

REPORT

National Consultation Involving Civil Society in Caribbean Development Jamaica Conference Centre, June 19, 2001

Background & Context

The inaugural national consultation on ways to involve civil society in Caribbean development was held in Jamaica on June 19, attended by some 75 representatives of the business sector, non-government organisations (NGO)s, community based organisations (CBO)s, faith-based groups, professional associations, special interest groups including those focusing on youth, gender and the disabled, and a range of other non-state agencies. Some 55 entities were represented. The list of attendees is attached as Appendix 1.

CARICOM Heads of Government, meeting in October 1999, had called for an encounter with civil society, to “provide for a free and wide-ranging inter-change of ideas aimed at arriving at a consensus for a strategy for the development of the region and its peoples.”

In organising the event, the Association of Development Agencies (ADA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹, identified three specific objectives:

- To identify strategies for development that take into account the needs of the poor and marginalised groups;
- To establish new approaches to collaboration and consultation between civil society and government on development issues, particularly in pursuit of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME);
- To strengthen the scope for dialogue and collaboration among the various strands of non-state actors in promoting regional development.

These objectives informed the approach to the consultation, which included background presentations, opportunities for question and answer, and workshop discussions with reports back to the plenary. The day’s agenda is attached as Appendix 2.

The initial presentations were made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Paul Robertson (Foreign Policy Coordination & Functional Cooperation); the Minister of Foreign Trade, Mr Anthony Hylton (CARICOM Trade Issues and the CSME); and CARICOM Assistant Secretary General, Dr Edward Greene (Vision and Strategies of Caribbean Development in the Global System). The full text of the keynote addresses by Ministers Robertson and Hylton are attached as Appendix 3.

The three working groups looked at ways of organising the CSME to maximise the development potential for Caribbean people, including issues of international

¹ ADA is the national focal point for coordinating civil society participation in CARICOM; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has responsibility for CARICOM affairs.

competitiveness; how to integrate gender issues and the needs of youth into the development agenda; and at issues of justice, governance and human rights.

Common Issues Arising

All three working groups agreed that ways must be found to have **an on-going dialogue between CARICOM, and the groups and communities making up civil society** across the region. Further, that mechanisms must be developed to ensure that the outcomes of this dialogue find their way into policy. This reflected a positive summation of several initially critical comments and questions concerning the timing, level, format and direction of the consultative process; the extent to which CARICOM is relevant and responsive to social as well as economic issues important to people within the Community; the long timeframe for action; difficulties of access to CARICOM; and the lack of engagement with ordinary people, who may feel confused at the varied impacts of globalisation, and for whom issues such as the free movement of labour would be very relevant.

There was broad agreement on the need to **make the education system more relevant**, including the early introduction of business and trade into the curricula, the incorporation on **gender considerations**, and the **motivation of students** through the use of innovative teaching methods. Both within and outside of the educational system, the **engagement of youth** was a common concern.

The education of the media so that news stories reflect issues as well as conflict, was one part of a concern for **more effective public information**, and **greater access to information** regarding CARICOM issues and output – and to CARICOM itself.

Several issues relating to **justice and to law**, arose in the various groups, including the need for CARICOM to support justice in the region; aspects of the Caribbean Court of Justice including the potential for fast-tracking the trade aspects of the court; the potential benefits of establishing a Caribbean Commission for Human Rights; and laws to protect the vulnerable and to define and protect NGO entities.

Other issues arising in specific working groups are set out under those headings.

Working Group 1:

Organising the CSME to maximise the development potential of Caribbean people/including looking at improving the region's international competitiveness.

Falicitators: Gail Mathurin
James Moss-Solomon
Dotsie Gordon

Rapporteurs: Maxine Harris/Lisa Bryan-Smart

The relationship of the two topics – the CSME, and the broader issue of international competitiveness – sparked discussion: for instance, on how the CSME will relate to wider groupings such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

Businesses Must Focus Outward: The point was also made the way business is presently organised locally and regionally is not helpful in competing externally. There was a need to get together, so as to get goods and services out. There was a further need to take advantage of the wider market opportunities provided by CARICOM and the ACS; and to ‘turn migration around to benefit us’, by using the networking and marketing opportunities provided by Jamaica and Caribbean communities abroad.

The issue of sovereignty was raised, in the context that Caribbean integration must take account of differences between member territories, while shaping a vision of a common future. It was noted that the intention was to achieve integration similar to that of the European Union, with free movement of people and, eventually, the virtual dissolution of borders; but that this could be a slow process for CARICOM, especially where the national borders of island states are clearly marked. The further point was made that while a business could have employees all over the region, the dissolution of national boundaries required political decision-making; a process in which civil society could have an input.

Improving International Competitiveness: Several areas were identified in respect of improving international competitiveness. These included improving foreign language skills; developing good ethical practices; learning credit analysis; dealing with differences in culture, perspectives and issues of sovereignty.

Free Market vs. Social Cohesion: It was felt that care must be taken, in managing the CSME process, to ensure that individualism connected with the marketplace does not undermine traditional social cohesion, with fallout within the societies.

Free Movement: The free movement of labour as well as goods and services captured the attention of the group. The consensus was that there was no need to fear wholesale population movement as a result of the instituting of freedom of movement, as people with significant ties (jobs, homes, families etc) would think hard about moving; although the group did note that there would be a need to educate people on the implications of the policy. It was felt that the problem lay in bringing this perspective to the political directorates, which were the major stumbling block in this regard.

Role of Business: There were two streams of thought in relation to the role of businesses in the region. One was that businesses should accept a social responsibility, both in terms of considering the interests of the consumer, and in terms of recognising a regional rather than simply a national interest. The other is that business is about organising people for an economic purpose, and cannot be expected to do the jobs of government, the churches, NGOs or community.

System of Education: The development of human capital is important and must be managed to ensure competitiveness. It was noted that this had implications for the system of education. It was felt, for instance, that systems should be implemented in the schools to encourage the early development of a psyche whereby young people understand trade and business.

Educating the Media: It was felt that the media must be educated about issues relating to the CSME, world trade and its impact on the region etc, as well as its responsibility for informing people; so that the media focuses on issues as well as conflicts.

Caribbean Court of Justice: It was suggested that the court could begin with a focus on areas where there was broad agreement on its usefulness, such as trade disputes; with disputed issues relating to criminal justice following later.

Inclusiveness in Decision-making: It was noted that ways must be found to facilitate on-going dialogue involving groups and communities.

Working Group 2:

Integrating Gender Issues, and Youth, into the Development Agenda.

Facilitators: Juddith Wedderburn
Shelli Rai Grandison

Rapporteur:

Gender: The group began by agreeing to focus on gender rather than women alone, as the topic had originally proposed; even while recognising the differing needs of men and women. It was felt that issues to do with health and employment must be addressed from a gender perspective.

Education Focus: The group agreed that education was the key to integrating gender issues and youth concerns into the development agenda. Issues related to health, including HIV/AIDS, and employment, were discussed, but it was felt that even these were grounded in education.

The group urged the re-vamping of the education system and process so as to make them relevant to today's society. The question was asked, 'What are we educating young people for?' Solutions included the development of innovative teaching strategies, which can engage students in learning; and teaching teachers how to teach. It was felt that curricula should take the CSME/trade liberalisation issues into account.

Media: The importance of the role of the media was underlined.

Parenting: The group underscored the importance of parenting.

Youth: Concern was expressed about young people feeling helpless and disconnected, and the group called for the development of creative ways to seek out their ideas and channel these into decision-making. The concerns of young men were highlighted, and a young male participant spoke out: "Young men lack of a sense of being worthwhile; lack a sense of a future. There is a need to make young men feel that education is not just a means of getting by, but a life-long process. Right now, education is seen, by young men, as punishment. Also, we are socialised to be breadwinners; that we should not cry, and so on..."

Inclusiveness: The group felt that there was a need for more representation of civil society ideas at the policy-making level. It was felt that civil society had a role in arranging on-going consultations, which should aim at developing national vision and consensus on issues; and that there was also a need to seek a mechanism whereby the fruit of such consultations could be incorporated into policy.

Working Group 3:

Justice, Governance and Human Rights.

Facilitators: Jessica Byron
Robin Lim-Lumsden
Rapporteur: Yunena Morales

Governance and Justice: The group defined governance in terms of accountability, management, transparency, and inclusive participation. It said that governance must be based on justice, and that CARICOM should ensure justice at a regional level, in a non-discriminatory way.

The group felt that a Bill of Rights was essential as a basis for guaranteeing human rights. It also considered the development of a Caribbean Commission on Human Rights, along the lines of the European and International commissions.

Popular Involvement: All citizens must be able to see the connection between policy and people's lives, so as to buy in to the process. However this must involve more dialogue between citizens and policy-makers, and accountability is essential to future meaningful responses.

Youth: Young people must be included in all dialogue.

Public Education: An effective way must be found to educate the public, at a time when many people do not listen to or read the media. The role of the media itself must be looked at, in regard to the dissemination of CARICOM issues and outputs.

Access to Information: There is a need for more public information, and for greater access to information on CARICOM so that civil society can make more informed decisions and participate in the decision-making process.

Document Production: Groups participating in consultations should produce policy papers in advance, according to a specified format, so as to be better prepared and make better use of the opportunity.

Protection: There should be a law to protect the vulnerable, and a better, more effective court system.

Social Workers: The role of social workers in mediating on important issues including violence, fathering, the disconnection of youth from mainstream society, makes them social actors who should be engaged with at the regional level.

NGO Criteria: The group urged the development and enactment of an NGO Act, which would establish criteria for NGO activities, establish who NGO representatives speak for, and offer protection to registered NGOs.

Other Issues Raised in Question & Answer Sessions:

Accessibility of CARICOM: The vexed question of the accessibility of CARICOM, especially in the context of the CSME, was raised. Aside from the business sector, NGOs also questioned how to spur CARICOM interest in and access CARICOM resources to address the needs of groups such as persons with disabilities; to recognise the contributions of groups such as the social workers, the insurers and the legal fraternity. Officials noted that the issue of access is being addressed through several mechanisms:

- Decentralising some processes through the assignment of portfolio responsibilities to the various heads of government. Therefore a special office dealing with the CSME is being located near to the Prime Minister with responsibility for that area.
- Task Forces, which are looking at some issues, such as gender, and will report to the CARICOM Council on Human & Social Development.
- A new, dedicated CARICOM office in Georgetown.
- Using new technology, which will aid access and help the secretariat function more effectively.
- Facilitation of regional caucuses using the University of the West Indies (UWI) Distance Teaching mechanisms.

Resources: The issue of ensuring adequate resources for all subject areas, was raised with regard to the decentralisation of CARICOM portfolios; as was the modality by which concerns can be channeled to the Prime Minister with responsibility for particular issues.

Financial Arrangements Within the Community: It was suggested that a Caribbean Stock Exchange, to widen limited opportunities, was overdue. The point was also made that there was a need to look at pension arrangements, on a regional basis, particularly in context of an aging population.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Ms. Dawn Ashley	Missionary Church Association in Jamaica
Mr. Fabian Bernard	S-Corner Clinic & Community Development Centre
Mr. Richard Billings	Social Development Commission
Amb. Ellen Bogle	Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade
Mr. Keith Russell Brown	Stella Maris Foundation
Mr. Matthias Brown	Environmental Foundation/Social Action Centre
Mrs Joan Browne	Jamaica Women's Political Caucus
Mrs. Suzanne Francis Brown	C'wealth Foundation Citizens & Governance Prog.
Dr. Jessica Byron	Dept. of Government, UWI
Rev. Samuel Carter	Holy Cross Rectory
Mr Terrence Cover	STEPA/ADC
Mrs. Joan Grant-Cummings	Coalition for Community Participation in Governance
Ms. Michelle Davis	Centre for Gender & Development Studies, UWI
Prof. Neville Duncan	UWI
Mr. Graham Glover	British High Commission
Mr. Tony Gomes	Jamaica Chamber of Commerce
Mrs. Una May Gordon	IICA
Mr. Delroy Gordon	Jamaica Cultural Development Commission(JCDC)
Ms Shelli-Rai Grandison	
Rev. Dr. Sam Green	Missionary Church Association in Jamaica
Ms. Jennifer Henry	ODPEM
Mrs. Marcia Hextall	JCDC
Miss Lisa Higgins	Association of Development Agencies (ADA)
Mrs. Kim Hoo-Fatt	Kingston Restoration Company
Mrs. Paulette Griffiths-Jude	FIT – Enhancing Civil Society Project
Mrs. Laila Ismail Khan	UNICEF
Dr. Patsy Lewis	UWI
Mrs. Beverly Sutherland-Lewis	ICSW/CVSS
Mrs. Robin Lim-Lumsden	Jamaicans for Justice
Ms. Gail Mathurin	MFA&FT
Mr. Wayne McCook	MFA&FT
Ms. Sharene McKenzie	SCLR
Mr. James Moss-Solomon	Grace, Kennedy & Co. Ltd.
Mr. Joseph McPherson	Jamaica Institute for Political Education
Mr. Kevin Meek	UNDP
Mrs. Kemorine Miller	Jamaica Baptist Union
Ms. Celia Busby Montenegro	JAMPRO
Ms. Marlene Moore	CEPACASA
Ms. Yunena Morales	Jamaica Association of Social Workers
Mr. Jason Morris	Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ)
Mr. Bryan Noble	IICA
Mr. Derrick Palmer	Disabled Peoples' Association

Mrs. Lorna Peddie	Jamaican Self Help Partners
Ms. Jeanne Perez	UNV/UNDP
Mr. Anthony Perry	Craige Town Youth Organization
Mrs. Loretta Reid-Pitt	CIDA/SCLR
Ms. Jaquie Tannis-Riley	Helpage International
Ms. Georgia Scott	Youth Opportunities Unlimited
Ms. Georgia Simmonds	ADA
Ms. Lisa Bryan-Smart	MFA&FT
Ms. Maureen Spencer	STATIN
Mr. Patrick Taylor	Key Insurance Co. Ltd.
Ms. Freda Thomas	Dudley Grant Trust
Dss. Rachele Vernon	ADA
Mrs. Judith Wedderburn	Fredrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)
Shellion Cope	Association of Clubs (AOC)
Mr. Omar Hughes	AOC
Mr. Pat Roy James	AOC
Rev. H. Cunningham	Jamaica Conference of Churches
Mr. Richard Allicock	MFA&FT
Mr. David Lee	Grovedale Limited
Mrs. Miriam Moveton-Campbell	Consumer's League
S. Donaldson	Jamaica Information Service (JIS)
T. Thompson	JIS
Mr. Paul Fuller	Consumer Affairs Commission
Ms. Lana Finnikin	Sistren Theatre Collective
Mr. Donald Jones	Combined Disabilities Association
Mrs. Charmaine Constantine	Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)
Ms. Maxine Harris	CARICOM
Dr. Edward Green	CARICOM
Sheryl Jarrett	OPM
Ms. Keisha Wright	OPM
Ms. Tamoyo Christie	UWI
Mr. Claremont Kirton	UWI
Mr. O. Green	JIS
Mr. Peter Young	JBS

APPENDIX 2

AGENDA***National Consultation Involving Civil Society in Caribbean Development******Jamaica Conference Centre******19 June 2001***

8.00a.m. – 9.00a.m. Registration

Moderator: Professor Neville Duncan9.00a.m. – 9.10a.m. Welcome - Deaconess Rachele Vernon, Chair,
Association of Development AgenciesDr. Edward Greene, Asst. Secretary-General
CARICOM9.10a.m. – 9.45a.m. Keynote Speakers:
Foreign Policy Coordination & Functional Cooperation
Hon. Paul Robertson,
Minister of Foreign AffairsCARICOM Trade Issues & the CSME
Hon. Anthony Hylton
Minister of Foreign Trade9.45a.m. – 10.30a.m. Background Presentation:
Vision & Strategies of Caribbean Development in the
Global System
Dr. Edward Greene

10.30a.m. – 11.00a.m. Question & Answer/ Discussion

11.00a.m. – 11.15a.m. COFFEE BREAK

11.15a.m. – 1.30p.m. Working Group Discussion¹

1.30p.m. – 2.30p.m. LUNCH

MODERATOR: Mr. Wayne McCook, Min. of Foreign Affairs2.30p.m. – 3.30p.m. Plenary (Reports of Working Groups)
Discussion and Conclusions

¹ Group 1 – Organising the proposed CSME to maximise the development potential (national and regionally) to benefit Caribbean people/ Improving the region's international competitiveness.

Group 2 – Integrating Gender Issues & Youth Concerns into the development agenda

Group 3 – Justice, Governance & Human Rights

APPENDIX 3

ADDRESS BY DR. PAUL ROBERTSON, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The people of Jamaica share with the peoples of the Caribbean Community a common history that impels us towards a common destiny. While this was not to be found in the attempt to create a West Indian Federation in 1958, Jamaica and its sister states of the English-speaking Caribbean recognised from the earliest stages of independence that it was vitally important that an effective mechanism be found to achieve the necessary process of regional integration. It is instructive that the founding fathers and founding mothers of our Community embarked on the steady pursuit of integration processes not after years of ‘going it alone as newly independent states swept up in the excitement of their new status’; they did so from the very beginning. Indeed the 1962 meeting to look at certain important ‘common services’ was to create the foundation for the strong functional cooperation programmes of the region. The creation of the University of the West Indies was a fitting outcome of this first initiative for functional cooperation and it remains, to this day, a symbol of the best traditions of regional cooperation. The first meeting of the Heads of Government of self-governing territories and newly independent Caribbean states – Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, which was hosted by the late Prime Minister Dr Eric Williams of Trinidad & Tobago in 1963, represents another very important early step in the process of integration. In addition to the regular meetings of the heads of government to address matters of common interest, the region was to address the important question of development and trade by establishing the Caribbean Free Trade Area in 1965. These processes were to come together in the establishment of the Caribbean Community by the Treaty of Chaguramas in 1973, bringing to fruition a decision of the 1972 meeting of heads of government of the Caribbean Free Trade Area.

COOPERATION IN FOREIGN POLICY

One of the important goals of CARICOM has been the coordination of common positions on critical foreign policy issues and the management of foreign relations. From the earliest stages of the community, the leaders of member states have consulted on important foreign policy issues and taken common positions. While the region does not and cannot take a common position on every issue, we have managed to establish a consensus on many very important issues. Caribbean foreign policy coordination began from as far back as the first heads of government meeting in 1963, when the leaders all addressed the need for close cooperation with a number of regions including Latin America and Africa. The consultations at the level of heads, ministers and diplomats have been refined through the establishment of the Council on Foreign and Community Relations, COFCOR. Speaking as the minister who sits on this council, I can tell you that it strengthens our hand on many important international issues. We often coordinate our position on initiatives in the OAS, the UN and other important international bodies. We also leverage our bloc of votes on critical matters of concern to the region. The effectiveness of our common approach to many foreign policy issues is reflected in the

increasing number of requests that we receive from other states for consultation with the community, as a group, on important issues.

The coordination of foreign policy at the ministerial level is complemented by the close coordination among CARICOM representative offices overseas. In many places where one CARICOM mission exists, it serves as a de facto CARICOM presence, assisting other member states as far as resources allow. In Geneva and in Japan, Jamaica's missions have provided useful support to other regional countries from time to time. At a more formal level, the institution of a caucus of CARICOM ambassadors has worked exceedingly well in key centres including the United Nations, Washington and London. right now, the government of The Bahamas is demonstrating in a most significant way the concept of regionalism in representation, by hosting the CARICOM mission to Haiti in its embassy there and providing critical support services to it. Last week, we opened the CARICOM office in Haiti after an important visit led by the OAS Secretary, Cesar Gaviria and Dame Eugenia Charles.

I must pause here to say a word about our role in the international effort to restore democracy to Haiti – a provisional member of CARICOM. This is an especially important area of CARICOM cooperation and we remain committed to the effort to help the people of Haiti to find their rightful place within the community of nations and to pursue their dream of stability and social and economic progress, too long deferred.

CARICOM's coordinated approach to foreign policy and regional relations stands out in other significant areas, for example our effort to help the people of Montserrat in their valiant struggles in the face of a devastating natural disaster; this showed the solidarity of the community at its best. Our positive and constructive engagement with Cuba, our growing connection with the Dominican Republic and the emergence of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), are all tangible expressions of our commitment to the goals of the truly integrated, wider Caribbean. Within our membership, CARICOM has quietly, but effectively, assisted member states in moments of electoral challenge – in Guyana, Suriname, St Kitts and Nevis, and St Vincent and the Grenadines. CARICOM's moderating influence has also been felt in our response to tensions between Suriname and Guyana.

The community has, over the years, forged important multifaceted cooperation arrangements with key partners such as the United States through such mechanisms as the Bridgetown Accord, and continues dialogue with the new US administration on the further strengthening of the relationship. It has spearheaded the CARIFORUM mechanism for cooperation with other regional partners in the wide-ranging arrangements with the European Union under the ACP/WU agreements. Our cooperation with traditional partners like the UK and Canada remains a major focus of our foreign policy initiatives as a region. We have recently re-doubled our efforts to deepen our links to our neighbours in Latin America and have established a number of joint commissions with some states and are exploring new arrangements with others. Similar commissions or other arrangements have been developed with other partners further afield, including Japan and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), for example. This

network of external linkages, together with our close consultations and joint positions on important international matters, has enabled us to effectively protect and promote the region's interests at the hemispheric and the international levels.

FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION

From the earliest stages of the integration process, CARICOM has placed functional cooperation at the top of its agenda. As I mentioned earlier, even before the process of establishing the community began, the emerging nations of the Caribbean began the process of creating mechanisms to facilitate functional cooperation. Community initiatives in health, education, security and justice, telecommunications, disaster preparedness, environmental security and agriculture have been an integral part of our regional development process. Several institutions have been created to pursue important goals and many national initiatives have been made regional in scope, consistent with the community mindset that is taking root. The most topical initiatives in regional institution-building are the CSME, that will be addressed later on, and the Caribbean Court of Justice. The court, when implemented, will be a further step in the deepening and strengthening of the regional integration process. It will be a landmark in our quest for true regional independence and will provide the juridical underpinning for much of the institutional transformation being undertaken in the creation of the single market and economy and other important initiatives within the community.

GLOBALISATION AND THE CARICOM RESPONSE

The Caribbean Community, in its mission statement, commits itself to provide dynamic leadership and service with community institutions and groups towards the attainment of a viable, internationally competitive and sustainable community, with improved quality of life for all.

Today, the goals so eloquently articulated in the mission statement are being tested by the fast-moving currents of globalisation, as the Caribbean Community seeks to find its place in a world in which change is a constant and barriers are falling all around us. These developments should inspire us to redouble our efforts as a community, not drive us to panic. A world of greater openness brings with it a wealth of opportunities together with its many challenges. The increasing responsiveness of the global community to humanitarian crises and the evolving role of the World Trade Organization are significant examples of this trend. Beyond these institutional developments we find increasing connections of peoples across national borders, driven by the revolution in information technology, shared cultural experiences and migration and refugee flows. In this global environment, the mission of our integration movement is even more vital as a means by which the interests and the aspirations of the peoples of the Caribbean can be advanced.

Our heads of government have not been slow to recognise these challenges and have already moved decisively to deepen the integration movement. At the pivotal 10th meeting of heads of government in Grand Anse, Grenada, in 1989, they agreed to work towards the deepening of the economic integration of the community by revisiting the Treaty of Chaguramas. They set in motion a far-reaching revision of the Treaty which was completed in March 2000 with the conclusion of 9 protocols. These will form the

framework for a single market and economy that will set the stage for a new level of economic interaction within the community. The process also established important structures through which CARICOM now effects its mission – the conference of heads of government, which is the highest organ of the community; in addition, four ministerial councils which provide critical leadership in the important functional areas: foreign and community relations, trade and economic development, human and social development, and finance and planning. In addition to the organs that I have mentioned earlier, the creation of technical entities such as the Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM) and the introduction of a quasi-Cabinet in which individual heads of government assume special portfolio responsibilities, provide additional mechanisms to better help us to meet today's challenges.

CIVIL SOCIETY

From the earliest stages, CARICOM has recognised the central role of the people of the region in forging its vision and shaping its agenda. The adoption of the Charter of Civil Society by the heads of government in their 8th inter-sessional in February 1997, solidified CARICOM's commitment to a binding partnership with civil society. Indeed, we must remember the West Indian Commission process through which Caribbean peoples within the region and in the diaspora were consulted. That process yielded a landmark document for our region – A Time For Action – and produced many important initiatives including the establishment of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), which gave life to the dream of widening our regional integration movement. Beyond the Charter and the work of the West Indian Commission, we come today to the Forward Together process. Here in Kingston, today, we begin the region-wide process of consultation with the private sector and other non-state actors to reason together about where we are going as a region.

We will explore the role of civil society in designing and implementing strategies to ensure that we realise the goal of Caribbean development in the global system. I hope that taking into account the steps that CARICOM has already taken, we will have frank and open discussions on the challenges facing our region at this time. I hope that we will spend some time dealing with the AIDS pandemic, human resource development, the fight against illicit drug trafficking, the protection of the environment, the recognition of the special status of the Caribbean Sea in the context of sustainable development, the issue of small arms, and social and economic development. I am certain that the dialogue today will identify many other areas in which CARICOM has made a difference. I am also certain that it will also identify areas in which we, as a region, have not done enough. I hope that our discussions will be full, frank and fair, and that out of these consultations we will be better able to place into the decision-making process important inputs from our civil society.

THE VISION

The vision for Caribbean development must be driven by constant input from the people of the region. We must broaden the discourse by building on what is already a strong participatory tradition and find ways of making consultations like this an integral part of our CARICOM life. We must ensure that every CARICOM citizen from the forests of

Guyana in the south to the beaches of The Bahamas in the north, understands and feels himself or herself a member of a team, a part of the work of CARICOM. We must reject insularity and commit ourselves to the achievement of a true sense of community and a strong Caribbean identity as we who share this common Caribbean history forward together to a common destiny – development and progress for all our citizens in a truly integrated Caribbean Community.

ADDRESS BY MR ANTHONY HYLTON, MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE

I wish to express a very warm welcome to you who are attending the national consultations on issues related to the development of the Caribbean region. In my view, a most important issue before this consultation is the development of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

Since I became Minister of Foreign Trade last year, I have actively sought to deepen my relationship with various groups in the society in light of the major challenges and opportunities presented by globalisation. As minister with portfolio responsibility for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, I am particularly pleased to have this opportunity to speak to members of the civil society who have a major role to play in building a new Caribbean space.

The significance of the CSME must be understood in the context of the rapid global changes taking place in the world today. The phenomenon of 'globalisation' is generally associated with the increasing linkages between nations and peoples through the reduction of barriers to the movement of goods, services, culture and people across borders.

Across the world, reaction to the globalisation has been mixed. Many see it as a positive force, a process of creating a 'global village' that will deliver progress and prosperity to all the peoples of the world. Others, however, see it as a threat to the weak and powerless and a tool of the rich and powerful. This is the view of globalisation held by the demonstrators in Seattle opposing the free market arrangements in the WTO and, more recently, in Quebec opposing the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

Regardless of what one thinks of the process, the facts are not in question – the world has changed dramatically and the process of globalisation has taken root.

Globalisation is essentially the process of economic expansion across national boundaries.

The modern expression of the globalisation process is unprecedented, because it has restructured the world economy by reducing the ability of national governments to directly influence domestic economic affairs, while expanding the role and significance of the international marketplace and international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Globalisation is forcing all nations to compete for opportunity – with the risk of unemployment, poverty and criminality facing those who fail. These new arrangements have led analysts to suggest that this modern expression of globalisation involves the most fundamental redesign of the world's economic arrangements since the Industrial Revolution. In the context of our own history, the changes are as profound as the transition from colonisation to independence.

It is in this context of globalisation that the CARICOM heads of government, at their meeting in 1989, agreed that the establishment of a CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) was the only viable option for our small economies. To achieve this, it was agreed that the Treaty of Chaguramas would be amended by incorporating separate agreements, called protocols, into the original treaty. Some nine protocols have been completed and were approved for implementation sometime next year, at the 12th inter-sessional meeting of CARICOM heads of government, held in Barbados in February this year. Already, some of the protocols are being provisionally applied.

The essential features of the CSME are:

- unrestricted movement of factors of production;
- coordination of trade and economic policies; and
- movement towards a single currency over time.

There are several benefits to be derived from the CSME:

- The CSME provides us a stronger power base for international negotiations so that we can be better able to change and influence WTO rules and other rules for international trade that affect competitiveness.
- Foreign investment and business alliances are likely to increase as there will be new rules that will encourage investment.
- Protocol II gives Jamaican businesses a right to operate in any CARICOM country. Founded on the principle of national treatment and non-discrimination of CARICOM nationals, it also provided for the free movement of service providers and the free movement of capital.
- University graduates and other professionals can move freely in search of opportunities across CARICOM states, thereby increasing the pool of skills from which businesses can choose.
- In 1997, the Caribbean Community Free Movement of Skilled Persons Act abolished the requirements for work permits for skilled CARICOM nationals. The legislation also provides for the free movement of artistes, sports persons, musicians and media workers. The objective is that, eventually, all CARICOM nationals will have a CARICOM passport that will enable free movement for all citizens.
- The free flow of business transactions and people within the region will ensure that consumers and businesses will have a wider range of goods and services from which to choose.
- The CSME will provide easy market access to a wide market of approximately 15 million people. When the average annual tourist population in the region is added to this, the CSME is enlarged to a market of nearly 35 million people.

The revised treaty also establishes two new regional bodies which will be particularly important in protecting the interests of consumers throughout the region. These are the Caribbean Regional Organisation on Standards and Quality (CROSQ) and a Regional Competition Commission.

CROSQ will coordinate the work within the CSME towards the development and application of harmonised regional standards, particularly in relation to goods, in order to

ensure international competitiveness and, equally important, to ensure consumer health and safety. It is expected that this body will become operational during the second half of this year.

The Regional Competition Commission will be aimed at promoting competition among businesses in CARICOM and consumer interest and welfare. The protection of consumers and the facilitation of consumer choice throughout the region are key elements in its mandate. Further, it is expected that an information system using communication technology will be established, in order to inform consumers about the operations of markets.

The benefits of Caribbean regional integration and cross culture integration are already evident in our region. Our common historical and richly diverse cultural heritage provides a pool of resources that are replicated and integrated throughout the region in differentiated forms. The rapid growth of the Caribbean music and entertainment industry is an excellent example. The CARICOM regional market provides important demand, consumer feedback, new forms of knowledge and other key resources that drive fusion and business development in the region. This creative fusion is evident in our adaptation of Trinidad & Tobago's carnival, here in Jamaica.

Caribbean integration also facilitates our penetration in the markets of the North Atlantic with large Caribbean populations. Reggae, jerk, roti, carnival are products consumed not only by Jamaicans and Trinidadians overseas but also by the large resident Caribbean populations as well as their friends and associates from other racial and cultural backgrounds. Ethnic and other niche markets for Caribbean products have emerged and are increasingly becoming an important source of foreign revenue for Caribbean producers.

In today's knowledge-based global economy, it is these creative activities that will transform our economies and provide the basis for sustainable development in the region. With the ending of traditional preferences, Caribbean societies must now develop the capacity to compete by building new alliances and new institutional arrangements that can facilitate competitiveness and improve the lives of the ordinary citizen in the region. The development of creative, competitive industries will provide the basis on which we can diversify our economy away from the current dominance of a few sectors. This dominance and over-specialisation makes our whole economy and social fabric susceptible to vulnerabilities. Long-term development in the Caribbean will require this diversification and transformation in order to be sustainable.

As trade barriers fall and market access becomes increasingly liberalised, the modern rules of trade now limit the ability of governments to protect domestic markets and defend the strategic interest of domestic or regional firms. Civil society organisations such as consumer groups, community organisations and others, must now consider forging new alliances with the private sector in order to defend the interests of stakeholders who face the negative impact of business closures. By exposing unethical

behaviour or inferior standards through a range of consumer awareness activities, civil society organisations can effectively assist the survival and growth of local businesses.

Although guided by different objectives and concerns, business, civil society and government share a common interest in ensuring economic development and prosperity. If local businesses fail, unemployment rises, incomes fall and social upheavals are likely. Now, more than ever, businesses and civil society organisations must work more closely with government to create the environment to ensure sustainable growth.

I therefore wish to congratulate the Association of Development Agencies and the CARICOM Secretariat for their collaboration on holding this consultation and bringing all these social partners together. I am confident that the discussions will assist in raising the level of awareness of what we are working to create in CARICOM. I look forward to your continued participation in the development of our Caribbean regional space.

**NOTES OF A PRESENTATION BY DR EDWARD GREENE,
ASST. SECRETARY-GENERAL, CARICOM**

CONTEXT FOR THE CONSULTATION

The development of a collective Caribbean strategy is proving vital, and the consultation is taking place at a critical time; but philosophies seeking to broaden the base of participation are not new. The discussion today is part of a history which is seeking to make decision-making systems more inclusive; where we strive for broad agreement and recognise that we will differ on details.

The consultation is therefore intended to examine the causes of divisiveness and attempt to establish mechanisms for resolving them, especially in the context of globalisation.

Reasons for having the consultation:

- the clamour of various groups in society for a greater say in decision-making;
- the current quest to establish the CSME, with free movement for Caribbean people and businesses as a major objective;
- the Charter of Civil Society reconfirms the need to create a truly participatory environment consistent with genuine consultation and a process of good governance.

The consultation therefore seeks to advocate for a vision of development that is inclusive and can be translated into practical policies that:

- make the Caribbean more viable and competitive in a changing global environment;
- invest in human capital with equity, by ensuring more opportunities for education and health care for Caribbean citizens – functional cooperation;
- improve human resource capabilities so that the region can exploit opportunities created by information technologies;
- provide for uplifting the culture that underpins the educational systems, how we deal with health and family life, and the emergence of entrepreneurial spirit through access to new and appropriate skills. Viewed this way, culture is at the heart of development. It is more than the performing arts. It speaks to the production of viable cultural products that bring pleasure and cohesion as well as economic and profitable returns.

Within the context of the global environment, it is important to determine how, as a region, we will manage:

- human resources
- financial resources
- technological resources

What needs to be considered includes:

- New approaches to collaboration and consultation;
- New modalities of governance;
- New relationships between civil society and government.

At the regional level, these have already involved the development of a quasi-Cabinet where Prime Ministers have portfolio responsibilities at the regional level; and the Caribbean Court of Justice.

Civil society must seize opportunities to be involved in areas such as HIV/AIDS, financing for development, labour standards etc

The principal beneficiaries of this discussion will be:

- Caribbean citizens
- Regional civil society including the private sector, labour unions, women's groups, NGOs etc
- National governments and development agencies will benefit by extension.

HOW DO WE DEAL WITH THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT/SOCIAL STABILITY?

Involve civil society in defining critical strategies to increase the region's productive capacity; enhance employment opportunities; reduce poverty; develop financial structures to make capital accumulation meaningful; improve communication.

The key is to strengthen the region's capacity to 'deal' at international levels through incorporating a strong regional civil society movement into the policy equation; ensuring that it has a voice at the highest levels of decision-making; developing a formula that institutionalises the role of civil society while ensuring that its dynamism is maintained.

APPENDIX 4

News Release:**CARICOM/CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATION IDENTIFIES NEED FOR CONSISTENT POPULAR INPUT IN REGIONAL DECISION-MAKING**

The need to develop mechanisms that ensure consistent civil society inputs into the decision-making processes of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), was an overarching theme emerging from the first in a series of national consultations planned to take place between June and September this year.

The National Consultation Involving Civil Society in Caribbean Development, held at the Jamaica Conference Centre, June 19, was attended by 75 persons representing non-government organisations (NGO)s, community based organisations (CBO)s, faith based groups, the business sector, and other non state agencies. The Association of Development Agencies (ADA) and Jamaica's Ministry of Foreign Affairs were joint organisers.

The opening session of the consultation was addressed by both Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Paul Robertson, and Minister of Foreign Trade, Mr Anthony Hylton, who respectively addressed the development of regional cooperation in general, and the specific mechanism of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) which is presently being implemented.

It is within the context of the CSME process that CARICOM Heads of Government mandated the present series of consultations with civil society. CARICOM Assistant Secretary General Dr J. Edward Greene noted that their aim was "to advocate a vision of development that is inclusive and that can be translated into practical policies," with a view to making the Caribbean more competitive in the global environment, investing in Caribbean citizens as a basis for exploiting new opportunities, and providing for the upliftment of culture which underpins the societies of the region.

Working groups looked at ways of organising the CSME to maximise the development potential for Caribbean people, including issues of international competitiveness; how to integrate gender issues and the needs of youth into the development agenda; and at issues of justice, governance and human rights.

Participants expressed concerns about the need for CARICOM to catch the imagination of the region's people, for greater inclusivity and accessibility, and for consistent engagement with groups and communities throughout the region.

In responding to some of the concerns, Minister Robertson noted the pace of global change, and the need for timely response as a factor affecting efforts at consultation. He noted that in the face of these changes, particularly in the trade arena, Caribbean states had no option but to band together and make the CARICOM process work. However the

pace at which the process proceeds is governed by the decision-making of each territory within the Community, since CARICOM operates on a consensus model.

Specific issues arising from the workgroup discussions included the need to extend business networks not only within CARICOM and the wider Caribbean, but also in related ethnic communities abroad; the need to educate the media so that stories focus not just on conflict but on issues; the need to encourage politicians to move ahead on the issue of free movement of people within CARICOM; the need to take into account different views of sovereignty without letting these become divisive. The workgroup on trade issues also noted the need to manage the development of human capital, and to introduce issues relating to CARICOM, trade and business into the educational system from an early stage. In respect of the Caribbean Court of Justice it was recommended that the initial focus be on issues related to trade, on which there was substantial agreement, with criminal issues following later.

The workgroup on justice and governance urged consideration of developing a Caribbean Human Rights Commission, as well as a law to protect the vulnerable, ensuring justice at a regional level, and the development of a more effective court system. The group also identified the need for developing more effective ways of educating the public, the need for more public access to information, the need to encourage groups to document their positions in advance of consultations. It also urged CARICOM to press for an NGO Act, which would protect NGOs but also require certain criteria for their operations.

Education was the main focus of the gender and youth workgroup, which urged greater relevance within the educational system, the more effective training of teachers, the need to motivate youth and to take youth concerns into account, the importance of parenting education, the need to consider the different needs of men and women, and the importance of incorporating a gender perspective in issues relating to education, health and employment.

June 20, 2001