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CAJANUS is published quarterly by the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute
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Annual Subscription:

Free - CFNI member countries

US\$6.00 - Other developing countries

US\$12.00 - Developed countries

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Food Security and Poverty Alleviation

Ballayram^a

This issue of **CAJANUS** summarizes the main findings of an International Conference the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI) held titled “Food and Nutrition Security and Poverty Alleviation Strategies in the Caribbean”. The conference was hosted by CFNI in Kingston, Jamaica, with sponsorship by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat. The aim was to gather new inputs from the regional efforts on food security, anti-poverty and health enhancing initiatives to be implemented in the Caribbean. Several regional and international institutions and numerous NGOs with programmes on poverty and food security participated. Over 80 persons attended the conference including, on the final day, several Caribbean government ministers and senior government officials.

The conference provided a forum for key policy-makers to share experiences and lessons learned from regional and extra-regional programmes to alleviate poverty and

promote food and nutrition security. This was also an excellent opportunity to promote new partnerships and policy agreements, identify key areas that require research, elaborate new approaches, and make recommendations for targeted interventions to reduce poverty and promote food and nutrition security in the Caribbean. The conference also provided a background for the launching of a Small Grants Programme for Caribbean countries to pursue recommendations developed by the various work groups at the meeting.

Eighteen policy and technical papers were presented in three thematic areas:

- Lessons from Food and Nutrition and Poverty Alleviation Programmes.
- Preventing Food Insecurity and Improving Health.
- Public Policy for Enhancing Regional Food and Nutrition Security.

Several papers maintained that effective long-term solution to food

^aDr. Ballayram, *Food Economist, CFNI.*

security and poverty alleviation in the region requires economic growth, based on both trade openness and complementary domestic policies and enabling institutions. Presenters reinforced the need for a pro-poor growth strategy that includes adequate public spending for basic education, health and family planning services, improved access to credit, and a poverty reduction strategy, which favors policies and programmes that benefit the poor more than the rich, and the promotion of small and medium

....The conference served to sensitize participants, but more importantly, ministers of government and senior government policy-makers.....

enterprises. Experiences from other countries suggest that poverty reduction can occur more rapidly if governments follow pro-poor policies, or avoided policies with adverse consequences on income distribution.

The impact of trade openness and globalization on poverty reduction and food security will depend on how effective resources are allocated to tackle these goals directly through compensatory mechanisms such as social safety nets which are required to:

- Compensate 'losers' from trade policy reforms.

- Provide opportunities to develop basic skills needed to exploit the new opportunities resulting from integrating with the global economy.
- Recognize and protect the most vulnerable in society.

In this regard, selective targeting is important to reach the neediest, allow for wide coverage of families, rationalize resources targeted to the poor, and minimize duplication. Additionally, inter-sectoral coordination must be emphasized and sustained to enhance synergy with civil society and as a guarantee to sustainability of programmes.

The central achievement of this conference was the success in bringing together policy-makers to share experiences on what works and what does not work in interventions to address food insecurity, poverty and disease in the region. The conference served to sensitize participants, but more importantly, ministers of government and senior government policy-makers, on the severity of the socio-economic conditions on poverty and food security in the Caribbean. It also reinforced the urgency to implement deliberate, focused and targeted programmes to alleviate illiteracy, disease, low income and other debilitating conditions of poverty, social marginalization and vulnerability in the Caribbean.



The Poverty Challenge

Fitzroy Henry^a

Poverty Alleviation and Food Security Strategies in the Caribbean target one of the key Millennium Development Goals (MDG) – poverty and hunger. Because the MDGs are interlinked, impacting on one – as fundamental as poverty – will undoubtedly have an impact on several others.

Concepts of Poverty

Poverty has always been complex, multi-dimensional and dynamic and it results from a combination of economic, political and environmental factors. But the forces driving poverty are also changing and they make it even more complicated. There are two major concepts of poverty in the Caribbean context.

The first is the well known and traditional paradigm – where being poor means living in a poor neighbourhood, going to a second-rate school, having an inadequate education which leads to having a low-paying job and entails eating poor

food, having poor health and living in unsanitary housing in a poor neighbourhood, and the cycle continues. That type of circle begins and ends with the poor, and often exists in a defined and limited sphere – largely in enclaves within a country.

The second is the expanded paradigm in which 70% of the world's population subsists on only 10% of the world's foreign direct investment and this exemplifies the current imbalance in access to resources. Such competition stemming from global economic changes in trade and capital markets, coupled with the rapid erosion of preferential market access present difficult challenges, particularly for small states such as those in the Caribbean. This expanded paradigm does not begin and end with the poor. In fact it could result where individuals, communities and even countries that previously were non-poor could become poor through forces that erode their traditional pillars of existence.

^a*Dr. Fitzroy J. Henry, Director, CFNI.*

Globalization certainly has the potential to bring huge benefits to societies but it also carries many risks. The risks arise through globalization's largely negative impacts on poverty and inequality. A major challenge is to identify not only the absolute poor but also the relative poor and the recent poor because the strategies to combat these may well be quite different. This conference explored both the narrow and expanded scenarios and proposed several responses to this poverty challenge.

The Challenges

In the Caribbean context there are two overarching challenges – inequality and targeting:

Inequity – Under globalization where the “fittest will survive” there is bound to be a rise in world income inequality between nations, at least in the initial stages. The question is: does globalization also imply more inequality within nations as well? This is critical for this region because Latin America and the Caribbean exhibit the largest social inequalities in the world and if poverty increases this inequality may also increase.

Targeting – It remains essential to ensure that the relief goods reach the intended targets. But in this expanded paradigm it also becomes necessary to explore other types of targeting. If as estimated, one-third of those who are

capability poor are not monetary poor, then intervention programmes designed to reduce monetary poverty are likely to miss large numbers of capability poor. The types of programmes for each group are equally important – whether they should be money transfers and income generation – or education and health programmes. This type of intervention goes beyond handouts and presents a new and major challenge for the region.

This project does not end with the recommendations formulated from this dialogue, and herein lies the real and practical challenge. The success of the small grants programme, which will be established out of this dialogue, will be based on the recommendations from this conference. These grants will aim to identify and support those opportunities that can convert poverty alleviation projects into sustainable development programmes.

This report captures the main points of the dialogue among the senior officials and policy-makers who have responsibility for poverty alleviation programmes in the Caribbean. The discourse and recommendations were enriched with the active participation of the executives representing key developmental agencies working on poverty alleviation in the region.

The Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI) highly values the collaboration of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat in this successful endeavour.



Dr. Fitzroy Henry, Director, CFNI, delivering the Welcome Address at the Opening Ceremony at the Policy Dialogue Forum. From left are: Dr. Chelston Brathwaite, Director-General, IICA; Senator the Honourable Ms. Deika Morrison, Minister of State, Office of the Minister of Finance and Planning, Jamaica; Dr. Carissa Etienne, Assistant Director, PAHO; Dr. Edward Greene, Assistant Secretary-General, CARICOM Secretariat; and Dr. Carol Kramer-LeBlanc, Director of Research and Scientific Exchanges, Foreign Agricultural Services, USDA.

Economic Development and Poverty in the Caribbean: *Theoretical Perspectives and Practical Challenges*

Dennis Benn^a

I feel extremely privileged to have been asked to participate in this important meeting and to address the topic 'Economic Development and Poverty in the Caribbean'.

I would like to commend the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI), the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the CARICOM Secretariat for taking the initiative to sponsor this conference since I believe that the issues to be addressed are extremely important and relevant to the needs of the Caribbean at this stage of its evolution.

Over the years the concept of economic development has undergone considerable theoretical elaboration and particularly so during the past decade or more. Starting with the assumptions of classical development economics pioneered by Arthur Lewis, Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, Walter Rostow and others and moving through traditional growth theory

associated with the work of the World Bank and other development agencies during the 1960s and 1970s, economic development is now seen mainly in terms of the satisfaction of human needs. This approach is most evident in the UNDP Human Development Report which was initiated in 1990 and which is underpinned by Amartya Sen's philosophical redefinition of development as the enlargement of people's choices. The concept of human development advanced in the Report sought to introduce a substitute perspective on development which challenged the assumptions of traditional development theory focused on growth indices and per capita GNP measurements.

It should be noted of course, that a major element of the Human Development Report is the construction of a composite Human Development Index (HDI) which encompasses life expectancy, educational attainment and an income element, which is used to rank

^aProfessor Denis Benn, Michael Manley Professor of Public Affairs/Public Policy, UWI, Mona Campus.

countries in terms of the level of attainment of human development. It is noteworthy that in 2003, Barbados (27) ranks third among developing countries behind Cyprus (25) and Hong Kong, China (SAR) (26) while the Bahamas (49), St. Kitts and Nevis (51) and Trinidad and Tobago (54) are also placed in the category of countries which have achieved a high level of human development.

In keeping with this evolution in thinking about development, increased emphasis has been placed on poverty eradication not only by the United Nations, notably UNDP, but by the World Bank and other international development agencies. The priority assigned to poverty eradication in current international development policy is underlined by the fact that poverty eradication is the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that have been adopted by the international community to guide development policy. For purposes of international comparison, the figure of \$1 a day has been established as the benchmark for measuring progress towards the halving of poverty between 1990 and 2015 which is the target set in respect of the poverty eradication goal.

In fact, UNDP has formulated a Human Poverty Index (HPI) which defines poverty from a human development perspective which employs indicators of the most basic dimensions, namely, a short life, lack of

basic education and lack of access to public and private resources. In other words, while the human development index adopts a 'conglomerate' perspective which focuses on the advances made by all groups, the HPI employs a 'deprivational' perspective in which development is judged by the way the poor and the deprived fare in each community.

Like the HDI itself, this approach to poverty is also influenced by Amartya Sen's capability theory of development and thus focuses on the functioning that a person can or cannot achieve, given the opportunities he/she has. Sen's analysis in fact involves considerable theoretical sophistication. Building on some of the assumptions of welfare economics, Sen advances a conception of poverty that is based on a measure of deprivation in terms of the denial of opportunities for a long life, the acquisition of knowledge and the achievement of a decent standard of living, instead of a mere lack of material well-being.

Despite the fact that a number of Caribbean countries rank high on the HDI, including Barbados which in 2003 was number 27 in the overall ranking among countries and the third highest ranking developing country, there are significant pockets of poverty in some countries, notably in Haiti, Guyana and Jamaica.

Recent analyses of the poverty profile of the Caribbean carried out by Witter and Downes, among others, suggest that there is considerable variation and unevenness among the various countries. However, in all countries, with the exception of Barbados, more poor people live in rural than in urban areas. Moreover, the Gini coefficient is quite high in some countries indicating significant disparities in the distribution of wealth in some societies. Studies have shown that based on the application of iso-poverty curves, income inequality has a negative impact on poverty reduction since the poverty reduction elasticity of growth diminishes as income distribution worsens.

Witter has also argued that poverty measurements in the region have focused too much on the insufficiency of consumption and have therefore overlooked the subjective perceptions of people which often differ from the quasi-objective poverty line measure. This line of reasoning is similar to the position embraced by analysts such as Ramesh Deosaran who also focuses on the psycho-social dimension of poverty particularly in terms of the self-perceptions of the poor which may be quite different from their objective condition.

The issue of the nature of the relationship between economic development and poverty eradication has generated a significant body of literature. Some approaches, such as

the sustainable livelihood approach, emphasises the importance of the empowerment of the poor as a necessary pre-condition for their climb out of poverty. Others have called for an increased focus on grassroots interventions aimed at liberating the poor from the shackles of poverty. However, while such direct interventions are important, it should not be overlooked that poverty has significant structural underpinnings based on low levels of development, low productive capacity, the limited application of technology and the general underdevelopment of human resources, all of which must be addressed if poverty eradication is to become a reality.

It will be necessary therefore to adopt an appropriate strategy aimed at the expansion of output based on increased productivity designed to ensure competitiveness. This will in turn require the introduction of new techniques of production such as flexible specialisation and new forms of organisation, including cross functional management techniques, which as the experience of Japan and the newly industrialising countries of East Asia has shown, have made a significant contribution to growth and output in these economies. Special emphasis will also need to be placed on improved agricultural productivity which remains low in many countries in the region. In addition, countries must engage in an ongoing process of diversification including the expansion

of the services sector, in order to broaden the productive base of their economies.

But even as we seek to improve output and productivity at the national level, it behoves us to focus on the broader possibilities for development at the regional level.

In the context of globalisation, we would need to look beyond national boundaries and explore options in a larger regional context. It is not without significance that larger countries than ours, such as those in Europe, have seen the need for closer collaboration in the face of globalisation. The challenge for us in pursuing this course is to move beyond the traditional neo-functional approach to regional integration pioneered by analysts such as Haas, Schmitter and Nye based on the European experience and to formulate instead, new theoretical constructs that will enable us to pursue creative possibilities for the integration of the small, mainly insular and non-contiguous countries and territories in the Caribbean.

I firmly believe that, conceived in this context, the Caribbean has the potential to eradicate poverty and to develop into an extremely prosperous region enjoying a high standard of living. I say this since I can think of no regional economic entity of comparable size that boasts of such an

array of resources such as bauxite/alumina, petroleum, natural gas, gold, diamond, agriculture and forestry resources, tourism and other services infrastructure, including efficient offshore financial services, not to mention the human resources of the region which are comparatively well developed. I believe if we were to engage in a strategy of regional production integration based on factor complementarity we would establish the basis for an accelerated pace of development.

Of course, over thirty years ago – in 1967 to be exact – Havelock Brewster and Clive Thomas had advocated a similar strategy. But although some tentative efforts have been made over the years to pursue some initiatives such as the CARICOM Enterprise Regime, the time has come for a renewed thrust in this direction. It is indeed quite significant that Article 52 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas provides for the promotion of various forms of production integration which are explicitly defined in the Treaty.

It is for this reason that in the Rosehall Declaration adopted at their twenty-fourth meeting held in Montego Bay in July 2003 the CARICOM Heads of Government decided to appoint a high level group of experts to identify the opportunities for production integration and also the related policy and institutional arrangements in support of this thrust.

Let me also say in this context that there is considerable evidence to suggest that the off-shore area which is the subject of competing jurisdictional claims by Guyana and Suriname contains one of the largest supplies of petroleum in the world. It would seem therefore that the most logical way to proceed is for Guyana and Suriname to embark on the joint development of these resources as a CARICOM regional project on the understanding that part of the proceeds from the exploitation of these resources, say 25-30 percent, would be deposited in a CARICOM Regional Fund to finance development projects in the various member states of the Community and also to provide balance of payments support for countries which may be in need of such assistance from time to time.

I believe that the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) provides an important framework for the movement of factors of production within the region but it should be consciously complemented by an overall policy framework that is premised on the logic of integrated production based on factor complementarity within the region.

Of course it would be quite naïve to think that in the age of globalisation an economic development strategy geared to poverty reduction could be pursued without reference to the external environment in which Caribbean economies function. For

this reason the countries of the region will need to maintain their collective solidarity in the various multilateral trade negotiations taking place within the World Trade Organization (WTO), the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement and also in respect of the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in order to promote their economic interests.

I am not convinced by the arguments of those who call for unfettered liberalisation since I believe that, given their small size and level of development of their productive capacity, special consideration will need to be given to the countries of the Caribbean in the form of special and differential treatment.

I have formed the impression that some of our policy-makers in the Caribbean are sometimes ambivalent on this issue, believing perhaps that we can compete on an equal basis with the developed countries but in my view, this is a serious miscalculation. The reality is that free trade was not practised by its current advocates at a comparable phase in their own development. For example, for centuries, Britain maintained a highly protectionist mercantilist system and did not subscribe to free trade until after the Industrial Revolution when it had developed a capacity to supply the world with its manufactured products. Similarly, it is well known that, under the influence of Hamiltonian economics, the United States also pursued

highly protectionist policies in the period following its independence. In fact Alexander Hamilton, who was the architect of this strategy, carried out his famous study on Manufactures which in fact represented one of the earliest arguments in favour of infant industry protection.

I believe that in pursuing their interests, the Caribbean countries will need to make common cause with other developing countries. It is encouraging to note that the Group of 20 was able to make common cause during the recent WTO Ministerial Meeting in Cancun and was therefore able to assert their collective power and solidarity in defence of their economic interests. This is an important development since for too long through the 'green room' process and other non-transparent means, the developed countries had imposed, in a rather arbitrary fashion, decisions which reflected their interests, often to the detriment of the developing countries.

I believe therefore that the promotion of economic development geared to poverty eradication must be pursued both at the national and the regional level in order to maximise the development possibilities of the region through the pursuit of a strategy of production integration based on factor complementarity. At the same time, the region will need to defend its economic interests by forging a strategic alliance with other develop-

ing countries, both in the hemispheric system and in the wider global community.

I believe that in doing so the Caribbean will lay the foundation for future economic prosperity, thus eliminating the scourge of poverty which continues to affect an unacceptably large segment of the population in the region. This is the challenge of economic development in the Caribbean.

Primary health care

What is primary health care?
Priority should be given to mass primary health care because most cases could be prevented by relatively cheap methods:

- adequate water supply
- adequate nutrition
- safe sanitation
- immunization against major diseases
- community participation in deciding on and supporting preventive health plans
- back-up referral service for training of primary health care workers
- treatment for cuts and common ailments
- parental education

A New Vision for Agriculture in the Caribbean

Chelston Braithwaite^a

I am indeed extremely pleased to be back in the Caribbean and thank you for your invitation to this meeting on poverty alleviation and food security strategies in the region. This event is being held at a time when agriculture and agriculture-related issues continue to dominate the global trade agenda. The recent meeting of the World Trade Organization in Cancun underscores the importance of the sector to national development and world peace and prosperity.

There is no doubt that globalization and trade liberalization have had some positive effects for certain economies of our world. However, globalization that fails to take into account rural development and food security objectives, and the concerns of developing countries, will not provide global prosperity or social equity. The economies of small developing countries in the Caribbean must be afforded the opportunity to insulate their domestic sectors from import surges and depressed export prices. Food security, social stability and environmental concerns must also be part of the new trade agenda.

A report published recently by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), entitled “Making Global Trade Work for People”, states that special and differential treatment for developing countries goes beyond traditional trade issues and includes education, health, gender equality, environmental protection and respect for cultural diversity. It also proposes that WTO rules should be more flexible and development oriented. The results of the Cancun meeting, where the three pillars of trade (viz. market access, domestic support and export subsidies) were discussed, underscore the pivotal role of an agreement on agriculture for world peace and prosperity. In my view, however, the FTAA is not solely about trade, but about how we are to live together in this hemisphere in the future.

While these initiatives are taking place at the global level, we must begin to implement national and regional strategies to support agriculture and rural development in our countries, based on a new approach to

^a*Dr. Chelston Braithwaite, Director-General, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture.*

the issues involved. A prosperous agricultural sector is a prerequisite for poverty alleviation and food security because the majority of the rural poor are in agriculture, which promotes economic growth, employment and rural prosperity.

To begin with, agriculture must be valued for what it is: the bedrock of society and the cornerstone of any economy. Agricultural development is not about helping marginal poor farmers; the agricultural sector is a strategic sector of our economy.

Official statistics often show agriculture as contributing single digit percentages to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In the case of Jamaica, the figure given is 8%. Our research suggests that when all the backward and forward linkages in the commodity chain are considered, agriculture's contribution to national development is between three and seven times higher than the percentages reported in national statistics.

For example, a recent study carried out by our Institute showed that in Argentina official statistics indicate that agriculture's contribution to GDP is 4.6%. When we consider all the backward and forward linkages, however, this figure increases to 32.2%. The same is true in the case of Brazil (with the figure rising from 4.3% to 26.2%), Chile (5% as opposed to 32.1%), Mexico (4.6% and 24.5%), and Costa Rica (11.3% and 32.5%).

We are now carrying out a similar study in the Caribbean.

Underestimating the importance of food and agribusiness industries in economic development has had a series of negative consequences in the region. The true contribution made by agriculture and agricultural professionals to national development is not recognized; agricultural research, training and education is underfunded; young people have little interest in a career in agribusiness; rural infrastructure and investment in the sector are underfunded; there is a bias toward urban areas in the allocation of national resources; and, some countries of the Americas continue to depend on imported food.

We are convinced that the agricultural sector viewed in the broad sense, in terms of more than just primary production, is crucial for economic growth and rural welfare. Agriculture contributes to three fundamental aspects of development, namely: national food security; national social stability; and, environmental protection for this and future generations. Agriculture is important in the promotion of rural prosperity because the solutions to rural poverty can no longer be left to the migration of the rural poor to the cities, where social and economic difficulties continue to threaten social stability and the progress being made toward democratic governance, making the cities of the hemisphere unmanageable.

We are convinced that unless the role of the ministries of agriculture is redefined and agriculture's true contribution to national development is recognized, there will be no definition of a rural identity and decisions about agriculture will continue to be taken by people who do not live or work in the sector, nor understand it.

The structural adjustment programmes of the recent past have resulted in fewer budgetary resources being allocated to the ministries of agriculture of several countries in the hemisphere. However, the global scenario requires that the State play a key role in providing the regulatory framework for agriculture, a policy framework, and support services such as rural infrastructure, security of land tenure, and training, research and extension, all of which are necessary for the development of a competitive agricultural sector. Traditional private-sector and non-governmental organizations are increasingly involved in the provision of technical services to the sector, but the role of government in building new strategic partnerships with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and the institutions of civil society is a critical one.

Nevertheless, the rural sector has no hope of developing unless there is an increase in the flow of investment capital from both the public and private sectors into the rural economy. It is rather unfortunate and ironic that

when there are budgetary constraints, governments tend to reduce investment in a productive sector like agriculture and increase investment in social services. If progress is to be made in curbing rural poverty, the international financial community must consider the importance of social balance – and not just profits – when investing in the rural economy. I noted recently that only 3% of the IDB loans went to the rural sector in 2002 and in Jamaica only 1% of the budget was allocated to agriculture.

We must therefore examine the potential in rural communities for rural services, agro-tourism, forest products, transportation, food processing, marketing, input supplies and output-related services, as a basis for rural prosperity and the provision of rural employment. According to the International Food Policy and Research Institute (IFPRI), “the abundance and diversity of Latin America and the Caribbean's agricultural and natural resources provide the region with a comparative advantage to compete in world markets and generate broad-based growth throughout the economy”.

However, such growth will only be realized if we adopt a more relevant development model that facilitates increased investment in rural areas and ensures a more sustainable development of agriculture and greater prosperity in the rural economy. Such a model should include an institutional framework that promotes cooperation

and closer ties between the State and civil society. This should be considered within the framework of strong government at the community level and a new role for the public sector, private sector and international organizations in rural community development.

Past and even current development models have an anti-rural bias in which the recommended approach to modernizing the economy is based on industrialization and favours the growth of urban areas. The consequences of these models are many. They have resulted in a large, disproportionate allocation of public investment funds for urban centers and the concentration of the population in cities. Due to the resulting political importance of urban dwellers, more public investment is channeled into services for urban areas. This is accompanied by a greater inflow of private investment into urban areas as a result of the externalities created by public investments.

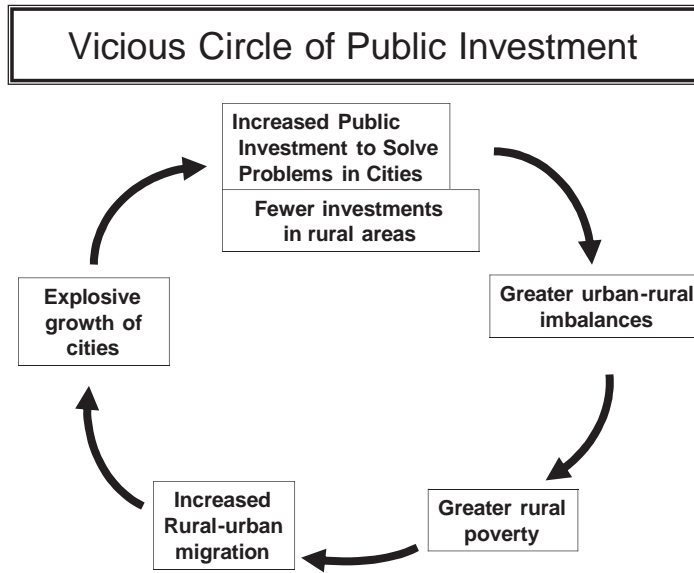
Thus, despite the economic reforms implemented in the mid-1980s and during the 1990s, the inequality between urban and rural areas continues to exist. The situation is aggravated by the limited inflow of resources and improvement in infrastructure in rural areas due to inappropriate public policies on investment, trade and taxes. The spillover effects of increased rural

poverty are then seen in urban areas and a larger slice of the national budget is allocated to solve the growing problems in the cities. The vicious circle is completed by a rise in violence and growing social and political insecurity in the rural economy due to the urban-rural imbalances; and the continued competitive disadvantage of the rural sector, despite investments in areas with much potential.

The increasing migration from rural areas results in less agricultural production and the government then imports more food (normally cheap food) to satisfy urban demand. This further undermines the capacity of the rural sector to produce and creates another vicious circle-food insecurity.

A new development model is therefore needed that facilitates a better rural-urban balance through the integral development of both areas. More investment in rural areas is also required, so as to ensure social and political stability; promote the competitiveness of agriculture and rural economic activities; and, create rural agricultural and non-agricultural employment that allows rural dwellers to enjoy an acceptable standard of living. Other aspects that must be considered include productivity increases and an expansion in the food supply to meet the growing needs for food and market requirements.

This vicious circle of public investment must be re-examined:



Furthermore, appropriate policies and strategies must be adopted that will: increase investments in the rural sector and thereby facilitate the profitable and sustainable use of natural resources; support investments in infrastructure and services that will make both agriculture and non-agricultural activities in rural areas competitive, profitable and sustainable; support investment for the development of human capital in the rural sector (rural education), to increase the skills of the population and improve their standard of living; and, increase investment in the development of rural enterprises and institutions that strengthens rural-urban linkages and the generation of

value-added activities and higher incomes.

In light of the challenges facing agriculture and rural life, a new institutional framework to transform rural isolation into a network of global prosperity is needed. The best mechanism for implementing this strategy would be a hemispheric platform that facilitates dialogue, strengthens and expands alliances with strategic partners, increases the flow of investments into agriculture and the rural economy, and fosters hemispheric trade.

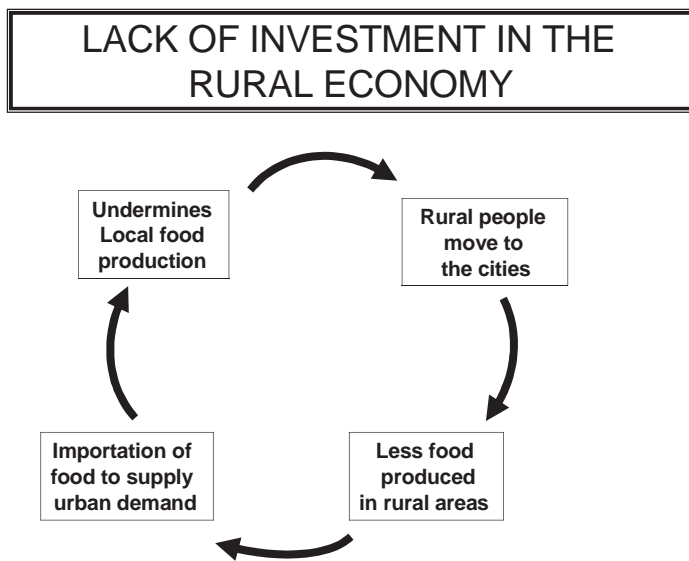
The aim of this hemispheric platform would be to permit the

stakeholders in agriculture to take advantage of hemispheric and global knowledge and, at the same time, sensitize hemispheric and global players to the needs at the local and national levels.

The proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), with a potential to create a single hemispheric market of 800 million people and a capital market of some 15 trillion dollars, presents the countries of the Americas

reality for development in our countries.

However, the potential will only become a reality if globalization and trade liberalization are controlled and regulated by transparent, science-based rules, instruments and institutions to provide for the equitable distribution of the benefits of the new global economy. In this regard, the treatment that small economies receive, the environment, and the fate



with both challenges and opportunities. The concept of a new Inter-American economy, in which no country is constrained by its geographic size but has the potential to create enterprises that can operate in the new regional, hemispheric and global environment, is an exciting

of those who may be marginalized by the process are all relevant concerns.

Small economies in the region, struggling as they are to cope with the twin challenges of eliminating poverty and promoting sustainable economic development, need assistance if they

are to integrate into the global economy. The networking and benchmarking of institutions in the hemisphere to share experiences and learn from each other is also important. In addition, institutions such as IICA have an important strategic role to play in facilitating development cooperation that channels effective technical assistance from the Institute's large, developed members to its small, developing ones. Small states must be able to play their legitimate role in the new global scenario.

Caribbean agriculture will have to tackle several global challenges in the future. It must adjust to liberalized economies in the global world; broaden the base of our economies, moving away from traditional crops; preserve the environment; and, become competitive.

In response to these developments, IICA's work will continue on many fronts. It will strengthen the region's trade negotiating capacity by providing further assistance to the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) and facilitate studies and actions that provide the technical base for negotiations in areas such as sanitary and phytosanitary measures, intellectual property rights and food safety. It will also increase the region's capacity to gather, generate and disseminate technology by providing support to CARDI, PROCICARIBE and national

technology generating institutions. In addition, the IICA Offices in the countries will become centers for information, training and technical support in areas of strategic importance to the region's agricultural sectors.

The Institute will also support agricultural enterprises with agribusiness services and provide Caribbean agribusinesses with links to Latin American markets, by strengthening the Caribbean Agribusiness Association and facilitating cooperation and contacts with the wider hemispheric agribusiness community. It will also support the efforts of the Caribbean Council for Higher Education to produce graduates who are better suited to manage the development of agriculture and rural areas. And it will support the disadvantaged groups of rural women and youth, through the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers and the Caribbean Forum for Youth in Agriculture, to contribute significantly to the repositioning of agriculture and improve the quality of life of these segments of the population.

IICA will continue to support the Alliance for Sustainable Agricultural Development in the Caribbean, a mechanism for regional dialogue and coordination. This all-embracing stakeholder forum also generates critical strategic thinking and discussion on issues related to the modernization of the agricultural

sector. Furthermore, the Institute will assist the ministries of agriculture in their process of reform. Many ministries in the region are in the process of restructuring and refocusing their efforts and programs to cope with the new challenges of the global trade environment and the need for the agricultural sector to be efficient and competitive at a time when budgetary allocations are being reduced.

Lastly, IICA will support the development of a regional agrotourism programme in cooperation with relevant tourism organizations, to explore opportunities for effectively linking the tourism market of hotels and cruise ships with locally produced foods and promoting concepts of quality and reliability in local food production. In addition, the recreational and educational aspects of agrotourism will be explored under a programme that emphasizes linkages between agriculture, tourism and the environment, and that seeks a multi-sectoral approach to rural development.

The Institute cannot dissociate itself from the social problems of unemployment, lack of shelter, education and health care, poverty and social injustice that prevail among the majority of our peoples. These problems are reflected in urban and rural crime, trafficking in illicit drugs, personal insecurity and lawlessness, all of which represent a threat to peace

and prosperity and the process of democratic governance.

Consequently, the Institute will embrace greater social responsibility and a development agenda that allows it to play a more dynamic and strategic role in the promotion of prosperity in the rural communities of the Americas. This role takes us beyond the traditional support to agricultural production and makes us partners in the development process of increasing the competitiveness of the entire agrifood chain and fostering linkages between the chain and other sectors of the economy, such as, tourism, health, nutrition, infrastructure, education and the environment. Our National Agendas must reflect a holistic integrated approach that responds to the reality of the national agricultural community and national circumstances, and must link macro-policy with territorial reality.

Given this expanded mandate, a close relationship with strategic development partners at the national, regional and global levels becomes very important for our work. Consequently, we must actively seek to promote strategic partnerships as part of this change. The agreements we have signed with FAO, PAHO and ECLAC are all part of this new strategy. The appointment of portfolio managers to work with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank is also part of this strategic approach.

The work and reports of our Institute will no longer focus on narrow scientific matters but must embrace the wider aspects of our contribution to society and to development. These include the Institute's contribution to food security and rural prosperity, through efforts aimed at speeding up hemispheric and regional integration; facilitating competitiveness and global trade; strengthening rural communities; promoting food safety and agricultural health; developing human capital; improving environmental management; and, advancing institutional modernization.

We will embrace this development agenda while respecting our core business of promoting an agricultural sector that is competitive, technologically prepared, environmentally managed and socially equitable for the peoples of the Americas. This will ensure that we provide the new level of maturity that our Institute must demonstrate to our Member States.

These initiatives will support competitiveness, as we all work together to forge alliances that create synergies and help build a new, effective single market and economy for the region that will enable our peoples to achieve improved standards of living in the 21st Century.



Poverty Reduction Strategies, WTO, Sugar and Bananas: *The Experience of the OECS Countries*

Arlington Chesney and Diana Francis^a

INTRODUCTION

Because of time constraints and the difficulty in accessing primary data, this paper neither attempts to identify all, nor to evaluate the effectiveness of existing poverty reduction strategies in the OECS. The paper seeks to accomplish three main results:

- To enhance the understanding of why the issue of poverty reduction is receiving considerably more focused attention in the current period.
- To reinforce the observations that a new approach to addressing the problem of rising poverty levels is urgently needed if the OECS countries are to achieve and sustain real and balanced growth.

- Briefly discuss the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) as the current 'best practice' framework towards achieving the goal of sustained poverty reduction in the OECS.

Poverty and Trade Openness – Establish the Link

Poverty reduction within the context of an increasingly liberal trade environment has become a major issue in the political agenda. Over the last twenty years, a period dubbed the globalization years, poverty and inequality have both increased alongside the increase in global trade and economic growth (Sala-i-Martin (2002)).^b Globalization and trade liberalization are inextricably bound and while both can be considered as

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^bSala-i-Martin, X. (2000) "The Disturbing 'Rise' of Global Income Inequality", Cambridge (Mass.). NBER Working Paper, No. 8904, in "Does globalization reduce poverty? Some empirical evidence for the developing countries", E. Santarelli and P. Figini, of the University of Bologna, 20 December 2002.

complementary in promoting economic growth and development, the multifaceted nature of trade liberalization and the wider globalization process may either increase or reduce poverty in developing countries. While there is no simple one-to-one relationship between trade and poverty reduction, the evidence seems to indicate that trade liberalization is generally a positive contributor to poverty alleviation.*

Rajan (2003) observed that even if a link between trade liberalization and growth is accepted, it is still far from clear that it will make direct in-roads into poverty.** It was further observed that up until now, trade liberalization has not been sufficiently inclusive to enable countries to achieve poverty reduction through pro-poor growth strategies. Using the pre-1997 growth experience of East Asian countries as an example, the pro-poor effects of such growth were observed to be due to an astute combination of outward-orientation along with complementary policies in agriculture and widespread basic education. Further, proponents of globalization argue that poverty-reducing growth may take place

through economy-wide resource reallocation effects and the exposure and access to foreign markets, capital and technology.

Increased trade openness that promotes labor-intensive specialization may well have a positive direct impact on poverty. However, this is generally not the case since trade openness requires competitiveness which in turn depends on productivity and in most cases mechanization that calls for retraining of human capital which is not easily or quickly attained. While the increased export of labor-intensive products, such as, those in agriculture could contribute to helping the poor, access to these markets is currently highly protected by non-tariff and/or trade implementation barriers in developed countries. This negates the positive social impacts of trade openness.

Despite their historical trade openness, the OECS countries have not yet been able to integrate successfully within the global market reconfiguration, thus limiting their ability to participate in the growth-inducing and potentially poverty-

*"Summary of Proceedings of Workshop in Trade Policy Issues", 17-25, July 2000, Tokyo, prepared by S.B.Chua, R.B Adhikari, P. Athukorala and T.Ujiie.

**Rajan, R. (2003) "The Nexus Between Trade Liberalisation and Poverty in Asia", World Scientific, forthcoming, referenced in a paper on "Trade liberalization, New Regionalism and Poverty Reduction in Asia and the Pacific", prepared by Dr. Ramkishan S. Rajan, University of Adelaide, Australia, for the Expert Group Meeting on Regional Trade Agreements in Asia and the Pacific, 30-31 January, 2003.

reducing benefits of trade. In the immediate term, therefore, trade liberalization in the agricultural sector has and continues to negatively affect income growth in rural agricultural areas exacerbating the problem of rural poverty. A significant proportion of the populace in the OECS countries is still largely tied to the agricultural sector and this is where the bulk of the poverty is concentrated. Therefore, agriculture cannot be ignored if significant inroads are to be made in reducing poverty and raising living standards in the OECS countries.

Sugar, Bananas and the WTO – Exposing Vulnerabilities

In the pre-1990 period, security of access to the export market for banana and sugar, through preferential trade arrangements with the European Union (EU) fuelled strong growth in agricultural exports, dominated by bananas (Windward Islands) and sugar (Leeward Islands). The impending phasing out of the EU's banana regime and the uncertainty regarding the future of the preferential EU sugar regime, and trade liberalization in general, under the World Trade Organization (WTO) have had an adverse impact on the banana and sugar industries specifically, and OECS agriculture in general. The negative impact of trade liberalization on OECS agriculture was predictable because of the small individual farm

size, the inadequacy of the terrain and soils for crop production with consequential low productivity and high unit costs.

The entire OECS economic system is strongly correlated to the performance of these single export crop industries, and erosion of preferential access has severely weakened the viability of these industries. Consequently, the recent economic performance of these economies has been characterized by low, volatile and in some cases, negative growth due to a steady deterioration of the banana industry over the past decade, which has also adversely affected growth in other sectors. In spite of a range of agricultural diversification programmes since the early 1980s, rural areas and agriculture in general remained reliant on these single-export crops. Therefore, despite their deficiencies, the banana and sugar industries remained vital to the social and economic well-being of rural communities.

The situation in rural communities has deteriorated drastically over the past few years as a result of the fall out from the banana industry and the incidence of poverty has increased significantly. According to a Commonwealth Secretariat study, 'Impact of changes in the EU policy for banana imports on the ECS (1992-2002) by C. Predille, from 1992 to 2002, the number of persons employed

in the regional banana sector declined by 86 percent, from 60,000 to 13,600 approximately. In addition, the real output of the sector declined by 65 percent, falling from 279,812 tonnes to 99,089 tonnes, and GDP growth of -3.1 percent and -4.2 percent has been recorded for St. Lucia and Dominica, respectively for 2001. Further reports indicate an estimated 52 percent of farmers have exited the St. Vincent and the Grenadines banana industry between 1990 and 2001.* In Dominica, reports are that farmers' take-home cash fell by 62 percent between 1990 and 2000, with a significant decline in the number of active banana farmers from 6,675 to 2,410 over the same period.**

The rapid pace of trade liberalization therefore, has exposed agriculture's vulnerability and provided little transition space to undertake necessary adjustments. In the context of agriculture's historical dependence on concessionary external financing and public sector driven incentives, the phasing out of the EU's banana regime and the decline in official development assistance (ODA) for agricultural development in developing countries from 1999, have severely curtailed Government's

ability to put in place the necessary measures to mitigate the fall out from bananas. The situation has been aggravated by the events of September 11, 2001, which have further limited alternative economic activities, such as tourism, thus exacerbating the likelihood of increased unemployment and hence increased risk of poverty.

Many OECS countries have undertaken structural adjustments aimed at correcting their weakening economic and fiscal situations and reducing their vulnerability to external shocks. The pain of such adjustment has been hardest on the rural sectors due to their heavy concentration of employment in agriculture. Many of these measures took cognizance of minimizing the adjustment costs of the more vulnerable including farmers and their dependents. However, to date, these economic and social strategies tended to address issues of development without direct reference to poverty alleviation and reduction. In the post-2000 period, even in face of continued economic turbulence, the Governments of the OECS are increasingly committing to addressing the needs of the poor and disadvantaged of their economies.

**St. Vincent and the Grenadines Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, prepared by the Poverty Reduction Task Force (PRTF) of the National Economic and Social Development Council, Final Revision, June 2003.*

***2002-2003 Budget Address of the Prime Minister of Dominica, "Programme for Economic Stabilisation and Recovery".*

Despite the negative reactions that trade liberalization and the WTO evoke in the OECS, there also remains commitment to further the process of trade openness. However, for these countries to participate in the poverty-reducing benefits of openness, trade liberalization must be accompanied by a constellation of other complimentary domestic policies and institutions. These include labor market flexibility, macroeconomic stability, reasonable infrastructure and good governance. These policies need to be consciously developed and nurtured. OECS governments are taking explicit recognition of the need to invest in poverty reduction initiatives and other social and economic development programmes to minimize the negative impacts of adverse economic shocks that arise in part, from acceleration in trade liberalization.

Rajan (2003) argues that the impact of trade openness on poverty reduction will depend on how effective it is in garnering the necessary resources for the society to tackle the goal of poverty alleviation directly via compensatory mechanisms. He suggests that social safety nets and or mechanisms will be needed that should: (a) compensate 'losers' from trade policy reforms; (b) provide

opportunities for the less well-off to develop basic skills needed to exploit the new opportunities brought about by integrating with the global economy; and (c) recognize and protect the most vulnerable in society in the event of economic downswings. In the context of trade openness, the need for well-designed social safety nets to mitigate the possible harmful effects on the poor – at least in the 'short term' – is particularly relevant.

Pro-Poor Programmes – Setting The Context

This section draws heavily from a paper by Kakwani and Pernia (2000) on poverty reduction and pro-poor growth to set the context for discussion on the experiences of poverty reduction strategies in the OECS.* The authors trace the beginnings of the debate on pro-poor growth to the 1950s where the notion of 'trickle-down' development dominated development thinking. The poor is said to benefit from economic growth only indirectly through a vertical flow from the rich, implying that the proportional benefits of growth going to the poor will always be less. However, since the World Bank's 1974 *Redistribution with Growth*,** the concept of, and phrase 'pro-poor' growth has underplayed

* "*Pro-Poor Growth And Income Inequality*" by Nanak Kakwani and Ernesto M. Pernia, Asian Development Bank (ADB) with the assistance of Hyun Son. Draft, October 2000.

** *Redistribution with Growth: Policies to Improve Income Distribution in Developing Countries in the Context of Economic Growth*. Chenery H.B, et al., (1974), Oxford: Oxford University, referenced by Nanak Kakwani and Ernesto M. Pernia (2000).

discussions on ways to alleviate poverty in developing countries. Pro-poor growth was also implicit in “broad-based growth” that pervaded the World Development Report 1990.

Kakwani and Pernia (2000), define poverty reduction as improving human well-being, in particular that of poor people. Well-being is about the life people live; what they can do or cannot do. Broadly, pro-poor growth can be defined as one that enables the poor to actively participate in and significantly benefit from economic activity. The authors admit that it is a major departure from the trickle-down development concept. It is inclusive economic growth. Its outcome should be that no person in society is deprived of the minimum basic capabilities. For instance, everyone should be adequately nourished, no child should be allowed to die prematurely, and people should be able to 'enjoy' long and satisfying lives.

The growth process that results from market forces generally benefits the rich proportionally more than the poor. This is because the rich have inherent advantages (e.g., human and material capital) in the management of a market economy. Moreover, in many countries, governments knowingly or unknowingly adopt policies that reflect bias in favour of the rich.

Consequently, the gap in the well-being between the poor and the rich (between countries and between people within countries) tends to widen over time. To foster the overall well-being of society, governments need to pursue policies that will at least prevent the widening of this gap, if not reduce it.

A pro-poor growth strategy entails the removal of institutional and policy-induced biases against the poor and the adoption of direct pro-poor policies. The latter includes adequate public spending for basic education, health and family planning services, improved access to credit, and poverty reduction strategy, which favours policies and programmes that benefit the poor more than the rich, and the promotion of small and medium size enterprises. In referencing a paper by McCulloch and Baulch (1999), the authors note that using a measure called the “poverty bias of growth”, the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Sussex, United Kingdom shows that poverty reduction depends on the rate of economic growth as well as on changes in income distribution.* Using the new indicator to analyze the nature of economic growth in Laos, Thailand, and Korea, the results suggest that poverty reduction can occur more

*The research was undertaken at the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Sussex, United Kingdom, to arrive at a simple operational definition of pro-poor growth.

rapidly if the governments follow pro-poor policies, or avoided policies with adverse consequences on income distribution. As expected, growth in rural areas was more pro-poor than in urban areas. The research further reinforces the conclusion that economic crises inflicted proportionally more harm on the poor than on the non-poor.

Research by Deshingkar and Johnson (2002) on rural poverty and livelihood diversification in Andhra Pradesh (AP) has shown that people are already trying to move out of agriculture.* Many are desperately trying to gain a living from extremely small plots on poor quality land. The trouble is that the poor often switch from one low-paid activity to another and rarely manage to exit from poverty. Moreover, they lack the skills and the capital to engage in more lucrative activities. Factors like gender and lack of access to political power also constrain them. This is also true for the OECS where it has been extremely difficult to find suitable alternative employment for those who have been displaced from the banana and sugar industries.

Poverty Reduction Strategies in The OECS

The OECS countries have had various, albeit, ad hoc public sector

driven programmes addressing poverty alleviation and social equity over the last three decades. In the pre-1990 period, a significant proportion of these programmes were largely aimed at alleviating the short-term impacts of natural disasters (hurricane relief) on employment, particularly in agriculture. Additionally, many of the on going social public sector programmes are in the realm of community development projects aimed at providing short-term employment, skills and entrepreneurship training to facilitate income-earning opportunities for the vulnerable and marginalized and the establishment and development of rural infrastructure.

In terms of national efforts, each OECS country has in place public sector driven programmes that target the poor and vulnerable. While these programmes may be termed differently in the various countries, their basic objectives and range of activities are largely similar. Generally, the 'pro-poor' programmes involve support services and safety nets that provide short-term income support and access to social services for the segment of the population most vulnerable to external economic shocks and economic adjustment.

A quick review of the types of initiatives suggests that public assistance programmes are the most

**"Poverty Reduction in Andhra Pradesh (AP): The Real Concerns"* Priya Deshingkar and Craig Johnson, Respectively, AP Research Director and UK Research Co-ordinator, Livelihood Options Project, Overseas Development Institute.

common and most broad in terms of coverage. The services and safety nets provided usually fall under the portfolio of a range of line Ministries, including agriculture, health, community development, education, etc. These programmes are typically included in the Government's annual public sector investment programmes as a part of their responsibility to address the needs of the vulnerable and poverty-stricken in the society. They are usually not directly associated with any particular poverty-inducing occurrences. The programme supports assistance, such as pauper allowance/pension, financial support for poor and vulnerable students, school feeding, care for the elderly and disabled persons, child abuse/care, adult literacy, skills training and micro-enterprise; community services, development and self-help, including labor intensive infrastructure development projects (such as, road maintenance and provision of drinking water), gender sensitization and advocacy, including skills training and micro-enterprise development and micro-finance.

It appears that in many instances, the poverty reduction elements of public assistance programmes are implemented without benefit of

structured poverty assessments. As such, the basis for policy formulation within which direct interventions to address the poverty situation can be conceived, comprehensively implemented and coordinated and sustained does not exist. To illustrate, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia are reported to have conducted their first poverty assessment in 1995, Grenada in 1999 and Dominica in 2001/2002!*

It has been the experience among the OECS that the budgetary allocations to such programmes are generally insufficient to result in any sustained impact on poverty reduction. Such poverty assessments are critical because of the limited resources that were further reduced with the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 80s and 90s. These assessments would facilitate greater focus on the most critical areas for poverty alleviation and hence the most appropriate Ministry or department to implement poverty alleviation programmes. This will eliminate the "broad brush" approach, reduce duplication, enhance coordination, facilitate monitoring and evaluation and reduce administrative cost.

The OECS public sector also implements special pro-poor social projects aimed at responding to more direct needs and with specific target

*Various country reports, namely, *St. Vincent and the Grenadines Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2003. ibid., Government of St. Lucia 'Basic Needs Trust Fifth Programme Poverty Reduction Action Plan, 2002-2008', and Grenada Rural Enterprise Project.*

beneficiaries and zones. In many instances, these are funded from external sources with the activities having well defined start and end dates. Among these include the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) programme implemented in the OECS over the last two decades. The BNTF, jointly financed by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and national governments, targets assistance directly to low income communities to improve their access to public services through the provision of social and economic infrastructure and the development of skills to enhance employability. All OECS governments are in various stages of negotiations with the CDB for the extension of the fund to another programme cycle, BNTF-5, 2002-2007. BNTF-5 will primarily fund socio-economic infrastructure that will enable communities to access basic social services, while creating significant short-term employment. The BNTF is recognized as an important poverty reduction programme in the OECS countries. While it has played a pivotal role in bringing infrastructure services to rural communities and creating conditions conducive to community empowerment, country reports suggest room for improvement and greater effectiveness on meeting the needs of the poor communities.*

From the foregoing, it is clear that the major national-led safety nets and pro-poor social programmes are largely public sector led, with a significant component of financing provided by international financial institutions involved in poverty reduction. The observation from an assessment undertaken in St. Lucia that private sector participation in poverty reduction programmes was 'marginal', holds for the rest of the OECS.** The report concludes that

“...experience suggests that it [the private sector] could provide more support to micro enterprise development and incorporate poverty reduction objectives in its approach to investment and business development. The private sector also has a key role to play in skills development, by setting standards, by helping to define and forecast labor market demands, by contributing finance and resource personnel, and by providing more support to apprenticeship programmes. On a small scale, several businesses are currently involved in charitable activities, and this is another area where the private sector could increase its contribution and enhance its impact.”

This conclusion should be of significant interest to those involved in

**Government of St. Lucia Basic Needs Trust Fund Programme Poverty Reduction Action Plan, 2002-2008, prepared by Yves Renard, Facilitation and Management Services.*

***ibid*

the design of poverty reduction strategies given the emerging global environment and the changing, or rather, lessening role of the public sector in areas previously thought of as within their domain. The growing practice is to actively involve and not merely consult the beneficiaries in the design, ownership, implementation and evaluation of pro-poor strategies and programmes. The State, as regulator, will continue to have a large, but more facilitating role to play in minimizing the impact of adjustments on the most vulnerable and poor of society. However, the real drivers of the process must be the beneficiaries themselves, aptly aided by direct interventions from the private sector, within which the entrepreneurial capital and opportunities lie.

Outside of the formal efforts of the governments, the countries also have a large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in poverty reduction initiatives and safety nets, serving a wide range of vulnerable groups – children, youth, women, elderly and physically and mentally challenged, as well as the community as a whole. They are resourced from a mix of local and international voluntary funds; some are also partly funded by government with reorientation, refocus, modification of their objectives and structured and human reengineering.

This diverse group of 'pro-poor' organizations is well poised to become

a more critical player in the fight against rising poverty levels. The advantage of these types of organizations over the public sector is that often times they seek to redress the inequalities from which they themselves have emerged. Consequently, they appear to be more 'in touch' with the real needs of the poor and vulnerable, hence the associated label as 'grass-root' organizations. In addition, the growing trend among international financial institutions and other donor agencies towards direct lending to beneficiaries, places a significant volume of resources into the hands of NGOs, as opposed to the public sector treasury.

While poverty is widespread and not confined to any particular locale, age group, gender and field of activity, the NGO community may tend to focus in similar areas. Consequently, the ratio of NGOs to target beneficiaries becomes too large (many NGOs vying for the confidence of a small beneficiary population) to be effective and the needs of a large proportion of the vulnerable and poverty stricken may be left unfulfilled.

In spite of the existing social services and social protection programmes in place, poverty in the OECS countries, particularly in rural areas worsened significantly by 2000. There is consensus that this worsening situation results directly from the

globalization and trade liberalization induced socio-economic pressures on large segments of the population dependent on agriculture and related services. The depth of the social crisis that was spawned by the fall-out from the worsening fortunes of the banana industry has extended beyond the capacity of the existing and typical social programmes and poverty amelioration measures.

While the typical pro-poor programmes did not target agriculture sector workers specifically, the depth of the agriculture-induced increase in poverty required more direct and immediate measures within agriculture as a major factor in poverty reduction. The primary safety nets and poverty reduction programmes specifically targeted to the unfolding and undesirable situation in agriculture, particularly bananas, has been the EU's Stabilization of Export (STABEX)-funded Social Protection Program (SPP), under STABEX 96/97 agreed in October 2000. The SPP aims to enhance and sustain living standards and life chances of the socio-economically under-privileged, specifically in response to the increase in poverty levels as a consequence of changes in the banana industry and other related factors. The elements of the programme focuses on risk mitigation, risk coping and risk reduction.

It is noteworthy that while the banana industry has operated an insurance scheme, risk mitigation measures have been painfully absent in agriculture. Evidently, the banana insurance scheme was also woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the banana community in the aftermath of industry restructuring. Perhaps this was because it was not conceptualized or designed to deal with the complete overhauling of the trade arrangements that have provided the industry with market security since the 1960s in such a relatively short timeframe.

Also, funded by the EU, under the auspices of its Special Framework of Assistance (SFA) programme, is a Social Investment Fund (SIF) which includes among its four objectives: (a) to improve living conditions of the poor through speedy provision of basic economic and social services; and (b) to mitigate recession and adjustment related social costs as a result of changes in the banana industry.

Other programmes that emerged in direct response to the situation in agriculture in the OECS include more focused programmes to address rural poverty, through various versions of Rural Enterprise Projects (REP). Dominica and St. Lucia each implemented their REP in 1997, both due to terminate in March 2003. However, the programmes have been

extended to March 2004. Grenada recently (2002) began implementation of its six-year REP as part of its strategic framework for addressing the issue of poverty. Not all countries have specific time-defined rural enterprise projects, such as, St. Kitts and Nevis, which operate a Small Enterprise Development Unit as part of their public sector programmes.

The general aim of the REPs, is to reduce rural poverty in a sustainable and gender equitable manner through community mobilization, enterprise development and the provision of innovative rural financial services. It is expected that such a direct intervention will have a similarly direct impact on the lives of rural dwellers since it offers small holders and other rural poor households, include women-headed households, the option to broaden their income by directing production activities towards existing market opportunities and to reduce risk by encouraging diversification into non-agricultural enterprises where appropriate. These programmes also have a significant level of financing from regional (CDB) and external sources, including the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

It is still too soon to make any conclusive assessment as to the effectiveness of these agriculture-targeted poverty reduction programmes. However it is reasonable to opine that while these programmes

may have positive ameliorating impacts in the immediate and short-term, a much more well-informed, holistic, multi-dimensional strategy is a pre-requisite if poverty reduction is to be sustained. Given the emerging trade environment, it is well recognized that these direct interventions in agriculture, on their own, can not tackle the poverty problem in agriculture-dependent communities. Complementary actions that will make the long-term goal of poverty reduction more achievable include macro economic stability, increased focus on the 'urbanizing' of rural areas, as opposed to mere rural development and rural diversification. It has been shown that direct targeting of rural poverty will generate benefits to the urban poor, though not vice versa. The practical experience further suggests that growth in the rural sector has an equalizing income effect in the urban sector, while expansion of the urban sector actually exacerbates overall income inequalities.

Towards a 'Best Practice' Framework for Poverty Reduction

The following conclusions can be drawn from the foregoing:

- Trade openness and trade liberalization does not automatically result in the reduction of poverty. Indeed, it tends to widen the gap between the “haves” and the “have nots”.

- “Pro-poor” policies that impact at the macro, sectoral and community levels must be developed and introduced if poverty reduction is to be achieved and rural life enhanced as poverty is primarily rural based.
- The “pro-poor” policies must be inclusive, involving government, private sector, civil society (through NGOs), and the beneficiaries.
- Trade liberalization and trade openness have had a disastrous effect on the one agricultural commodity export paradigm of the OECS with negative social and economic consequences. The end result is that poverty has increased in the last decade.
- The OECS has had many social poverty alleviation programmes that have generally been implemented without proper poverty assessments and as a result had little focus and apparently limited success.
- With the exception of the EU's stabilization of Export (STABEX)

funded Social Protection Programme (SPP) and the Social Investment Fund under its Special Framework of Assistance, the Poverty Reduction Programmes of the OECS have failed to take into consideration that agriculture has traditionally been a major source of employment and hence a poverty alleviator.

OECS governments have pledged their commitment to the goal of reducing poverty in all its forms by 2015, using 1990 as a benchmark. This is the underlying theme of the first seven of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which derive from the series of World Summits on development issues during the 1990s.* The MDGs are an ambitious agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives that world leaders agreed on at the Millennium Summit in September 2000.

However, to achieve predetermined and measurable success of poverty alleviation, i.e. “pro-poor” growth in the future, OECS countries must accept that trade liberalization and trade openness, at least in the near

**The Millennium Development Goals commit the international community to an expanded vision of development, one that vigorously promotes human development as the key to sustaining social and economic progress in all countries, and recognizes the importance of creating a global partnership for development. The goals have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress. Many of the poorest countries will need additional assistance and must look to the rich countries to provide it. Countries that are poor and heavily indebted will need further help in reducing their debt burdens. And all countries will benefit if trade barriers are lowered, allowing a freer exchange of goods and services. Details of the PRS can be obtained from the World Bank Website.*

future will tend to increase poverty. Therefore, even in spite of Cancun, trade liberalization and trade openness will continue in some form, appropriate “pro-poor” policies (based on poverty assessments) must be introduced; these policies MUST recognize the direct relationship between the demise of traditional agriculture and increasing poverty. As such, adequate provisions (incentives, education, infrastructure, credit, etc.) must exist to facilitate the use of the many displaced workers and the total use of the biodiversity and other assistance available in, or to the rural communities. In addition, these policies must be inclusive, long-term and national in nature and hence transcend political imperatives.

Recognizing the above criteria, the World Bank Group and the IMF (September 1999), agreed that nationally owned, participatory poverty reduction strategies should provide the basis of all World Bank and IMF concessionary lending and for debt relief under the enhanced *Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative*. The World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) promotes five

core principles underlying their development and implementation:

- country-driven – involving broad-based participation by civil society and the private sector in all operational steps;
- results-oriented – focusing on outcomes that would benefit the poor;
- comprehensive in recognizing the multidimensional nature of poverty;
- partnership-oriented – involving coordinated participation of development partners (bilateral, multilateral, and non-governmental);
- based on a long-term perspective for poverty reduction.

Given these guidelines and the fact that the sub-region has in October 2003 approved its Agricultural Policy and Plan of Action, OECS countries are theoretically, well positioned to develop appropriate “pro-poor” policies, programmes and projects that will provide sustainable employment and hence drive the process of poverty alleviation.

LESSONS LEARNED

....Encouraging acceptability of social programmes. Well-developed school feeding programmes are an important strategy for poverty alleviation and essential for the healthy development of school children.

The Policy Dialogue Outcomes and CARICOM Mandates

Edward Greene^a

On behalf of the CARICOM Secretariat and the Secretary General, Mr. Edwin Carrington for whom I am deputizing, it is my pleasure to bring you greetings from the Caribbean Community system. CARICOM is delighted to collaborate with CFNI and USDA in presenting this most important policy dialogue on poverty alleviation and food security in the Caribbean. I wish in particular to express gratitude to Dr. Fitzroy Henry and his staff for the very efficient manner in which they have organized and managed this event and indeed for their most gracious hospitality.

The findings and recommendations from the technical sessions that preceded this policy dialogue are important for CARICOM and indeed for the organs and institutions of the Community. In the first instance, poverty alleviation and reduction of hunger comprise the first priority in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to which all CARICOM countries have subscribed. The technical sessions identified specific features of this MDG priority

that must be pursued at both the regional and national levels and therefore provides a framework for action, which will form the focus for our deliberations today.

I am in a particularly fortunate position having participated in the very interesting technical discussions that resulted in some very concrete recommendations that will be presented by the Conference rapporteur. However among the considerations – at least from the perspective of CARICOM – are how can the recommendations be converted into practical programmes? What role can CARICOM play in translating policies to programme?

Intersection of Policy Dialogue outcomes and CARICOM Mandates

Among the major issues that concerned the technical discussions were how to deal with the threats posed by globalization to issues of poverty alleviation and food security and more specifically what regional strategies are required?

^aDr. Edward Greene, Assistant Secretary-General, CARICOM Secretariat.

In general the answer resides in the acceleration of CARICOM'S flagship activity to achieve a CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). More specifically however the answer emerges out of recognition that there is an intersection between the outcomes of this policy dialogue and the mandates of the organs of the Community.

In the first instance the CSME is predicated on the assumption that an enlarged economic space comprising 15 member states and 6 Associated states and encompassing a population of 17 million people is more likely to be competitive in a global environment which includes larger and more prosperous groupings as is the case with respect to the regional groupings of Europe, Asia, the Pacific, Africa and the impending FTAA. The CSME revolves around the principles of free movement of goods, services and people and offers the hope that with the enlarged market space the collective regional economic activity would drive the process toward poverty alleviation and food security much more so than small economies - even those that are famed for tourism and reggae - operating individually in the vast labyrinth of a rules-based global arena.

It is this context of wider conglomerate of states that offers greater scope for the Region to maintain its collective solidarity in the various multinational trade negotiations taking

place within the World Trade Organization (WTO), the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement and the FTAA system. The recent outcomes of the Cancun Summit are a good illustration of the veracity of this type of collective solidarity. In fact in his presentation to the technical session, Professor Denis Benn was emphatic about the need for a relentless collective pursuit by CARICOM, of the case for special and differential treatment in international trade, especially for agricultural products. This is a particular charge for the Regional Negotiating Machinery and the Council for Foreign and Community Relations.

A parallel activity is the promotion by the Council for Trade and Economic Integration of the Regional Transformation Programme that places emphasis on diversification of production and a Regional Stabilization Fund pioneered by the Caribbean Development Bank. Herein lies the intersection with recommendations from the technical session designed to achieve complementarity of production and employment generating schemes intended to rationalize resources regionally.

But the policies intent on increasing productivity, collective negotiations internationally and support for troubled economies cannot take place in a vacuum. They are meaningful only if accompanied by programmes, the essential focus of

which are to improve the quality of life of the populations of the region. In this regard the recommendations from the technical session intersect with the mandate of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD). This mandate is pivoted on the theme **investment in human resources with equity**. COHSOD recognizes that the methodology and mechanisms for achieving this objective rest with an intersectoral approach to policy and planning much the same as that for achieving poverty reduction, through improving health conditions, establishing healthy workplaces, ensuring access to quality education, making provision for social safety nets and mainstreaming gender, youth and culture in the policy framework of human and social development. In this regard CARICOM is striving to strengthen the partnerships with agencies such as CDB that has initiated a rethinking of human resource development (HRD) strategies including poverty reduction, UNECLAC on social statistics and UWI on social policy research. We acknowledge the role of PAHO in the formulation of national health statistic and national health accounts as a basis for planning and programming for health and development .The Region's policy-making capabilities can be enhanced by a serious attempt to make our data collection and information connectivity systems more effective and meaningful. Failing which we will continue to be dependent on outside

sources for evidence-based analysis, even though the history of such dependence has not often been beneficial

The CARICOM system is geared toward fostering implementation of the policies and programmes that arise out of this dialogue as priorities for action. CARICOM does have the track record for delivering the political will required to scale-up responses to regional priorities as attested by the outstanding success of the Caribbean Examinations Council, now in its 30th year and the cooperation in health, that has resulted in the Caribbean Commission of Health and Development chaired by Sir George Alleyne. These are only a few illustrations of functional cooperation. Then there is the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP), hailed as a model for regional initiatives and is sustained by a network of government, business, NGO, civil society, faith based and donor partners. This Partnership has acted as a catalyst for negotiating lower regional prices for ARVs and has been fortunate that among its partners in this venture are the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Foundation, PAHO, WHO and UNAIDS. The Partnership has also been pivotal to the resource mobilization efforts, not only for ARVs but of other aspects of care treatment and support and human rights and stigma reduction for People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWA).

The relevance of this regional experience in the HIV/AIDS programme to our concerns at this dialogue is by no means far-fetched. It provides a useful model for cooperation that shows how advocacy that incorporates the affected and in this case the infected groups in planning and operationalizing programmes for their benefit can improve the lot of the poor and vulnerable.

The PANCAP programmes for HIV/AIDS like the programmes that emerge out the recommendations from this dialogue require collaboration

with donor partners for both financial and technical supports. It is

...But beyond these expected outcomes, there is need to chart a road map that would translate policy options into action.

for this reason that CARICOM continues to challenge the criteria for technical assistance, soft loans and other forms of concessionary funding from multilateral and bilateral sources that are based solely on income levels. This system by which the small countries of this region are disqualified from many forms of technical assistance is unjust and unfair. It does not take into consideration the high rates of poverty in many of our countries, the high risks to natural disasters that reek havoc on the GDPs and exacerbate the debt burdens, the skewed levels of income distribution that reinforce poverty, the relatively high levels of unemployment, the epidemiological trends

which show that there is need to correct nutritional deficiencies in early childhood in order to avert the chronic non-communicable diseases like heart failure diabetes and high blood pressure that afflict so many in our populations.

I end by repeating what I said at the opening session of the technical meeting: if this meeting can point the Region in the direction of scaling up its response to poverty alleviation and food security strategies that are practical, it would be considered to be partially successful. If in addition it

could identify priorities and appropriate mechanisms for sustained poverty alle-

vation and sustainable food security it would be largely successful. But beyond these expected outcomes, there is need to chart a road map that would translate policy options into action.

The CARICOM Secretariat stands ready to do what it does best: that is, help to advocate for delivery of the appropriate programmes, facilitate the mobilization of resources, and galvanize the necessary political will. CARICOM is pleased to partner with CFNI and USDA and indeed with all of the agencies represented here today in confronting the challenges posed by poverty and food in-security that affect so many – too many – of the citizens of this region.

Technical Advisory Meeting

WEDNESDAY, 19-20 NOVEMBER 2003

OPENING SESSION

The conference sponsors and several distinguished individuals welcomed the participants and provided brief remarks at the opening session, which was chaired by Mrs. Ann Marie Bonner, Principal Director, Policy Analysis Review Unit, Cabinet Office, Office of the Prime Minister, Jamaica. Presenters included: Dr. Fitzroy Henry, Director, CFNI, Dr. Carol Kramer LeBlanc, Director of Research and Scientific Exchanges, Foreign Agricultural Services, USDA, Dr. Edward Greene, Assistant Secretary-General, CARICOM, and The Honourable John Junor and The Honourable Roger Clarke, Ministers of Health and Agriculture, respectively, Government of Jamaica.

Two papers were presented following these introductory remarks. The first was the keynote paper by Prof. Denis Benn, Michael Manley Professor of Public Affairs/Public Policy, UWI, Mona, followed by Dr. Ballayram, Food Economist, CFNI. Prof. Benn's paper (reproduced in full in this issue of *CAJANUS*), titled "Economic Development and Poverty

in the Caribbean", traced the evolution in thinking on development, beginning from classical development economics, through the preoccupation with growth in the 1960s and 1970s, to the current emphasis on human needs. This latter challenged the earlier focus on growth rates and other national economic aggregates as indices of development. Beginning with the 1990 UN Human Development Report and its Human Development Index (HDI) and later the UNDP's Human Poverty Index (HPI), the new approach reflects a philosophical redefinition of development in terms of the enlargement of people's choices. In this regard, international development agencies (World Bank, UN, etc.) assign priority to poverty eradication underlined by the fact that poverty eradication is the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted by the international community to guide development policy.

Prof. Benn emphasized the need to address the longer-term structural underpinnings of poverty. In this regard, he identified several policy directions:

- Appropriate strategies to expand output based on increased productivity and competitiveness.
- Exploit the regional economic entity in terms of:
 - ◆ establishing CARICOM regional projects, especially to establish a CARICOM Regional Development Fund;
 - ◆ support the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) as a wider framework for integrated regional programmes based on factor movements and complementarity;
 - ◆ collective solidarity, both regionally and with other developing countries (e.g., the Group of 20 at the Cancun Ministerial Meeting), in multi-lateral trade negotiations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement, and the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA).

Prof. Benn maintained that promoting economic development along these lines would lay the foundation for future economic prosperity, thus eliminating the scourge of poverty and food insecurity in the region.

Dr. Ballayram's presentation, titled "Conceptual Framework for Food Security Within Poverty Alleviation Strategies", elaborated on key structuring principles that should guide policies to enhance food security and reduce poverty. Recognizing that food security and poverty alleviation overlap and that health is a central component in economic growth and in poverty reduction programmes, Dr. Ballayram submitted that poverty alleviation must be posed simultaneously with several other debilitating conditions of human existence which may appear disparate and unrelated, yet on closer examination, are all bounded within the same vector. The challenge is to design poverty alleviation programmes that give emphasis to improved nutrition as one of the main outcomes. This derives from unacceptably high levels of poverty and inequality, and insufficient attention given to prevailing nutrition-related health problems in the region. Of particular importance, nutrition-related chronic diseases (NCDs) such as obesity and its comorbidities, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, heart diseases, and cancer have replaced malnutrition and infectious diseases as the major public health problems, and are the major causes of death in the region. The cost of managing these NCDs places a disproportionate burden on poor families and perpetuates the vicious cycle of poverty and ill health.

SESSION 1

POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND FOOD SECURITY IN THE CARIBBEAN: Lessons Learned

Three papers were presented in this session. The first was by Dr. Pauline Knight, Head, Social Manpower and Planning, Planning Institute of Jamaica, followed by Dr. Judy Wedderburn, Director, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Foundation, Jamaica and Eastern Caribbean, and Dr. Arlington Chesney and Ms. Diane Francis, respectively, Director of Operations, Caribbean Region, and Advisor to the Director-General on Caribbean Affairs, and Consultant, Trade and Policy Programme, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA).

Dr. Knight's paper, "**Poverty Alleviation Strategies in Jamaica: Lessons Learned**", identified key lessons learned from poverty alleviation programmes and related projects implemented in Jamaica over the last two to three decades. The lessons include:

- Minimizing administrative costs and leakages of benefits of programmes.
- Effective targeting.
- Encouraging acceptability of social programmes. Well-developed

school feeding programmes are an important strategy for poverty alleviation and essential for the healthy development of school children.

Household level social interventions with a nutritional orientation contribute immensely to poverty alleviation and food security. However, while safety net and other programmes to improve the nutritional status can have long-term benefits more emphasis must be placed on making sustainable changes in the circumstances that cause poverty and poor nutrition in households.

Dr. Wedderburn's paper, "**Hunger Anywhere is a Threat to Peace Everywhere: A Non- Governmental Organization (NGO) Perspective: Food Sovereignty, Nutrition Security and Poverty Alleviation**", drew attention to one of the fundamental human rights now denied millions of people around the world, viz., the right to adequate food and nutrition. She discussed food sovereignty, nutrition security and poverty alleviation and their inter-relatedness within the context of the current multilateral trade regime, which has emerged since the 1900s. This regime has affected not only the rules that regulate the integration of

developing countries into the world economy on which they are increasingly dependent, but has also affected their domestic economic policy options. Its essence is not about promoting agricultural trade between countries, but rather, it is primarily aimed at accumulation and profit taking for a handful of large agribusiness corporations, supported by massive subsidies. These lead to distortions in global markets, which threaten the survival of small farmers, and turn many rural people into landless agricultural workers who must sell their labor before they can buy food. This regime also reduces government's policy options to promote small-scale farming and sustainable rural development as part of the larger objectives of national food security and food sovereignty.

The paper by Dr. Chesney and Ms. Francis (reproduced in full in this issue of CAJANUS), titled **“Poverty Reduction Strategies, WTO, Sugar and Bananas – the Caribbean Experience”**, focused on the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The socio-economic situation in rural communities in the OECS has deteriorated drastically over the past few years as a result of the fall out from the banana industry, resulting from (a) adverse effects of trade liberalization, particularly on the traditional preferential EU market access arrangements; (b) the cumulative effects of structural adjustment

programmes; (c) the decline in official development assistance for developing countries' agriculture since 1999; and (d) increased rural unemployment and hence the risk and incidence of poverty following events of September 11, 2001. The OECS have had many social poverty alleviation programmes. These programmes have, apparently, met with limited success, due in part to the lack of proper poverty assessments and the failure to take into consideration that agriculture has traditionally been a major source of employment and hence a poverty alleviator. It is now well accepted that the depth of the agriculture-induced increase in poverty requires more direct and immediate measures within agriculture as a major factor in poverty reduction. Guided by the World Bank's new Poverty Reduction Strategy approach and the recent (October 2003) approval of the OECS Agricultural Policy and Plan of Action, the sub-region is well positioned to develop appropriate “pro poor” policies, programmes and projects that will provide sustainable employment and hence systematically drive the process of poverty alleviation.

.....agriculture cannot be ignored if significant inroads are to be made in reducing poverty and raising living standards in the OECS countries.

SESSION 2

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES TO COMBAT POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY

Three papers were presented in this session. The first was by Ms. Peggy Cantfil, Senior Analyst, School Program Development Branch, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, followed by Ms. Babette Gainor, Director, Global Food and Education Programmes, Food and Agricultural Service, USDA, and Ms. Ann Marie Chandler, Operations Officer, Caribbean Development Bank.

Ms. Cantfil's, presentation, titled **“Food, Nutrition Security and Anti-Poverty Programmes of the United States of America”** provided a comprehensive historical account, going back to the Great Depression when food was abundant but purchasing power was absent, through the various Farm Bills and Agriculture Acts of the US over the last fifty years. The specific intervention over the years include the Food Stamp Programme, directed towards low-income families to secure access to foods, and is the oldest in the world. Other existing programmes include Food Distribution, Infant Nutrition, Community Food Security, School Feeding and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programmes. All of these programmes are rooted in the US

farm programme as a way of supporting US agriculture. The current focus of these programmes is on curbing obesity and nutrition-related chronic diseases by emphasizing more fruits, vegetables and whole grains in diets. National nutrition education is also a key component of these programmes.

Ms. Gainor's presentation, titled **“US Food and Nutrition and Anti-Poverty Initiatives in the Caribbean: Global Food and Education Programmes”**, explained the USDA's McGovern-Dole Food For Education Programme (FFE), which is a School Feeding Programme currently in 22 developing countries in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Its vision is to enhance education and development through increase school enrollment and attendance, improve school performance, and improve child/student health through nutrition. The World Food Programme (WFP) and several NGOs developed the programme. USDA donates the food, which can be used for direct commodity distribution, food for work, barter/processing, or monetization to purchase local foods. The objectives of the programme are met through targeting of rural areas that are often faced with poor school attendance. The project emphasizes children's education, especially females (illiterate women have a five

times higher death rate than their literate counterparts in Central America), and to incorporate boys into the school system in later years of their school age. Sustainability is met by strengthening the link between the community and the school through training programmes and effective participation of parents, teachers, and local businesses. The main achievements of the project so far have been an increase in school enrollment and reduced drop-out rates, infrastructural development of schools, improved water and sanitation, creation of school gardens and other production oriented activities, and other complementary benefits such as teacher training in health, sanitation, nutrition and the environment.

Ms. Chandler's presentation, titled **“Investment Initiatives to Alleviate Poverty and Improve Food Security”** reported on investment activities of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) in the areas of poverty alleviation and food security over the period 1970-2003. The CDB has provided capital investments for infrastructure, macro-economic growth, and to support public entities in the region. The specific activities include:

- Country Poverty Assessments (CPA)
- Shelter Development Projects
- Education and Skills Training
- The Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF)

- Rural Enterprise Development Projects (REPs).

The CPAs were required to identify policies, strategies, action programmes and projects to reduce the extent and severity of poverty, and to improve the quality of life in borrowing member countries (BMC). The most vulnerable groups found were: Indigenous groups, women and young persons, those in remote/rural areas, agricultural workers, those in the informal sector, and persons with low education and skill levels. Several dynamic forces were found responsible for generating and maintaining poverty in the BMCs, including the high dependency of rural poor on the traditional agriculture sector which most BMCs failed to modernize and diversify; the slow response time of BMCs to create new economic activities in light of declines in the traditional tradable sectors, tourism and agriculture; and the underdevelopment of resources, capacities and infrastructure required to support economic development. The interventions were aimed at addressing these problems by:

- Improving access to public services
- Enhancing employment opportunities
- Community and individual empowerment.

The benefits from these interventions include:

- Improved household incomes
- Enhanced food supply
- Reduction in food import bills
- Reduction in rural urban drift
- Community empowerment.

SESSION 3

POVERTY, FOOD SECURITY, GENDER AND EDUCATION

Two papers were presented at this session. The first was by Mr. Carl Greenidge, Director, Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation, ACP-EU, followed by Dr. Aldrie Henry-Lee, Research Fellow, Sir Aurther Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies (SALISES), UWI, Mona Campus.

Mr. Greenidge's paper is titled "**Food Security and Poverty: Some Lessons on Gender and Information Strategies from Africa**". In Africa women are resource poor, have low entitlements, limited access to infrastructures, and are institutionally disadvantaged. These result from:

- Gender division of labour
- Migration of males in search of paid work
- Impact of the AIDs endemic
- A complex set of rights and obligations arising from:
 - ◆ biological differences
 - ◆ traditional social and religious norms
 - ◆ consequence of division of labour, land and proceeds from different types of production.

Further, women in Africa:

- Are the majority of smallholders and the main suppliers of agricultural labour
- Manage many farms
- Lead many households but whose children have more schooling
- Are younger and less well educated
- Are undercapitalised
- Depend on remittances.

For all of these reasons most of the 8 Millennium Development Goals

would not be achieved by 2015 in Africa.

Gender and gender politics in Africa are not fully understood. These relationships are dynamic and diverse across space and time. Further, since gender inequality has many distinct and dissimilar faces solutions must therefore include:

- Cultivating an environment that empowers women and women's organizations through education and gainful employment.
- Informed critical assessment of received values to deal with injustice due to natality.

Mr. Greenidge concluded by emphasizing the urgency to address gender dynamics and identified context-specific steps to enhance women's bargaining power in Africa. First, context-specific steps must be taken to enhance women's bargaining power such as supporting gender institutions, disseminating information on labour-saving technologies, etc. Second, there is need for new perspectives that will democratize economic policymaking and legitimize a role for organized civil society in development programming. Finally, targeting is an integral part of any process aimed at achieving food and nutrition security.

Dr. Henry-Lee's paper, titled **"Poverty Alleviation and Social Interventions"**, examined the commitments

and challenges to poverty eradication at the international, national and community levels. Although there has been a shift in the development agenda to a more people-centered approach, the successful implementation of poverty reduction strategies will be difficult. In particular, the poverty eradication agenda is doomed to fail because of the increasing global gaps and the threats posed by globalization. There has been no dramatic change in the global distribution of power and assets to facilitate a reduction in global inequalities. Using the Caribbean as a case in point, the paper examined the national and community challenges that face the poverty eradication strategies. Within the context of slow economic growth, high levels of indebtedness, an unstable tourist sector and the removal of the protectionist system, poverty alleviation, not eradication remains the more realistic goal for small developing countries.

CAJANAQUOTE

"...The time has come to galvanize our efforts. The knowledge and technology already exists. What we need now is determination, courage and foresight. Health is a product of social action and not just as a result of medical care. Active community participation and supportive social policies are necessary for progress in health, and herein lies your challenge."

*Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima
Director-General, WHO*

SESSION 4

MEASURING SOCIAL INEQUALITIES TO REDUCE POVERTY

Three papers were presented at this session. The first was by Dr. Lynn Brown, Chair, FIVIMS Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG), World Bank, followed by Dr. Carlos Castillo-Salgado, Area Manager, Health Analysis and Information Systems, PAHO, and Dr. Cesar Vieira, Area Manager, a.i., Governance and Policy, PAHO.

Dr. Brown's paper, titled "**Food Security Information Systems and Effective Targeting Geared towards Food and Nutrition Security and Anti-Poverty Interventions**", looked at the need for quality information systems and targeting from the perspective of food security, especially as the development community favors results based lending and focuses on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. One information initiative designed to do this task and to achieve the necessary cross-sectoral communication and action, is the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Mapping Systems (FIVIMS). This system consists of several activities carried out both at the national and international levels, in support of improved information to help achieve World Food Summit goals, Millennium

Development Goals and other goals related to food security and nutrition, hunger and poverty. Experience shows that there are often many information systems operating in a country but very little integration between them thus reducing their effectiveness in tackling complex issues such as food insecurity. The key to the FIVIMS framework is the bringing together of these information systems. Systems that may already exist in many countries include Agricultural Information Systems, Health Information Systems, Land, Water, Climate Information Systems, Early Warnings Systems, Household Food Security and Nutritional Information Systems, Market Information Systems, and Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping Systems.

Dr. Brown concluded that in countries such as Jamaica and Haiti, information is more prevalent but for many others in the region there is little, and most of it fairly outdated. There is therefore the need for a comprehensive network of food security and poverty information systems, with supporting analysis – a FIVIMS type system. Given the increasing prevalence of both food insecurity and obesity, this is a critical step for effective policy action. The advantage of an integrated network of information systems, such as FIVIMS,

is that it will also foster the intra- and inter-sectoral linkages necessary to successfully implement food security and anti-poverty policies, an issue that has been identified to be currently under-exploited in the Caribbean region.

Dr. Castillo-Salgado's paper, titled **“Measuring Social Inequalities in Health-Experiences and Lessons from Latin America and the Caribbean”**, explained PAHO's approach to measuring social inequalities and health status using the SIGEpi programme. This is a Geographic Information System (GIS) designed for applications in Epidemiology and Public Health, including specific analytical procedures for:

- Mapping of health indicators.
- Equity and poverty measurements.
- Health situation and spatial analyses.
- Public health surveillance.
- Epidemiological assessment.
- Exploratory data analysis.

The Area of Health Analysis and Information Systems (DD/AIS) of PAHO/WHO have developed and supported this regional initiative, which:

- Facilitate the collection, analysis and dissemination of health information for measuring health inequalities.

- Support the Core Health Data Regional Platform and assist the development of health information/communication networks in the countries.
- Analyze the applicability of known indicators for measuring health inequalities that are aggregated by geopolitical units and population groups.
- Evaluate those indicators with country data jointly with national authorities.
- Prepare technical materials and guidelines for the transfer of these methodologies to all countries in the Region.

In this regard, SIGEpi is used to:

- Design specific analytical procedures to identify and locate inequalities integrated in a GIS; and
- Distribute strategy focused on priority countries and sub-regions in the areas of:
 - a. Training
 - b. Software
 - c. Technical cooperation
 - d. Materials.

Dr. Cesar Vieira's paper, titled **“Inequalities in Education, Health and Nutrition: Policy Implications”** discussed four issues:

- Inequalities in the Caribbean and Latin America.

- Regional experiences in social policies.
- Promising initiatives for inequalities reduction
- A balanced approach to inequality reduction.

In these regards, he traced the origins of inequalities to:

- Colonial times
- Persisting after independence
- Present in different dimensions of life
- Socio-economic, political and racial roots
- Mutual interactions among themselves.

In response, social policies in Latin America and the Caribbean have been:

- Parallel, isolated initiatives from different sectors.
- Supply side perspective and not focused on community needs.
- Lack of coordination thereby limiting complementarity.
- Universal focus rather than on the specific needs of vulnerable groups.
- Regressive benefits increasing exclusion.

Some promising initiatives include:

- Multi-sectoral policies in the Caribbean (e.g., COHSOD (CARICOM), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, etc.
- Jamaica Social Policy Evaluation
- Social Impact Amelioration Programme and HIPC Initiative (Guyana)
- Monitoring inequalities-Survey of Living Conditions (Jamaica); Harmonization of Social Statistics and Indicators (CARICOM).
- Mix of services and subsidies-Progressa Opportunity (Mexico); Zero Hunger, Family Subsidy (Brazil), etc.

Dr. Vieira suggested elements of a balanced approach to reducing inequality through:

- Universal plus targeted interventions.
- Sectoral as well as multi-sectoral policies.
- Supply and demand perspectives.
- Combination of state, market and civil society participation.
- Economic, social and political development.

SESSION 5

POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES AT THE SCHOOL AND HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

Two papers were presented in this session, after which participants were organized into four working groups to discuss new approaches and strategies to regional food and nutrition security and poverty alleviation and to formulate recommendations. The first paper was presented by Prof. Beatrice Rogers, Dean, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, and the second by Mr. Godfrey Xuereb and Ms. Laura D. Richards, Public Health Nutritionist and Clinical Dietitian, respectively, CFNI.

Prof. Rogers' paper is titled **“Efficacy and Effectiveness of Social Interventions with Nutrition Orientation at the Household Level”**. She said that household level social interventions with a nutritional orientation are aimed at addressing malnutrition, but within the context of a broader set of objectives related to poverty alleviation and food security. While these objectives are closely related, they are not the same thing, and interventions need to address them explicitly as separate outcomes. Interventions to alleviate malnutrition have at times been short-term in nature, providing supplementary food to the undernourished as a rehabilitative measure, but without changing the underlying circumstances

of the household that initially led to malnutrition. Improving the nutritional status of young children does have long-term health benefits, even into the next generation, but household-level social intervention should aim to make sustainable changes in the circumstances that cause poor nutrition in households. Safety net programmes that provide food or purchasing power to low-income, food insecure households play an important role in maintaining adequate nutrition, but do not themselves alter a household's longer-term economic and nutritional circumstances.

There are several examples of programmes that address both short-term nutritional needs (through income transfers and food supplements) and longer-term investments in human capital (through incentives to make use of preventive health and education services). Over the past several years, carefully designed evaluations have provided evidence of the effectiveness of these programmes, at least at the pilot level, in improving food consumption, nutritional status of children, and use of health and educational services. As is often the case, the specifics of the programme, including the size of the transfer, range and quality of services provided, enforcement of conditionalities, targeting mechanisms, and others, are significant determinants of programme impact, as is the community context in which these

programmes operate. Not all programmes appear to be equally effective, and different programme elements affect different dimensions of the problem. Long-term impact and long-term programme sustainability have not been adequately assessed in many of these programmes. Such assessment should be incorporated into plans for the further development of household level, nutritionally oriented social interventions.

The paper by Mr. Xuereb and Ms. Richards, titled “**School Feeding Programmes in the Caribbean: Opportunities for Nutrition Security within Poverty Alleviation Strategies**”, argues that school feeding programmes are a potent weapon against hunger and also provide an excellent opportunity to achieve nutritional goals. In this regard, school-feeding programmes should focus on “Healthy Eating” and not just on making sure children have a full stomach. Further, Recommended Daily Allowances (RDA) for the specific age groups should be used to develop the menus and ensure that school feeding contributes positively to the health of the child. Using the experience of a pilot programme from Jamaica that incorporated these insights, the paper reported that:

- Over 90% of students noticed a positive change in the lunch provided.
- 52% reported that they told their parents to serve food similar to those served at school.
- Forty percent (40%) teachers reported observing an improvement in the school attendance;
- Over 70% in all-age schools noticed a positive change in schoolwork enjoyment.
- Thirty-three percent (33%) observed some amount of improved behaviour among the students.
- Over 90% indicated that PATH students benefited from the programme.
- Forty-eight point seven percent (48.7%) of the parents noticed changes in the eating habits of their children as follows:
 - a. 26% said the child eat more
 - b. 21 % requested vegetables
 - c. Almost 40% of the children had made request of their parents for a particular food preparation method linked with the new menu; and
 - d. Ninety-five point five percent (95.5%) saw the meals as good value for money.

From the Administrators:

- Thirty-six (36%) stated that there was an increase in the participation in the programme as well as in attendance and performance at school.
- Overall 46% indicated that there was an improvement in attendance since the start of the pilot.
- Sixty-four percent (64%) indicated that there was an improvement in the children's health status.

FRIDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2004

OPENING CEREMONY

Several distinguished persons addressed the Forum at the opening ceremony, which was chaired by Dr. Fitzroy Henry, Director of CFNI. Presenters included Dr. Carissa Etienne, Assistant Director, PAHO; Dr. Chelston Brathwaite, Director-General, IICA; Dr. Carol Kramer-LeBlanc, Director of Research and

Scientific Exchanges, Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA; Dr. Edward Greene, Assistant Secretary-General, CARICOM; and Senator The Honourable Ms. Deika Morrison, Minister of State, Office of the Minister of Finance and Planning, Jamaica. Senator Morrison was the keynote speaker at this opening ceremony.

SESSION 6

LESSONS LEARNED FROM POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND FOOD SECURITY

Two papers were presented at this session. The first was by Ms. Kate Coler, Deputy Undersecretary, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Affairs, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, followed by Mr. Carl Greenidge, Director, Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation, ACP-EU.

Ms. Coler's paper, titled "**Food, Nutrition and Anti-Poverty Programmes: The USA Experience**", discussed the policy perspective of several food, nutrition and anti-

poverty programmes of the USA. These include:

- The National Nutrition Safety Net Programme.
- The Food Stamp Programme.
- The National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Special Milk, Child and Adult Care, and Summer Food Service Programmes.
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Programme for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).
- The Farmers' Market Nutrition Programmes.

- The Commodity Assistance Programmes.

Ms. Coler identified several features of these programmes and important lessons to follow:

- Programmes are defined in terms of nutrition assistance rather than general welfare thus providing a broader basis of political support.
- Benefits are linked to food as meals, food products or markers that can only be used to purchase food in grocery stores or farmers' markets.
- Some variability and individual choice is built into the benefits of each programme in recognition of the importance of cultural background and the diversity of food preferences.
- Benefit amounts are based on individual or family need. Need is defined in terms of financial circumstances and dietary requirements.
- Education is an integral part of nutrition assistance programmes in order to ensure that citizens make healthful food choices.
- Programme participation is regarded and communicated as temporary assistance, a helping hand, for families on the way to self-sufficiency.
- If appropriately designed, nutrition assistance programmes can be

responsive to the general economic conditions—that is, allowing for increased participation in poor economic climates and decreased participation as the economy improves.

Mr. Greenidge's paper, titled “**Regional Approaches to Anti-Poverty Programmes and Food Security: Past Experiences and the Way Forward**”, began with the observation that countries in the region have had various, albeit, ad hoc public sector driven programmes addressing poverty alleviation and social equity over the last several decades. From a regional perspective, meeting the MDG on poverty is a serious challenge. Poverty in the region is linked to several factors that affect national and household food security, including:

- Low productivity agriculture and monoculture.
- Sluggish reaction to long-term changes in traditional markets and globalisation.
- Inappropriate agricultural investment strategies with consequential deleterious impact on community organisation.

Mr. Greenidge identified several recent/past initiatives to address poverty, including a range of interventions addressing aspects of the problem [e.g., BNTF; REPs; National Poverty Eradication Programme and

Programme for Advancement through Health and Education (PATH); and the Social Impact Amelioration Programme (SIMAP)]. He emphasized that the interventions need to be multi-sectoral and multi-layered but conceded that the division of labour between regional entities and national states has not yet been adequately defined. He also identified areas that require greater focus in policy, such as:

- Combating hunger and extreme poverty through renewed and expanded commitment to agriculture and rural development especially because dependence on

agriculture is greatest where hunger is most persistent.

- Public investment fails to reflect this and is inadequate as far as infrastructure is concerned including for agricultural research and extension.
- Tenure reform, indigenous rights, women's rights, missed opportunities to link production with feeding programmes.

Finally, he maintained that regional integration is still not informed by the urgency that poverty elimination would seem to warrant.

SESSION 7

PUBLIC POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO REDUCE POVERTY AND ENHANCE REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY

The final session of the meeting, was chaired firstly by Senator The Honorable Calixte George, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Saint Lucia, and secondly by Senator The Honourable Deika Morrison, Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Planning, Jamaica. Two papers were presented. The first was by Dr. Deep Ford, Food Systems Economist, FAO Regional Office, Chile, and the second by Dr. Edward Greene and Ms.

Sandra Plummer, CARICOM. Additionally, Dr. Omawale, Poverty and Food Security Specialist, presented the recommendations from the Work Groups, and Dr. Kramer-LeBlanc launched the Small Grants Program. Dr. Fitzroy Henry and Ms. Kate Coler gave the closing remarks.

Dr. Ford's paper is titled **“Towards a New Food Policy Strategy for the Caribbean: Linking Food Security, Health and Surveillance”**. He maintained that the food policy spectrum now extends from undernutrition to addressing food security, the right to food, food

sovereignty, food poverty, food safety and the prevention of chronic disease. While several of the poorest countries in the Caribbean region face serious food security problems in terms of food and poverty, (Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Jamaica and Guyana), other countries classified as more developed are now increasingly facing food safety and food health problems. The paper addressed these policy issues related to food insecurity in the Caribbean using as its point of departure the proposition that resolving food insecurity of the poor is a prerequisite to addressing broader issues related to poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The paper presented a brief overview of trends in food policy from the 1970's to the current period and outlined the nature of some emerging themes and challenges facing the region in the context of food security, nutrition and health. Components of a new food policy agenda were presented, highlighting the need to synchronise food security and health concerns in three main areas:

- Food consumption, nutrition and health.
- Food trade, production and safety.
- Food and agriculture resource allocation and public health programming.

The paper concluded that improved food security information

systems development is critical to establishing a new food policy framework that will enhance the achievement of the food security goals of the Caribbean region.

The paper by Dr. Greene and Ms. Plummer is titled “**Globalization, Poverty Alleviation and Food Security in the Caribbean: The Imperative for a Regional Strategy**”. The authors observe that the Caribbean is currently actively engaged in deepening and widening regional integration at a time when global forces are in pursuit of universal efficiency. Considerable tension emerges from this interface resulting in several pressing issues that the Region must urgently deal with, including, *inter alia*:

- Loss of preferential markets and the negative effects on agricultural development, employment, income and living standards.
- Globalization appears to be increasingly working to the disadvantage of small economies.
- Increase dependence on extra-regional food imports and the persistence of pockets of poverty are affecting the food security situation in the Caribbean.

Against this background the authors provided several suggestions on the way forward:

- Develop a regional mechanism to protect the interest and the quality

of life in the Caribbean, such as the Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM) which has been lobbying for special and differential treatment for small economies and promoting a CARICOM position within international arenas such as the FTAA, MERCOSUR and NAFTA.

- Commitment to the UN Millennium Developmental Goals to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty.
- Strengthen trade in goods and services, allow free movement of persons, and scale up the Regional Transformation Programme in Agriculture to increase the human resource capacity and competitiveness in national and regional development.
- Improve social statistical capacities to develop accurate indices of Poverty, Vulnerability and Human Development, to inform decision-making and attract donor funding for sub-regional and regional projects and programmes.
- Integrate gender into developmental activities, plan for sustainable and environmental development, and develop a Human and Social Development Strategy to improve food security and national and regional development.
- Encourage Regional Task Forces such as the Futures Group and the

Regional Commission on Macroeconomics and Health, to develop possible solutions to some of the most pressing social and economic problems of the Region.

CAJANAQUOTE

“...Food and food consumption are as much a social as a nutritional phenomenon. In every society, the nutritional items identified as food, their mode of preparation, the proscriptions and prescriptions relating to ritual and other occasions, all reflect basic cultural values, premises about life, religious convictions and, often, national pride.

Consequently, changing food habits in directions that promote greater safety implies simultaneously changing and redefining social mores.

The Role of Food Safety in Health and Development Geneva, World Health Organization, 1984 (Technical Report Series, No. 705)

Recommendations From the Work Groups

The participants of the conference were organized into working groups to discuss and make recommendations for future actions to address poverty and food security in the Region. For convenience, these recommendations are grouped under four categories:

Institutional Development

- Establish a supra-national (CARI-COM and/or CFNI) Survey/ Data Coordination Unit that will collaborate with national statistical institutes, harmonize data collection efforts and make data available and publicly documented.
- Intensify Inter-sectoral Coordination for clear, transparent, widely accepted national policy to counter competitive tendencies, due to struggle over limited resources.
- Promote broad partnerships with civil society organizations and private sector in development of national anti-poverty and food security policies. This would promote consistency in their subsequent actions.
- Pursue decentralization and strengthening of people's organizations; support small farmers;

promote national and regional cooperative production.

Policy Design and Coordination

- Formulate Country-specific Strategies based on analysis of specific causes of poverty and food insecurity in each country.
- Ensure domestic, regional and international policies consistent with poverty alleviation through: compulsory education, job creation and stemming rural-urban migration; creation of an enabling environment for economic growth and meaningful, legitimate employment and wealth creation.
- Examine feasibility of COHSOD Recommendations for a managed migration programme – seek support from other countries regarding brain/skills drain managed migration programme (consultation, task force to devise strategy) inclusive of the GATS element.
- Pursue Operationalization of Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Unit to deal with SPS matters at a regional level and assist Ministries at the national level; rationalisation of standards, legislation, laboratories with international assistance.

Agricultural and Other Sectoral Development

- Advocate strongly for Special and Differential Treatment in International Negotiations (especially for special products or industries). Protect and strengthen the Regional Negotiating Arrangements and align with others who support the concept.
- Actively research and explore niche markets and vigorously pursue value-added agricultural products.
- Vigorously pursue the Regional Agricultural Transformation Programme.
- Pursue and support focused applied research.
- Diversify within the region: select industries that could trade in the region.
- Promote environmental practices to enhance food production and address health and disaster hazard mitigation.

starting with MDGs and add a few indicators of Poverty, Hunger, Obesity, Diet Quality, Gender Equity, Education, Health, Environment and Food Cost. To measure inequity, disaggregate by urban/rural, geographical regions, income quintile, across countries, and ethnicity where relevant.

- Do Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) type survey every 5 years; LSMS “quick survey” every year; use health and education sector data and PAHO national survey data; assess reliability and representativeness of health/education sector data; harmonize mapping strategies to link GIS with data.
- Assess Technical Capacity in each country-survey capability, etc.; facilitate broad participation, making data publicly available, with lead agency to coordinate data needs of ministries/agencies; do periodic special studies, e.g. impact of free trade agreements on food supply. ♦

Measurement/Evaluation/Monitoring

- Provide evidence-based analysis to support recommendations (Benefit Cost Analysis); identify best practices by studies of school feeding and other projects throughout the region. Develop and use key indicators of inequity,

Small Grants Programme

The Small Grants Programme is the second phase of this USDA initiative with CFNI. USDA has already contributed US\$120,000 to start this Small Grants Programme.

CFNI is aggressively seeking supplemental funds from grant agencies for this Programme, which is aimed at promoting innovative small projects, designed to enhance food and nutrition security and alleviate poverty in Caribbean countries. CFNI, USDA, CARICOM and others will prepare a "Call for Proposals", outlining the selection criteria and other conditions of the grants. The proposals will be reviewed by a committee set up for this task and CFNI will be responsible for administering the grants.

Inputs and recommendations from participants at the CFNI/USDA/CARICOM Policy Technical-Dialogue Meeting identified an initial set of priority specific areas/activities for funding:

- Loans to small rural producers: fishermen, farmers, livestock holders.
- Agro-processing.
- Loans for Urban Food Production
- Community Gardens for Women
- Craft production and marketing
- Cottage industries
- Environmental Protection
- Support School Food Vendors; linked to appropriate products and practices.
- Nutrition and Health Education
- Public Health and Sanitation

- Experiment with use of palm pilots linked to centralized computers for local data collection, transmission up and down.

CONCLUSIONS

A central message throughout the conference is that development must ultimately reflect an improvement in the well-being and welfare of people. This would require, *inter alia*, adequate public spending for basic education, health and family planning services, improved access to credit all of which should be geared to benefits the poor more than the rich. Short-term safety-net programmes, especially those with a nutrition orientation, do have an important role to play. Equally important, however, policies must address the longer-term structural underpinnings of poverty through appropriate strategies to expand output based on increased productivity and competitiveness, regional cooperation (e.g., regional development fund, CSME) and collective solidarity with other developing countries in multi-lateral trade negotiations.

While the development agenda in the region has shifted to a more people-centered approach there are several major challenges to be faced, including the threats posed by globalization, slow economic growth, high levels of indebtedness, an unstable tourist sector and the removal of preferential markets.



Dr. Carissa Etienne, Acting Director, PAHO/WHO greets Prof. Denis Benn, Michael Manley Professor of Public Affairs/Public Policy, UWI, Mona, while Dr. Barrington Wint, Chief Medical Officer, Ministry of Health, Jamaica, looks on. Far right is Dr. Omawale, Poverty and Food Security Specialist.

The importance of agriculture, the imperative to link agricultural production to food assistance and feeding programmes, and the emphasis on nutrition to both reduce poverty and enhance health status were all highlighted in the conference. Governments must therefore renew, expand and re-orient their commitments to agriculture and rural development especially because dependence on agriculture is greatest where hunger is most persistent.

The meeting was successful in bringing together policy-makers to

share experiences and lessons learned in interventions to address food insecurity and poverty in the Caribbean and elsewhere. The meeting also served to sensitize participants, especially ministers of government and senior government policy-makers, on the severity of the socio-economic conditions on poverty and food security in the Caribbean. It also served to reinforce the urgency to implement deliberate, focused and targeted programmes to eliminate the debilitating conditions of poverty, social marginalization and vulnerability in the region.

Policy Dialogue Technical Forum

Friday, 21 November 2003

08:30 **Registration**

Chairperson: *Dr. Fitzroy Henry*
Director, Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute

National Anthem

09:00 **Opening Ceremony – Remarks and Addresses**

Dr. Carissa Etienne
Assistant Director, Pan American Health Organization

Dr. Chelston Brathwaite
Director - General, Inter -American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

Dr. Carol Kramer -LeBlanc
Director of Research and Scientific Exchanges, Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA

Dr. Edward Greene
Assistant Secretary -General, Caribbean Community Secretariat

Keynote Address

Dr. The Honorable Omar Davies
Minister of Finance and Planning, Jamaica

10:15 **Coffee Break**

LESSONS LEARNED FROM POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMS

Chairperson: *The Honourable Ismael Cal*
Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Belize

10:45 **Food, Nutrition and Anti -Poverty Programs: The USA Experience**

Ms. Kate Coler
Deputy Undersecretary, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Affairs, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

Introduction by Mr. Sylburn Thomas, Agricultural Specialist, USDA/FAS

Discussion (10 minutes)

11:30 **Regional Approaches to Anti -Poverty Programs and Food Security: Past Experiences and the Way Forward**

Mr. Carl Greenidge
Director, Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation, ACP -EC, The Netherlands

Discussion (10 minutes)

12:15 **Lunch**

Friday, 21 November 2003

PUBLIC POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO REDUCE POVERTY AND ENHANCE REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY

Chairperson: Sen. The Hon. Calixte George
Minister of Agriculture,
Forestry and Fisheries, Saint Lucia

- 14:00 **Towards a New Food Policy Strategy for the Caribbean: Linking Food Security, Health and Surveillance**
Dr. Deep Ford
Food Systems Economist, FAO Regional Office, Santiago, Chile
Discussion (15 minutes)
- 14:45 **Globalization, Poverty Alleviation and Food Security in the Caribbean: The Imperative for a Regional Strategy**
Dr. Edward Greene
Assistant Secretary -General, CARICOM Secretariat
Discussion (15 minutes)
- 15:30 **Coffee Break**
Chairperson: Senator The Hon. Deika Morrison
Minister of State, Ministry of Finance
and Planning, Jamaica
- 16:00 **Recommendations for Future Action on Poverty Alleviation and Food Security Strategies**
Dr. Omawale
Poverty and Food Security Specialist
Discussion (20 minutes)
- 16:40 **Fostering Community Food Security: Announcement of USDA/CFNI Small Grants Program and Closing Remarks**
Dr. Carol Kramer -LeBlanc
Director of Research and Scientific Exchanges, Foreign Agricultural Service,
United States Department of Agriculture
- 16:50 **Reflections on the Meeting and Closing Remarks**
Ms. Kate Coler
Deputy Undersecretary, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Affairs, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
- 17:00 **Presentation of Draft Communiqué & Closure**