the pandemic.

33. There being no objections, the agenda was adopted as presented. The Chair indicated that the report of the meeting would be circulated to delegations by 19 November; delegates would have seven days to review the report send any amendments to the secretariat in writing. The report of the meeting would be approved on a no objection basis if no amendments were received within that seven-day timeframe. The report of the meeting would therefore be considered final on 26 November 2021.

34. The meeting adopted the following agenda²:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Accelerating recovery and strengthening economic resilience in the Caribbean.
3. Supporting recovery through regional solidarity and integration.
4. Safeguarding the health of the Caribbean.
5. Implementation of the 2020 programme of work for the Caribbean.
6. Other matters.
7. Date and venue of the twenty-ninth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
8. Conclusions and recommendations.

Accelerating recovery and strengthening economic resilience in the Caribbean (agenda item 2)

35. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC outlined a strategy for a post-COVID-19 recovery in the Caribbean. She said that the subregion faced a protracted health crisis that affected countries differently across the world, in part due to unequal access to vaccines, wealth and financing. The pandemic amplified the structural weaknesses in health systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the region was experiencing a recovery paradox marked by a pickup in growth that was not inclusive and transformative. The region was facing increasing poverty, inequality, informality and unemployment, which were likely to persist unless corrective policies were implemented. The region needed strategies for transformative recovery focused on investment with equality and sustainability. The region was facing a triple health, debt and climate crisis. The health crisis was particularly concerning since, between 2020 and 2021, the cases of COVID-19 per million inhabitants in the Caribbean were very close to the high levels in the United States and Canada and above that of Latin America. Also, daily deaths per million, which had been falling in Latin America, were increasing in the Caribbean.

² LC/MCCDCC.20/1

36. The Executive Secretary said that the prevalence of NCDs had aggravated the health crisis in the subregion and broad-based development had been impeded by the climate crisis. Indeed, two thirds of deaths in the Caribbean were caused by NCDs. There was a need for universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems. Further, resilience building in the Caribbean needed to tackle the multidimensional crisis and global asymmetries such as the global minimum corporate tax rate, de-risking, and the middle-income status that prevented Caribbean countries from accessing concessional financing. Lack of food security was also a key challenge, and the Caribbean faced the highest levels of undernourishment in the region, second only to Africa globally. People were unable to afford healthy diets, which led to rising incidence of NCDs.

37. She noted that the fiscal challenge was a major vulnerability in the Caribbean. Public debt had increased, on average, by 21 percentage points between 2019 and 2021, and average debt was 96.5% of GDP, with some countries' ratios in excess of 100%. In the real sector, losses in tourism's contribution to growth in 2020 averaged between 6.6% and 8.5%. Job losses were also very high, especially in tourism, and women were disproportionately affected, as 10.5% of the female labour force was employed in tourism compared with 4.6% for men. Although the subregion was expected to recover somewhat with growth of 4.1% in 2021 and 7.8% in 2022, this was from a negative base and was not expected to translate into more jobs and higher productivity growth.

38. She then said that the threat from natural disasters was a real challenge for the subregion. Indeed, many storms had affected the subregion during the pandemic. Notably, the cost of Hurricane Maria in 2017 in the British Virgin Islands and Sint Maarten was more than 100% of their GDPs. Therefore, disaster recovery and reconstruction spending were major drivers of growth in debt in the Caribbean. Moreover, although the Caribbean had one of the lowest levels of carbon emissions in the world, it was severely affected by climate change and natural disasters. Disaster impacts were aggravated by 70% of the population living in low-lying areas, leaving them heavily exposed to sea level rise. Despite those multiple vulnerabilities, many countries in the Caribbean had been graduated from international concessional financing based on per capita gross national income (GNI), a limited and inadequate criterion.

39. The Executive Secretary outlined some key development priorities to build forward better in the Caribbean, including: a focus on strengthening food security by increasing domestic production; promoting economic diversification, including through investment in blue, green and circular economic activities; the need to expand broadband access and promote wider use of digital platforms for education, communication and commerce; more robust measures to strengthen risk assessment and disaster management; enhanced social protection to address the needs of vulnerable groups and the upgrading of health infrastructure to better respond to COVID-19. Economic restructuring was key to facilitating a resilient recovery in the subregion and should be based on upgrading of existing economic sectors and diversification into new activities and markets. Upgrading should be driven by product and process upgrading, including subsectors such as eco- and heritage tourism and strategies to boost investment in those and other activities to increase productivity, efficiency and cost competitiveness, and should be supported by diversification into other areas such as electronics, aerospace parts and pharmaceuticals and the opening of new markets in Latin America to ensure a sustained recovery.

40. She noted that the Caribbean already had key mechanisms and institutions that were working well to address some of the challenges it faced, including the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) that dealt with disaster management; the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) that addressed climate change issues; and the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF SPC) that provided parametric insurance for countries in the subregion that were impacted by natural disasters. In addition, the Caribbean Geospatial Development Initiative (CARIGEO) was an interesting example of using geospatial technologies for disaster risk reduction and other activities.

41. She said the thirty-sixth session of the Committee of the Whole would focus on financing for development on 3 December 2021 in New York. The aim was to get new issuance of SDRs and reallocation of SDRs to middle-income countries. This would reinforce the Prime Minister of Barbados' call for issuance of US\$ 500 billion per year that would amount to US\$ 2 billion in extra international reserves in the Caribbean. State contingent debt instruments such as hurricane clauses and resilience bonds also needed to be institutionalized, to expand fiscal space in the Caribbean.

42. The Executive Secretary indicated that ECLAC strongly supported the Caribbean Resilience Fund. The Fund would provide low-cost medium- to long-term financing for resilience building in the Caribbean. She noted that the Caribbean Resilience Fund was requesting from donors and other financiers an initial capitalization of US\$ 6.9 billion, equivalent to 12.2% of the Caribbean's debt. The Caribbean Resilience Fund would be a segregated portfolio trust fund with themes based on resilience building, growth and competitiveness and a liquidity and debt facility. Costa Rica had also proposed a Fund to Alleviate COVID-19 Economics (FACE) to redistribute liquidity to affected countries regardless of their per capita GNI. The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) had promoted the development of a multidimensional vulnerability index (MVI) for SIDS. ECLAC and UNDP were working with the Commonwealth to develop that index, which was crucial for reconsidering the eligibility of countries for concessional financing for SIDS and to replace the narrow per capita GNI criterion. To persuade the international community to accept the index would require strong advocacy, solidarity and multilateral cooperation.

43. The Executive Secretary said that ECLAC proposed to convert the Committee on South-South Cooperation into a Conference to include more member States and donors to discuss what was needed to foster sustained growth, structural change and stronger institutions in the region. The Conference would also examine new means of measuring development beyond per capita GNI.

44. The Executive Secretary proposed key measures to build forward better in the Caribbean. Those included new measuring tools to assess development progress; the design of new strategies for cooperation, including the development of regional public goods; reformed regional and global governance mechanisms; new modalities for accessing financing, technical assistance, debt reduction and technology transfer for development; and fostering cooperation with the wider Latin American region. She then proposed key recommendations for a sustainable and resilient recovery in the subregion, including: an integrated strategy to contain the health, debt and climate crises; better use of catastrophe clauses, including hurricane clauses and parametric insurance to reduce the impact of disasters and strengthen societal resilience; fiscal and export promotion reforms to build macro-stability as a platform for stable growth; upgrading and diversification of key economic sectors by investing in skills, digital and other technologies and innovation; with support from partners, the subregion needed to actively seek to establish the Caribbean Resilience Fund to leverage and scale up resources for a sustainable green, blue and circular economic transformation; a strong advocacy and outreach programme to encourage international solidarity for financial and technical assistance support.

45. She said that other key issues to facilitate recovery in the subregion included the need to strengthen statistical infrastructure and data collection in the subregion. ECLAC was working closely with CARICOM on data for evidenced-based decision-making. The subregion should also pursue innovative access to finance and insurance schemes; invest in national development planning; expand its health infrastructure; and invest in upgrading the skills of its youth. In addition, measures should be implemented to strengthen partnerships with the private sector and increase investment in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Development partners also needed to advocate on the prevalent vulnerability in the Caribbean. The region should develop universal social protection systems to increase resilience to disaster risks and external shocks and to align policies to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In closing, she called for a plan for improved self-sufficiency in health matters to prepare for the next pandemic or major health shock.

46. The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanked the Executive Secretary for her presentation, noting that the analysis and recommendations provided a good platform for driving recovery in the subregion.

47. The Minister of Finance of Guyana provided perspectives on how the Caribbean could accelerate recovery and strengthen economic resilience. He thanked the Executive Secretary for identifying some of the critical issues facing the subregion and outlined his perspective on key challenges for the Caribbean. COVID-19 had devastated most economies in the subregion, especially those that were tourism-based. The closure of hotels and other businesses had led to significant job losses and impacts on the livelihoods of affected persons. The subregion had been focused on saving lives through a range of measures, including border closures and vaccination of its population. Nevertheless, vaccine equity and hesitancy continued to present challenges for the subregion.

48. With respect to vaccine equity, the Minister of Finance noted that in the early months of the pandemic, many Caribbean countries could not access enough vaccines through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility in a timely manner. Therefore, they had to source vaccines from wherever they could. This meant in some cases the use of vaccines that were either not approved or only approved on an emergency use basis by WHO. This, in turn, created another problem: with evolving global travel restrictions whereby countries had given preference to some vaccines over others, vaccine acceptance in the subregion had been affected. Therefore, segments of the population had decided to take only vaccines that were accepted for international travel. The subregion needed to advocate for timely approval of all vaccines that had been scientifically proven to be safe and effective. This was essential to ensure that global travel rules did not create incentives for persons to take some vaccines and not others, which ultimately harmed vaccine take-up across the Caribbean.

49. On the climate crisis, he reiterated that the Caribbean was acutely vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. He thanked the Executive Secretary for fielding a team to conduct a damage and loss assessment (DaLA) of the recent floods in Guyana, which had devastated its agriculture sector. On resilience, the subregion needed to move from presenting an emotional argument about its vulnerability to a technically rigorous and objective analysis, with indicators that could persuade development partners. ECLAC had the intellectual capital for that, which it should use to develop measures to articulate the vulnerability of the subregion as part of the global advocacy relating to issues such as a multidimensional vulnerability index. Per capita GNI was a misleading indicator of development and in the case of Caribbean SIDS created a “middle-income illusion” that they were wealthy when they were not, masking significant pockets of poverty and vulnerability across sectors and regions.

50. He said a rigorous vulnerability index was needed to persuade the global community to move away from per capita GNI as a measure of development. The global community lacked a universally accepted index to measure vulnerability, which would provide a fairer means for countries to access development assistance. While there were strategies for assessing vulnerability and proven adaptation measures, the real constraint was a lack of sufficient financial and technical capacity to implement those strategies. Many countries in the subregion did not have the capacity to build what was needed, much less to build back better, and simply did not have the fiscal resources to build out any truly climate-resilient infrastructure. The capital of Guyana, Georgetown, could be underwater by 2030 because of its low-lying nature. Therefore, the subregion needed to have a conversation with the international community about increasing the pool of affordable resources for building out more climate-resilient local infrastructure.

51. With respect to the debt crisis, the Minister of Finance said that although he supported expanding the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and a special debt relief mechanism for the subregion, the fiscal and external sector challenges in the Caribbean meant there was also a critical need to reform the real economy. Lasting reform was required to upgrade and diversify the productive sectors to make them more competitive and resilient. In this regard, agriculture and food security were critical not only for economic and productive diversification, but also to alleviate the epidemic of NCDs that stemmed, in part, from consumption of imported processed foods. Within CARICOM, attention was being given to transforming agrifood systems to reinvigorate the regional agenda on food security, which could help to reduce the subregion's food import bill. However, that required removal of binding impediments to investment in agricultural production and trade, including transportation, sanitary and phytosanitary requirements. There also needed to be a serious conversation on what was required to re-open and revitalize the tourism sector. Furthermore, the subregion needed to move beyond traditional sectors to real, meaningful and lasting diversification by harnessing technology for knowledge-based industries, including ICT. In addition, it was important to invest in people, to build up the human capital of the subregion and thus harness the benefits of the knowledge economy. The blue economy was also important in the subregion. Apart from the Pacific, no other region in the world had larger ocean and marine resources relative to land mass than the Caribbean. Therefore, the subregion needed to properly analyse how those resources could better contribute to its development, thus enabling better leverage of those resources to drive its economic transformation.

52. The Minister of Finance said that the subregion must not shy away from insisting on critical points that had been on the global agenda for a very long time, such as the United Nations commitment to 0.7% of per capita GNI of developed countries for official development assistance (ODA), which after half a century had not been achieved. The commitment had largely been ignored by the global community, suggesting a failure to recognize that economic development in any country or region was a global public good. The world had lost sight of the universality that was shared as a common humanity. Indeed, when countries had committed to the benchmark, it was because they recognized that underdevelopment in other parts of the world also affected them. However, fifty years later, the countries seemed to have forgotten that commitment. Moreover, countries had committed to other targets, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the US\$ 100 billion for climate finance, which had not been met, and there was the prospect that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs would meet a similar fate. Caribbean countries felt very strongly that as a global community this should be the 'age of delivery' and countries should commit to achieving long-standing targets that they themselves had set.

Supporting recovery through regional solidarity and integration (agenda item 3)

53. The Minister ad interim of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, the country serving as Chair of ECLAC, provided perspectives on how the subregion could support recovery through regional solidarity and integration. The pandemic had reinforced the important lesson that only through solidarity and international cooperation could the region and the world emerge from the crisis. Latin America and the Caribbean had many examples of solidarity and cooperation, but there was much room for greater collaboration and integration. Costa Rica had promoted trade and integration within the Central American Integration System (SICA) and had addressed health, social and environmental issues. Furthermore, within the framework of ECLAC, efforts had been made to strengthen political coordination and the single voice of the entire region, in particular, to promote an equal, sustainable and green recovery after the pandemic. As Chair of the Commission, Costa Rica was willing to work with the Caribbean to achieve those goals. Crucially, the region was committed to strengthening the multilateral system to advance the interests of small States, which they could not champion individually. Key practical areas of collaboration to promote a more inclusive and resilient recovery included better and more equitable access to vaccines; digitization and advancement of technology for development; increased intra-regional trade and investment; greater

maritime and air connectivity to encourage regional trade and tourism; adaptation and mitigation initiatives for climate change and disaster risk management; preferential access to financing; and greater financial integration. The Chile-Costa Rica-Caribbean cooperation initiative to share good practices and successful cooperation experiences welcomed input on issues of special importance to the strategic sectors and interests of the Greater Caribbean. In addition, Costa Rica, as Chair of the Special Committee on Cooperation and Resource Mobilisation of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), supported viable cooperation projects in areas of common interests such as tourism, trade, transport, and the mitigation of natural disasters.

54. On the issue of access to vaccines, he noted that there had been great regional solidarity, including from the Dominican Republic and from Cuba, which had facilitated access to its Soberana 2 vaccine and sent medical professionals to help several countries at the beginning of the pandemic. However, he called on the region to strengthen coordination mechanisms for the acquisition of vaccines through the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The region needed to encourage cooperation in prevention, control, diagnosis and treatment, which could positively impact public health systems, as well as help it to better prepare for future public health emergencies. Costa Rica in this regard had promoted collaboration with WHO to create a repository called the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) to promote the sharing of knowledge, intellectual property and data related to health technologies to combat COVID-19. The aim was also to facilitate timely, equitable and affordable access to vaccines, medicines and medical equipment to deal with the pandemic. All of this was based on the principle of health as a global public good. There was an ECLAC initiative to promote health self-sufficiency by increasing health and pharmaceutical supplies in the region and in that regard, greater investment was needed in research and development.

55. The Minister reiterated that the pandemic had a major impact on public indebtedness, which limited the fiscal and manoeuvring space of governments. Therefore, the establishment of innovative financing mechanisms such as the Caribbean Resilience Fund and clauses for pandemics and hurricanes as part of loan provisions was a step in the right direction. In that regard, Costa Rica had championed, with the support of ECLAC, the FACE fund, which aimed to facilitate access to financing on preferential terms. As Chair of ECLAC, Costa Rica was also convening a meeting in early December with regional organizations to analyse and pursue specific proposals for financing mechanisms for the region, with a particular focus on Central America and the Caribbean. Emphasis would also be placed on the situation in Haiti, which, based on the principle of solidarity, must concern all countries in the region. The region would continue to insist that per capita GNI could not be used as the only metric for access to concessional finance. In that respect, Costa Rica had promoted a strategy on opportunities for renewed cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean and development in transition, which was supported by ECLAC. The focus was on changing existing paradigms to enhance opportunities for the global community's international cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean. Costa Rica was addressing that issue with the utmost urgency in all possible international forums, with multilateral financial organizations and, in particular, with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). With respect to financing, Costa Rica had promoted—in the Sixth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)—a special declaration on financing for adaptation to climate change with a view to COP26 to encourage developed countries to comply with their financing commitments made under the Paris Agreement.

56. He noted that climate change was an issue of concern to all, which jeopardized the region's potential for a sustainable and resilient recovery. To reduce the devastation caused by the natural disasters to which it was constantly exposed, the Caribbean needed to invest significantly in national and regional adaptation, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery strategies. There were multiple initiatives at the multilateral level that could be pursued as a region for biodiversity preservation and for climate change mitigation and adaptation, such as the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, which proposed the

protection of 30% of the planet's land and ocean by 2030, and which Costa Rica invited Caribbean countries to join. Protection of the region's oceans was extremely important, since it could not achieve a truly sustainable economic recovery, effectively fight against climate change, or achieve the SDGs, if it did not take urgent action to protect and preserve its seas and oceans. The region was taking some actions in that regard. Costa Rica and Jamaica were two of the ten countries chosen as Lead Partnering Countries (LPC) of the GloLitter Partnerships (GLP) project and were leading actions in their respective subregions to foster national initiatives in the context of support for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear.

57. The Minister also stressed that it was strategic to advance the regionalization agenda, which required progress on national agendas regarding productive development and structural change. Regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean would enable better global integration. This was especially important considering the complex global context in which the region found itself, with the collapse of logistics and international transport systems. The region was stronger as an integrated region. Intraregional trade in Latin America and the Caribbean had suffered a gradual decline over the past 20 years. Hence, the region needed to remedy that situation. It was important to promote greater links with the rest of the region in trade and investment and the development of strategic partnerships through measures such as reactivation of existing free trade agreements. In that regard, the region needed to promote air and maritime connectivity and implement new concepts for the logistics industry with an inclusive, resilient and sustainable vision, which enabled more integrated development of the tourism and commercial sectors, and the economy in general. In that respect, as that was one of the issues that was identified in meetings held to promote collaboration, Costa Rica was coordinating with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA) to explore mechanisms and perform feasibility studies for air connectivity between Central America and the Caribbean.

58. The Minister stated that leaders had identified spaces to promote collaboration in the tourism sector, which, for the Caribbean and Costa Rica, was a fundamental pillar of economic stability. That included promotion of a sustainable tourism certification system for the region that could be approved by the different countries. Costa Rica also participated in triangular cooperation projects in the management of tourism destinations to preserve biodiversity and ensure resilience to the health crisis.

59. The Minister highlighted the potential for the development of a blue economy and creative industries, which would create opportunities for the sustainable use of resources, allowing greater participation in global value chains. The region needed to take advantage of new trends such as nearshoring to strengthen its industries and guarantee new developments, including increased food security for its population. Since the ongoing crisis was global, there was also an urgent need—as an international community and specifically in Latin America and the Caribbean—to identify and capitalize on opportunities focused on achieving stability that led to growth, equity and environmental sustainability with a view to achieving a more egalitarian and inclusive region.

60. Lastly, the Minister noted that regional leaders were convinced that development cooperation was the ideal tool to promote international and regional solidarity and a means to address the multidimensional challenges that the entire world faced, but which had the most severe impact on the Caribbean. Political dialogue, strengthening of regional agreements and deepening of intra-regional cooperation would be key vehicles to diversify economies and strengthen development efforts.

Plenary discussion

61. During the discussion, the Deputy Premier of the British Virgin Islands and Minister for Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture provided perspectives from the viewpoint of the associate members of ECLAC. He noted that it was a pleasure to listen to the insights of Minister ad interim for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica on the need for regional solidarity and cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean in order to accelerate the region's recovery from the pandemic, which was a view he shared. Costa Rica had demonstrated its sincerity and determination to enhance greater cooperation across the region, and he commended the country on its efforts so far.

62. The Deputy Premier acknowledged the work done by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC and her team at the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in highlighting the negative impacts of the pandemic on the Caribbean, advocating for vaccines at the global level and pushing for greater support for middle-income countries of the Caribbean. He thanked the Chair of ECLAC and the Commission for including the associate members in the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. That, he said, was an important part of integrating the associate members into the sustainable development framework of the region. Also, within the Forum there was the first ever high-level meeting of the associate members, in which they discussed their challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda. That dialogue provided a greater sense of the associate members' gaps in development and where development cooperation could help them achieve the SDGs.

63. The Deputy Premier thanked Costa Rica for highlighting to the wider Latin American region that the associate members were a part of the region and should be integrated in the existing sustainable development framework. He said that the British Virgin Islands and other associate members welcomed Costa Rica's commitment to a second meeting of the associate members in 2022 within the framework of the fifth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. He recommended that the meeting include an agenda item entitled "resource mobilization and development cooperation for climate change adaptation in the associate members", as most associate members were not covered by the Paris Agreement, but faced huge gaps in building climate resilience. The associate members were also SIDS, whose very existence was threatened by climate change. Indeed, the destruction caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in the British Virgin Islands and other associate members was an ample demonstration of that.

64. He noted that to secure a brighter future after the pandemic, the region needed to position itself for a recovery that would deepen economic integration, strengthen social protection, accelerate digital transformation and boost climate action. He stressed the importance of working through South-South cooperation, noting that the British Virgin Islands and other associate members were keen to access technical expertise and centres of excellence in the region that could assist in the pursuit of their sustainable development objectives. He called on the region to support the inclusion of the associate members in the establishment of the Caribbean Resilience Fund. Lastly, he thanked the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean for its continued responsiveness and support to the British Virgin Islands.

65. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados said that the pandemic had devastated the economies and societies of the Caribbean, upending lives and livelihoods. Barbados, for instance, was experiencing its worst period of the pandemic with increasing cases and loss of life as the Delta variant raged through communities, despite efforts to get as many people as possible vaccinated as quickly as possible. The pandemic had triggered a deep recession in the Barbadian economy, with a major fallout in the mainstay tourism sector and substantial loss of government revenues. That had led to a challenging financial situation, made worse by the need for unplanned spending in the health sector, and on social safety nets to cushion the effects on the most vulnerable in society.

66. The Permanent Secretary reaffirmed the call by the Prime Minister of Barbados for developed country partners to provide concessional financing and access to credit to assist Caribbean SIDS in restructuring their economies and to offset the massive revenue shortfalls stemming from the pandemic. She said that should be buttressed by debt relief and access to low-cost, long-term development finance for the heavily indebted countries of the Caribbean, in order to provide much needed fiscal space and to reduce the likelihood of debt default. A universal vulnerability index was needed, which would make clear the challenges faced by SIDS and prove their case for the use of special parameters for international financial assistance. COVID-19 presented opportunities, including digital transformation, which could improve the delivery of education, health, commerce and other activities. Nevertheless, to realize the full benefits the subregion needed to invest in secure, affordable broadband infrastructure, as efficiency, innovation and productivity became even more critical in gaining competitive edge. Barbados needed to increase its competitiveness through a capital works programme, improving its ease of doing business and public service delivery to recovery strongly from the pandemic.

67. She then proposed important sectors to drive the recovery of the Caribbean economy. Those included a sustainable blue and green economy, quality production and high-value niche manufacturing and research and development through the expansion of Caribbean technologies. More effective multilateralism and international cooperation was needed to solve global problems, including strengthened South-South cooperation. Indeed, the digital revolution opened prospects for South-South cooperation in e-commerce and regional economic expansion after the pandemic. Going forward, Barbados would focus on increasing its efforts to diversify its economy and enhance resilience through increased disaster risk financing, to ensure an inclusive green recovery. Concessional financing was therefore critical to the recovery effort.

68. The Chief of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean conveyed the organization's appreciation for the powerful and persistent advocacy of the Prime Minister of Barbados on behalf of the subregion, and thanked the representatives of the British Virgin Islands and Barbados for their remarks.

Safeguarding the health of the Caribbean (agenda item 4)

69. The Executive Director of CARPHA presented the outcome of the Seminar on Non-Communicable Diseases and their Impact on Sustainable Development in the Caribbean that was held on the previous day, organized by ECLAC, PAHO and CARPHA. She noted that the seminar aimed to broker a dialogue on the prevalent and pervasive challenge of NCDs in the Caribbean. It examined, in particular, how those diseases exacerbated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The seminar featured presentations from medical practitioners from the Ministries of Health and Wellness of Barbados and Belize, representatives from the University of Technology in Jamaica and the University of the West Indies at Saint Augustine, a senior researcher and an executive from public and private institutions, respectively, and experts from PAHO. She outlined the following outcomes from the seminar:

- (i) Caribbean countries were facing continuing and varied challenges linked to the pandemic. Also, evidence of the extent to which COVID-19 had been made worse by NCDs made the discussion of the issue even more relevant. Indeed, the Caribbean had one of the highest incidences of NCDs in the world. Caribbean people lived daily with the health risk associated with NCDs. COVID-19 had heightened the risk faced by persons living with those chronic diseases. The Caribbean should continue in its effort to procure and administer vaccines, since the subregion was behind the global average in the share of its population vaccinated.

- (ii) The NCD challenge was illustrated by the fact that in Barbados, for instance, 80% of admittance to the medical and surgical wards were for NCDs and their complications, while 80% to 85% of COVID-19 deaths were in persons with NCD co-morbidities. In Belize, NCDs were an added burden in the management of COVID-19, with diabetes and hypertension representing the main co-morbidities.
- (iii) In the Caribbean, the evolution of social dynamics precipitated by the pandemic had resulted in increased levels of hunger and reduced nutrition. This was important, as poor nutrition was a key driver of the onset of NCDs. An important consideration was that, while governments had aided households to cushion the impacts of the pandemic, research indicated that cash transfer programmes had been poorly targeted and had disproportionately benefited higher income households.
- (iv) Lessons from India also pointed to a rural-urban divide in the psychosocial impacts of COVID-19, whereby rural populations found it more difficult to obtain medicines, in addition to suffering worsening symptoms of diabetes and hypertension.
- (v) The time was ripe for the Caribbean to elevate NCDs beyond the remit of personal responsibility and to situate the issue more firmly as one to be addressed within the context of national economic and social challenges. Indeed, COVID-19 provided a good opportunity for the subregion to refocus on NCDs. Efforts should be made to implement or scale up tools to effectively reduce the prevalence of NCDs in the subregion. That required the engagement of all sectors and a focus on quality nutrition and physical exercise as an overarching strategy to combat those diseases. In addition, digital health service interventions such as telemedicine provided a means to bridge the gap in healthcare that COVID-19 had highlighted.
- (vi) Although NCDs constituted a huge economic burden, research showed that the returns on interventions to combat them were quite good. However, that fact was not often part of the discussion when setting health policies in the subregion. Moreover, there existed several useful, proven and cost-effective best practices, which could be adopted by the Caribbean to reduce the burden of NCDs over time. Those include increasing tobacco excise taxes and prices; banning tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; creating smoke-free environments in all indoor workplaces; and reducing salt and sugar intake by reformulating food products and setting target levels for meals.

70. The Executive Director then said there was need for improved customs and border control measures to ensure that fiscal measures to control NCDs were enforced. There were good opportunities for public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the management of NCDs, modelled on state-funded disease assistance programmes to provide drugs for NCD management, in collaboration with the private sector that had been implemented in four Caribbean countries. In addition, there was a need to address the huge research gap between the global North and South in exploring feasible instruments —such as taxes and investment— to treat the NCD epidemic in the subregion.

71. The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in his capacity as Chair of CDCC, thanked the Executive Director of CARPHA for continually educating persons across the subregion in the past year and more on the pandemic and the interconnected challenges of NCDs and how they were linked to COVID-19.

72. The Minister of Finance of Guyana thanked the organizers for convening the meeting, which he said was very timely given the added challenge of COVID-19 and against the backdrop of COP26 in Glasgow. Development obstacles, which had plagued the region over the years, were being exacerbated by the pandemic. The impacts on the subregional economy ranged from significant decreases in revenue owing to the decline in economic activity to falls in foreign direct investment (FDI) and in some cases capital

flight. Additionally, health care systems in many Caribbean countries were overwhelmed. The skewed classification used for graduating many countries of the Caribbean, which were deemed middle-income countries, needed to be rethought. It excluded many deserving countries in the subregion from the assistance needed to reduce their vulnerability and build resilience. Key vulnerabilities included the devastating effects of climate change, volatility in markets and dependence on a single major export. The subregion needed the support of the international community to complement its own efforts to address those challenges. Integral to the development of the Caribbean was the need to address issues related to areas such as food security, energy and de-risking, which needed to be tackled to accelerate the rebuilding process. It was therefore imperative that the subregion vigorously advocate for and pursue the causes that were crucial to the Caribbean's development and improved quality of life for its people.

73. The President of the Commission for International Cooperation of Martinique, speaking on behalf of the President of Martinique, noted that Martinique was once again available to participate and collaborate in the work and meetings of ECLAC. It was important for Martinique to be present at meetings alongside other Caribbean countries. The representative thanked ECLAC for the quality of the seminar held on the previous day and the other events. She said that Martinique's geopolitical context was that of a French territory in the Caribbean and part of the European Union, but it had also always shown a keen interest in integrating and cooperating with countries in its natural space in the Caribbean. Caribbean partners were very important, especially during challenging times. Indeed, Martinique was part of ACS, ECLAC, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and soon CARICOM. The change of political status of Martinique in 2015 (to a Territorial Authority), gave the island more powers. On 5 December 2016, the Territorial Authorities were given greater freedom in their dealings with the outside world. Martinique wanted to be integrated with the Caribbean in the subregional cooperation space and with other partners and actors. The subregion needed to build resilience through innovation and investment, to transform its economies and societies, and to think collectively, raise questions with each other and experiment together.

74. In outlining the challenge facing the subregion, she stated that the vulnerable territories of the subregion had been affected by external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, dependency on imports and the high cost of raw materials. Therefore, the Caribbean needed to promote local products and systems that supported each other, while limiting its dependency on imports. In addition, other challenges, including rising sea levels and climate change, which were addressed at COP26 were important for the subregion. Other challenges including population ageing, brain drain, land erosion, cancer and other NCDs, lack of food security, sargassum, and a lack of health infrastructure, medical experts and specialists. Importantly, the subregion needed to draw lessons from the health crisis to reform and rethink its economies, societies and consumption patterns.

75. On the issue of solidarity, she said that international solidarity was key to combatting the health crisis and ensuring the survival of the countries of the subregion. In that regard, Martinique received financial assistance from France and the European Union under the recovery plan that was launched by France for all its territorial authorities. In addition, human resource support was provided by Cuba. In 2020, 16 medical doctors came to provide highly appreciated support to the hospitals and medical teams in Martinique, for the first time. Also, with European Union funding, Martinique had supported private companies as well as the most vulnerable members of the population during the pandemic.

76. The representative proposed opportunities for regional cooperation in the following areas:

- (i) Dealing with the high death rate from COVID-19 and providing better treatment for younger patients suffering from prostate and breast cancer.
- (ii) The creation of a Caribbean nuclear imaging company, underpinned by a medical cooperation project to improve the condition of patients diagnosed with cardiovascular and cancerous diseases and neurological disorders. The company was set to be operational in

July 2022 with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment. It would include a health facility, telemedicine, distance learning and training. It would also focus on new clinical research which could lead to the development of new patents. The company would be an important asset for the Caribbean, French Guiana, Latin America, France and even Europe.

- (iii) Martinique invited ECLAC and the countries of the region to join the partnership network that was being built, to improve access to medical care for patients in the Caribbean as a whole. Many countries had already joined: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.
- (iv) A working group had been created with OECS to identify the means and resources available in each country to provide health-care access to the most vulnerable groups in the population. ECLAC and the countries of CDCC were invited to join the working group.

77. In her concluding remarks, the representative noted that Martinique was working to conserve its natural heritage. France, on behalf of Martinique, had requested the classification of the Mount Pelée and the Pitons du Nord and their forests as World Heritage natural sites. The decision was expected in 2022 at the next session of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Committee (WHC). Martinique was also a candidate for the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Martinique planned to create a pharmaceutical institute, which would focus on research into the benefits of medicinal plants. With respect to climate change, COP26 placed emphasis on acting immediately, but territories of the subregion were not major polluters, yet were paying a heavy price. Global warming and climate change had caused the extinction of endemic species and the spread of invasive species. Therefore, the cooperation projects she had mentioned were important for solidarity and cooperation among the Caribbean countries. She challenged the subregion to move forward together and see the future from a fresh perspective.

Implementation of the 2020 programme of work for the Caribbean (agenda item 5)

78. The Chair noted that subprogramme 12 of the ECLAC programme of work was devoted to supporting the activities for the countries of the Caribbean. Therefore, the members of the Monitoring Committee would be expected to review the work done by the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean for the benefit of CDCC member States and associate members, and, very importantly, to identify any shifts in priorities that they would wish to see addressed during the next year.

79. The Chief of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean gave a presentation on the results of the work programme for 2020 entitled “Responding to the development priorities of the Caribbean”. She noted that ECLAC continued to promote the priorities of the subregion as mandated by CDCC. The aim was for ECLAC to be able to address the needs of the subregion and to pivot to respond to changes as they arose. That was what ECLAC had done over the last two years. In 2020, the United Nations had moved to an annual programme budgeting cycle, which necessitated a streamlining of work operations to produce shorter, more focused research and analysis and technical assistance. Furthermore, ECLAC was currently working with the United Nations country teams in the Caribbean to design a new multi-country sustainable development framework that would anchor the programmes delivered by the United Nations system. In addition, ECLAC continued to provide support for SDG implementation, but had been forced to do so remotely over the last two years.

80. She said that within its regional role, ECLAC was proud to act as a convening platform for meetings such as those of the Monitoring Committee of CDCC, which allowed it to work with the countries of the subregion to identify a common, coherent and strategic approach that optimally promoted the interests and concerns of the Caribbean. She noted that with respect to policy and analytical capacity in the United Nations

country teams, ECLAC would provide support in specific areas of comparative advantage. The Chief of the subregional headquarters reiterated ECLAC support for key global mandates, including the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, where it worked closely with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and AOSIS. The focus in those platforms was to ensure that the unique challenges and viewpoints of Caribbean SIDS were communicated to global partners. Indeed, ECLAC was beginning to prepare for the 30-year review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados Programme of Action) and the 10-year review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway in 2024 on behalf of the countries of the subregion.

81. She stated that the subregional headquarters also collaborated with colleagues in Santiago to ensure effective Caribbean participation in the subsidiary organs of ECLAC. In the week prior to the meeting, the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean had been convened, with Antigua and Barbuda serving as Chair, the first time that a Caribbean country had chaired one of the Commission's subsidiary organs. The subregion had not played as significant a role in the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies as it had in other subsidiary organs of the Commission, but, given the importance of these issues to a resilient recovery, the Caribbean needed to be actively engaged in that Conference.

82. She outlined some of the key activities that were accomplished in 2020. Important publications included "The Caribbean Outlook: Forging a people-centred approach to sustainable development post-COVID-19",³ the "Economic Survey of the Caribbean 2020: Facing the challenge of COVID-19",⁴ and the "Preliminary Overview of the Economies of the Caribbean 2019–2020".⁵ In addition, there had been studies on statistical disclosure control, the case had been made for financing Caribbean development, work had been done to promote gender equality and a study had been prepared on NCDs. Meetings included the twenty-eighth session of CDCC in 2020 and the High-level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond. Meanwhile, integrated policy advice was provided on gender equality, microdata files and support to governments in conducting their voluntary national reviews for submission to the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Technical assistance was provided in training in conducting DaLAs, evidenced-based planning and the creative industries.

83. She touched on several key current activities in 2021, which included studies on gender disparities in education, the use of geospatial technologies in disaster risk management and online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking ahead to 2022, the office would again focus on its flagship report The Caribbean Outlook, which would examine how the subregion could transition beyond COVID-19 and begin the long hard road towards a resilient recovery. That would be complemented by efforts to advance the Caribbean Resilience Fund as a segregated portfolio unit trust fund to scale resources for investment in environmental resilience, growth and competitiveness, liquidity support and debt relief. Work would also be done on building back better in tourism-based economies and advancing innovative finance solutions in the Caribbean. In addition, the office would support Belize and Jamaica in presenting their second voluntary national reviews and Dominica, Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis in presenting their first.

³ LC/SES.38/12.

⁴ LC/TS.2021/1- LC/CAR/TS.2021/1

⁵ LC/TS.2020/56- LC/CAR/TS.2020/2.

Discussion

84. During the discussion of the work programme, the representative of Jamaica provided her country's observations and recommendations. The Jamaican delegation concurred with the perspectives and recommendations shared over the course of the meeting. The call by the Minister of Finance of Guyana for more attention to implementation of proposals and actions resonated strongly. In addition, Jamaica concurred on the importance of the vulnerability index and the creation of a baseline of indicators that accurately and adequately reflected the realities of the Caribbean, and welcomed the proposals from ECLAC and others to enable this to be achieved in the shortest possible time.

85. With regard to financing for development, she reiterated the need to engage the subregional private sector in more meaningful ways to ensure that they contributed to the value and profitability of productive and safe societies. Food security remained a priority for Jamaica, as made clear by the country's Prime Minister at the United Nations Food Systems Summit in September 2021. The usual challenge faced by the subregion in that area was made worse by the new challenge posed by dislocation in global supply chains.

86. She said that Jamaica wanted to flag and second many of the points raised by the Chief of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in her presentation. She welcomed the continued efforts of ECLAC to remain engaged and support the subregion. She thanked the Chief of the subregional headquarters and her team for their continued hard work, advocacy and willingness to work with the countries of the subregion as they worked out the best way to advance their growth and development.

87. The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanked ECLAC for its hard work and noted welcomed forays into areas such as the creative industries and ICT for development, which he said were key to the subregion's diversification thrust, and also the update on the Caribbean Resilience Fund. ECLAC had done some work on the blue economy, but it was focused on conservation. He recommended that ECLAC undertake research to analyse the economic potential of the blue economy and how it could contribute to diversification and economic transformation in the Caribbean, and similar work for the green economy and climate-resilient infrastructure. He looked forward to the work on online learning, facilitating economic recovery in the tourism-based economies, indicators and statistics and the creative industries.

88. In response, the Chief of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean said that the office had indeed started work on the potential economic benefits of the blue economy. ECLAC was a part of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) initiative, a governance framework which looked at the holistic use and management of the region's ocean resources. ECLAC was committed to undertaking the study on the blue economy as proposed by the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Other matters (agenda item 6)

89. No other matters were raised.

Date and venue of the twenty-ninth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (agenda item 7)

90. The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines informed the meeting that the chairship of CDCC would move from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to Suriname for the twenty-ninth session of the Committee. He gave the floor to the representative of Suriname to ascertain whether her government was ready to serve as Chair for the twenty-ninth session.

91. The representative of Suriname indicated that Suriname was happy to serve as Chair for the next two years. She noted that the Government of Suriname would do its utmost to contribute to the objectives of the body within the framework of economic and social cooperation.

92. The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines noted that he looked forward to an in-person meeting in Suriname and that delegates would await confirmation of the dates of the meeting from ECLAC.

Conclusions and recommendations (agenda item 8)

93. The conclusions and recommendations of the meeting are provided in section A of this report.

Closing remarks

94. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that the meeting had provided two days of reflection and dialogue. A key highlight of the presentations and discussions was the recurring point that the region was in the midst of a multidimensional crisis stemming from the pandemic, unsustainable debt and climate change. To facilitate recovery, the subregion needed to focus on achieving vaccine equity and reducing vaccine hesitancy, invest in the green and blue economy, and revitalize tourism and agriculture. The Minister ad interim for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica had indicated how Latin America and the Caribbean could strengthen cooperation, while the Minister of Finance of Guyana had underscored the need to revisit past global commitments such as the 0.7% of GNI and the importance of developing an evidenced-based vulnerability index that could be recognized by the international community. She remarked that the Minister of Finance's point concerning the oneness of the world, the universality that we shared as a common humanity and the fact that global economic equality was a global public good was inspirational.

95. In summing up, the Executive Secretary noted that ECLAC, with the support of the countries, would push for diversification of the economies of the subregion with a focus on the green and blue economies; development of resilient infrastructure; progress on financial solutions, including innovative finance; development of a universal vulnerability index to replace per capita GNI as a basis for concessional financing; increased investment in ICT and sustainable transportation; and continued cooperation and capacity-building with CARICOM and other agencies to develop statistics for development.

96. In his closing remarks, the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines noted that the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean had a good programme of work for 2022. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname were both willing to work with ECLAC to promote the work of the subregional headquarters. He also expressed the hope that by the time of the CDCC session in Suriname the subregion would be able to discuss the precise outlines of a vulnerability index. He then declared the twentieth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of CDCC officially closed.

Annex 1

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES⁶**

**A. Member States of the Commission
Estados miembros de la Comisión**

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA/ANTIGUA Y BARBUDA

Representative/Representante:

- Anthony Liverpool, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration

Delegation member/Miembro de la delegación:

- Joy-Marie King, Director of International Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration

BAHAMAS

Representative/Representante:

- Sharon Brennen-Haylock, Director-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Donyelle Ward, Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Kendricka Kemp, SDG Focal Point, Office of the Prime Minister
- Torree Musgrove, Research Analyst, SDG Focal Point, Sustainable Development Goals Unit, Office of the Prime Minister
- Donna Bannister, Administrative Officer, Healthy Bahamas Coalition/Ministry of Health and Wellness
- R. Aruba Ferguson, Administrative Cadet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Lyndianna Rahming, Lead for Hypertension and Diabetes, Healthy Bahamas Coalition, Ministry of Health
- Barsha Smith, Registered Nurse, Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases, Ministry of Health and Wellness

BARBADOS

Representative/Representante:

- Donna Forde, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

BELIZE/BELICE

Representative/Representante:

- Michel Chebat, Minister of Health and Wellness

⁶ The information contained in this list is as supplied by the participants themselves, in the register provided for the meeting.

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Orla Kantun-Coleman, Director of International Affairs (Cooperation), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration
- Gisele Gibson, Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration

CUBA

Representative/Representante:

- Tania Diego Olite, Ambassador, Embassy of Cuba in Trinidad and Tobago

Delegation member/Miembro de la delegación:

- Ana Martínez, Trade Economic Adviser, Embassy of the Republic of Cuba in Trinidad and Tobago

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC/REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Representative/Representante:

- Hugo Francisco Rivera Fernández, Vice-Minister for Economic Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- José Luis Morillo, Director of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- José Guillermo Sarita, Head of the Multilateral Cooperation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Celestina García, International Cooperation Analyst, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

GUYANA

Representative/Representante:

- Ashni Singh, Minister of Finance

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- George Talbot, Director, Department of Americas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, email: gtalbot@minfor.gov.gy
- Forbes July, Director, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- Lachmie Lall, Director, Non-Communicable Diseases, Ministry of Health
- Sonya Roopnauth, Director, Office of the Budget, Ministry of Finance
- Narine Singh, Chief Medical Officer, Ministry of Health
- Heather Seelochan, Senior Foreign Service Officer, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- Michelle Haynes, Foreign Service Officer III, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

JAMAICA

Representative/Representante:

- Alison Stone Roofe, Under-Secretary, Multilateral Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- A'Dale Robinson, Senior Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade
- Marlon Roberts, Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS/SAINT KITTS y NEVIS

Representative/Representante:

- Kaye Bass, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Delegation member/Miembro de la delegación:

- Bjorn Hazel, Senior Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES/SAN VICENTE Y LAS GRANADINAS

Representative/Representante:

- Hon. Camillo Gonsalves Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Janelle Hannaway-Horne, Economist II, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology
- Giselle Myers, Senior Economist, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology

SURINAME

Representative/Representante:

- Elizabeth Bradley, Deputy Permanent Secretary, International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation

Delegation member/Miembro de la delegación:

- Lucill Starke, Head (a.i.), Social and Culture Affairs Division

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO/TRINIDAD Y TABAGO

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Lynne Mohammed, Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs
- La Donna Gulston, Director, Health Education Division, Ministry of Health

**B. Associate members
Miembros asociados**

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS/ISLAS VÍRGENES BRITÁNICAS

Representative/Representante:

- Natalio Wheatley, Deputy Premier

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Carolyn O'Neal-Morton, Permanent Secretary, Premier's Office

- Najan Christopher, Director, International Affairs Secretariat
- Dwynel Davis, Assistant Secretary for External Affairs
- Xyrah Wheatley, Political Economy Officer
- Benito Wheatley, Special Envoy of the Premier

CAYMAN ISLANDS/ISLAS CAIMÁN

Delegation member/Miembro de la delegación:

- Jamaal Anderson, International Affairs Analyst, Cabinet Office

CURAÇAO

Delegation member/Miembro de la delegación:

- Rayan Rafaela, Minister Cabinet Employee, Ministry of Economic Development

MARTINIQUE/MARTINICA

Representative/Representante:

- Patricia Telle, President, Commission for International Cooperation

Delegation member/Miembro de la delegación:

- Mayvis Gibus, External Affairs Officer

MONTSERRAT

Representative/Representante:

- Joseph Farrell, Premier

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Veronica Dorsette-Hector, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education and Health
- Debra Lewis, Director of External Affairs, Office of the Premier
- Meredith Lynch, Executive Secretary to the Premier, Office of the Premier

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS/ISLAS TURCAS Y CAICOS

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Teri Helenese, Director of Federal Relations
- Edward Hall, Policy Analyst, Strategic Planning and Policy Department

C. Observers Observadores

COSTA RICA

Representative/Representante:

- Christian Guillermet-Fernández, Minister (a.i.), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Rodrigo Carazo, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations
- Esteban Penrod, Director, International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship
- Carol Viviana Arce Echeverría, Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship
- Verónica García, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship
- Gabriela Sánchez, Desk Office - Multilateral International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship

ECUADOR

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Karen Viviana Luzardo, General Coordinator for Studies and Inclusion Data, Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion
- Carolina Guzmán, Director, Prevention of Vulnerability of Rights Directorate, Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion
- Ramiro Pinos, Director – Special Protection Services Directorate, Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion

GUATEMALA

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Marvin Pol, Subdirector, Secretariat for Planning and Programming of the Office of the President (SEGEPLAN)
- Gustavo Sierra, Analyst, Ministry of Economy
- Ana Cabrera, Economic Adviser, Ministry of Economy

NICARAGUA

Representative/Representante:

- Cristian Toledo, Director General for Health Surveillance, Ministry of Health

Delegation member/Miembro de la delegación:

- Samir Aguilar, Director of Health Model, Ministry of Health

PARAGUAY

Representative/Representante:

- Raúl Silvero, Director General of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Martín Paiva, First Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Santiago Mainero, Third Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**D. United Nations Secretariat
Secretaría de las Naciones Unidas**

Resident Coordinator Office/Oficinas de los Coordinadores Residentes

- Didier Trebucq, Resident Coordinator, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean
- William Evans, Team Leader, Office of the Resident Coordinator, Guyana

Department of Global Communications (DGC)/Departamento de Comunicación Global (DCG)

- Juan Miguel Diez, Director, United Nations Information Centre for the Caribbean Area

**E. United Nations system
Sistema de las Naciones Unidas**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO)

- Renata Clarke, Sub-regional Coordinator for the Caribbean
- Franssen Jean, Food Security Officer, Barbados

**United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)/
Entidad de las Naciones Unidas para la Igualdad de Género y el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres (ONU-Mujeres)**

- Angela Davis, Joint Programme Coordinator - United Nations trust fund for human security

**F. Intergovernmental Organizations
Organizaciones intergubernamentales**

Caribbean Community (CARICOM)/Comunidad del Caribe (CARICOM)

- Rodinald Soomer, Chief Executive Officer, CARICOM Development Fund (CDF)

Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)/Organismo de Salud Pública del Caribe

- Joy St John, Executive Director

Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)/Organismo del Caribe para la Gestión de Emergencias en Casos de Desastre (CDEMA)

- Andria Grosvenor, Deputy Executive Director (a.i.)

**G. Academic institutions
Instituciones académicas**

University of the West Indies (UWI)/Universidad de las Indias Occidentales

- Wilberne Persaud, Senior Lecturer, UWI Cave Hill Campus, Barbados
- Ferne Louanne Regis, Lecturer, UWI St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago
- T. Alafia Samuels, Research Fellow, Caribbean Institute for Health Research, UWI Mona Campus, Jamaica

H. Secretariat Secretaría

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)

- Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary/Secretaria Ejecutiva
- Raúl García-Buchaca, Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis/Secretario Ejecutivo Adjunto para Administración y Análisis de Programas
- Luis Yáñez, Secretary of the Commission/Secretario de la Comisión
- Romain Zivy, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive Secretary/Jefe de Gabinete, Oficina de la Secretaría Ejecutiva
- Lydia Rosa Gény, Political Affairs Officer, Office of the Secretary of the Commission/Oficial de Asuntos Políticos, Oficina de la Secretaría de la Comisión

ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean/Sede subregional de la CEPAL para el Caribe

- Diane Quarless, Chief/Directora
- Dillon Alleyne, Deputy Chief/Director Adjunto
- Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development Unit/Coordinador, Unidad de Estadística y Desarrollo Social
- Catarina Camarinhas, Social Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit/Oficial de Asuntos Sociales, Unidad de Estadística y Desarrollo Social
- Artie Dubrie, Coordinator, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit/Coordinadora, Unidad de Desarrollo Sostenible y Evaluación de Desastres
- Dale Alexander, Programme Management Officer, Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre/Oficial de Gestión de Programas, Centro de Gestión del Conocimiento del Caribe
- Johann Brathwaite, Programme Officer, Programme Support Unit/Oficial de Programas, Unidad de Apoyo a los Programas
- Michael Hendrickson, Economic Affairs Officer, Economic Development Unit/Oficial de Asuntos Económicos, Unidad de Desarrollo Económico
- Francis Jones, Population Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit/Oficial de Asuntos de Población, Unidad de Estadística y Desarrollo Social
- Willard Phillips, Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit/Oficial de Asuntos Económicos, Unidad de Desarrollo Sostenible y Evaluación de Desastres

Annex 2

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Agenda item 1 LC/MCCDCC.20/1/Rev.1 LC/MCCDCC.20/2	Opening of the meeting Provisional agenda Annotated provisional agenda Provisional programme
Agenda item 2 LC/MCCDCC.20/DDR/1	Accelerating recovery and strengthening economic resilience in the Caribbean Conference Paper: <i>Reckoning with COVID-19: Pursuing a people-centred recovery and more resilient future for the Caribbean</i>
Agenda item 3	Supporting recovery through regional solidarity and integration
Agenda item 4	Safeguarding the health of the Caribbean
Agenda item 5 LC/MCCDCC.20/3	Implementation of the 2020 programme of work for the Caribbean Implementation of the 2020 programme of work. Subprogramme 12: Subregional activities in the Caribbean
Agenda item 6	Other matters
Agenda item 7 LC/MCCDCC.20/4	Date and venue of the twenty-ninth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
Agenda item 8	Conclusions and recommendations