The Canada Caribbean Conference, May 24-26 2007

Preparing for the Future: Identifying Issues and Mechanisms for Renewing Canada’s Ties with the English-Speaking Caribbean

Report by
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Rapporteur’s Report
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOCAL and McGill University convened a meeting on the campus of The College of The Bahamas in May 2007 to allow for a focused discussion on selected issues of immediate and mutual concern to both Canada and the English-speaking Caribbean by a select group drawn from the English-speaking Caribbean, Canada, and international financial and policy institutions.

Risks, Trends and Vulnerabilities: Rising Violence, Organized Crime and Proposals for Meeting these Challenges

We need to recognise the growth of violence and crime in the region and its negative effects on the quality of life. The solutions must include poverty alleviation, a more equitable distribution of wealth, the provision of employment-relevant education and training, the creation of more adequate capacity in law enforcement, the creation of stronger institutions and the recognition from the states concerned that part of the solution rests on developing the political will to sever the links between politics and violence.

Early Childhood and Primary Education: The Challenges of Disengagement from Traditional Productive Society, Teacher Training and Teacher Emigration

Three essential areas for action were identified: early childhood development and education, teacher training and brain drain. It will be important to identify specifically which actors on both sides would be appropriate partners for the definition and implementation of these broadly defined proposals. While Canadian government agencies
are already involved in such projects, the identification of specific civil society actors is an important next step in this process. Another important goal of this initiative should be to create the basis for ongoing and systematic interaction between Canada and the Caribbean both with individual countries and in a more multilateral fashion.

The identification of specific civil society actors and concrete strategies to complement the existing actions of government agencies in these areas constitute the next step in this initiative, as well as other specific areas for further discussion.
Preamble

For more than a century, Canada and the English-speaking Caribbean benefited from a close, almost reflexive, cooperative relationship. It was second nature to both communities. This relationship has grown less intense as other priorities have come to the fore, and it is worth noting that of late Canada has not done a lot to earn the region’s continued confidence. Yet a remarkable and broad vein of good will and common purpose still persists.

Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean also share a geographic proximity and special relationship with the United States based on shared language, institutions and immigration. As the USA has turned inward in response to the events of September 11 and as new threats to the security of states and the health of citizens have emerged, Canada and the Caribbean have faced significant changes in their commercial and political relationship with the US. In this regard, the mutual interests of Canada and the English-speaking Caribbean are becoming increasingly more apparent, and the old habit of Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean working together has new urgency, utility and importance. The challenge is to renew it in forward-looking ways.

In May 2006, a small group of current and former Canadian and Caribbean officials, senior politicians and analysts met at the Canadian Embassy in Washington to discuss the status of the Canada-Commonwealth Caribbean relationship and how it might be revived. The result was a strong agreement on the principle of renewal, and a general consensus on some specific initiatives that might be considered, including a “modern” trade agreement, Canadian leadership in donor co-ordination in the region, and Canadian support for research on high priority Caribbean issues, via a Public Policy Institute and other initiatives.

➢ To build upon this first meeting, FOCAL and McGill University convened a second meeting, on the campus of The College of The Bahamas. The meeting featured a focused discussion on selected issues of immediate and mutual concern to both Canada and the English-speaking Caribbean.
Friday, May 25th

Opening Remarks: Rt. Hon. Joe Clark and Janyne M. Hodder

This conference, sponsored by FOCAL and McGill University, was intended as a follow-up to a meeting in May 2006 of a small group of current and former Canadian and Caribbean officials, senior politicians and analysts at the Canadian Embassy in Washington DC to discuss the status of Canada-Commonwealth Caribbean relations. This meeting on the campus of the College of the Bahamas was intended as a forum to develop new ideas to renew and revitalize Canada’s historically close relations with the English-speaking Caribbean.

The participants sought to obtain two concrete types of results: to identify, firstly, concrete and specific actions to take in this endeavour, and secondly potential actors above and beyond those traditionally involved in these fields. This last point was a recognition that there is a growing range of non traditional actors whose potential should be incorporated, such as the existing network of over half a million people of Caribbean descent in Canada. The initiatives to be proposed were not intended to be, necessarily, major new projects, but rather smaller and more concrete steps that would contribute to establishing practical building blocks for a renewed and durable relationship.

Session One: Risks, Trends and Vulnerabilities: Rising Violence, Organized Crime and Proposals for Meeting these Challenges

Chair: Sir Ronald Sanders

Panel: Admiral Hardley Lewin, Chief of Staff, Jamaica Defence Force
Prof. John Rapley, Department of Government, University of the West Indies
Prof. Philip Oxhorn, Centre for Developing-Area Studies, McGill University
Sir Ronald Sanders

It is a concrete reality in today’s Caribbean that crime and violence are on the rise. Crime rates are increasing and prisons are becoming overcrowded, and while the majority of crime is related to the drug trade, it also increasingly includes kidnappings, drive-by shootings, and gang-related violence, which is beginning to encroach into schools. This has led to a growing sense of insecurity and social instability, with inevitable negative effects on the influx of investment and, perhaps more importantly, on the quality of life of the population and a resulting increase in the out-migration of skilled and talented people.

There is a real sense that the region lacks the resources to build the appropriate capacity to address these problems. In addition, the issue of criminal deportees from Canada—as well as from the United States and the United Kingdom—is often perceived as an additional burden on Caribbean societies which the deporting countries should contribute to shoulder. This problem is compounded by the lack of available funding from international organisations like the IMF and the World Bank, whose resources are available for security programmes linked to combating terrorism, but not the security problems arising from criminality linked to the drug trade.

Admiral Hardley Lewin

Speaking with regards to the issue of security in the broadest sense, it is important to note that the definition of this concept has expanded to include such items as the HIV/AIDS epidemic and natural and human made disasters. In a very real sense, security now is a matter of quality of life. It is clear therefore that it is a multifaceted issue and that any form of intervention must be equally multidimensional.

The notion of security can be understood to be comprised of five main dimensions: political, economic, law enforcement-related, socio-economic/socio-cultural, and civil society elements. In the specific context of the Caribbean, it has been noted that there is no greater threat than drugs, a source of insecurity which further exemplifies the powerlessness of the affected states. This has clear implications for domestic but also international governance frameworks. This further highlights the fact that the successes of security forces alone will not solve the problem of security; rather, it is necessary to
remove the conditions that stimulate criminality itself. Furthermore, it should be clear that no amount of international intervention will be useful unless it is accompanied by action on the part of the affected people themselves.

It should also be noted that the states concerned by the violence and brain-drain need to have the will and unity of purpose to address the problem, neither of which can be imposed by external donors. Governments need to collectively confront the established or emerging alliances of violence and criminality, and for this it is clear that security should not be a political football. Furthermore, it should be clear to the law-enforcement apparatus that the version of the British police inherited from the colonial period, and which is essentially a paramilitary force designed to repress the colonial subjects, is not the appropriate institutional form to create effective community policing. A further area of state intervention should be the appropriate provision of basic amenities and opportunities for the population. In both of these endeavours, the active participation of civil society is needed.

This suggests that a multidimensional and coordinated set of actions is the best approach for the Caribbean to collaborate with international donors in order to address the problems of security in the region.

Prof. John Rapley

One paradox of the proliferation of gangs worldwide is that those areas of urban spaces that are controlled by gangs are often among the safest and enjoy the best levels of services, except when the police try to take control of the situation, which engenders gang wars of succession. Insecurity is, rather, a feature of non-gang controlled areas of the city.

This process of privatisation of violence and the emergence of new agents controlling security is often analysed in the dominant literature in the framework of the thesis of failed states, but it may be useful to understand it in terms of a new type of political entity; a kind of “new medievalism” in the sense that there are now new types of political organization with overlapping and multiple authorities. This notion is intended to capture the fact that we see the emergence of new, subnational actors which control resources and are able to render services in kind which sufficiently justify their existence so that the agents of the state have no real interest in removing them. It also seems to
capture the notion that globalisation involves a process of deepening economic integration combined with increased spatial segregation, with the concomitant unsustainable tensions.

This is mostly an urban phenomenon that takes place in locations that are well-linked to the world economy, such as Rio de Janeiro and Dakar. It is important to realise that these substate units exist with the tacit consent of the official state, because they provide services to the population. It has been noted by some police officers in these environments that although in principle tolerating the presence of such substate actors may be wrong, it has positive implications for the broader functioning of the state. This is because most often the police lack the resources it would need to deal effectively with certain crimes and so the police will turn a blind eye to other gang activities as long as the gangs address those crimes that the police is unable to resolve.

It should also be noted that the very networks that are being created in the formal economy through processes of globalisation also contribute to the creation of networks for the illegal drug trade. These networks are also extremely flexible and multi-nodal, which makes them that much more difficult to combat by individual states.

It is also important to remember that what we are seeing today is not so much an increase in the levels of violence, but rather their privatisation, which makes them more unpredictable. Similarly, although there is a case to be made linking violence to poverty, a stronger case exists to link it with the unequal distribution of wealth, or relative deprivation. As a result of this growing inequality, we see different strategies for obtaining security, wherein the middle classes will turn to the police forces, the wealthy to private security agents, and the poor are left with little recourse other than to turn to gangs. This means that the solution to violence and to organised crime lies not only in ensuring growth, but also in ensuring the equitable distribution of the resulting wealth.

The notion of semi-autonomous criminal units with transnational networks further strengthens the notion that a coordinated approach from multiple states is needed to address their impact.
Some specific proposals to deal with the problem of criminality and societal insecurity can be usefully drawn from the experiences and expertise of various countries in the Spanish-speaking Americas, which face some similar problems. In Central America, for instance, there is a growing problem related to gang members deported from the United States, who thus gain a foothold in countries like El Salvador. A number of analysts felt that the presence of these gangs provided a renewed sense of community to otherwise marginalised groups, but it was also clear that it contributed to create a sense of impunity. Most importantly, resorting to these extralegal solutions to the problem of marginalisation presents a real challenge for the creation of states that can provide services, because it provides the impression to the citizenry that results are the only thing that counts, thus undermining the values of democratic participation and citizenship.

In addition, there is a growing perception that the poor are more likely than others to commit crimes, whereas in reality they are more likely to be the victims of crime. This creates a series of vicious circles, where we see a surge in popular support for legislation that essentially criminalises poverty, clearly raising the spectre of massive human rights violations. It must be remembered that there are other ways than stricter laws to tackle the problem of violence. One fruitful way to do this is for the judicial and police institutions to establish positive relationships with society, by building sufficient trust in the community for people to feel able to report crime and to believe that it will be adequately addressed. After all, the best way to solve crime is to prevent it, and in this sense positive relations between the community and the forces of order are a powerful tool.

In spite of the popularity of “zero-tolerance” approaches, these are expensive because they require well-equipped, well-trained and well-paid police forces, which is a challenge for the less developed countries. It is also clear that the state cannot do it all. There has been a lot of success in various cities in South America, notably in Sao Paulo, Brazil, with communities mediating conflict through various mechanisms that are legitimated by the state.

The problem of violence and crime, at a more basic level, needs to be addressed by creating productive, well-paying jobs and by giving the population the skills they need to fill those jobs. An important step in this direction is to provide funding for higher
education to create the needed human capital to sustain economic growth. It is in part because this has not been done well enough that there is a brain-drain in places like the English-Speaking Caribbean, a problem compounded by the lack of effective recourse in the presence of violence.

Discussion

It was clear from the panellists’ presentations that we need to recognise the growth of violence and crime in the region and its negative effects on the quality of life. In order to address these problems, the solutions must include poverty alleviation, a more equitable distribution of wealth, the provision of employment-relevant education and training, the creation of a more adequate capacity in law enforcement, the creation of stronger institutions and the recognition from the states concerned that part of the solution rests on developing the political will to sever the links between politics and violence.

In the ensuing discussion, several points were raised:

- There is a need for a more cooperative approach between the states where the markets for illegal drugs are primarily located and those through whose territories the trade passes.

- The political disengagement of communities is involved in the growing levels of violence, since the lack of provision of essential services and security on the part of the state leads the communities to seek to fill that void otherwise. This is related to a generalised sense that the state is also often involved in criminal activities and violence, and with the fact that the language of governance and accountability has often been hijacked by the process of structural adjustment policies which have had negative effects on the poor.

- The racial dimension of violence needs to be addressed, in particular by addressing the racial composition of police forces in order not to reinforce social divisions of this sort in attempts to tackle criminality.

- We need to make an effort disaggregate violence and crime linked to the drug trade from that which affects women in particular as victims of domestic and sexual violence, which requires different sets of solutions and the recognition of
the role of women in sustaining the community. Conversely, the construction of male identity as grounded in violence needs to be better understood and countered.

- Providing social amenities and social capital is certainly at the heart of the solution to violence and criminality, since numerous studies show that there is a direct link between the presence of a cleaner and healthier environment and a reduction in the levels of violence. The lack of a sense of stake-holdership is an important contributor to community and youth disaffection.

- It is also important to gain a better understanding of the prison population and understand why it is that it is mainly composed of young males. This should provide us with a better and more concrete understanding of what drives these young men to criminality, rather than relying on preconceived notions, in order to address their motivations. This seems to be related to the fact that girls outperform boys in formal education and the very high rates of drop outs need to be resolved. Qualitative, ethnographic research should be a priority in this field.

- In this context, education should be understood in a broader sense and not focus so tightly on examination results, but rather on providing youth with the life-skills necessary for their healthy integration into society, which would also address the issue parenting skills and child protection which likely contributes to youth criminality. In a similar vein, it is important to address the family impacts of the growing prison population and to provide a safe environment, though not severed from the family and the community, for the children of prison inmates, in order to ensure that a new generation does not fall into criminality for lack of the protection and income of their imprisoned parents.

- There was general agreement that with regards to criminal deportees in the sense that since deporting countries are transferring the costs of incarceration and rehabilitation to the Caribbean countries, they should contribute to building the necessary capacity. This is an important issue since such deportees often constitute over half of the prison population in the Caribbean countries. Similarly, the link between the drug trade and the proliferation of small arms needs to be addressed at the regional level.
Poverty alleviation coupled with increased economic and political participation seems to be an indispensable first step, which should be taken by integrating the efforts of community groups, universities, policy institutes, business groups and government departments.

It was suggested that at the Canadian domestic policy level, some changes could be encouraged which would have a positive impact on the problem of crime and violence in the Caribbean. For instance, the preference for criminalisation over treatment with regards to drug usage needs to be revisited. Similarly, Canada’s policies on immigration could be revised to mitigate their brain-drain impact on the Caribbean.

In terms of Canada’s development agencies, a reformulation seems in order, to incorporate the notion that relations take place not only government to government but also society to society, and in this sense the deterritorialisation of national and political communities presents opportunities for the re-engagement of translocal cultures. Since the involvement of non-state actors in this process, especially with regards to trust-building is indispensable, and given the importance of religion in many Caribbean societies and their strong organizations in the communities, non-exclusionary religious institutions seem to constitute a natural actor in this process.

Session Two: Early Childhood and Primary Education: The Challenges of Disengagement from Traditional Productive Society, Teacher Training and Teacher Emigration

Chair: Paul McGinnis, Director, Caribbean Division, CIDA
Panel: Dr. Morella Joseph, Programme Manager, Human Development and Education, CARICOM
        Tamian Beckford, CARICOM Commissioner on Youth Development and UN Youth Advisor
        Dr. Maureen Samms-Vaughn, Chair, Early Childhood Commission, Jamaica
        Prof. Lynn Butler-Kisber, Department of Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University
Dr. Morella Joseph

In order to address the problems of teacher education, quality and retention, there is a serious need to assess the impact of teacher shortages and regional policies. This process will require consultations with educational institutions, civil society, the employers’ federation, national parent-teacher associations, the Caribbean Union of Teachers, and the Ministers of Education and Labour in the region.

An important element in dealing with these problems would be the establishment of a Commonwealth Protocol to balance the right to migration with the need to maintain the integrity of the education system. Since teacher training is provided by the state, there is a real sense that the countries who recruit these teachers are taking away a valuable national resource, and that some compensation should be provided.

At the Commonwealth Caribbean level, in order to address the high numbers of untrained teachers and the inadequate numbers of experienced, qualified teachers, and given the high mobility of teachers within member states, it is important to harmonise and regulate teacher training and employment conditions. The Ministers of Education of the Region have given CARICOM a mandate to study these issues, and as a result a task force has been set up to study teacher education, retention and the impact of migration, and to set up a system to monitor and evaluate quality assurance. This last point is important because the articulation requirements and education systems differ from one country to the other, and we are therefore looking for a mechanism to harmonise and synchronise these structures to allow for the emerging greater mobility of teachers within the region.

This task force has arrived at some important suggestions, particularly to promote high standards through regional and national teaching councils, which should have an advising and monitoring function. Initiatives need to be put in place to improve the conditions of the teaching profession in both public and private schools, which should include the identification and establishment of measures to recruit and retain appropriate numbers of qualified teachers. These most likely should include an improvement in the monetary compensation provided to teachers.
In terms of relations with Canada and other regions, the identification of best practices should be a priority, as well as the creation and expansion of strategic alliances with educational institutions.

Tamian Beckford

Youth should be the primary beneficiaries of education. However, early education and attendance at school seems to be almost arbitrary, with very high drop out rates. Young boys in particular feel under additional pressure from a perceived discrimination against them as well as from their added family burdens where they are expected to contribute to the family income.

A major contributor to the high drop out rates is that intergenerational understanding is not providing youth with a clear understanding of the benefits that education may bring them. Attendance at school is perceived as a chore with no added value, and this contributes to the disengagement of young people with the education system. Furthermore, violence in schools – related to violence in the young persons’ communities – provides for an unstable and hostile environment for both students and teachers.

The high incidence of teenage parenthood is an additional problem, in that we see unprepared young people producing a new generation that will most likely experience these same problems to a greater degree. This situation suggests that in addition to formal academic or vocational training higher priority should be given to health and family life education (HFLE) programmes. Similarly, teacher training in this field seems inadequate, as well as in the area of matching teaching styles with learning styles. A resolution in this area would most likely contribute significantly to reducing failure rates.

Dr. Maureen Samms-Vaughn

Focusing on early childhood education, of which the first three years take place at home, it becomes clear that parents also need to be educated, since this period is crucial for the physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development of children. It should be noted that the Canadian Institute for Advanced Academic Research has been a very active and useful partner in this field.
We need to keep in mind that early childhood education is the highest yielding investment in education, and to make this clearer to policymakers and donors, since most of the investment actually takes place in secondary or higher education. And yet the system of early childhood education has evolved piece-meal. As a result, although there have been important increases in access, the quality of the vast majority remains very low, providing a custodial rather than educational service.

The good news is that in the Commonwealth Caribbean region early childhood education has been perhaps the most regionally advanced program in terms of remedying these problems, with the establishment of an Early Childhood Education Policy Forum, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and CARICOM. In additional to national improvements, we have seen the establishment of an integrated commission between Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Dominica, which has had the added advantage of depoliticising the issue.

It is clear that there is still a need for investment in parenting initiatives, teacher training, health centres for the earliest periods of life, and for the establishment of developmental screening. On this point, the experience of Canada would be very valuable, since it has put in place a system of developmental screening for all 18-month olds. Another Canadian contribution which represents an important advantage for the development of early childhood education initiatives is that we have a lot of research in this area, in particular a series of longitudinal studies from IDRC. These have already been used to support policy design, an area that is still in need of more direct investment.

Prof. Lynn Butler-Kisber

The Centre for Education Leadership at McGill University is dedicated to building capacity for achieving and enhancing student benefits from education. The focus is on professional development in the broadest sense. In this context, leadership is defined as a service that can be provided, but also and more importantly as a process of partnerships with reciprocal gains through the educational system. Our goal is to develop student leaders, teacher leaders and administrative leaders.

The Centre’s method and philosophy is to start from a holistic approach that is action-oriented and incorporates multiple forms of communication, inclusion and equity.
It is directed to the benefit of student-teachers and of early childhood education. This approach has yielded powerful lessons. In particular, it has led us to recognise the power of the cohort or network to provide a critical friend in a risk-free environment which provides validation and support as well as a healthy resonance and a forum for problem solving.

The Centre has also learned to recognise the power of grassroots initiatives and the impact they can have compared to funded project experiences. In partnership with an associated school in Turks and Caicos, McGill student teachers set up an extended field experience in that country. This required them to convince the Quebec government of the validity of this training for our students, and it led to the development of new relations with the ministries of education.

Another important lesson we have learned is that participant voices are very important. One of the most successful programmes is the Home Intervention for Parents of Preschool youngsters. We attribute this success to the fact that home visitors are other parents with young children, and that the programme does not start from the notion that the parents are somehow deficient. The sense of peer advice provides a sense of ownership of the process.

Discussion

The panellists’ presentations all highlighted the importance of teacher training, the relationship between problems of teacher retention and migration, and the value of involving youth. Early childhood development and interaction with caregivers was also identified as an area of focus, not only in terms of access but more importantly in terms of teacher training. Some directions for action were proposed in the creation of partnerships and the identification of best practices, as well as in doing additional research and involving the various stakeholders in policy formulation.

The discussion raised several points:

- The tension between people’s right to migrate and the requirements of maintaining the integrity of the education system was highlighted, as was the fact that remittances from teachers who migrate do not seem to off-set the loss of resources for the Caribbean. One suggestion to address this problem was the
creation of short term contract programmes for teachers in receiving countries like Canada, with the requirement that they return at the end of their contracts. A different approach offered was to accept that the Caribbean has become a producer of teachers for export and seek donor assistance from the importing countries to ensure the quality of teacher training because it would be of benefit to them. In this sense, it was noted that the possibility of receiving countries, specifically Canada, providing scholarships and exchange programmes should be presented as a jointly developable opportunity. At the regional level, the Commonwealth has recently crafted a code providing guidelines to ensure mutual benefit from the migration of trained professionals.

- It was clear that the tension between the human rights of migrating teachers and the social rights of the countries who train them constituted a major hurdle in obtaining consensus on how to address the impact of this issue.

- Still with regards to migration, it was suggested that expatriate teachers and other members of the Diaspora should be regarded as a potential partner for forging partnerships to help develop and maintain the educational systems of the sending countries.

- With regards to the possible contributions of the Diaspora, it was noted that favourable conditions for sending remittances need to be developed, and that these remittances might be channelled from the domestic consumption of receiving relatives to community-benefiting projects.

- In terms of the disengagement of youth, it was noted that it is no longer easy to see education as a tool for social advancement, and that to address this problem adequate compensation for teachers and community involvement would be key. This would also contribute to dealing with the problem of migration, by removing the push-factors of difficult working conditions and lack of social rewards, as well as ultimately the problem of violence in schools and beyond. Specifically regarding the disengagement of young males from education and from society more broadly, some important advances have been made as a result of the focus on early childhood education by CARICOM.
Saturday, May 26th

Conclusion to the Main Meetings: Recommendations for Action, Further Study and Canadian Follow-up

Chair: Rt. Hon. Joe Clark

The purpose of this conference was to identify areas where Canada and the English-speaking Caribbean can act together in the short-term. A good start would be to identify where and how this cooperation is already taking place.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) already acts in some of the areas identified here, particularly concerning security and education, within the human capital elements of its programmes. CIDA shares the broad definition of security underlying the conference’s discussions, and has ongoing programmes on legal reform with various countries in the region. In addition, it is developing a more regionally oriented approach to its programmes, recognising that the challenges of human capital development and security are best understood and tackled on a regional basis.

In terms of human capital formation, CIDA has projects dealing with basic and primary education, which are being extended into early secondary education. As far as business and industry are concerned in this process, there is a project to identify competitive firms and their areas of operation, and to focus training for employment in those areas, in keeping with the idea of providing employment-appropriate training to fill the existing opportunities.

With regards to improved governance, there are regional programme plans to assist in the creation of specific projects to enhance governance mechanisms and grassroots participation, as well as human capital formation which includes programmes for extending gender equality.

Security and Violence

Some concrete proposals to meet the challenges in this field emerged from the previous day’s panel discussion. In the context of Canada-Caribbean relations, it is promising that Canada is already working in this area, and the challenge is to ensure that Canada continue its support for the existing programmes. But some specific areas that need further action have been identified: employment creation and poverty alleviation;
education and training more focused on employment requirements; capacity building with regards to dealing with criminality, including community policing; empowering women to increase their self-reliance and not to be lured into the drug trade; encouraging civil society groups to work with each other across national boundaries; encouraging the Canadian government to support intelligence building in the region and to create mechanisms for Canadian agencies to exchange intelligence with their Caribbean counterparts.

Education

Three essential areas for action were identified:

- *Early childhood development and education:* The actions proposed include the creation of strategic links between community and educational institutions; investment in parenting and family training; identifying best practice; encouraging the continuation of research on the impact of early childhood development; and continuing to link research with policy design.

- *Teacher training:* Low pay is an important push factor for migration, both out of the country and out of the teaching profession, and this needs to be addressed. There is also a need to standardise and monitor teacher training, to focus on improving the ability to deal with different learning styles and to provide more training for home and family values education. On this point, it was proposed that Church members and other civil society actors might play a useful role in exchanging experiences and contribute to training for working with youth. The actions identified in this area include again identifying best practice; creating strategic alliances; reviewing the funding models for universities and creating scholarships; developing computer mediated and distance education projects; and incorporating the lessons from existing studies on gender differential outcomes.

- *Brain drain:* There is an inevitable net loss from migration, but more clear data is needed to assess this impact and the contribution of recruitment policies from Canada. The improved use of remittances might help to alleviate this loss and contribute to capital expenditures rather than consumption. Recommendations for action include the extension of the model existing in Mexico that allows
remittance recipients to use this as collateral for small loans to purchase or build a home; to seek to use the fact of migration as an opportunity to reach out to the Diaspora; to review tax treaties between Canada and Caribbean countries to reduce the negative impact of loss of resources through migration; to develop a code of professional ethics for managed migration.

Generally, the participants agreed that it will be important to identify specifically which actors on both sides would be appropriate partners for the definition and implementation of these broadly defined proposals. It was noted that the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs maintains a list of government agencies involved in such projects, which could provide an initial list on this component. But it was also noted that the identification of specific civil society actors—in education, business and industry, religious institutions and non-governmental organisations—is an important next step in this process, given that governments cannot and should not be the only actors involved, if the conference’s commitment to community participation and stakeholdership is to hold true.

On a different level, it was noted that one important goal of this initiative should be to create the basis for ongoing and systematic interaction between Canada and the Caribbean both with individual countries and in a more multilateral fashion. On this point, the possibility of using existing multilateral fora as the setting for regular exchanges between government officials was put forward, as was the possibility of extending the existing model of CIDA-CARICOM meeting to other agencies.

Further discussion

The following list was proposed as topics for further discussion, although time limitations meant that only a few of these points were discussed on site. It was agreed that further suggestions provided by the participants would be included in this report.

1. What are the practical steps which might be taken on trade? What are the specific outstanding issues? What “allies” would be interested in addressing those issues?
   • One proposal at an earlier meeting was to extend free trade agreements in the America to recognise the need for special and differential treatment for
Caribbean countries. Such an agreement with Canada might provide a mutually beneficial model to encourage Caribbean nations to join the proposed FTAA.

- The trade in services is a critical issue for the Caribbean, especially with regards to financial services. Since the most important banks in the region are Canadian-owned, they might constitute natural allies on this matter.
- There is a need to find specific and creative areas for agreement, and in this sense it would be important to understand what would be important for businesses, which traditionally are not included in free trade negotiations.
- A small working committee was established to work out some concrete proposals to convey to the preparation committee for the upcoming meeting of Prime Ministers for possible inclusion in that agenda.

2. What are the risks of health pandemics, and what allies might be interested in encouraging more comprehensive planning respecting a response to pandemics?

- The Pan American Health Organisation has acknowledged that health risks are growing particularly in tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, where more resources are needed. But there are also increased risks of diabetes and heart disease which take an important toll and where aid resources are as yet not directed.
- In terms of communicable diseases, the high level of traffic between Canada and the Caribbean suggests that there should be a Canadian interest in dealing with these problems.
- Regarding health risks more generally, Canada has a special expertise in accessing carbon credits for the improvement of air quality and green spaces. This could contribute to the development of local expertise for environmental trading in the Caribbean.
- Potential actors on health include the Caribbean Health Research Unit and the Chronic Disease Research Unit at the University of the West Indies; civil society actors for monitoring purposes and with regards to lifestyle issues; consumer rights organisations; First Nations organisations in Canada who have tackled similar health problems.
3. What are the facts about “deportations”? What practical steps might be taken? What “allies” would be interested in addressing the issue?

4. How can vulnerability and risk-reduction be improved, and who are potential “allies”?
   - The transhipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean sea
   - Need to distinguish between environmental and development concerns.
   - The issue of affordable insurance was identified, along with the suggestion that the Caribbean Catastrophic Risk Insurance Fund (CCRIF) provides a good starting point for increasing the immediate access to financial resources to deal with environmental catastrophes.
   - There is a need to address the environmental impact of growing tourism resorts and of the practice of sand mining, which both contribute to the degradation of the beaches and to the deforestation of the surrounding areas.

5. What more might be done to engage the Caribbean Diaspora in Canada?

6. What more might be done to engage the non-Caribbean resources of cities in Canada where the Caribbean Diaspora is prominent—the Mayor and Council, corporations, NGOs, educational institutions, active citizens?

7. What constructive joint Canada-Caribbean action might be taken respecting “gangs” in both communities, and who are potential “allies” in addressing the issue?

8. What domestic Canadian NGOs might be interested in broadening or applying their expertise to the Caribbean—eg., service clubs, women’s organisations who might be particularly interested in “early childhood” issues, labour unions, Canadian Business for Corporate Social Responsibility, Aboriginal organizations?

9. What are the implications of the increasing interest of China and India in the Caribbean, and what “allies” would be constructive and interested in addressing those implications?

10. How might the relevant expertise, in management or other fields, of the Canadian private sector be made more available?
11. Are there representatives of other non-Caribbean countries who should be encouraged to join these informal discussions –UK, Latin America, representatives of the Commonwealth?

12. Are there issues of governance, elsewhere in the Commonwealth, which would profit from advice or assistance from a combined group from Canada and the Caribbean?
   - Increasing respect for human rights in the Caribbean, specifically regarding the conditions of detention; police brutality; the rights of sexual minorities (GLBT); and gender discrimination.

The following points were also added after the discussion:

- How to involve youth in the processes of decision-making? On this point, the following proposals were made: developing ongoing exchange programmes to help identify best practice in education and training; creating links between educational institutions to develop benchmarks as well as to create linked information services. Canadian universities and Caribbean Diasporas in Canada were identified as potential interested actors, who could contribute to engage government officials and agencies in both Canada and the Caribbean if their capacity to act as development actors can be increased.

- How can we encourage the application of Information and Communications Technology for development?

- How can the region’s energy needs be met?

- With regards to transportation, can direct air links be increased? This would have an important impact on tourism revenues for the region. Also, Canada has well-known expertise in the development of rapid transit systems, which could be transferred to the Caribbean countries.

- The fisheries fleet in Canada is relatively idle: could it become an important actor in the Caribbean?
Final remarks

The purpose of this conference was to seek to fill informally the gap that has developed between Canada and the Caribbean in recent years. The participants recognise that they only have the power to make recommendations, but that they can also create incentives for non-traditional actors to become involved in this relationship. Most importantly, meetings such as these help to demonstrate that there is a constituency for this kind of cooperation, but they must be followed by concrete actions.

Annex - List of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
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