



Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean  
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

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LIMITED  
LC/CAR/L.  
19 July 2018  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MONTEVIDEO CONSENSUS ON  
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN:  
A REVIEW OF THE PERIOD 2013 - 2018**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides a review and evaluation of the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development five years on from its adoption in 2013. The Montevideo Consensus is the Latin America and Caribbean regional framework for the further implementation of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (1994). It represents an ambitious commitment to address population and development issues through more than one hundred priority actions organized into nine thematic sections. This executive summary, and the document as a whole, is structured in line with these thematic sections.

### **A. FULL INTEGRATION OF POPULATION DYNAMICS INTO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH EQUALITY AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

In most Caribbean countries, there is no institution or unit specifically responsible for planning, coordination and monitoring of population and development matters. Jamaica is the country which has had the strongest institutional capacity dedicated to population and development issues. Where there is no single ministry or agency responsible for coordination of population and development matters, coordination depends on the cooperation of different ministries and other stakeholders. With respect to the integration of population dynamics into sustainable development planning, including sectoral policies, there is certainly an awareness and understanding of the most pressing population issues which require a public policy response: addressing population ageing and the burden of non-communicable diseases; achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health including the elimination of HIV; managing migration; urban and land-use planning among others issues. For example, 12 of 13 countries recognised that population ageing was a major concern and this was reflected in national development plans. Turning high-level development plans into sectoral plans, laws, regulations and programmes –and then implementing, administering and monitoring them– is a rather more challenging undertaking. It requires a capacity within government for evidence based policy making, statistics and public administration which small Caribbean governments find it relatively difficult to build and maintain. This lack of capacity is a serious constraint on the ability to governments to implement development plans, whether or not population concerns have been considered.

The eradication of poverty is a key commitment, in fact the first priority action, of the Montevideo Consensus. Relatively little is known about trends in poverty and inequality over the last five years since the Caribbean's country poverty assessment programme has been on hold during much of this period. It has now been relaunched as the Enhanced Country Poverty Assessment Programme although results are yet to be published. During the 1990s and 2000s, there was progress towards the eradication of extreme poverty (also referred to as indigence<sup>1</sup>) across the Caribbean. Progress in the reduction of poverty<sup>2</sup> has been slower. This is not surprising since the calculation of national poverty lines generally<sup>3</sup> takes account of increases in living standards in the respective countries, and so the poverty rates are a measure of relative poverty. With inequality remaining at a high level throughout the 1990s and 2000s, elevated levels of poverty were almost inevitable. The annual poverty estimates for Jamaica provide some indication of the impact of the Caribbean's poor economic performance over the last decade. Poverty in Jamaica in 2015 was 21 per cent compared to 10 per cent in 2007. The publication of data and analysis from the new round of Enhanced Country Poverty Assessments over the next few years should be used to inform poverty reduction strategies. Redistributive measures, human capital development, pro-poor growth and job creation all have a role to play.

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<sup>1</sup> A household is deemed to be indigent if its expenditure is lower than the cost of the food that that would be necessary to satisfy minimum nutritional requirements. This is an indicator of extreme poverty with the calculation of the indigence line making no allowance for any expenditure on non-food items, for example on shelter, electricity, clothes or household goods.

<sup>2</sup> A household is deemed to be poor if its expenditure falls below the national poverty line. These poverty lines are calculated in such a way that the poverty estimates should be regarded as measures of relative rather than absolute poverty.

<sup>3</sup> Jamaica, where unlike other countries poverty is measured annually, is an important exception in this regard. The poverty line for each year is obtained by uprating the estimated poverty line for 1989 using the Consumer Price Index.

## **B. RIGHTS, NEEDS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS OF GIRLS, BOYS, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH**

The number of children aged 0-14 in the Caribbean has been declining since the early 1970s, and the number of youth aged 15-29 has been falling since the late 1980s. This is mainly due to falling fertility although migration also plays a role. Among 16 Caribbean countries, declines in the number of young people have been taking place, or are projected to take place, in all of them. This decline in the number of young people presents an opportunity to make real increases in investment per head in children and youth.

There are a number of critical social development challenges facing the Caribbean which impact especially hard on children and youth. Children and young people are more likely to be living in poverty than older adults. They are more likely to be victims of some form of violence, including sexual violence, than older adults. Youth are more likely to be unemployed than older adults while young women, particularly those living in poverty, are at greater risk of unintended pregnancies, HIV or other sexually transmitted infections.

The Montevideo Consensus calls for a 'guarantee' of 'a life free from poverty and violence' which, at present, is very far from being realized. Poverty reduction programmes need to address social protection for families with children, for example through child benefits, subsidized health care and other measures to enhance the wellbeing of children, such as investment in pre-school education. Child protection is an area that also needs further attention, and legislation related to corporal punishment should be reviewed.

In the area of adolescent sexual and reproductive health, while there is progress in the right direction, much remains to be done to further reduce unwanted teenage pregnancies, transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Special attention should also be given to the needs of LGBT youth, including repeal of discriminatory laws, strengthening laws to deal with homophobic and transphobic abuse and violence, training for service providers such as the police, educators and health service providers, and measures to address societal prejudices.

## **C. AGEING, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES**

Population ageing affects all countries and overseas territories in the Caribbean although the process is more advanced in some countries than others. In territories such as Aruba, Curaçao, Guadeloupe, Martinique and the United States Virgin Islands, the ageing process is relatively advanced; in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago ageing is moderately advanced; while in Guyana, Belize, Suriname and Jamaica, ageing is less well advanced. However, all Caribbean countries will see their old age dependency ratios approximately double over the next thirty years, with important implications for public policy and households.

Since the adoption of the Montevideo Consensus in 2013, Caribbean member States have continued to develop and implement national policies on ageing and strengthen their programmes and services for older persons. Attention has focused to a large extent on income protection, health, and care services. These efforts have impacted positively on the wellbeing of older persons but more needs to be done to ensure that they are able to fully enjoy their human rights. Due to limited resources and capacity, implementation has been slow and significant gaps still exist between policy and practice.

The human rights-based approach has yet to be truly adopted. There is still a dispersion of measures to protect the rights of older persons at the national level, without considering the whole spectrum of human rights. Less attention has been paid, for example, to legal capacity, access to justice and rights to education and culture. Policies and programmes also need to consider more explicitly the heterogeneity of older persons: specific groups of older persons, including older women, older migrants, LGBT older persons, those belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, those living on the streets or those who are deprived of liberty. There is an absence of national mechanisms to enable older persons to seek redress when their rights have been violated.

#### **D. UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES**

There have been steady improvements in the sexual and reproductive health of the Caribbean population on most indicators although there is still much to do to achieve universal access to services. The adolescent birth rate in the Caribbean has declined faster than total fertility, falling by 34 per cent over the last two decades compared with the 22 per cent fall in total fertility. The promotion of family planning has made modern methods of contraception more easily available. However, there are large disparities in the rate of unintended pregnancies between different socioeconomic, educational, ethnic, age and racial groups in the Caribbean. With regard to HIV/AIDS, there has been significant progress over the last 10-15 years in reducing the number of AIDS-related deaths, mainly due to antiretroviral treatment. The elimination of vertical (mother to child) transmission of HIV is within sight. The record with regard to maternal mortality is a little more mixed with evidence of progress in some countries but not in others.

Further work is required to overcome institutional weaknesses as well as cultural and legal barriers which obstruct the provision of good-quality sexual and reproductive health services. Providers need to bear in mind the specific needs of men and women, adolescents and young people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, migrants, older persons and persons with disabilities, and persons living in remote areas. Unsafe abortion should be eliminated and laws relating to the voluntary termination of pregnancy should be reconsidered in order to protect the lives and health of women and adolescent girls.

Achieving the 90–90–90 targets will depend on people being able to seek HIV testing and treatment without fear of being stigmatised either by their family, community, or by health service providers. Discrimination and discriminatory laws remain a more general problem restricting the free exercise of sexual rights, particularly the right to take decisions about sexual orientation and gender identity.

There has been a great deal of work to improve the provision of comprehensive sexuality education although more needs to be done to strengthen implementation. Similarly, there are initiatives to encourage pregnant girls and young mothers to remain in school but entrenched attitudes and written or unwritten rules still combine to result in a high number of drop outs or exclusions.

#### **E. GENDER EQUALITY**

There was some progress with regard strengthening the autonomy of women in decision-making and access to power in electoral systems. In May 2018, Mia Mottley became the first female Prime Minister of Barbados. The Government of Guyana has introduced a revised Local Government Act which requires candidate lists to contain a minimum number of women.<sup>4</sup> However, the proportion of ministerial cabinet positions held by women is still less than 20 per cent in 11 out of 12 Caribbean countries and women represent less than 30 per cent of representatives elected in all national parliaments except those in Grenada, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. More countries should adopt temporary special measures, quotas or a parity system for political appointments.

Regarding the priority actions on promoting equality in the labour market and the recognition of the productive value of unpaid domestic work and care work as well as the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the care economy, relatively little progress has occurred in the Caribbean subregion with respect to the recognition of women's contribution to national economies and, gender stereotyping in the distribution of domestic tasks remains a cause of concern. Gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices, often reinforced by the lack of recognition of the value of their domestic and care work, still characterize the labour market. Policies for childcare and parental leave could encourage more men to share domestic work but only three countries in the Caribbean—the Bahamas, Dominica and the Cayman Islands— have policies on parental leave for both parents. Another trend in the region is the constant high levels of unemployment among women, in particular young women.

In relation to the priority measures of the Montevideo Consensus to eliminate violence against women, gender-based violence and promote new masculinities, Caribbean countries are in the process of

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<sup>4</sup> Guyana, CEDAW/C/GUY/9 (17 April 2018), para.69.

strengthening their normative and institutional frameworks, since the current ones are mainly focused on domestic violence without addressing all other forms of gender-based violence. There was a landmark achievement for girls in Trinidad and Tobago with the passing of an amendment to the Marriage Act which ended all forms of child marriage in the country.

Legal gaps still persist in terms of the definition of discrimination against women, including direct and indirect forms of discrimination, intersecting forms of discrimination, and effective enforcement mechanisms and sanctions. Caribbean countries must continue their efforts to address deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men at all levels of society.

#### **F. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND PROTECTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL MIGRANTS**

Over the last five years, there has been significant progress in the level of international cooperation in migration in the Caribbean. The participation of Caribbean States in the adoption of the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action in 2014 led to the creation of the Caribbean Migration Consultations. These, together with the anticipated agreement of a United Nations Global Compact for Migration later this year, are welcome developments which will provide frameworks for dialogue and international cooperation on the issue of international migration.

The protection of refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants has been a focus of attention in the Caribbean Migration Consultations. Most countries have introduced legislation to address trafficking against persons although further work is required regionally and nationally to address the issue. Legislation on refugee protection and asylum is absent in many countries and matters relating to refugees and asylum seekers are handled with reference to policies or operational procedures which do not provide sufficient protection for the rights of migrants. Countries should consider the introduction of new legislation on the protection of refugees and asylum seekers. There is inadequate protection for the rights of migrants more generally, for example access to basic services in education and health is not generally guaranteed regardless of migration status.

There has been some decline in emigration over the last decade although outflows of migrants from the Caribbean remain at high levels. Based on World Bank estimates, remittances received by Caribbean countries were equivalent to 5.6 per cent of GDP in 2015 and have been at a roughly similar level since 2000. Remittances as a proportion of GDP vary from 17 per cent in Jamaica to 1 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago.

The management of skilled migration is an ongoing challenge with the continual loss of skills undermining progress in education, health and many other sectors. In addition to measures designed to offer more attractive careers to Caribbean nationals, consideration should also be given to the extent to which skilled immigration can mitigate to challenges posed by skilled emigration. In addition, several countries have implemented measures to begin to take advantage of the benefits of relations with diaspora communities, and these need to be further pursued.

#### **G. TERRITORIAL INEQUALITY, SPATIAL MOBILITY AND VULNERABILITY**

The Caribbean urban population is growing two to three times faster than the current average in the Latin America and Caribbean region as a whole although the situation in the subregion is very heterogeneous. Partly due to recognised challenges in the statistical definition of ‘urban’<sup>5</sup> sectors and partly due to geographical and socioeconomic constraints, the Caribbean urban population varies widely from 100 percent in the Cayman Islands or Sint Maarten to less than 10 percent in Montserrat. Growth patterns are also diverse: new, more polycentric urban forms are expected in the Caribbean, different from the traditional mono-centric design of Caribbean cities and towns. The Caribbean urban shift is seeing the

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<sup>5</sup> See ECLAC (2017), *Subregional Action Plan for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the Caribbean: Prioritizing regional challenges and opportunities (2016-2036)*, ECLAC, MINURVI, UN-Habitat, p. 17.

emergence of new “city-regions” and “urban corridors”. Urban sprawl in the Caribbean will entail a doubling to a quintupling of total urban land area.<sup>6</sup>

If managed well, the Caribbean urban transition can bring important benefits; however, it will also increase public responsibilities in dealing with the pressures on already stressed urban infrastructure and public services. As Caribbean urban population and urban areas grow, unprepared and unplanned territories pose a threat to Caribbean development patterns. A new focus on land governance will be critical, including measures to address tenure security, public land management, housing policy, transportation, waste management, water safety and security, and an integrated coherent approach to urban services.

During the period under review, countries of the subregion instituted various measures to achieve the objectives associated with territorial inequality. They have made important achievements in terms of access to basic services. However, there is considerable weakness and institutional fragmentation both in policies and regulations, and in the provision of services.

Climate change impacts pose threats to countries’ resilience in respect of biodiversity, coastal protection, water and energy security, and food security among other areas. Hurricanes, like Irma, Jose and Maria in 2017, and tropical storms threaten the Caribbean with growing intensity. With high percentages of Caribbean populations living near the coast, many of them in low-lying areas, coastal floods, storm surges and inland flooding can also drive migration and displacement. Some countries have begun to consider the issue of internal migration and population location in the context of natural disaster prevention and mitigating the effects of climate change.

#### **H. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: INTERCULTURALISM AND RIGHTS**

There are around 160,000 people that identify themselves as indigenous in the Caribbean which represents two per cent of the total population. The country with the highest proportion of indigenous peoples is Belize (17.4 per cent) with two main groups, the Garifuna and the Maya. Around half of the indigenous people of the Caribbean live in Guyana where they represent 10.5 per cent of the population. There are smaller proportions of indigenous peoples in Suriname, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Dominica, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Where data is available, it strongly suggests that indigenous peoples are much more likely to be living in poverty, suffering from material deprivation, a lack of basic services, or affected by other social inequalities. There is an urgent need to target poverty alleviation, education, health and employment programmes towards indigenous peoples and eliminate the social inequalities by which they are systematically disadvantaged.

Comparing the arrangements of the respective governments for governance of indigenous affairs, there is a notable contrast between Guyana and Dominica on the one hand and Belize and Suriname on the other. In the case of Guyana and Dominica, there are Ministries responsible for indigenous affairs which work with the representative institutions of indigenous peoples. In Belize and Suriname, there is no single ministry responsible for indigenous peoples’ affairs. In the case of both Belize and Suriname, indigenous peoples have had some success through recourse to either the Caribbean Court of Justice or the Inter-American Court of Human Rights but these court decisions need to be implemented in full.

The only a legally binding international instrument which is addressed directly to indigenous peoples is International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples (1989). Its various articles provide wide-ranging protections for indigenous peoples, their communities, institutions, practices, territory and the right of indigenous and tribal peoples to exercise control over their own development. Of the Caribbean countries with indigenous populations, only Dominica has ratified the convention (in 2002). Other countries should also ratify this convention.

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<sup>6</sup> McHardy and Donovan’s research has concluded that by 2050, the urban area of the Caribbean will include somewhere between three times the size of Barbados and the entire surface area of Trinidad and Tobago. McHardy, Pauline and Michael G. Donovan (2016), *The state of housing in six Caribbean countries*, Inter-American Development Bank.



## I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development was adopted by the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean at the first session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, held in August 2013. It serves as the regional framework for the further implementation of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (1994), which was extended beyond 2014 by decision of the United Nations General Assembly.<sup>7</sup> In the Montevideo Consensus, Latin American and Caribbean member States reaffirmed the principles of the Cairo Programme and agreed to a series of priority actions intended to reinforce its further implementation in the region. The first five-year review of the Montevideo Consensus will be carried out at the Third Session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean taking place in Peru from 7-9 August 2018.

As agreed at the Special Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in November 2017, voluntary national reports on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus will be presented to the regional conference. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has been supporting member States in their preparation of national reports. The secretariat (CELADE) have prepared a first regional report on the implementation of the Consensus which will also be presented to the conference. The regional review then contributes to the global review of the Cairo Programme of Action beyond 2014 to be undertaken in 2019 at the fifty-second session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development.

This report provides a review and evaluation of the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus in the Caribbean. It was prepared as a background document for the Caribbean Forum on Population, Youth and Development to be held in Georgetown, Guyana from 24 to 26 July 2018, organised by the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) with the collaboration of the CARICOM Youth Ambassador Corps (CYAs), the Caribbean Regional Youth Council (CRYC) and the University of the West Indies' Students Today, Alumni Tomorrow (UWI STAT). This meeting comes five years on from the Caribbean Forum on Population, Migration and Development which was held in July 2013, also in Guyana, as part of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review process.

An Operational Guide for Implementation and Follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development was adopted at the Second Meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, held in Mexico City in 2015. For each the Montevideo Consensus's priority actions, it suggests possible lines of action, targets and suggested indicators. The Operational Guide also made direct links to relevant goals and indicators in other international instruments with a view to establishing synergies, for example with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the instruments of the Regional Conferences on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

A proposed list of indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus has also been created by an Ad-Hoc Working Group. The working group consisted of representatives of a geographically representative selection of member States which was coordinated by Government of Mexico through the National Population Council (CONAPO). There are a total of 140 indicators across nine thematic areas. These are integrated with the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), meaning that some proposed indicators for follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus are also SDG indicators. Countries are currently assessing the feasibility of measuring the proposed indicators on the basis of available statistical information and it is anticipated that the list of indicators for monitoring the Montevideo Consensus will be finalised at the Regional Conference in 2018. However, the proposed indicator set has guided, to some extent, both the national reports and this subregional report.

Voluntary national reports on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus were submitted by Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Suriname around March 2018. The

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<sup>7</sup> General Assembly resolution 65/234, Follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014, A/RES/65/234 (5 April 2011), available from [undocs.org/A/RES/65/234](http://undocs.org/A/RES/65/234).

reports which were submitted were comprehensive and provide a valuable status report which will inform and guide the further implementation of the Montevideo Consensus in those member States. This report provides an overview of the status of implementation across the subregion as a whole and has drawn information from a wide range of sources.

Unless otherwise stated, the Caribbean here refers to the following English, French and Dutch-speaking member and associate member States of ECLAC: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Dominica, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.



## II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MONTEVIDEO CONSENSUS ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN:

### A. FULL INTEGRATION OF POPULATION DYNAMICS INTO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH EQUALITY AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The first section of the Montevideo Consensus includes six priority actions which capture the broad intent of the agreement as a whole. It identifies the eradication of poverty and the need to break ‘cycles of exclusion and poverty’ as being conditions for achieving development. It emphasises the human rights approach, gender and intercultural perspectives, and makes clear the need to build and strengthen public institutions with responsibility for population and development issues and the participation of non-governmental stakeholders. In addition, it calls for the full integration of population dynamics into sustainable development planning, sectoral policies and public policies and programmes in general. Finally it draws attention to the fundamental connections between population, development and the environment which should be ‘in a harmonious and dynamic balance with a thriving biodiversity and healthy ecosystems.’

#### 1. Poverty and inequality in the Caribbean

Poverty and inequality remain pressing issues. During the 1990s and 2000s, there was progress towards the eradication of extreme poverty (also referred to as indigence<sup>8</sup>) across the Caribbean. Where reasonably comparable data are available, rates of indigence have been falling and in many countries, indigence rates are 3 per cent or lower. Exceptions to this include Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname where a more sizeable proportion of the population continue to live in extreme poverty (see table 1).

Progress in the reduction of poverty<sup>9</sup> has been slower. This is not surprising since estimates of indigence are calculated based on the cost of meeting minimum nutritional requirements and so are a measure of absolute poverty, whereas the calculation of national poverty lines generally<sup>10</sup> takes account of increases in living standards in the respective countries, and so the poverty rates are a measure of relative poverty. This means they measure how many people are poor by the standards of a particular country at a particular time.

In respect of inequality, the average Gini coefficient is 0.40 and in most countries the estimated Gini coefficient is fairly close to 0.40, certainly between 0.35 and 0.45. By global standards, this constitutes a fairly high level of inequality (although international comparisons are complicated by the fact that in many other parts of the world household income, rather than household expenditure, is used to measure inequality).

In respect of both poverty and inequality, from the data available, there was no evidence of any long term trend in either direction through the 1990s and 2000s. That tentative conclusion is at least internally consistent: if the level of inequality in Caribbean countries has tended to remain at a fairly similar level, one would expect that national estimates of the poverty rate would also remain relatively unchanged (remembering that poverty is a relative concept).

There has been a paucity of data on levels of poverty and inequality in Caribbean countries since around 2010. For many countries, poverty assessments are carried out through the Caribbean Development Bank’s (CDB) Country Poverty Assessment programme. Caribbean countries generally use a common poverty measurement methodology. By 2012, almost all countries had carried out at least two surveys of

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<sup>8</sup> A household is deemed to be indigent if its expenditure is lower than the cost of the food that that would be necessary to satisfy minimum nutritional requirements. This is an indicator of extreme poverty with the calculation of the indigence line making no allowance for any expenditure on non-food items, for example on shelter, electricity, clothes or household goods.

<sup>9</sup> A household is deemed to be poor if its expenditure falls below the national poverty line. These poverty lines are calculated in such a way that the poverty estimates should be regarded as measures of relative rather than absolute poverty.

<sup>10</sup> Jamaica, where unlike other countries poverty is measured annually, is an important exception in this regard. The poverty line for each year is obtained by uprating the estimated poverty line for 1989 using the Consumer Price Index.

living conditions/country poverty assessments as part of this programme. It was subsequently decided to launch an Enhanced Country Poverty Assessment Programme which will produce not only estimates of monetary poverty but also multidimensional poverty taking into account deprivations, relating for example to education, health, housing, empowerment, personal security, and more (CDB, 2016). The programme is currently being implemented although countries are not yet at the stage of reporting results. As a consequence, little is known about trends in poverty and inequality over the last five years.

**Table 1**  
**Indicators of poverty and inequality**

Country	Year	Poverty rate (percentage)	Indigence rate (percentage)	Poverty Gap	Poverty Severity	Poverty Line (dollars per year)	Indigence Line (dollars per year)	Gini coefficient for consumption
Anguilla	2002	23.0	2.0	6.9	3.2	2,937	1,135	0.31
	2008/09	5.8	0.0	1.1	0.2	6,055	964	0.39
Antigua and Barbuda	2006	18.3	3.7	6.6	3.8	2,366	917	0.48
Bahamas, The	2001	9.3	5.1	2.8	1.3	2,863	964	0.57
	2009	..	..	..	..	..	..	0.44
	2011	..	..	..	..	..	..	0.46
	2013	12.8	..	3.3	1.3	..	..	0.42
Barbados	1997	13.9	..	2.3	..	2,751	1,448	0.39
	2010	19.3	9.1	6.0	3.2	3,931	1,985	0.47
	2016/17	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Belize	1996	33.0	13.4	8.7	4.3	644	377	..
	2002	33.5	10.8	11.2	6.1	..	..	0.40
	2009	41.3	15.8	11.0	5.0	1,715	1,003	0.42
British Virgin Islands	2002	22.0	<0.5	4.1	1.7	6,300	1,700	0.23
Cayman Islands	2007	1.9	..	0.4	0.2	3,319	..	0.40
Dominica	2002	39.0	15.0	10.2	4.8	1,260	740	0.35
	2008/09	28.8	3.1	8.9	4.0	2,307	902	0.44
Grenada	1999	32.1	12.9	15.3	9.9	1,208	530	0.45
	2008	37.7	2.4	10.1	4.0	2,164	887	..
Guyana	1993	43.0	29.0	16.2	..	380	281	0.44
	1999	35.0	19.0	12.4	..	510	..	0.41
	2006	36.1	18.6	11.5	..	..	..	0.35
Jamaica	1990	28.4	8.3	..	..	..	..	0.38
	1995	27.5	9.0	..	..	..	..	0.36
	2000	18.7	5.0	..	..	..	..	0.38
	2005	14.8	4.3	..	..	..	..	0.38
	2006	14.3	3.3	..	..	..	..	0.38
	2007	9.9	2.9	..	..	..	..	0.37
	2008	12.3	3.1	..	..	..	..	0.37
	2009	16.5	4.9	..	..	..	..	0.37
	2010	17.6	6.3	..	..	..	..	0.38
	2012	19.9	7.5	..	..	..	..	0.37
	2013	24.6	10.4	..	..	..	..	0.40
Montserrat	2008/09	36.0	3.0	10.2	4.8	5,333	1,754	0.39
	St. Kitts and Nevis							
St. Kitts	2000	30.5	11.0	2.5	0.9	1,244	791	0.39
	2008	23.7	1.4	6.4	2.6	2,714	961	0.38

Country	Year	Poverty rate (percentage)	Indigence rate (percentage)	Poverty Gap	Poverty Severity	Poverty Line (dollars per year)	Indigence Line (dollars per year)	Gini coefficient for consumption
Nevis	2000	32.0	17.0	2.8	1.0	1,460	908	0.37
	2008	15.9	0.0	2.7	0.8	3,625	1,086	0.38
St. Lucia	1996	25.1	7.1	8.6	4.4	695	371	0.50
	2006	28.8	1.6	9.0	4.1	1,905	588	0.42
St. Vincent & Grenadines	1996	37.5	25.7	12.6	6.9	450	393	0.56
	2008	30.2	2.9	7.5	3.0	2,046	906	0.40
Trinidad and Tobago	1992	21.2	11.2	..	..	570	420	0.42
	1997	24.0	8.3	5.3	2.8	753	457	0.39
	2005	16.7	1.2	4.6	2.0	..	..	0.39
Turks and Caicos Islands	1999	25.9	3.2	5.7	2.6	2,424	880	0.37
	2012	21.6	0.0	4.0	1.4	6,650	2,000	0.36

Sources: Surveys of Living Conditions; MDG Progress Reports (Guyana and Suriname); Labour Force Survey i.e. based on income not expenditure (Bahamas 2009 and 2011); Household Expenditure Survey (Bahamas 2013). See also Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) Strategic Plan 2010 – 2014 and The Changing Nature of Poverty and Inequality in the Caribbean (also CDB).

1. Urban areas only.

In Jamaica, however, there is an annual survey of living conditions and therefore annual estimates of poverty. These estimates of poverty in Jamaica are revealing about the way in which the economic cycle and the performance of the Jamaican economy over the last decade have impacted upon the least well off. Poverty was in decline until 2007 when it reached low of 9.9 per cent (extreme poverty was 2.9 per cent). It then increased reaching 24.6 per cent in 2013 (with extreme poverty increasing to 10.4 per cent). From 2013 to 2015, there was a reduction in the poverty rate to 21.2 per cent (while extreme poverty fell to 6.9 per cent). This increase in poverty, followed by a partial recovery of some lost ground from 2013 to 2015, was driven by prevailing economic trends: the fallout from the 2008 financial crisis; its impact on tourism, remittances and the wider economy; and then a relatively slow and weak recovery.

Efforts to reduce poverty in the Caribbean have focused on sustainable economic growth, investment in human capital, and social protection. Social protection encompasses social security for those in formal employment and social assistance programmes which target specific needs of poor and vulnerable households mainly falling outside the formal sector. There are cash or near cash programmes including national insurance, public assistance, student assistance and emergency assistance. In-kind programmes include school feeding programmes, day care, home care, home repair, programmes providing food or medical care. A combination of targeting mechanisms such as self-targeting, universal access and proxy means methods are used in recruiting individuals to safety net programmes, but eligibility criteria are often unclear (CDB, 2016). Governments also provide a range of active labour market programmes: skills training, job search, small business support. Programmes aimed at persons with disabilities, older persons, victims of abuse or abandonment or adolescent mothers also have a role to play in poverty reduction.

A number of countries have developed dedicated poverty reduction policies or strategies. In 2016, the Government of Jamaica published a National Policy on Poverty and National Poverty Reduction Programme in the form of a Green Paper. It seeks to strengthen and coordinate the wide range of social assistance programmes targeted at households living poverty. The policy encompasses social protection, human capital development, livelihood creation, infrastructure, social services and behaviour change. The Government of Grenada's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (2014-2018) took a different approach, focusing on growth and how that could be achieved: through macroeconomic policy, investment in infrastructure and human capital, governance, citizen security and resilience. Belize, Guyana and Saint Kitts and Nevis have also developed poverty reduction strategies.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Poverty Reduction Action plan, Government of Belize and Caribbean Development Bank (2014); Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2011-2015, Government of Guyana (2011); National Poverty Reduction Strategy (2011 to 2015), Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis (see also the National Social Protection Strategy

The publication of data and analysis from the new round of Enhanced Country Poverty Assessments in the next few years should provoke renewed attention to poverty reduction. There needs to be a strengthening of capacity in data management, evidence-based policy making, and programme administration. Governments must be equipped to must reform existing social security and social assistance programmes –improving efficiency and coordination, making eligibility criteria transparent, plugging gaps, rationalising where appropriate, extending coverage and raising the level of coverage– to transform them into universal and rights-based social protection systems.

The persistence of poverty over the last two or three decades makes clear that economic growth alone will not eliminate poverty, much less weak economic growth. Redistributive measures, human capital development, inequality reduction, pro-poor growth and job creation must also be emphasised. Here pro-poor or inclusive economic growth sees poverty reduction and growth as one and the same thing, where there is broad-based participation of all sections of the society in generating economic growth and the derivation of benefits. Pro-poor growth must also be about increasing the productivity of the labour force and the availability of decent jobs. (CDB, 2016).

## **2. Integration of population dynamics into sustainable development planning**

In most Caribbean countries, there is no institution or unit specifically responsible for planning, coordination and monitoring of population and development matters. Jamaica is the country which has had the strongest institutional capacity dedicated to population and development. The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) has been the responsible agency working together with the Statistical Institute of Jamaica and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. There is a Population and Health Unit in the Social Policy Planning and Research Division which has overarching responsibility for population issues. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministry of Planning is responsible for population issues although the country had previously had a Population Council which was disbanded. In 2015, the Ministry approved a new National Population and Development Policy and is now focused on enhancing institutional capacity to manage and monitor the implementation of the policy. The Ministry is establishing the necessary structures to aid in this process, including a new national Population Council and a Population and Development Unit within the Ministry to support the technical work of the Council.

In some countries, where there is no single ministry or agency responsible for coordination of population and development activities, there have been efforts to align the activities of different ministries and other stakeholders. For example, in Belize the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation, and Poverty Alleviation organized stakeholder consultations as part of a national review of the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, several departments and institutions have provided support to the overall pursuit of the country’s population and development agenda: the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health and Gender Affairs, Ministry of Sustainable Development, Department of Labour and the Nevis Maternal Health Fund.

With respect to the integration of population dynamics into sustainable development planning, including sectoral policies, there is certainly an awareness and understanding of the most pressing population issues which require a public policy response: addressing population ageing and the burden of non-communicable diseases; achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health including the elimination of HIV; managing migration; and urban and land-use planning among others. For example, 12 of 13 countries recognised that population ageing was a major concern (see table 2) and this was reflected in national development plans.

There are some countries where government actively wishes to influence the components of population change in one direction or the other. Based on data from the United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development, only the Government of Belize, which has one of the most rapidly growing populations in the Caribbean, has indicated that it has a policy to lower the growth of the population. In other countries, the policy was to maintain the current growth rate or not to intervene. Belize

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and Plan of Action (2012) of Saint Kitts and Nevis).

and Jamaica had the policy of lowering fertility while Barbados had the policy of raising it. Only two member States wished to reduce immigration (Barbados and Belize); five wanted to raise skilled immigration (Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago); while four wanted to lower emigration (Barbados, Dominica, Guyana and Suriname).

**Table 2**  
**Government policies on population change and its components, 2015**

	Policy on growth	Policy on fertility level	Policy on immigration	Policy on highly-skilled workers	Policy on emigration	Level of concern about the ageing of the population
Antigua and Barbuda	No intervention	No intervention	Maintain	Maintain	No intervention	Major concern
Bahamas	Maintain	No intervention	Maintain	Maintain	No intervention	Major concern
Barbados	No intervention	Raise	Lower	Raise	Lower	Major concern
Belize	Lower	Lower	Lower	Maintain	Maintain	Major concern
Dominica	No intervention	No intervention	Maintain	Maintain	Lower	Major concern
Grenada	..	Maintain	..	..	..	Major concern
Guyana	No intervention	No intervention	Maintain	Raise	Lower	Major concern
Jamaica	Maintain	Lower	Maintain	Raise	Maintain	Major concern
Saint Kitts and Nevis	No intervention	No intervention	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Major concern
Saint Lucia	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Major concern
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Major concern
Suriname	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Raise	Lower	Minor concern
Trinidad and Tobago	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Raise	No intervention	Major concern

Source: United Nations, World Population Policies Database.

.. No official policy

In Jamaica, the National Development Plan, Vision 2030 Jamaica (2009), is accompanied by a Population Sector Plan (2010) with goals, outcomes and strategies for achieving those. The plan covers population growth; population age and sex structure and policies for specific age groups; international migration and development; internal migration and population distribution; and technology, research and demographic data. The Population and Health Unit chairs a Population Thematic Working Group that has responsibility for monitoring, evaluating and informing the implementation of population issues under Vision 2030 Jamaica. The ongoing attention to population dynamics was reflected in the Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework 2015 – 2018. The Migration Policy Unit (established 2011) led the development of a National Policy and Plan of Action on International Migration and Development (published as a white paper in April 2017). A draft diaspora policy was also developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. There have also been important developments in social and demographic statistics including the establishment of a national statistical system. The policy framework does however acknowledge continuing inadequacies in data systems, data quality and availability and inadequate sectoral coordination in population and development policy and planning.

Other countries have more specific challenges related to population dynamics. The Turks and Caicos Islands has seen very rapid population growth in recent years, from 5,600 in 1970, to 11,500 in 1990, to 31,500 in 2012 (ECLAC, 2016a). This growth was driven primarily by the development of the tourism sector which led to an influx of both skilled and unskilled workers with major socio-economic impacts on the territory. In the labour market, the local population find themselves caught between these two groups of migrant workers; undercut by low skilled (sometimes irregular) migrant workers but without the skills to compete with skilled migrants for professional, technical and managerial work. Prices of real estate have increased beyond the reach of the local population and ad hoc and unplanned townships have been created in some areas with increased demand for health, education and social welfare services (Government of Turks and Caicos Islands, 2013).

Suriname's National Development Plan (2017-2021) describes another set of problems arising not from the size of the population but from its distribution across what is the sixth most sparsely populated country in the world. Eighty per cent of Suriname's population resides in the coastal plain, yet the country's future economic prospects depend critically on the primary industries of the interior. The hinterland, meanwhile, lacks the urban population and workforce which would be necessary to support this future development and there remains a major 'development gap' between the isolated communities of the



interior and the coastal zone. At the same time, Suriname's low-lying coastal area is highly vulnerable to rising sea levels and so in the medium to long term, larger urban population centres will need to be established deeper inland.

In Monserrat, the concern is more the maintenance of a viable and sustainable population on the island. Since 1995, more than half the island has been uninhabitable due to the Soufrière Hills volcano and a population which had previously been between 10 and 15,000 fell to around 4,400 in 2002, increasing to a little over 5,000 by 2015. The country's Sustainable Development Plan (2008-2020) included five strategic goals, one of which was for a stable and viable population, for which population growth was required. Recognising that population changes would be driven primarily by changes in migration, Government policy sought to use economic, labour and migration policy to retain the resident population and encourage immigration (including return migration). The plan envisaged annual population growth of 5 per cent per year from 2011 although between 2011 and 2016 growth averaged just 1.1 per cent and the problems associated with low population remain: skills shortages, loss of skills due to emigration, heavy reliance on aid and the public sector (Government of Monserrat, 2017).

In Dominica, prior to hurricane Maria in September 2017, the Ministry of Planning, Economic Development and Investment had been undertaking a comprehensive assessment of population issues. The country's medium term Growth and Social Protection Strategy (2014 – 2018) noted a 32 per cent decline in the number of births in the 2000s compared to the 1990s and that the country continues to record steady decreases in births, a rapidly ageing population and outward migration of the productive population. Youth unemployment was a further concern, estimated to be 40 per cent for those aged 15-19 years, and 22 per cent among those aged 20-24 years (Baksh, 2014). Maria emphasised how mitigation against the population impacts of disasters, such as displacement, loss or damage to housing, loss of employment or impact on healthcare must also be taken into account in any consideration of population policy. The Government continues to work with UNFPA to produce a population situation analysis with a view to developing a population policy.

Despite the absence in most countries of institutional units dedicated to population and development matters, the foregoing examples illustrate that the most important population dynamics are, to some degree at least, being taken into account in national development planning. This 'recognition' of population and development issues is certainly important and is a response to longstanding calls for greater attention to be paid to these matters.

However, turning high-level development plans into sectoral plans, laws, regulations and programmes –and then implementing, administering and monitoring them– is a rather more difficult undertaking. It requires a capacity within government for evidence based policy making, statistics and public administration which small governments find it relatively difficult to build and maintain.

In the case of population and development, the smallest states may not be able to justify the creation of institutions dedicated to population and development concerns. Where this is the case, a more effective strategy may be to try and build capacity for policy analysis in a select number of public institutions where they will have the most impact, for example: the Office of the Prime Minister, finance, social protection and health. A smaller number of such 'policy analysis hubs', could be better resourced, thereby giving them sufficient critical mass to foster the kind of skills development that is required for such work. The recently endorsed CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (2019-2030) also presents an opportunity to address the data gaps, strengthen national statistical capacity and advance full integration of population dynamics in sustainable development for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **B. RIGHTS, NEEDS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS OF GIRLS, BOYS, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH**

Section B of the Montevideo Consensus deals with issues affecting children, adolescents and youth. There are priority measures emphasising the rights of children and youth to health, education and social protection, the right to participate in decision-making on matters that affect them directly, and the right to enjoy a life free from violence. Training and employment policies for young people are also addressed. In addition, member States committed to strengthen provision of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services. This includes the provision of safe and effective contraceptive methods with respect for the principles of confidentiality and privacy, and policies and programmes to avoid early and unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortion, the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Governments also need to pay particular attention to the educational and health needs of young mothers. Finally, member States guaranteed to provide reliable statistical data on the lives of adolescents and young people.

The number of children aged 0-14 in the Caribbean has been declining since the early 1970s, and the number of youth aged 15-29 has been falling since the late 1980s. This is mainly due to falling fertility although migration also plays a role. Among 16 Caribbean countries, declines in the number of young people have been taking place, or are projected to take place, in all of them. This decline in the number of young people presents an opportunity to make real increases in investment per head in children and youth.

### **1. Child poverty, health and the school to work transition**

Children and young people in the Caribbean are disproportionately affected by poverty relative to adults. A recently published study of child poverty in the Eastern Caribbean found that child poverty was higher than adult poverty in every one of 11 countries and territories analysed (OECS and UNICEF, 2017). The average child poverty rate was 33 per cent compared to 21 per cent for adults. Children living in households with four or more children were much more likely to be living in poverty and in most countries, these households accounted for over 40 per cent of all poor children. In countries with high levels of immigration, poverty rates were substantially higher among migrant-headed households as opposed to those headed by nationals. Children living in female-headed households were only slightly more likely to be living in poverty than those in male-headed households.

There are several reasons why children are more likely to be living in poverty than adults. Households with children require more resources than those without children to achieve a given standard of living. Children also place care responsibilities on the adult members of a household which impacts their ability to earn income. In addition, women living in poverty are more likely to have more children than women who are not living in poverty. The situation is similar across the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region as a whole (World Bank, 2016). This points to a need for stronger social protection for families with children. Rates of poverty among youth (aged 15-24) generally fall somewhere between the poverty rates for children and those for older adults: lower than child poverty rates but higher than adult poverty rates (Jones, 2016).

There has been progress in reducing under-five mortality and infant mortality. Under-five mortality has fallen by a third over the last twenty years in the Caribbean. In 2010-2015, the probability of dying between birth and 5 years was 21 per 1,000 down from 32 per 1,000 in 1990-1995. A child mortality rate of 21 puts the Caribbean slightly ahead of the region as a whole (24) but well behind North America (7) and Europe (6). The child mortality rate is highest in Guyana (41) and lowest in Guadeloupe (6). Over half of under-five deaths in the region are new-borns (PAHO, 2017). The disparities between the rates of child mortality between regions, and between the countries of the subregion, makes clear that further improvements are possible in almost all Caribbean countries.

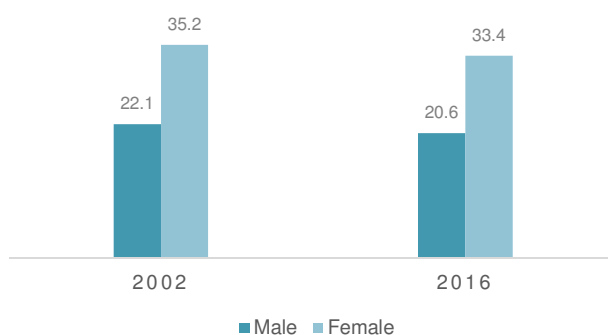
Universal primary education and near universal secondary education have been achieved in the Caribbean. However, with some exceptions, participation in early childhood and tertiary education are way below the norms for developed and some developing countries. Results in examinations entries, sittings and performance scores over the past decade have been somewhat disappointing. Only about 30 per cent of the eligible age cohort sits the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) annually and only

about 25 per cent achieve five passes or more, including in mathematics and English language, the baseline for entry into tertiary education. (ECLAC, 2018a).

The educational infrastructure and the quality of teaching still need to be improved. The CARICOM Human Resource Development Strategy (2030) describes how “severe systemic and cultural deficiencies threaten the contribution of...Human Resource Development sectors to national and regional development.” ECLAC’s recent Caribbean Outlook points out that despite good progress in secondary school enrolment, years of educational attainment, and relatively high levels of budgetary expenditures, there are still major challenges to overcome in the area of education. These include low school performance, especially in Mathematics and English Language and a low pass through rate from secondary to tertiary education (typically less than half that found in OECD countries).

The Caribbean youth unemployment rate was estimated to be 25 per cent in 2017 (ILO, 2017). Youth unemployment was over 30 per cent in the mid-1990s falling to around 20 per cent by 2007 but has been at 25 per cent or above since 2010. This is high by international standards and about three times the adult rate (CDB, 2015). An analysis of youth unemployment across ten Caribbean countries revealed the extent of the difference between male and female youth unemployment: in 2016, the average male youth unemployment rate was 21 per cent compared to 33 per cent among young women. Both these figures were only slightly lower than the corresponding numbers in 2002 (see figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
**The Caribbean (10 countries): unemployment rate by sex among 15-24 years old, 2002 and 2016<sup>a</sup>**  
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of figures from the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in ECLAC, Linkages between the social and production spheres: gaps, pillars and challenges, 2017 Available at: [http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/42269/1/S1700768\\_en.pdf](http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/42269/1/S1700768_en.pdf)

<sup>a</sup> Simple average of the following countries: Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Employment opportunities for Caribbean youth are mostly found in low skill, low education jobs.<sup>12</sup> The social and economic costs of this are high: alienation, exclusion, deprivation and a growing incidence of youth crime. High youth unemployment and a lack of decent work more generally, leaves many young people dependent on families and relatives for an extended period of time. This has changed the way that people think of ‘youth’ which is now conceived as extending into the late 20s and Caribbean youth policies commonly define youth as persons aged 15 to 29 or even beyond.

## 2. Adolescent sexual and reproductive health

The Latin America and Caribbean region has one of the highest adolescent fertility rates in the world, behind only West, Central, East and Southern Africa. As part of the CARICOM Integrated Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy, countries committed to ensure access to quality and age appropriate sexual and reproductive health services and commodities; age appropriate, gender and

<sup>12</sup> Lashley, J.G. and D.D. Marshall (2015), “Youth and Employment in the Caribbean”, Background Paper for the UNDP Caribbean Human Development Report, UNDP.

culturally sensitive comprehensive sexuality education; and to enact or reinforce laws that guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health information and services. Countries also committed to reduce the number of adolescent pregnancies in each country of the English and Dutch speaking Caribbean by at least 20 per cent within the time-period 2015-2019. However, at present, the majority of Caribbean States retain restrictive legislation and practices regarding adolescent access to sexual and reproductive health care services including family planning, due to the requirement for parental consent and socio-cultural barriers. Laws do not correspond with the Caribbean reality of early initiation of sexual activity among adolescents or even the age of consent for sexual intercourse in some cases. This lack of ability for adolescents in obtaining medical services, including emergency contraception along with the stigma attached to young girls engaging in sexual activity puts adolescents at an increased risk of contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancy and unsafe abortions (CARICOM and UNFPA, 2014).

In Suriname, the Government implemented the National Policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2013-2017) to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies. The Government is also providing support and counselling to teenage mothers through the so-called 'Project Teenage Mothers in School' which is intended to encourage them to remain in school and to prevent further pregnancies. It will also pilot a new sexuality education programme in seven primary schools during the coming school year and is currently developing a National Adolescent Health Strategy in alignment with the Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AH-HA!) and the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030) of the United Nations Secretary General.

In Antigua and Barbuda, a National Action Plan to Reduce Adolescent Pregnancy was developed in 2018 in line with the CARICOM Integrated Strategic Framework and is being implemented through the Ministry of Social Transformation. The Directorate of Gender Affairs is working with the Antigua and Barbuda Planned Parenthood Association to establish a public-private partnership to re-establish the adolescent clinic and services, in addition to the establishment of the Support and Referral Centre that provides comprehensive client-centred service to victims of gender-based violence.

In Saint Kitts and Nevis, this area is covered in the National Health Plan (2017-2021) however the development of a sexual and reproductive health policy has been identified as a priority for the next two years. The Government has also implemented a programme called 'Second Chance Teen Mothers Programme' that provides assistance to teen mothers in the form of counselling, job-finding skills and mentoring.

Barbados is currently implementing its National Strategic Adolescent Health and Development Plan, which was developed in 2017 and which addresses teenage pregnancy, comprehensive sexuality education, youth employment among other related areas. However, the CEDAW Committee was concerned about the compulsory expulsion of pregnant girls from schools after five months of pregnancy and the lack of measures taken to ensure their re-entry and retention in school following childbirth, as well as the lack of age-appropriate and comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the country.<sup>13</sup> UNFPA has committed to support the Government on policies and measures for reintegration of school aged mothers into the formal school system and to facilitate south-south cooperation between Jamaica and Barbados to learn from approaches proven to break cycles of teenage pregnancy and poverty among the adolescent population.

The Government of Jamaica reported that the country has already adopted a series of initiatives and policies including a life-skills-based curriculum for Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) which covers sexuality and sexual health education. A National Integrated Strategic Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV (2014-2019) was also adopted, as well as a National Strategic Plan for Adolescents and Pre-Adolescents, which is aimed at reducing teen pregnancy in the country, and a National Policy for the Reintegration of School-Age Mothers, to help them to return to the formal school system. The country is a pilot for the UNFPA/CARICOM regional initiative 'Every Caribbean Woman, Every Caribbean Girl' (CARIWAC) designed to address the health needs of women and girls. The Bureau of Gender Affairs is also conducting outreach to men and boys in community health fairs, and a special

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<sup>13</sup> Barbados, CEDAW/C/BRB/CO/5-8, paras. 31 and 36.

service desk for men was also re-established in 2016 in order to provide sensitization and awareness raising on a range of issues.

Guyana has the second highest rate of teen pregnancy in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a 40 per cent occurrence being recorded in rural areas compared to 10 per cent in urban areas.<sup>14</sup> The Government launched its Adolescent and Men-Friendly Health Programme in several hinterland regions, with access to Community Parenting Support Groups, Adolescent Antenatal Clinic Days, Adolescent Health and Wellness Days and a Men's Health Clinic. The introduction of health and family life education into the national primary and secondary schools' curriculum is being implemented in order to address a range of issues affecting young persons, including HIV/AIDS, sex, violence, suicide, teenage pregnancy, among others. In parallel, the Ministry of Education School Welfare Unit is also implementing the reintegration of teenage mother programmes in schools. A national Adolescent Health Strategy, which will focus on mental health, sexual and reproductive health, oral health and substance abuse treatment and prevention services, is being drafted and it is expected to be completed this year, as well as a comprehensive reintegration policy for pregnant and parenting adolescents. In addition, maternity waiting homes were established, a wider range of obstetrics and gynaecology services and Adolescent Health Clinic Days, have been introduced in the hinterland regions. A series of programmes are also being implemented in order to improve access to health in the hinterland.

Similarly, the Government of Bahamas, with the support of NGOs, conducts community outreach in order to promote awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights, with a particular focus on youth peer counselling and education services. A programme for high school students addressing teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases was being designed and a male health clinic was established to address the health concerns of men.<sup>15</sup>

In Trinidad and Tobago, it was reported that comprehensive sexuality education is delivered to young people in schools through the Health and Family Life Education curriculum, which addresses teenage pregnancy and early parenthood, and physical and sexual abuse. Awareness raising campaigns are being implemented through the Adolescent Intervention Program in communities and government primary schools, as well as during Carnival period. A draft national sexual and reproductive health policy is being developed and youth-friendly spaces are being created to provide counselling and services. Despite this positive advancement, the Government recognised that there are contradictory pieces of legislation relating to same sex relations and services that impede access to health care services. The Children's Act of 2015 is one example. While it was designed to prevent adolescents from abuse, due to mandatory reporting of all sex among minors, including that which is consensual, minors are not coming forward for services for fear of reporting. In addition, adolescents need parental consent in order to access sexual and reproductive health services which in the medium term will result in poorer outcomes: more unsafe abortions, adolescent pregnancies and an increase in sexually transmitted diseases including HIV. Laws of this kind, together with a tendency to equate reproductive rights with abortion and comprehensive sexuality education with 'teaching children to have sex' continue to lead to a more 'restrictive' environment for young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Continued efforts and reforms are required to achieve the desired outcomes of the CARICOM Integrated Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy: access to responsive sexual and reproductive health services, information and commodities; access to age appropriate comprehensive sexuality education (at least from the age of 10); protection against violence; adoption of common legal standards concerning ages of marriage, consent, prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence and access to social protection and sexual and reproductive health services; and knowledge exchange. Governments also need to further address the reintegration of pregnant teenagers in the school system by providing all forms of support and eliminating discriminatory practices and attitudes against them.

Young women and adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to HIV, in part due to the cultural norm of young women having sexual relationships with older men. According to data from UNAIDS, HIV prevalence in the Caribbean has been stable over the last decade with a reported HIV prevalence among youth of around 1 percent. Through programmes such as the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework on

<sup>14</sup> Guyana's report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.14.

<sup>15</sup> The Bahamas, CEDAW/C/BHS/6, para. 120.

HIV 2014-2018, significant results have been achieved over the last decade with a 52 percent reduction in AIDS-related deaths and a decline of five percent in new infections. However, young women remain at unacceptably high risk of HIV infection. In 2016, young women in the Caribbean<sup>16</sup> accounted for 17 percent of new HIV infections,<sup>17</sup> despite making up just 8 percent of the population.

Factors contributing to this are the barriers young people face in accessing HIV prevention services,<sup>18</sup> cultural practices of early initiation of sexual activity and the lack of knowledge of prevention among young people. The WHO Global School-Based Student Health Survey (GSHS) indicated that on average in the Caribbean, one out of every three young people aged 15–24 are inadequately informed or unaware of the ways to prevent HIV. Youth in Antigua and Barbuda were able to demonstrate knowledge and awareness of HIV (86 per cent); however, median awareness among youth in the region was 43 per cent among girls and 42 per cent among boys and significant proportions of adolescents reported not using a condom during last sexual intercourse (UNFPA, 2017b).

### **3. Protecting children and young people from violence and other threats to health and wellbeing**

Children, adolescents and youth are also at risk of multiple forms of violence in their schools, communities and homes. As in any region of the world, official figures can understate the true level of violence, much of which is hidden due to fear, pride, shame or lack of faith in the police and justice system. In 2016 and 2017, UNICEF completed Situation Analyses of Children in ten Eastern Caribbean countries and child protection was identified as a common priority for action. Most Caribbean countries operate within a legislative agenda of Child Protection Acts and Sexual Offences Acts that contain explicit provisions to protect children, adolescents and youth from abduction, rape and incest. Child pornography, trafficking and acts of paedophilia and prostitution are however growing issues of concern for Caribbean governments and citizens. There have been efforts in a number of countries to raise public awareness about child sexual abuse. However, further work is needed to: address troubled children and school dropouts, including the provision of residential care where necessary; expand programmes for improving parenting skills; include child protection within HFLE programmes; provide counsellors for child victims; enforce mandatory reporting for child sexual abuse; and ensure cases are prosecuted (UNICEF, 2016 and 2017).

In many Caribbean countries, corporal punishment is lawful and widely used in homes, schools or other institutions. While there are 10 countries in the LAC region with legislation that totally prohibits corporal punishment against boys, girls and adolescents, there are no countries in the Caribbean with such legislation (UNICEF, 2018). There have been some steps to limit the scope of corporal punishment, for example in Jamaica, legislation has prohibited corporal punishment in the penal system, alternative care settings and early childhood institutions, but corporal punishment remains lawful in the home and in schools, and is widely accepted in society. In Suriname, Ministerial directives have regularly advised schools against using corporal punishment since 1942, but there is no prohibition in law.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is the region with the highest homicide rate in the world. LAC also ranks first in the world in terms of deaths from violence among young people: 77 out of 100 deaths among young men are caused by violence. Within the LAC region, Caribbean homicide rates are generally higher than those of countries in the Southern Cone of Latin America but below those of Central America while violent crime is prevalent in many Caribbean countries.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The Caribbean here includes Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti.

<sup>17</sup> UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (2017), *Ending AIDS: Progress towards the 90–90–90 targets*, Global AIDS update 2017, Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>18</sup> UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (2016), *The Prevention Gap Report*. In nine out of 17 countries, minors require parental or guardian consent to take an HIV test and find out the results. A few countries in the Caribbean have developed policies allowing minors to access HIV testing without parental consent, either allowing it at any age (such as in Guyana) or above the age of 14 (as in Trinidad and Tobago).

<sup>19</sup> IMF reports that the number of victims of assault and threat as a share of the population (6.8 percent) is markedly higher than in any other region of the world, with the highest levels of assault and threat in the Caribbean at nearly twice the world average (New Providence; The Bahamas and Kingston, Jamaica). By comparison, property crimes (theft and burglary) in the Caribbean are relatively low compared with the international scale. See Alleyne, Trevor et al (2017), *Unleashing growth and strengthening resilience in the Caribbean*, International Monetary Fund.

Young people are both the primary victims and perpetrators of crime in the Caribbean. Eighty percent of prosecuted crimes are committed by persons aged 17 to 29 years while many victims of violent crime also belong to the same age group. Both victims and perpetrators are more likely to belong to lower socio-economic groups.<sup>20</sup> Victimization rates for assault and threat also differ greatly when analysed by gender, age, and income: they are higher for youth aged 18 to 30, and higher for males compared with females. However, females are the main victims of domestic and sexual violence while males are the main perpetrators and victims of crime and violence.

Young LGBT persons commonly face homophobic or transphobic abuse and physical violence, having consequences for both their physical and psychological health. Due to widespread societal prejudices, there is a shortage of appropriate support services, for example mental health services, and victims attempting to seek redress are likely to be met by further discrimination.

Combatting the illicit drug trade and its effects on societies also commands high-level political attention, and is a focus for legislation and policy, investments and long-term cooperation agreements such as the Caribbean Basic Security initiative with CARICOM and USAID. Drug and substance abuse prevention is managed as a national security and economic development issue as well as a health priority. Education, awareness, and peer programmes are integrated into schools. National Drug Units established in Ministries of Health, or other ministries, tend to lead these initiatives in most countries. In Belize, there is a drug week established in most high schools to address awareness and education on drugs and substance abuse.

There are a range of programmes aimed at achieving behavioural and positive social change to pre-empt or reduce violent impulses that land youth in conflict with the law. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the National Commission on Crime Prevention Unit in the Ministry of National Security is mandated to engage youth in various activities, and their Pan Against Crime campaign operating for over 10 years has taught young people to play the steel pan, while also providing mentoring and social skills to build self-esteem. In Belize, the National Drug Abuse Control Council applies a multi-agency approach with the police, the probations department, the courts system, the Youth Department and youth organisations to reduce drug use and associated negative behaviours. In Jamaica, the Safe School Programme (Anti-Gang Initiative) is a collaborative initiative between the Ministries of Education, National Security, Health and the police. Police Officers are placed in select (at risk) schools as School Resource Officers to reduce incidents of violence and respond promptly where they occur. The programme includes a psycho-social component that “will help in changing the behaviours of the youth involved.” Jamaica’s National Police Youth Club Council (NPYCCJ) also works specifically on fostering a better relationship between Communities and the Police through the Community Safety and Security Branch of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF). Crime prevention efforts require a strong partnership with the police within safe spaces to build healthy relationships with at risk youth, justice-involved youth, and youth living with trauma who do not normally have positive experiences with the police.

The Barbados Youth Department manages a crime prevention strategy that connects young people to programmes for self-development and personal well-being. In Belize, the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation manages a programme which aims to intervene with low risk offenders in order to divert them away from the juvenile justice system. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Youth Volunteer Corps engages at risk young women and men in community-building activities. The British Virgin Islands implements continuous healthy relationships sessions for youth across the education system to prevent violence and anti-social behaviours. These initiatives seek to enhance youth engagement as peace-builders and agents of positive social change.

Most Departments of Youth are located within a parent Ministry which also includes the national sports portfolio, and in some instances the culture portfolio. Sports and culture are an important part of youth programming. Sports as a tool for peace and development has been included in the youth policy actions of Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Guyana and Saint Lucia. Programmes for high risk youth who

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<sup>20</sup> Zimmermann, Robert, Carol Lawes and Nanette Svenson (2012), *Caribbean Human Development Report 2012: Human Development and the Shift to Better Citizen Security*, UNDP, p. 34. On this matter, see also Sutton, Heather and Inder Ruprah (2017), *Restoring paradise in the Caribbean: combatting violence with numbers*, Inter-American Development Bank, pp. 85-85.

distrust or are uncomfortable with formal “classroom” settings are designed to promote participation, inclusion, values, acceptance of rules, discipline, health promotion, non-violence, tolerance, gender equality and teamwork.

#### **4. Youth programmes and youth participation**

Most Caribbean governments have facilitated the creation of youth-led councils, networks or other representative structures in order to enable adolescents and young people to contribute to public debate and decision-making, especially in relation to the issues which affect them most directly. There are youth-led agencies such as national youth councils, youth parliaments or country ambassador corps and other youth structures in the majority of Caribbean countries. Working as part of established movements or in individual capacities with the Youth Departments, young people have driven youth policy formulation in many Caribbean countries. The Permanent Regional Conference of Youth in Guadeloupe produced the multi-sectoral youth policy agenda for persons 16-25 years old in 2014 (Schéma des Politiques de Jeunesse, 2014). Young people received training, and were mobilised for the data collection and social research agenda for youth policy formulation in Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Lucia.

There have been programs in a number of countries which have addressed environmental issues with activities such as school and community gardens, tree planting, and community clean-up drives. Larger national campaigns such as the ban on plastics (Cayman Islands) and on Styrofoam (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) managed by the private sector in both cases, engaged youth populations in environmentally sound and ethical consumerism. Earth Day, the 22 April, has been a focus for environmental action by youth.

Youth development programmes tend to have been most successful when they have received support and been able to work in collaboration with governments and other organisations. Youth representatives also need to be subject matter specialists who work to integrate youth perspectives into tourism, agriculture, finance and banking, urban and rural development planning, housing and land use, citizen security and other thematic areas.

The CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan (CYDAP) provides a framework for intergovernmental cooperation in youth programming. The CYDAP established Youth Development Goals (CYDGs) with six areas for action: (i) Education and Economic Empowerment; (ii) Protection, Safety and Security; (iii) Health and Wellbeing; (iv) Culture, Identity and Citizenship; (v) Policy and Institutional Framework; and (vi) Leadership, Participation and Governance. The goals propose minimum acceptable standards in wellbeing, empowerment and continuous engagement for young people between the ages of 10 to 29. The CYDAP, which was initially envisaged as an action plan for the period 2012-2017, has now been extended to cover the period up to 2022.

A persistent criticism has been that youth leaders functioning in regional movements such as the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Corps, the Caribbean Regional Youth Council (CRYC), the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC), the University of the West Indies Students Today Alumni Tomorrow (UWI STAT) Vice Chancellor’s Ambassador Corps, and National and Parish Youth Councils are perceived as operating within a very narrow sphere of influence with limited grounding in the issues that affect grass-roots, fringe and underserved youth populations. While youth policies speak to the need for greater inclusion and diversity in youth participation, and target “at risk”, “vulnerable”, and “marginalised” youth populations, the genuine participation of these groups as leaders within youth movements is limited.

#### **5. Conclusions**

There are a number of critical social development challenges facing the Caribbean which impact especially hard on children and youth. Children and young people are more likely to be living in poverty than older adults. They are more likely to be victims of some form of violence, including sexual violence, than older adults. Youth are more likely to be unemployed than older adults while young women, particularly those



living in poverty, are at greater risk of unintended pregnancies, HIV or other sexually transmitted infections.

The Montevideo Consensus calls for a 'guarantee' of 'a life free from poverty and violence' which, at present, is very far from being realized. Poverty reduction programmes need to address social protection for families with children, for example through child benefits, subsidized health care and other measures to enhance the wellbeing of children, such as investment in pre-school education. Child protection is an area that also needs further attention, and legislation related to corporal punishment should be reviewed. Bearing in mind the importance of healthy lifestyles to long term health, and the way in which habits formed in childhood or youth tend to shape adult behaviour, particular attention should be given to promoting healthy lifestyle habits among young people.

In the area of adolescent sexual and reproductive health, while there is progress in the right direction, much remains to be done to further reduce unwanted teenage pregnancies, transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Youth-friendly services are still the exception rather than the norm and legal barriers must be addressed. Implementation of Health and Family Life Education needs to be strengthened and more must be done to retain pregnant adolescents and mothers within the education system, and prevent subsequent pregnancies. Adolescents must also be protected from sexual violence. The CARICOM Integrated Strategic Framework to Reduce Adolescent Pregnancy (2013-2019) is an important statement of commitment and a guide in matters of adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Special attention should also be given to the needs of LGBT youth, including repeal of discriminatory laws, strengthening laws to deal with homophobic and transphobic abuse and violence, training for service providers such as the police, educators and health service providers, and measures to address societal prejudices.

The falling number of young people provides an opportunity to increase the investment, per head, in young people's education through the provision of universal, free, public, secular, high-quality, intercultural education to enable young people to develop as autonomous individuals with a sense of responsibility and solidarity and with the ability to tackle creatively the challenges of the twenty-first century. Renewed efforts must also be made to address the problem of youth unemployment and improve the quality of the employment opportunities that are available for Caribbean young people.

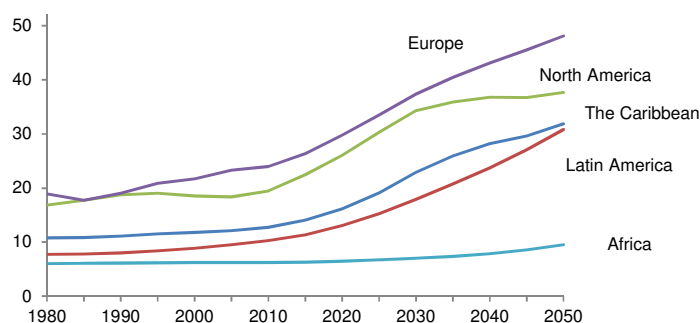
### C. AGEING, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Section C of the Montevideo consensus is concerned with the implications of changing population age structures and the need to formulate policies to ensure the wellbeing of older persons. It calls for social sector investment to take advantage of the demographic dividend offered by long term changes in the age structure of the population. There is a particular focus on discrimination, abuse and violence against older persons, particularly older women. Member states made commitments regarding social protection on the basis of intergenerational solidarity; and health policies relevant to older persons such as active ageing and palliative care. Emphasis is placed on participation in policy formulation, dignity, autonomy and the rights of older persons.

Since the adoption of the Montevideo Consensus in 2013, Caribbean member States have continued to develop and implement national policies on ageing and strengthen their programmes and services for older persons. Attention has focused to a large extent on income protection, health, and care services. These efforts have impacted positively on the wellbeing of older persons but more needs to be done to ensure that they are able to fully enjoy their human rights. Due to limited resources and capacity, implementation has been slow and significant gaps still exist between policy and practice.

In comparison to other regions of the hemisphere, the ageing process is a little more advanced in the Caribbean than in Latin America but still far less advanced than in North America. Old age dependency ratios in 2015 were 11 in Latin America, 14 in the Caribbean and 22 in North America (see figure 2). However, each of these regions is at a turning point and the ageing of their populations will be much more rapid over the coming decades compared with recent history. By 2040, dependency rates will be 24 in Latin America, 28 in the Caribbean and 37 in North America, so in both the Caribbean and Latin America the rates will have doubled in a period of only twenty five years.

**Figure 2**  
**Old age dependency ratio by region, 1980-2050**  
(Number of persons aged 65 and over per hundred persons aged between 15 and 64 years)

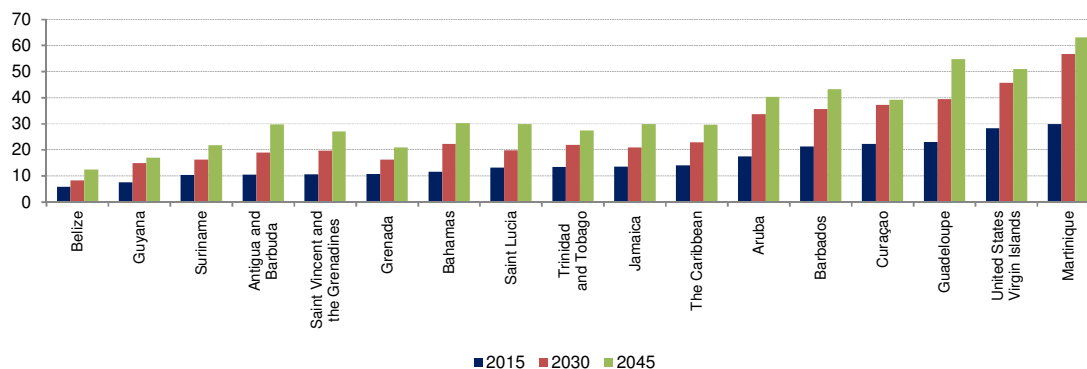


Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition.

Note: Latin America includes Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

Population ageing affects all countries and overseas territories in the Caribbean although the process is more advanced in some countries than others. In territories such as Aruba, Curaçao, Guadeloupe, Martinique and the United States Virgin Islands, which are classified by the World Bank as 'high income economies', the ageing process is more advanced (see figure 3). In these territories, the dependency ratios (persons 65+/ persons 15-64) ranged from 18 in Aruba to 30 in Martinique in 2015. In other countries, such as Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago that are also classified as high income economies, ageing is moderately advanced with dependency ratios closer to the regional average of 14. In middle-income countries, including Guyana, Belize, Suriname and Jamaica, ageing is less well advanced with dependency ratios generally below the regional average, the lowest being in Guyana (8) and Belize (6). However, irrespective of the stage of their demographic transition, most Caribbean countries, whether or not population ageing is well advanced, will see their old age dependency ratio double over the next thirty years with important implications for public policy and households.

**Figure 3**  
**Old age dependency ratio by country, 2015, 2030 and 2045**  
**(Number of persons aged 65 and over per hundred persons aged between 15 and 64 years)**



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition.

Caribbean governments recognise that population ageing is an issue of growing concern. In 2013 and 2015, based on national responses to the United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development, 12 out of 13 Caribbean governments identified population ageing as a major concern (up from 9 out of 13 in both 2005 and 2009).

### 1. Legal, policy and institutional frameworks

Since 2013, seven Caribbean States and territories have drafted or adopted national policies on ageing or similar: Antigua and Barbuda (2013), Bahamas (with the Older Persons Bill 2017), Barbados (with the National Policy on Ageing for Barbados: Towards a Society for all Ages 2013), and Belize (with the National Council on Ageing’s Strategic Plan 2015-2019); Cayman Islands (with the Older Persons Policy of 2016); while Montserrat has recently reviewed a draft National Policy for the Care of Older Persons initiated in 2007; and Sint Maarten is currently in the process of drafting a policy based on research conducted in 2012/2013.

Other States are in the process of reviewing their previous plans, policies and strategies: Bermuda (where a draft National Ageing Strategy is being reviewed), Jamaica (with the revision of the National Policy for Senior Citizens of 1997), and Trinidad and Tobago (where the National Policy on Ageing of 2007 is also being reviewed). The protection of older persons in some States and territories is still covered by their initial policy or law, which is the case in Anguilla (2009), Dominica (1999) and Grenada (2009). The following States have produced policies on ageing but they still remain in draft form: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (drafted in 2012); Saint Kitts and Nevis (drafted in 2009); Saint Lucia (drafted in 2003); and Suriname (drafted in 2006).

Out of a total of 25 Caribbean countries and overseas territories, 12 have implemented laws, policies, or strategies on ageing, while there are still 13 countries or territories in the region without a policy framework that effectively addresses ageing and the situation of older persons at the national level. Further efforts are needed to ensure that all countries and territories have up-to-date national policies on ageing and that, where necessary, legislation is enacted to implement these policies. These policies should have regard to recent developments in the international and regional human rights systems, particularly the newest regional convention, the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons.

The primary responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policies and strategies on ageing generally lies with ministries of social development (or similar). Some countries have established a

specific section or division within the Ministry, with responsibility for ageing, for example the Division of Ageing in Trinidad and Tobago.

In other countries, specific bodies have been established such as the Bahamas National Council on Older Persons; the National Council for Senior Citizens in Jamaica; the National Commission for the Elderly in Guyana; and the Belize National Council on Ageing. These bodies generally have a statutory role involving functions which can include advocacy for older persons; providing advice to governments; facilitating the development of programmes for older persons; and monitoring the implementation of policies on ageing.

There should be a specific body within government, adequately resourced, responsible for policies for older persons, advocating for their rights and for the mainstreaming of the concerns of older persons across government. Furthermore, their responsibilities should also include coordination and reporting on the implementation of international and regional agreements.

## **2. Economic security of older persons**

There are still many older persons living below national poverty lines in the Caribbean. Based on data for ten countries, the average poverty rate among persons aged 65 and over was 17 per cent, although the rate varied significantly, from 7 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago to 34 per cent in Belize. In addition, it was reported that among older persons living in poverty, hunger was a frequently cited complaint, alongside the inability to maintain and repair their homes or afford medical expenses, as well as loneliness and lack of assistance and help.

There are still many older persons in the Caribbean who do not have an independent income to guarantee them an adequate standard of living. Depending on the country, between a quarter and three-quarters of persons over statutory retirement age receive a social security pension. Those who do not receive a social security pension may be eligible for a non-contributory pension although, in most cases, these provide incomes inferior to national poverty lines. Some receive no pension at all.

Measures should be adopted to establish a social protection floor, including through improved non-contributory pension schemes, in order to reach those who have worked, or continue to work in the informal sector or as caregivers, with particular attention to older women and older migrants.

Many older persons continue to be active in the labour force across the Caribbean. Around 40 per cent of older men in Jamaica and Belize are still active in the labour market. In other countries, such as Barbados, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, that figure is around 12 to 14 per cent. Labour force participation rates for older women are around half the rates for older men. These older persons are often working by necessity, rather than choice, and their work tends to be insecure and poorly rewarded.

Some States have promoted initiatives to encourage older persons to re-enter the workforce such as the provision of employment assistance services to older persons and training, but the majority have not developed and implemented specific measures to promote either the participation or re-entry of older workers into the labour market. However, numerous countries are increasing, or considering increases, to statutory retirement ages.

Older persons should have opportunities to work if they so desire. Measures should be taken to enable them to continue to work beyond the statutory retirement age if they wish to do so, with the adoption of flexible working hours and flexible retirement arrangements. Information should also be disseminated on retirement and retirement planning, including the importance of remaining physically and socially active in old age.

## **3. Health and social care services**

Caribbean countries have extended access to a range of health care services for older persons although demand often outstrips supply and out-of-pocket expenditure accounts for over 30 per cent of total health care expenditure. There is some preferential access to medication, especially for those with chronic non-

communicable diseases; and there has been progress in addressing the situation of older persons living with HIV/AIDS and in supporting those with physical or mental disabilities.

However, many gaps remain and Governments are urged to promote the right to health by providing a continuum of care, including mental and physical health promotion and preventive care, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care; to implement programmes for the prevention, care, treatment and management of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia; and to promote healthy ageing throughout the lifespan in order to reduce the burden of NCDs on the population, the economy, and health services.

There is a need to develop gerontological and geriatric care across health and social care systems in order to meet the needs of older persons in the subregion, with particular attention to facilitating the access of older persons living in rural, remote, and deprived areas to such care. A starting point could be the inclusion of geriatrics and gerontology at all levels of medical, nursing and caregivers training programmes. Palliative care should also be integrated into curricula. Measures should be adopted to encourage men to consider careers in the caring professions.

Most Caribbean countries have a government run scheme to provide home care services to older persons who need help with daily living in order to enable them to remain in their own homes. However, further efforts are needed to extend the reach of these services and ensure a consistent quality of care, including those services provided by non-state actors, with the adoption of regulatory frameworks for monitoring care providers. Existing rehabilitation programmes aimed at helping older persons with disabilities, or age-related functional decline, should be expanded to include the adaptation of their homes, as well as the promotion of alternative types of housing for those in need of care, with the provision of grants, loans or other forms of financing. In addition, measures should be adopted to support family carers who have to balance care with other commitments, for example through respite care and promoting the equal sharing of care responsibilities between men and women.

Residential care institutions are mainly run by private sector or community based organisations although there are also some government run homes. There are concerns about the quality of care across the sector and governments should strengthen regulation and/or monitoring. Standards and codes should be adopted and implemented in order to ensure that older persons in long-term care institutions fully enjoy their human rights. Training programmes on human rights for those working with older persons in public and private institutions should also be promoted in the subregion.

#### **4. Participation on the basis of equality and non-discrimination**

Over the last five years, Caribbean countries have made significant efforts to establish mechanisms that encourage older persons' participation in decision-making and policy-making. For example, national committees, commissions and councils on ageing have been established, which include older persons and representatives of community based organisations that work with them. For example, the Division of Ageing in Trinidad and Tobago uses regular Public Open Forums for Older Persons and has held 'Senior Citizens Parliaments' to engage older persons and caregivers in the decision-making process.

Despite the progress made, existing mechanisms should be strengthened to facilitate the full inclusion, integration and participation of older persons in all phases of government decision-making on issues affecting their lives. New forms of participation, involving networks of civil society organisations and associations, charity, faith-based organisations and community-based organisations should be promoted. The role and contribution of older persons to society more generally should be promoted in order to present a positive image of ageing.

Since 2012, only a few countries have taken action to eliminate ageism. For instance, Bermuda has amended the Human Rights Act (2013) to protect against age discrimination in relation to access to goods, services, facilities and accommodation. Age and gender based discrimination remains common in the region, for example in employment advertisements and in banking services.

Further efforts are therefore required to adopt legal guarantees of equality for all and combat all forms of discrimination. Age should be one of the proscribed grounds for discrimination in legal, policy and administrative frameworks. Special attention should be given to discriminatory practices against older persons in the labour market, in relation to their access to, ownership, and control of land, property, possessions and natural resources; and access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial services.

Transport and accessibility have been areas where progress has been made since the previous review cycle of five years ago. In fact, several States have implemented measures to improve the access of older persons to transportation. For example, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, all have either a reduced-fare scheme for older persons, free transportation, or specialised accessible transportation services.

However, regular transport services are generally not designed to be accessible to older persons with disabilities who as a consequence, find transport services difficult or impossible to use. Further work is also needed to improve the accessibility of public buildings and public spaces. Most countries now have building codes which address accessibility although legislation is often not up-to-date and enforcement tends to be inadequate.

Some countries provide support to older persons who need assistance with home maintenance and repairs but more needs to be done to ensure that older persons enjoy adequate housing and are given high priority in the assignment of housing or land, particularly in situations of disasters, emergencies or evictions. Particular attention should also be paid to the increasing number of older persons living in single generation households, which puts them further at risk of isolation and increases the need for social rather than family care and protection. In this context, Governments should be encouraged to put additional effort into ensuring that older persons live in secure, healthy and accessible environments in urban and rural areas alike, including those living on their own in remote areas, in order to avoid social exclusion and abandonment.

Older persons have the same right to education and continuous learning as the young and member States should promote policies to facilitate older persons' access to and active participation in recreational, cultural, and sporting activities, and in information and technology. However, few countries have developed lifelong learning programmes for older persons. In particular, it can be difficult to get younger seniors and men to join seniors' education and recreational programmes.

In Barbados, the Unique Helping Hands Senior School was opened in 2012. The School serves retired and independent persons aged 50 and over and offers programmes in areas such as information technology, arts and craft, music and foreign languages. However, much more needs to be done to promote access to lifelong learning and intergenerational programmes in the region.

The Montevideo Consensus also draws attention to the vulnerability of older persons in emergency situations and disasters, and recommends member States to include the contribution of, and the needs of, older persons in disaster preparedness, relief, post-emergency and post-conflict plans, providing preferential treatment. The Caribbean subregion is particularly affected by disasters associated with hurricanes and tropical storms, phenomena which may become more frequent and/or severe due to climate change.

Several good practices have been implemented by Caribbean States that could inspire other regions. In Anguilla, a register of vulnerable older persons is maintained so that priority assistance can be provided in times of disaster. The Cayman Islands has a 'National Hurricane Plan', which identifies older persons as a priority for shelter and other services. In Trinidad and Tobago, the National Policy on Ageing includes a specific priority on disaster preparedness. This encompasses actions, personnel and amenities needed for shelters and coordinated responses to the needs of older persons, with particular attention to those with dementia and infirmity. The new Homes for Older Persons Legislation requires biannual evacuation drills that should be conducted in collaboration with emergency response personnel.

## **5. Neglect, violence, abuse and access to justice**

The issue of neglect and abuse of older persons has received increasing attention in the Caribbean. For example, in its report to the CEDAW Committee, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda highlighted the problem of elderly women being found neglected and destitute, often ending up in hospital.<sup>21</sup> Many countries have held awareness raising events and campaigns, for example in Guyana, a ‘Stop Senior Citizens Abuse’ campaign was rolled out in 2016 through the use of posters, pamphlets and bumper stickers. Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago are both in the process of establishing an integrated system to address reported cases of elder abuse. Some countries have established training in order to strengthen capacity to detect cases of abuse. Others have established protective mechanisms, including shelters.

There is an ongoing need to continue raising awareness of all forms of financial, physical, sexual and psychological abuse and violence against older persons as well as abandonment and neglect. In addition to older persons and their families, key stakeholders include those involved in the justice system and law enforcement, as well as health and social care providers who should also be targeted in such campaigns. More needs to be done to provide measures to support older persons who are victims of violence, neglect and abuse, taking into account a gender and disability perspective. This should include not only emergency shelters, but also advice centres, free helplines, and preferential treatments to access legal remedies. There should be legal and policy frameworks to prevent, investigate, punish and eradicate all forms of violence against older persons as well as other practices that jeopardize their safety and integrity.

Access to justice is an essential human right and a fundamental instrument for guaranteeing that older persons are able to exercise and effectively defend their rights. National mechanisms are currently inadequate to investigate and resolve complaints regarding compliance with human rights treaties.

Some countries have institutions that provide support to older persons. In Bermuda, there is a Human Rights Commission which offers mechanisms to address complaints of discrimination based on age in collaboration with other agencies. Meanwhile in Sint Maarten, the office of the Ombudsman is available to assist older persons when they have complaints against the Government.

Measures should, however, be implemented more widely that will improve older persons’ access to justice through legal aid and counselling, alternative dispute settlement mechanisms and mediation processes. Much more should be done to raise awareness of the rights of older persons throughout the justice and law enforcement systems, as well as among older persons themselves in order to enable them to defend their rights.

There have been few laws or programmes designed specifically to strengthen the autonomy and independence of older persons in the subregion. Further efforts are needed to guarantee the right to equal recognition before the law, legal capacity, and to implement regimes for supported decision-making for older persons with disabilities to ensure that they have the right to participate in all decision-making affecting their lives.

## **6. Conclusions**

Caribbean member States remain committed to addressing population ageing and protecting the rights of older persons. This has been illustrated by the adoption of national policies on ageing and the establishment or strengthening of institutions and programmes. Nevertheless, progress towards the objectives set out in international and regional agreements has been hampered both by limited financial resources and a lack of capacity in government and public administration.

The human rights-based approach has yet to be truly adopted. There is still a dispersion of measures to protect the rights of older persons at the national level, and they are often focused on specific issues, mainly in the area of health and social care, without considering the whole spectrum of human rights. Less attention has been paid, for example, to legal capacity, access to justice and rights to education

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<sup>21</sup> Antigua and Barbuda’s report, CEDAW/C/ATG/4-7, para. 172.

and culture. Policies and programmes also need to consider more explicitly the heterogeneity of older persons: specific groups of older persons, including older women, older migrants, LGBT older persons, those belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, those living on the streets or those who are deprived of liberty. Only a few very tentative steps have been taken towards the establishment of national mechanisms to enable older persons to seek redress when their rights have been violated.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) have a people-centred approach and seek to realise the human rights of all. The 2030 Agenda and its SDGs provides therefore a complementary framework which potentially broadens and reinforces a rights-based approach to ageing and the protection of older persons.



## **D. UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES**

Section D of the Montevideo Consensus addresses sexual reproductive health and rights. Key commitments include to review legislation, standards and practices that restrict access to sexual and reproductive health services and to guarantee access for all persons. These services include sexual and reproductive health education; access to contraception; and health care during all stages of pregnancy and childbirth. There is recognition of the need to eliminate preventable cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), maternal morbidity and mortality; to take measures to prevent unsafe abortion and reduce the number of abortions; guarantee universal access to comprehensive treatment for HIV/AIDS; and address discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Member States also agreed to promote programmes for the sexual health of men.

The context is one of falling fertility. The total fertility rate for the Caribbean was 2.7 in 1990-1995, 2.2 in 2005-2010 and 2.1 in 2010-2015. Fertility is following a similar trajectory in all countries, falling and then stabilising at around (or in some cases a little below) replacement level. This is the final stage of the demographic transition, and countries differ mainly in the way that they are at different stages in this process. In only three countries was the total fertility rate in 2010-2015 still significantly above replacement: Belize (2.6), Guyana (2.6) and Suriname (2.5).

There are large disparities in the rate of unintended pregnancies between different socioeconomic, educational, ethnic, age and racial groups in the Caribbean. There are also weaknesses and inconsistencies in the legislation related to access to sexual and reproductive health services especially for young people under the age of 18 and other marginalized groups. Some young people in the Caribbean receive limited or no sex education in schools and many parents are uncomfortable with discussing prevention of STIs and unwanted pregnancies with their children, or they are ignorant on the topic. In some countries pregnant girls are not allowed to continue their education during pregnancy and are forced to stop attending school.

### **1. An overview of actions to improve sexual and reproductive health services**

In seeking to expand access to services, Caribbean governments have faced longstanding challenges in the delivery of public health services. Health systems are not well resourced, even among wealthier Caribbean countries, while the loss of qualified health personnel is a serious problem in most countries and treatment protocols can be outdated.

UNFPA have promoted the development of national sexual and reproductive health policies or plans in Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and the British Virgin Islands, and also in Guyana and Sint Maarten where the policies are at an earlier stage of development. However, many remain in draft due to a lack of political will for their adoption.

UNFPA have also facilitated technical training for health service providers on contraceptive technology, cancer prevention, emergency obstetric care, and new-born care; and have supported maternal mortality reduction programmes, and the development of national protocols to identify and support victims of gender based violence and sexual violence. Technical and financial support has also been provided for NGOs.

There has been particular attention to the sexual and reproductive health needs of persons with disabilities, often in collaboration with disabled persons' organisations. For example, the Barbados Council for the Disabled provides sexual and reproductive health services through an 'SRH window', ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to counselling, referrals and medical services (Government of Barbados, 2016). UNFPA provide training and support for health care providers and counsellors to enable them to better meet the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents with disabilities.

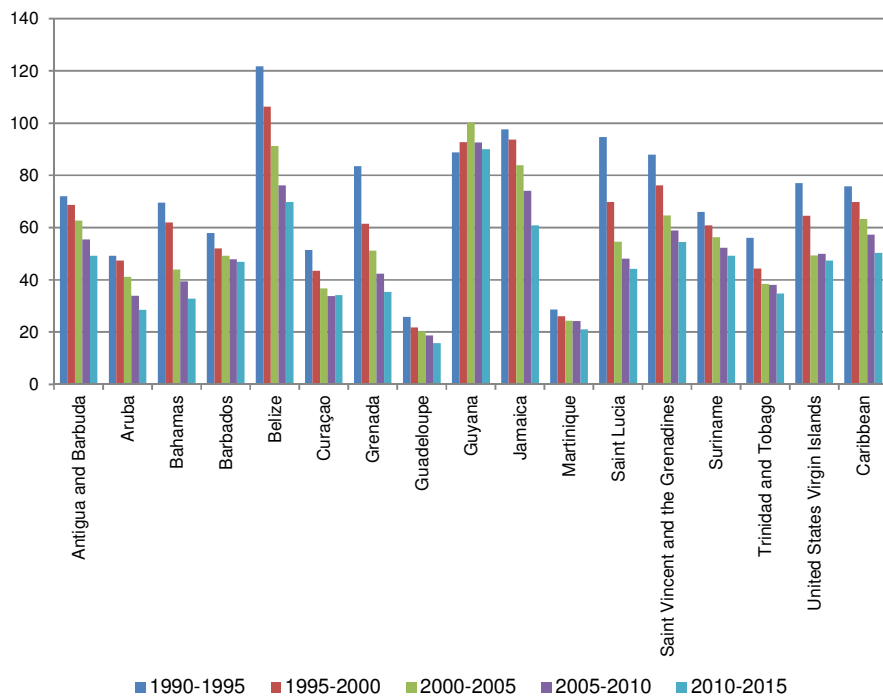
There has also been attention to sexual and reproductive health in disaster and emergency situations, another area where support is provided by UNFPA. National disaster preparedness and response plans have been developed in Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Anguilla, Sint Maarten, Saint Lucia and Jamaica to ensure the implementation of the Minimum Initial Service Package for reproductive health in emergencies which seeks to reduce mortality, morbidity and disability among populations affected by

crises, particularly women and girls. Work was also done on strengthening the referral pathway for access to services for survivors of gender-based violence and developing standard operating procedures, particularly in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Based on analysis of legal barriers to access for adolescents to sexual and reproductive health services and commodities, UNFPA collaborated with CARICOM to develop an Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy in the Caribbean. Model legislation on adolescent access to reproductive health services to reduce those barriers was also developed, initially focused on the Eastern Caribbean. There has been work on strategies to reduce adolescent pregnancy in countries across the subregion. This has included the development of youth-friendly spaces specifically designed to encourage young people to access contraceptive services, reproductive health care, testing for STIs and counselling. There are dedicated youth-friendly spaces providing services in Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Some of these clinics also provide peer counselling, delivery of comprehensive sexuality education, advocacy and awareness raising. In Barbados, the Family Planning Association provides adolescent services through a Youth Drop-in Centre and there is a Youth Advocacy Movement which allows adolescents to participate in peer counselling, educational outreach, and advocacy (Government of Barbados, 2016).

There is a strong correlation between teenage pregnancy and school dropout. For example, in Jamaica, 50 percent of girls who had dropped out of secondary school gave pregnancy as their reason for dropping out, and were unable to attend school consistently after the pregnancy. In Turks and Caicos Islands, many teenage mothers do not go back to school after giving birth due to the absence of support and encouragement to return (Mondesire, 2016). The governments of Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and more recently Guyana, have developed policies for the reintegration of school-age mothers back into to the school system. NGOs also work with adolescent mothers with a focus on life skills development in Saint Lucia, Grenada, Jamaica and Guyana.

**Figure 4**  
**Adolescent birth rate by country, 1990-2015 (births per 1,000 women aged 15-19)**



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, DVD Edition.

## 2. Progress towards universal access

The efforts of governments, NGOs and international development partners have contributed to falls in the adolescent birth rate in the Caribbean which has declined faster than total fertility, falling by 34 per cent over the last two decades compared with the 22 per cent fall in total fertility (see figure 4). In 2010-15, 13 per cent of all births were to women aged 15-19 compared to 16 per cent in 1990-1995. However, as illustrated in Table 3, these national averages can obscure the fact that adolescent pregnancy remains a significant problem among certain social groups. For example, the ratio between the adolescent birth rate in the top and bottom wealth quintiles was estimated to be three in Belize, seven in Guyana and fourteen in Jamaica.

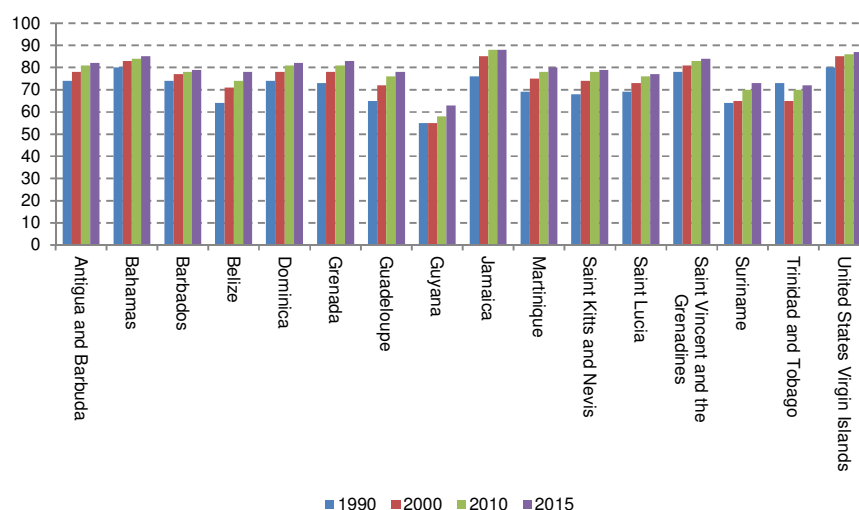
**Table 3**  
**Adolescent birth rate by residence and wealth (births per 1,000 women aged 15-19)**

	Adolescent Birth Rate (ABR) per 1,000 Women aged 15-19								Data Source
	All persons	Residence		Wealth					
		Urban	Rural	Poorest	2nd	3rd	4th	Richest	
Belize	74	55	90	111	107	58	47	39	2015-16 MICS
Guyana	101	50	123	222	112	104	47	32	2009 DHS
Jamaica	70	72	67	100	107	77	48	7	2011 MICS

Source: UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) for Belize (2015-16) and Jamaica (2011) and the Guyana Demographic and Health Survey, Ministry of Health, 2009.

The promotion of family planning has made modern methods of contraception more easily available. The proportion of demand for contraception which is satisfied has been increasing in almost every country. It averages 79 per cent compared to 75 per cent in 2000 and 71 in 1990 (see figure 5). It is lowest in Guyana where it was estimated to be 63 per cent.

**Figure 5**  
**Proportion of demand for contraception satisfied**  
(Percentages)

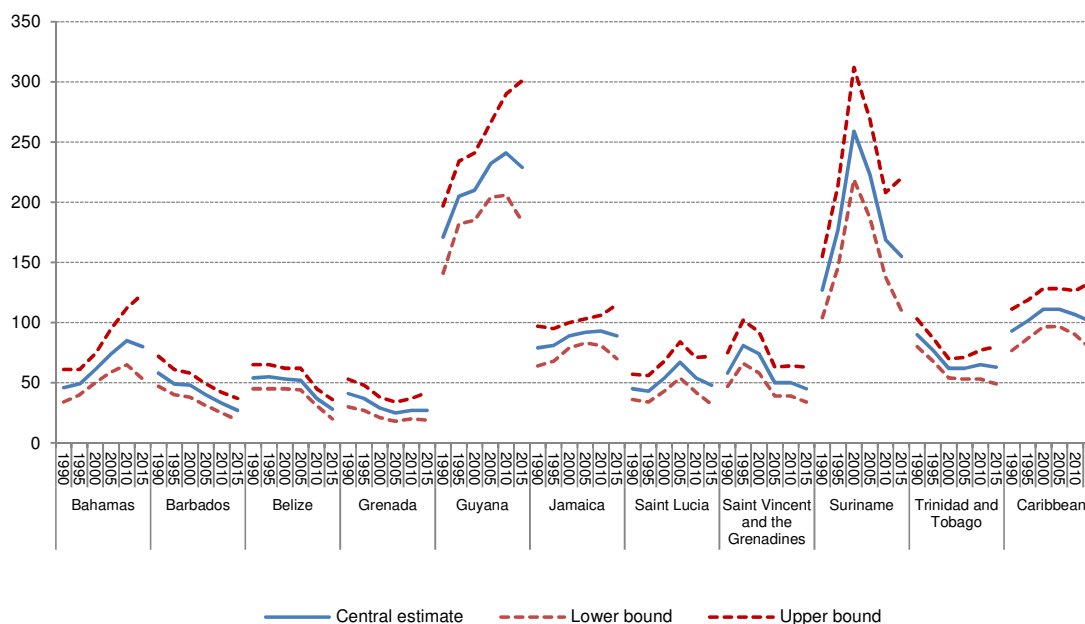


Source: UNFPA (2016), Universal access to reproductive health: progress and challenges. These are estimates of demand satisfied by modern or traditional methods (although in the Caribbean the contraceptives which are used are overwhelming modern methods).

Based on the most recent data, antenatal care coverage<sup>22</sup> is above 85 per cent in all countries except Suriname where it was estimated to be 67 per cent (in 2010) with coverage generally being lower among the poorest quintiles. The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel is at or close to 100 per cent in all member States except for Belize (94 per cent), Guyana (86 per cent) and Suriname (90 per cent).

Maternal mortality is still significantly higher in Caribbean countries than in developed regions. SDG target 3.1 is for the maternal mortality ratio to be lower than 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in all countries, which compares to an estimated 12 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in developed countries. Based on the most recently published estimates, four out of ten Caribbean countries do not reach the SDG target and in none did the level of maternal mortality approach that in developed countries. In most Caribbean countries, the ratio was somewhere between 25 and 100 although it was estimated to be above 100 in Guyana (229) and Suriname (155). A downward trend in maternal mortality is evident in some countries but not in others, although it should be emphasised that there is some uncertainty around the estimates of maternal mortality (see figure 6).

**Figure 6**  
**Maternal mortality ratio**  
(Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births)



Source: WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNPD (MMEIG), November 2015

Lifestyle-related non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes and also HIV are a major cause of maternal mortality. Diabetes and hypertensive disorders can affect the outcome of pregnancies increasing the possibility of developing hypertensive disorders during pregnancy, the main cause of maternal death in Afro-descendant women in the Caribbean. These illnesses are also responsible for increased incidence of breast and cervical cancer in women and prostate cancer in men. (UNFPA, 2017a).

The Caribbean was hit, in 2015-2016, by an outbreak of the Zika virus. There were over 5,000 confirmed cases in the Caribbean, 4 deaths and 52 confirmed cases of congenital syndrome associated with Zika virus infection (PAHO/WHO, 2017). Governments and international agencies responded with family planning information for women of reproductive age, including advising women to postpone new

<sup>22</sup> Antenatal care coverage is measured as the percentage of women aged 15–49 years who were attended to at least four times during pregnancy by any provider. The indicator refers to women who had a live birth in a recent time period, generally two years for MICS and five years for DHS.

pregnancies until after the Zika epidemic. They also addressed the need for self-protection against mosquito bites, and the need for close monitoring of pregnancies.

Most women in the Caribbean live in countries with restrictive abortion laws, that is, countries in the first four of the six categories in Table 4 which classifies countries according to the reasons for which abortion is legally permitted. The greatest restrictions upon abortion are in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Suriname where abortion is only permitted to save the life of a woman. Abortion is most widely available in Barbados, Belize, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and especially in Guyana where it is available without restriction (within the first eight weeks of pregnancy).

It was recognised in the Montevideo Consensus that penalization of abortion does not necessarily reduce the number of abortions carried out and can lead to higher rates of maternal mortality and morbidity. States where abortion is not restricted were urged to consider amending their laws, regulations, strategies and public policies relating to the voluntary termination of pregnancy in order to protect the lives and health of women and adolescent girls. However, during the period 2013 to 2018, there were no major reforms to abortion laws in the Caribbean.

**Table 4**  
**Legality of abortion**

Reason	Countries
Prohibited altogether, or no explicit legal exception to save the life of a woman	Suriname
To save the life of a woman	Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica
To preserve physical health (and to save a woman's life) <sup>1</sup>	Bahamas, Grenada
To preserve mental health (and all of the above reasons)	Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia (a,c), Trinidad and Tobago
Socioeconomic reasons (and all of the above reasons)	Barbados (a,c,d,f), Belize (d), St. Vincent and Grenadines (a,c,d)
Without restriction as to reason	Guyana

<sup>1</sup>Includes countries with laws that refer simply to "health" or "therapeutic" indications, which may be interpreted more broadly than physical health.

Notes: Some countries also allow abortion in cases of (a) rape, (b) rape of a mentally disabled woman, (c) incest or (d) fetal impairment. Some countries restrict abortion by requiring (e) spousal authorization or (f) parental authorization. Countries that allow abortion on socioeconomic grounds or without restriction as to reason have gestational limits (generally the first trimester); abortions may be permissible after the specified gestational age, but only on prescribed grounds.

Source: Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR), *The World's Abortion Laws 2016*, New York: CRR, 2016.

With regard to HIV/AIDS, there has been significant progress over the last 10-15 years in reducing the number of AIDS-related deaths, mainly due to antiretroviral treatment. The number of deaths increased until the early 2000s when it surpassed 20,000 per year in the wider Caribbean (including Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Puerto Rico). The most recent estimate, for 2016, was 9,400 deaths. This is broadly in line with the global trend over this period. Around a quarter of these were in the English, Dutch and French-speaking Caribbean where HIV prevalence among adults aged 15-49 was 1.6 per cent in 2016.<sup>23</sup> Among countries where data is available, only in Bahamas did the prevalence rate deviate significantly from this (3.3 per cent).

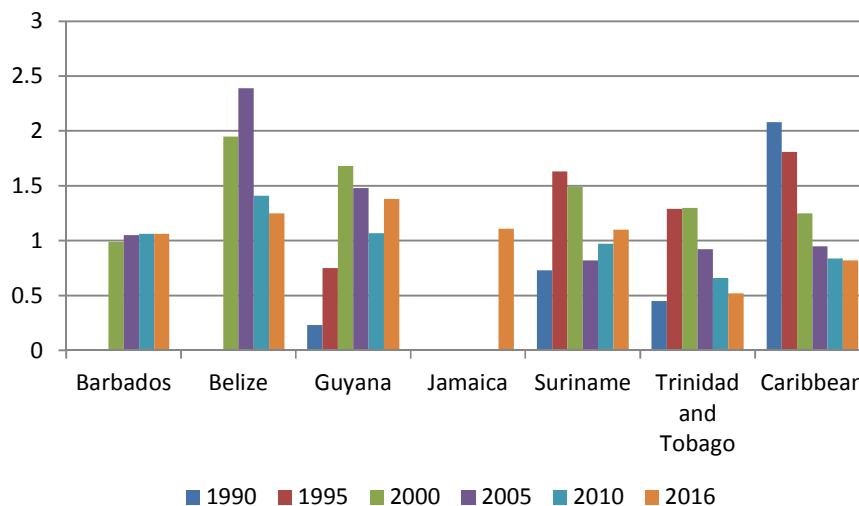
The evidence regarding the number of new HIV infections is more mixed with data from UNAIDS suggesting falls in some countries but not in others (see figure 7). Where the estimates do suggest falls in the number of new infections –Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, the wider Caribbean– the rate of progress is slowing, pointing to the need for countries to enhance their support to HIV prevention programmes.

In contrast, the elimination of vertical (mother to child) transmission of HIV is within sight. In December 2017, it was announced that six Caribbean countries were certified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as having eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis: Anguilla,

<sup>23</sup> Based on data from UNAIDS for Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis. The only other country in the Americas to have received this recognition was Cuba in 2015.

**Figure 7**  
**Incidence of HIV**  
(Number of new infections per 1,000 population aged 15-49)



Source: AIDSinfo, UNAIDS.

Note: Here, the Caribbean includes Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Puerto Rico.

Since they were launched in 2014, the three 90–90–90 targets<sup>24</sup> have become a central part of the global effort to end the AIDS epidemic. The intention behind the targets is to prevent the spread of HIV by ensuring that as many HIV positive people as possible are receiving antiretroviral therapy, which minimises the risk of transmission. Based on data published in 2017, no Caribbean country has yet met any of the targets (UNAIDS, 2017). Knowledge of status was estimated to be 69 per cent in Guyana, 81 per cent in Jamaica and 62 per cent in Suriname. Of those people, 84 per cent, 43 per cent and 79 per cent respectively were on treatment. The percentage of people living with HIV on treatment who are virally suppressed ranges from 82 per cent in Guyana to 58 per cent in Saint Kitts and Nevis. In each case, the target is 90 per cent.

Important challenges clearly remain for the effective control of HIV/AIDS. Reaching the 90–90–90 targets will require increased funding of national HIV programmes and improved recording and tracking of those who are infected or ill, with proper respect for their rights and their confidentiality. HIV prevention programmes must continue to target high risk groups including men who have sex with men, transgender persons, sex workers, youth, migrants and mobile populations, incarcerated persons and people who use drugs (PANCAP, 2017). At the same time there must be further efforts to raise awareness and understanding of HIV and to reduce risky behaviours among most-at-risk groups and the population in general.

To achieve the 90–90–90 targets, it will be crucial to challenge the stigma and discrimination which persons living with HIV experience. It has been shown that fear of and actual experience with stigma and discrimination can reduce an individual's willingness to practice prevention, seek HIV testing, disclose his or her HIV status to others, get care and support, and begin and adhere to HIV treatment (UNAIDS, 2013a). Yet research carried out in both Belize and Jamaica suggested that such stigma and discrimination remained widespread. In studies of persons living with HIV in these two countries, people reported being the subject of gossip, being abused, harassed, socially excluded, having to change their

<sup>24</sup> By 2020, 90 per cent of all people living with HIV should know their HIV status; 90 per cent of those diagnosed with HIV should be receiving sustained antiretroviral therapy; and 90 per cent of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

place of residence, losing their jobs, and even seeing their children suspended from school (UNAIDS, 2013b).

The full exercise of sexual rights, particularly the right to take decisions about sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity, is restricted by discrimination and violence. More recent research carried out on public attitudes towards homosexuality showed that in five Caribbean countries out of seven, 25 per cent or more of persons indicated that they “hate” homosexuals (Beck and others, 2017). In Caribbean countries which retain colonial-era British law, same-sex relations between males are outlawed with same-sex relations between females also outlawed in some countries but not in others. These anti-LGBT laws are themselves discriminatory and undermine the ability of governments to address discrimination and violence against LGBT persons.

Despite efforts to encourage male involvement in sexual and reproductive health care, males, including adolescents, still tend to be difficult to reach with sexual and reproductive health information and services. The culture of having multiple partners leads to sexually transmitted infections while poor health seeking behaviour among men leads to worse clinical outcomes for many health conditions. There is an ongoing need to improve sexual and reproductive health information and services for men and to change male attitudes to health.

### **3. Conclusions**

There have been steady improvements in the sexual and reproductive health of the population on most indicators although there is still more work to do to achieve universal access to services. Unmet need for family planning persists, mainly due to limited access to sexual and reproductive health commodities among adolescents, people living in poverty and other marginalised groups. There has been good progress in the reduction of the overall adolescent fertility rate in nearly all countries but pregnancy and childbearing remain prevalent among adolescents living in poverty. Further work is required to overcome institutional weaknesses as well as cultural and legal barriers which obstruct the provision of good-quality sexual and reproductive health services. Providers need to bear in mind the specific needs of men and women, adolescents and young people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, migrants, older persons and persons with disabilities, and persons living in remote areas.

Rates of maternal mortality also remain stubbornly high and more needs to be done to address the underlying health conditions which can lead to maternal mortality; to guarantee universal access to primary health care; improve emergency obstetric and new-born care; and strengthen vital statistics systems for better monitoring of maternal mortality and morbidity. Unsafe abortion should be eliminated and laws relating to the voluntary termination of pregnancy should be reconsidered in order to protect the lives and health of women and adolescent girls.

Efforts to prevent HIV transmission through sexual health education designed to minimise risky behaviour must be maintained. In addition, achieving the 90–90–90 targets will depend on people being able to seek HIV testing and treatment without fear of being stigmatised either by their family, community, or by health service providers. Discrimination and discriminatory laws remain a more general problem restricting the free exercise of sexual rights, particularly the right to take decisions about sexual orientation and gender identity.

## E. GENDER EQUALITY

Section E addresses gender equality as a cross-cutting issue of the Montevideo Consensus. By mainstreaming gender in the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus, the review provides an up-to-date overview of the progress made by Caribbean countries to achieve gender equality in the subregion and to identify the persistent challenges they face to achieve this goal. In fact, gender equality is an objective of sustainable development and part of the solution towards achieving it. The strategy of mainstreaming gender is also an enabler for the implementation of other international and regional frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention for the Elimination for All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belem do Para Convention), and the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, just to name a few.

Therefore, this chapter focuses on the priority measures included under the section Gender Equality of the Montevideo Consensus, read in conjunction with the other priorities set in the Consensus, as well as the progress and challenges reported in the latest review of the Beijing Platform for Action (2015), national reports submitted by Caribbean countries to the CEDAW Committee for the period between 2013-2018; and analysis conducted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), including the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.

### **1. Institutional machineries to build development policies with equality and gender mainstreaming**

The Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development reiterates the importance of strengthening institutional machineries in charge of guaranteeing the autonomy of women and promoting gender equality. As noted by the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, the level of the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women within the governmental hierarchy is a qualitative indicator that reflects the status given by Governments to these institutions. The creation of these institutional machineries in the Caribbean has been variable among the countries and their position in the administration hierarchy has been changing depending on government's priorities. In fact, according to the classification established by the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, there are three levels: high level for the institutional machinery if the head of the machinery is a Minister; intermediate level if the entity is attached to, or directly responsible to, the Prime Minister; and low level, if the machinery come under ministries or lower-ranking authorities, such as vice-ministries.<sup>25</sup> Out of 18 Caribbean countries and territories, in 16 the institutional machinery was deemed to be at a low level.

There has been progress in terms of institutional and policy frameworks for gender in the subregion. In Guyana, the Gender Affairs Bureau was established in 2015 and there is a Regional Gender Affairs Committee in each of the 10 administrative regions. A Women and Gender Equality Commission was also established in 2010, which is mandated to deal specifically with promoting the national recognition and acceptance that women's rights are human rights, respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality. With the aim of strengthening the national machinery, the Guyanese Government reported that a National Gender and Social Inclusion Policy would be implemented this year in order to promote gender mainstreaming into all sectors.

In Suriname, the Bureau of Gender Affairs, established as part of the Ministry of Home Affairs since 1998, now has a Gender Management System to build structural linkages with ministries and enhance gender mainstreaming in government policies. This system is comprised of gender focal points that are appointed by different ministries with the task to implement and monitor the Gender Action Plans in order to mainstream gender into policies and programmes within their ministries. A Bureau for Women

<sup>25</sup> ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean: <https://oig.cepal.org/en/indicators/level-within-governmental-hierarchy-national-machineries-advancement-women>



and Children was also established within the Ministry of Justice and Police. However, the CEDAW Committee expressed concern that since 2013 there is no national policy on gender and, the gender mainstreaming management system was not fully functional partly due to a lack of clarity about the responsibilities of the gender focal points, whose job descriptions have been pending approval since 2016.<sup>26</sup>

In the Bahamas, the upgrade of the Bureau of Women's Affairs to a Department of Family and Gender Affairs is being considered, but no information was given about the current implementation of this plan.<sup>27</sup> In Jamaica, the Bureau of Gender Affairs was upgraded from a department to a division under the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport and an organizational review is being conducted in order to transform it into an Agency. In fact, the Bureau is in charge of implementing the National Policy for Gender Equality and gender mainstreaming with the inclusion of perspectives on race, ethnicity, age, social class and disability status. In addition to the National Policy for Gender Equality, a gender perspective was also embedded in the national development plan Vision 2030 and policies, including the revision of the National Population Policy, the policies for Senior Citizens, Persons with Disability and Migration. However, it was also recognised that the Bureau has been negatively impacted by inadequate financing, human resource constraints and limited autonomy.<sup>28</sup> Similar concern was shared by Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago. More especially, in Antigua and Barbuda, the Directorate of Gender Affairs is a division, headed by one of the two elected female members of Parliament under the Ministry of Social Transformation and Human Resources, and while there is no national gender policy, the Directorate coordinates its efforts based on the National Strategic Action Plan to End Gender Based Violence (2013-2018), as well as the Action Plan for Gender Equality (2018). Insufficient resources and human capital are, however, limiting its work. The Government clearly justified the challenge of elevating the Bureau to a higher rank because of its status as a small island developing State that cannot afford the cost of establishing a new ministry.<sup>29</sup>

In the case of Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Gender Affairs Department is responsible for implementing a series of programmes targeting both women and men, but it was stressed that there is a lack of sufficient human resources, including male gender officers, to assist with men programmes, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In Trinidad and Tobago, it is the Gender Affairs Division within the Office of the Prime Minister under the responsibility of a Minister of State that is in charge of promoting gender equality. A National Policy on Gender and Development, recently published as Green Paper, is being adopted this year. However, despite this positive advance, the Government recognised the need to institute gender focal points at each Ministry, build capacity for staff working on gender related issues, and implement gender based budgeting.

Another key priority recommended in the Montevideo Consensus is the promotion of gender-sensitive budgets. Apart from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, no countries provided information about budgets that include a gender perspective. In fact, in Jamaica, the Cabinet Office has made it mandatory to include a gender component and gender budgets in all submissions. In Trinidad and Tobago, a gender budgeting toolkit and manual have been developed and a proposal on gender responsive budgeting is under review by Cabinet, awaiting approval.<sup>30</sup> The Government of Trinidad and Tobago also recognised the importance of developing formal institutional coordination mechanisms between gender machineries, planning and budget departments by 2030 and to advocate for the Ministry of Finance to issue a circular on gender budgeting and the use of the toolkit. Apart from these two countries, Antigua and Barbuda has developed an Action Plan for Gender Equality this year and a series of gender sensitization training sessions have been conducted. Nonetheless, it was recognised that the extent to which the different government bodies are implementing gender-sensitive and gender-responsive budgets was unclear and considered limited.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Suriname, CEDAW/C/SUR/CO/4-6, para. 14.

<sup>27</sup> The Bahamas, CEDAW/C/BHS/6, para 23.

<sup>28</sup> Jamaica's report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.57.

<sup>29</sup> Antigua and Barbuda' CEDAW, para.29.

<sup>30</sup> Trinidad and Tobago's draft national report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.32.

<sup>31</sup> Antigua and Barbuda's national report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.38.

The importance of gender statistics is stressed in the Montevideo Consensus. All Caribbean countries have reiterated their commitment to enhance the generation of gender data and statistics, particularly in the framework of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women (CEDAW).<sup>32</sup> However, when reviewing the latest national reports submitted by Caribbean countries concerning the review of the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus, CEDAW and the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action report<sup>33</sup>, with the exception of Jamaica and, to a certain extent, Suriname, there is a persistent lack of disaggregated data by sex, age, disability, race, ethnicity and other criteria in order to assess the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes.<sup>34</sup> This includes absence of disaggregated data regarding domestic, sexual, trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence.<sup>35</sup> It is also noticeable that Caribbean countries have not reported timely and accurate data on poverty with a gender perspective, for instance in Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, due mainly to a lack of human and financial resources. To illustrate, Guyana informed that that it was not possible to respond to numerous indicators of the Montevideo Consensus because disaggregated data was unavailable for some of the priority measures.<sup>36</sup> However, the Guyanese Government also reported that a three-year project aimed at enhancing statistical capacities (March 2016-March 2019) is being implemented to improve the collection and dissemination of statistical data. Similarly, in Suriname, despite the fact that a gender statistics focal point has been appointed in the General Bureau of Statistics and every year, there is a publication on ‘Selected Gender Statistics’, gaps remain in areas such as women’s economic autonomy and domestic violence. The Government is currently trying to overcome these gaps, through the implementation of the CARICOM Gender Equality Indicators model. Among the commitments reiterated for the next reporting cycle of the Montevideo Consensus, Antigua and Barbuda put emphasis on improving gender statistics, administrative data, and is in the process of strengthening their electronic database to track all reported cases of gender based violence.

Identifying trends, progress and gaps in gender equality in a comparative and timely manner requires not only strong institutional frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality, with adequate funding and human resources, but also the systematic implementation of a gender perspective in the production and dissemination of data, in budgets and in the drafting and reviewing of policies and programmes. This also requires the full engagement and participation of the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women in this process. Only through this mainstreaming of gender can all the different forms of inequalities affecting different groups of women and men be identified, and addressed with evidence-based actions to overcome them.

## **2. Equal participation of women in all spheres of public authority and autonomy in decision-making processes**

The Montevideo Consensus reiterates the commitment made by Caribbean countries to strengthen the autonomy of women in decision-making processes that impact their lives, through parity and other mechanisms to ensure their access to power in electoral systems; and the adoption of legislative measures and institutional reforms to prevent, punish and eradicate political and administrative harassment, in government and private entities.

Progress was reported, for instance, in Guyana, where women occupy key ministerial positions and represent 52 per cent of the permanent secretaries, and more than 30 per cent of regional democratic councils.<sup>37</sup> In addition, in the revised Local Government Act it enables political parties to submit a list of

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<sup>32</sup> General Recommendation No.9: Statistical data concerning the situation of women, adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women, eighth session, 1989.

<sup>33</sup> Alicia Mondesire, Caribbean synthesis review and appraisal report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, ECLAC Studies and Perspective Series- The Caribbean No.42, 2015.

<sup>34</sup> Barbados, Concluding Observations CEDAW/C/BRB/CO/5-8 (24 July 2017) p.4; Suriname, CEDAW/C/SUR/Q/4-6/Add.1 (18 December 2017); Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, CEDAW/C/VCT/CO/4-8 (28 July 2015) paras.46-47.

<sup>35</sup> Barbados, Concluding Observations CEDAW/C/BRB/CO/5-8 (24 July 2017), p.5; Trinidad and Tobago, Concluding Observations CEDAW/C/TTO/CO/4-7 (27 July 2016) para.21.

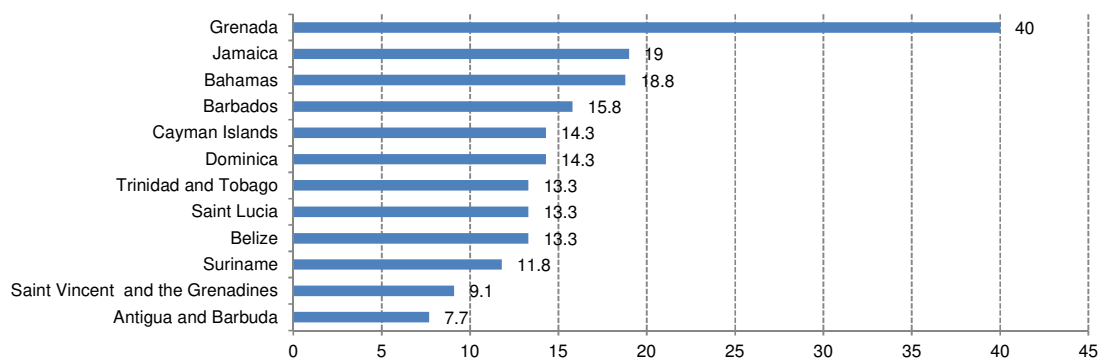
<sup>36</sup> Guyana: Report on the Implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development 2013-2018, p.3.

<sup>37</sup> Guyana: Report on the Implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, 2013-2018. p.35.

candidates which must comprise at least twenty-five women who will be eligible for selection<sup>38</sup>. In Trinidad and Tobago, there has been an increase of 2.5 per cent in the number of women elected as representatives of the various constituencies. In Suriname, the participation of women at local political level has improved from 27 per cent to 29 per cent between 2010 and 2017 and there are 2 (out of 51) indigenous females in the national parliament. This progress is also related to the work being done by organisations, such as the Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (CIWIL) at the regional level, the Guyana Women’s Leadership Institute, the Institute for Women in Leadership in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Women’s Political Caucus in Jamaica. In May 2018, Mia Mottley became the first female Prime Minister of Barbados.

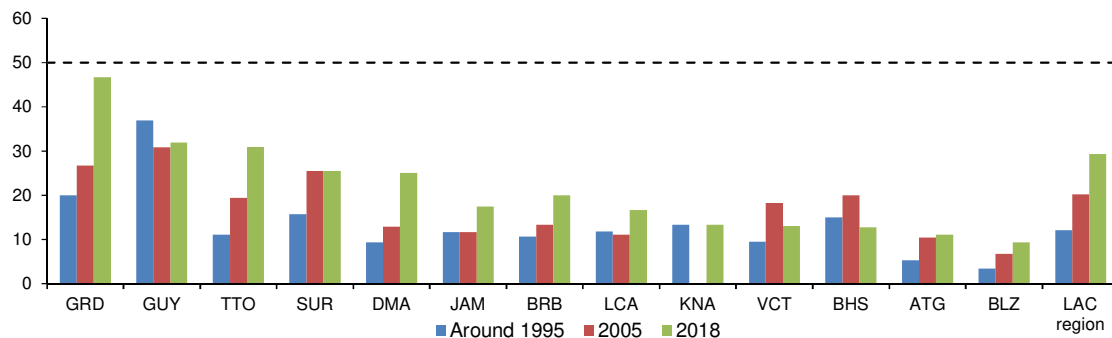
Despite this positive advancement, women are still underrepresented in decision-making positions in the subregion. For instance, the number of women holding ministerial cabinet positions, which is a direct expression of the political will to promote gender parity in positions of political leadership, is still less than 20 per cent of cabinet members in 11 out of 12 Caribbean countries (see figure 8). Women represent less than 30 per cent of representatives elected in all national parliaments except those in Grenada, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago (see figure 9).

**Figure 8**  
**The Caribbean (12 countries and territories): number of women**  
**in ministerial cabinet positions during the most recent term of office**  
*(Percentages)*



Source: ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean

**Figure 9**  
**Women elected to national legislative body, around 1995, 2005 and 2018**  
*(Percentages)*



Source: ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

<sup>38</sup> Guyana, CEDAW/C/GUY/9 (17 April 2018), para.69.

In fact, in the report of Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Government recognizes that there is no system put in place for training persons in policies or mentorship programmes for women in leadership roles but has committed to increase avenues for female political participation, to conduct political campaign management classes, recognize women in politics and retain them as mentors for young women and girls who have an interest in politics.<sup>39</sup> Suriname highlighted that there are no provisions that impede or restrict the entry of women into politics, but apart from raising awareness activities led by civil society organisations with the support of the Government, no specific measures have been taken to improve women's access to the political arena. Antigua and Barbuda also recognized that there are no laws or policies which specifically call for the increase and enhancement of opportunities for the equal participation of women in positions of power, leadership and decision-making.<sup>40</sup> On the contrary, a good practice was shared by Jamaica that could be a starting point in other countries of the subregion, with the establishment of a Joint Select Committee to consider and make recommendations to address women's under-representation in politics at all levels of government and the Gender Equality Seal Certification Programme. This Programme is aimed at addressing persistent gender gaps in the workplace by encouraging the public and private entities to create equitable conditions for both men and women. A Regional Gender and Diversity Seal proposal engaging the private sector was developed and launched in Belize in 2017, with expectation to be rolled-out to the wider Caribbean in 2018.

### **3. Broadening access to care services and physical autonomy of women**

Measures aimed at developing and strengthening policies and universal care services for both women and men are included in the Montevideo Consensus, as well as others on preventing all forms of discrimination and violence against women and gender-based violence, establishing awareness raising mechanisms and fostering the development of new masculinities.

There have been improvements in terms of access to health care services over the last five years, in particular on HIV/AIDS related services. For instance, Saint Kitts and Nevis has established a Commission to launch Universal Health Insurance Coverage. It became the second country in the Americas after Cuba to have eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and syphilis in 2017. An Action Plan to Strengthen and Sustain the Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission is in draft and includes, among other things, the use of an electronic perinatal information system to track information on antenatal patients in an effort to ensure positive delivery outcomes. Nevis became one of the first islands in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to have implemented this electronic system in order to ensure the implementation of the 90-90-90 strategy by 2020.<sup>41</sup> Trinidad and Tobago has also achieved the World Health Organisation standard for the elimination of mother-to-child-transmission with less than 2 per cent,<sup>42</sup> and established a specific Directorate of Women's Health to prevent mother-to child transmission and other women's related health problems. In Guyana, the Government has established a total of 190 Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission sites across the country. Antigua and Barbuda expressed its concern regarding the limited access to universal health in the country, however, is working towards the development of a Social Protection System reform which includes a gender-responsive approach to improve access to health care services.

No information was given about access to certain health services, for instance mental health (except Guyana), in particular in the countries impacted by hurricanes in the last five-years and how these services have been offered in the entire territories and sister-islands. In the report of the Bahamas for the CEDAW Committee (2017), the Government recognised the need to increase the number of trained mental health professional in the country.<sup>43</sup>

Concerning the measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination, Caribbean countries, such as Guyana, have enshrined the principle of equality and non-discrimination in their Constitution, however

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<sup>39</sup> Saint Kitts and Nevis' report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.47.

<sup>40</sup> Antigua and Barbuda's report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.42.

<sup>41</sup> Saint Kitts and Nevis' report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.30.

<sup>42</sup> Trinidad and Tobago's draft report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, February 2018, p.26.

<sup>43</sup> The Bahamas, CEDAW/C/BHS/6, para.108.

there are still no specific laws that define discrimination against women covering direct and indirect discrimination in both the public and private spheres and recognising intersecting forms of discrimination, for instance in Antigua and Barbuda<sup>44</sup> and Suriname<sup>45</sup>. In Barbados, the Constitution does not include discrimination on the grounds of sex or gender, including direct and indirect forms of discrimination<sup>46</sup> and some constitutional provisions on nationality still discriminate against women, regarding the transmission of their nationality to their children or to their spouses of foreign nationality<sup>47</sup>. Similar concern was shared by the CEDAW Committee for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.<sup>48</sup>

Progress is noticeable in terms of awareness-raising activities and the establishment of guidelines aimed at addressing all forms of discrimination. Saint Kitts and Nevis reported that a general campaign highlighting the importance of human rights was launched, called 'Making St. Kitts/Nevis Better: Equality for All'. This took the form of consultations, essay contests, among other activities, to educate persons on human rights and a Code of Conduct for health facilities was adopted for patients to report acts of stigma and discrimination, especially against LGBTI people. Guyana reported that an anti-stigma and discrimination policy document was developed by the Ministry of Public Health in 2011 to support the creation of an enabling environment for access to health services by those most in need of them, including male adolescents, men, gays and sex workers. Male friendly sexual and reproductive health services are being developed, but the Government also recognised that much more should be done to address the situation of LGBTI people in the country. A similar assessment was done by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, which found that certain groups were more difficult to reach with the relevant sexual and reproductive health information and services: men, HIV positive young people and LGBTI people, and those with disabilities.

Positive efforts have been made by the Government of Suriname that has established a Diversity and Inclusivity working group to make recommendations and actions, in particular to address the situation of LGBTI people.<sup>49</sup> The Government has also introduced programmes through formal education to bring about change in gender stereotyping, for instance with the revision of textbooks and illustrations to ensure a gender-balanced perspective, training on gender equality to principals and teachers, and recognised that these initiatives need to be expanded with adequate financing. In Antigua and Barbuda, the Ministry of Education conducts annual reviews of the textbooks and other educational materials to ensure that biases of sexual stereotyping are not reflected in the texts<sup>50</sup>, but also informed that there was a noted absence in supporting service delivery aimed at boys, adolescents and young men but no measures to overcome this gap was reported.<sup>51</sup>

In relation to the other key priority measures of the Montevideo Consensus to eliminate violence against women, gender-based violence and promote new masculinities, Caribbean countries are in the process of strengthening their normative and institutional frameworks, since the current ones are mainly focused on domestic violence without addressing all other forms of gender-based violence. For instance, Barbados amended its Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act in 2016; adopted the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act and the Trafficking in Persons Prevention Act in 2016<sup>52</sup> and also established the Family Conflict Intervention Unit in 2013. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, adopted a Domestic Violence Act, which includes not only physical violence but also sexual, psychological and economic violence, and created an inter-ministerial national action plan on gender-based violence.<sup>53</sup>

Guyana has launched a series of initiatives to strengthen the capacity of police officers and other professionals in charge of implementing the legal framework on sexual offences and domestic violence,

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<sup>44</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Combined Fourth to Seventh periodic reports submitted to CEDAW (CEDAW/C/ATG/4-7), 18 December 2017, para 12-16. Provisions under Labour Code Section in Antigua and Barbuda makes it a criminal offence to accord women less favourable remuneration and other working conditions than men on account of their sex.

<sup>45</sup> Suriname, CEDAW/C/SUR/CO/4-6, para.9.

<sup>46</sup> Barbados, CEDAW/C/BRB/CO/5-8, para. 11.

<sup>47</sup> Barbados, CEDAW/C/BRB/CO/5-8, para. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, CEDAW/C/VCT/CO/4-8, para 27.

<sup>49</sup> Suriname's report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, pp.28 and 37.

<sup>50</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, CEDAW/C/ATG/4-7, para.120.

<sup>51</sup> Antigua and Barbuda's report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.35.

<sup>52</sup> Barbados, CEDAW/C/BRB/CO/5-8, (24 July 2017)

<sup>53</sup> Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, CEDAW/C/VCT/CO/4-8, para 20.

through training programmes, including in the hinterland areas, and the development of a communication strategy against gender-based violence, including in schools. It has also established a Specialised Court for Sexual Offences and is currently in the process of conducting a comprehensive review of their national plan of action for the implementation of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Acts and establishing an inter-agency task force to tackle this serious problem. In its turn, in Antigua and Barbuda, considering the limited scope of the previous frameworks, the Domestic Violence Act (2015) expanded the definition of domestic violence, by including emotional, psychological and economic abuse, stalking and cyber harassment. The Government is also in the process of drafting legislation and policy to address sexual harassment and workplace discrimination and has already adopted a National Strategic Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence (2013-2018). National efforts to promote awareness-raising regarding gender mainstreaming and gender-based violence among law enforcement personnel and education officials are also being done, with the support of non-governmental organisations that are offering protective and responsive services. The Government has also established a specialised task force to review instances of human trafficking, that mainly involved female sex workers.

In Jamaica, a draft national sexual harassment policy and legislation was developed and is awaiting Cabinet approval. The ‘Amazing Dads’ miniseries was developed to highlight the positive roles of Jamaican fathers. In addition, a National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence was adopted in December 2017, which includes five strategic priority areas: prevention, protection, investigation, prosecution and enforcement of court orders; compensation, reparation and redress and protocols for coordination and data management systems. Inter-ministerial discussions have commenced for the establishment of a National Shelter Committee to create a shelter strategy for victims and survivors of gender-based violence and other forms of violence that will complement the work being done by the NGO Woman Inc. Crisis Centre. An online gender based violence platform to provide support to victims of sexual violence was launched in 2017 under the leadership of the Bureau of Gender Affairs. Several awareness raising campaigns against all forms of violence against women have been jointly conducted by the Bureau for Gender Affairs, civil society organisations, UN system, among others, as well as training sessions targeting police officers, nurses, medical practitioners, judges and front-line responders. A National Policy on Human Trafficking is scheduled for completion in 2018.

In Jamaica, and also in Trinidad and Tobago, the results of the first ever national prevalence surveys of gender based violence were recently published. The Jamaica survey revealed that 28 per cent of women had experienced intimate partner physical and sexual violence in their lifetime, and 25 per cent had experienced physical violence alone at the hands of a male partner. Women who were 18 years or younger when they entered their first union (living together or married to a man), were twice as likely to experience severe violence as women who were older when they entered into a residential union with a man (UN Women, 2018). It is anticipated that further prevalence surveys will be carried out in other countries.

In the Bahamas, a Strategic Plan to Address Gender-Based Violence was adopted in 2015. It was reported that police officers work with an NGO-managed safe house for women who need a place of refuge from violence<sup>54</sup> and are conducting a series of awareness raising activities on the issue of domestic violence in communities and the media.

In Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Government passed a new Domestic Violence Act in 2014 and have on-going gender sensitization awareness programmes on gender-based violence. The Government has adopted a programme to promote opportunities for decent working conditions in the workplace and to enlighten workers of their rights and benefits in public and private sectors, and sexual harassment has been considered a priority issue.<sup>55</sup> However, it was recognised that much more should be done to attract men in these raising awareness initiatives. Similarly, in Trinidad and Tobago, campaigns have been launched by the Equal Opportunities Commission on sexual harassment in the workplace, including guidelines<sup>56</sup>, and the creation of a national domestic violence abuse hotline, but additional efforts should be made to address all forms of violence and abuse against women, despite an alleged decrease in reports of sexual offenses in

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<sup>54</sup>The Bahamas, CEDAW/C/BHS/6., paras 44-45.

<sup>55</sup>Saint Kitts and Nevis’s report on the Implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.46.

<sup>56</sup>Equal Opportunities Commission’s Guidelines on Sexual Harassment in the workplace  
[http://equalopportunity.gov.tt/sites/default/files/Guidelines%20on%20Sexual%20%20Harrassment\\_FINAL.pdf](http://equalopportunity.gov.tt/sites/default/files/Guidelines%20on%20Sexual%20%20Harrassment_FINAL.pdf)

the country.<sup>57</sup> The adoption of the national strategic plan on gender-based and sexual violence that is still awaiting cabinet approval and the consolidation of the central registry on domestic violence established in 2016 are positive steps that should be carried out without delay.

In Suriname, the concept of sexual harassment has been expanded in the Sexual Offence Act, to include sexual violence within marriage as a criminal offense and sex-neutral terminology to include rape or sexual harassment of a man. It is, however, recommended to make the necessary adjustments in order to adopt the draft revised Civil Code that will establish the minimum age of marriage for both men and women at 18 years in compliance with international and regional standards. Other positive advancements are related to the development of a Policy Memorandum and a complaint mechanism by the Ministry of Police and Justice in order to address sexual harassment at the workplace. The Bureau of Gender Affairs has also formulated a Gender Work Plan with a particular focus on domestic violence and sexual violence, with a series of awareness raising campaigns. The Institute for Women, Gender and Development Studies of the Anton de Kom University of Suriname has established a corps of Domestic Violence Ambassadors since 2013 to raise awareness of this issue, including among students. In terms of institutional framework, the Government has also established a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee on Domestic Violence to draft a national policy that has not been adopted yet. A Trafficking in Persons Desk was also established, considering that 90 per cent of victims were females and children, and mainly subject to sexual exploitation.

There was a landmark achievement for girls in Trinidad and Tobago with the passing of an amendment to the Marriage Act which ended all forms of child marriage in the country. The Government also established a specific programme targeting men, with the Gender Affairs Division's Defining Masculine Excellence Programme, which is aimed to foster improved gender relations between men and women. It has also provided gender sensitization/training for males in various target groups; increased the number of boys completing secondary school and further education; and addressed all forms of violence, among others. There is also another good practice, which is the Gender Equality and Fatherhood project aimed at providing support to single fathers and their families to manage conflicts and address the trauma resulting from the involuntary separation from their children.

In a complementary manner, at the regional level, there are several NGOs working on new masculinities, for instance, the CARICOM initiative, 'Man up Jamaica', as well as the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), which focuses on men in its teaching research and outreach programmes, with the course 'Men and Masculinities in the Caribbean', in addition to the celebration of International Men's Day. A statistical Information Management Unit with a Crime Observatory Integrated Crime and Violence Information System was created with data disaggregated by gender, age, location and incident.

#### **4. Reducing disparities in the education system and strengthening women's economic autonomy**

The Montevideo Consensus pays particular attention to the situation of boys and young men in the education system in the English-Speaking Caribbean (Priority 60). In fact, women and girls are outperforming men and boys at all educational levels. Except for Barbados<sup>58</sup> and Guyana<sup>59</sup>, where gender disparity in primary and secondary education has reportedly been eliminated, Suriname, that mentioned that there is no difference in the attendance of girls and boys to primary school, and Antigua and Barbuda, where the gender imbalance has been reduced from 13.4 per cent in the 1999/00 school year to 0.4 per cent for the year 2014/15 for secondary school enrolment,<sup>60</sup> gaps still exist in secondary and higher education streams, with significantly lower participation of males.<sup>61</sup> This is an undeniably regional trend as indicated in the ECLAC Caribbean Outlook (2018). In Barbados, Jamaica, the OECS countries and Trinidad and Tobago, girls comprise as many as two thirds of those sitting final examinations and among those who sit

<sup>57</sup> Trinidad and Tobago's draft report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.35.

<sup>58</sup> Barbados, CEDAW/C/BRB/CO/5-8, (24 July 2017), para. 31.

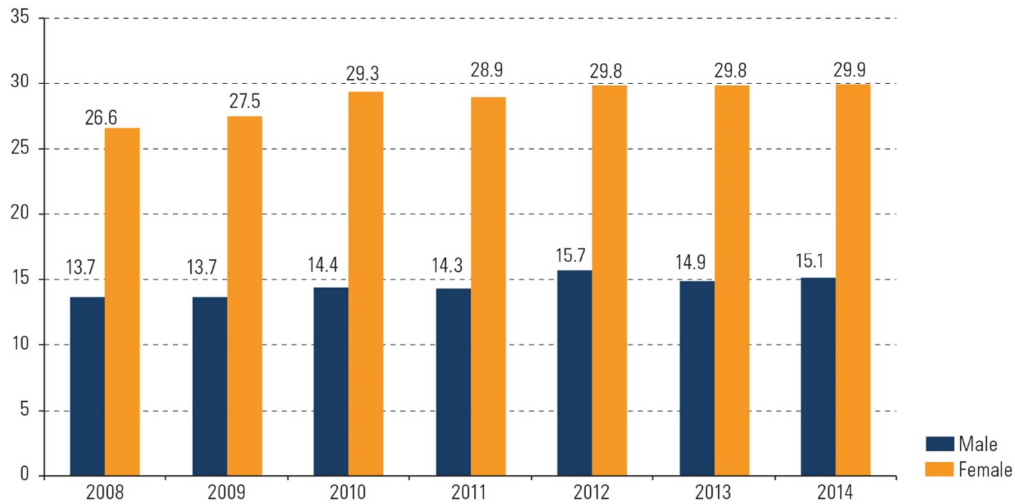
<sup>59</sup> Guyana's report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.16.

<sup>60</sup> Antigua and Barbuda's report, CEDAW/C/ATG/4-7, para 112.

<sup>61</sup> Suriname's report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p. 5.

the exams, girls tend to do slightly better than boys. The gender differential in participation rates is even greater in higher education (see Figure 10).

**Figure 10**  
**The Caribbean (10 countries): gross enrolment ratio, tertiary education, both sexes 2008-2014**  
**(Percentages)**



Source: World Bank and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, on the basis of data available for Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname *in* The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *The Caribbean Outlook*, 2018, p. 15.

Governments in the subregion are implementing plans and strategies to respond to this gap in their education system. For instance, Saint Kitts and Nevis are implementing a five-year Education Sector Plan for 2017-2021 to improve education delivery for all. Guyana reported on its 2014-2018 National Education Sector Plan and its considerable investment in the education sector over the last five years. In fact, the National Bureau of Statistics labour force survey recorded the proportion of youth not in education, employment or training (NEETs) was at 35.2 per cent, 63 per cent of whom are young women and 76 per cent of whom live in urban areas.<sup>62</sup> In order to address this situation, the Government of Guyana is pursuing a series of programmes, such as the Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training (YEST) Programme, the Sustainable Livelihoods and Entrepreneurial Development Initiative, the Youth Innovation Project, among others. Interestingly, more females than males have benefitted from these initiatives that include the improvement of entrepreneurial skills in areas considered non-traditional fields for females, such as joinery, masonry, auto mechanics, electrical engineering, craft and information technology. The Bahamas also informed about the expansion of grants and scholarship to facilitate access to education at the tertiary level and the implementation of a technical and vocational education and training agency.<sup>63</sup> A specific programme was created to promote girls in Information and Communication Technology, through forum and fairs, and the ICT curriculum school was under review.<sup>64</sup> A similar initiative was also implemented in Guyana to encourage girls in science and information technology career paths.

Trinidad and Tobago informed that the country achieved universal access to primary and secondary education, and increased participation in tertiary education to 45 per cent and has also extended the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) programme that funds all tuition expenses for undergraduate students on a financial needs basis.<sup>65</sup> Jamaica has a similar programme of advancement

<sup>62</sup> Guyana: Report on the Implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development-2013-2018, p.12.

<sup>63</sup> The Bahamas, CEDAW/C/BHS/6, paras.80-82.

<sup>64</sup> The Bahamas, CEDAW/C/BHS/6, para.92.

<sup>65</sup> Trinidad and Tobago's draft report on the Implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development p.14.



through Health and Education (PATH) for students. It has also undertaken several reforms and adopted specific programmes to improve the levels of literacy, numeracy and the use of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) methodology, as well as the establishment of a Business Process Outsourcing Finishing School. The objective is to ensure that students are trained to master the technical skills needed to secure a job and have the soft skills.<sup>66</sup> In addition, the project ‘Advancing the Education of Boys’ is being implemented since 2013 by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information with the purpose of supporting boys. The Government of Guyana is focusing on Secondary Competency Certificate, with a programme that addresses reading, mathematics, English, Language and Information Technology. Particular attention is being given to rural and remote areas, through The Kuru Kuru Training Centre. Additional efforts are being made to transform the educational system of delivery via technology, with Digital Classroom programmes, and e-material to reach those living in remote areas. In Antigua and Barbuda, the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resources, Youth and Gender Affairs developed a gender strategic plan to reduce negative gender attitudes that fuel discrimination and violence and reverse adverse trends in boys’ educational performance and in the workplace, with particular focus on boys and girls in impoverished communities.<sup>67</sup>

In order to address this multifaceted problem of inequalities, the Governments of the subregion have reported on the implementation of the national development plan and poverty reduction strategies. Barbados, with its Poverty Alleviation and Reduction Programme and the Identification, Stabilization, Enablement and Empowerment Programme,<sup>68</sup> and Saint Kitts and Nevis, with its National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2012-2016, the National Social Protection Strategy 2013-2017, and the social interventions targeting the most vulnerable, in particular teenage mothers and single mothers. In Jamaica, a National Policy on Poverty and Poverty Reduction Programme is being considered in Parliament, which reflects the specific challenges faced by female-headed households and youth. Guyana reported that the Framework for Green State Development Strategy has included the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality in three out of five of the central themes: infrastructure and spatial development; human development and well-being; and governance and institutional foundation. It is, however, important to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the effective implementation of this new development framework. The Government has also recently established a Poverty Unit at the Bureau of Statistics to prepare a new living conditions survey in October 2018. It will be important to ensure that a gender component is included in the survey to assess the particular challenges faced by women and girls in this process.

Antigua and Barbuda has a series of social programmes targeting the most vulnerable and has also included in its 2016-2020 Medium Term Development Strategy four sustainable development dimensions that encompasses the priorities set by the Montevideo Consensus, which include enhanced social cohesion through health care, education, social insurance and decent wages, among others. The Bahamas launched a new social safety net programme called Renewing, Inspiring, Sustaining, and Empowering (RISE), which is a conditional cash transfer programme that aims to reduce the number of Bahamians living at or below the poverty level, impacting more women<sup>69</sup>. Similarly, Suriname reported that it has not yet established a poverty line, but expect to target this gap under the new Development Plan 2017-2021.

Regarding the priority actions on promoting equality in the labour market and the recognition of the productive value of unpaid domestic work and care work as well as the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the care economy, very little progress has occurred in the Caribbean subregion with respect to the recognition of women’s contribution to national economies and, gender stereotyping in the distribution of domestic tasks remains a cause of concern.

Policies for childcare and parental leave could encourage more men to share domestic work but only three countries in the Caribbean —the Bahamas, Dominica and the Cayman Islands— have policies on parental leave for both parents, and more research is needed to verify how many men have benefited from these policies and the extent to which they have facilitated women’s access to economic activities.

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<sup>66</sup> Jamaica’s report on the Implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, pp.22-25.

<sup>67</sup> Antigua and Barbuda’s report on the Implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.20.

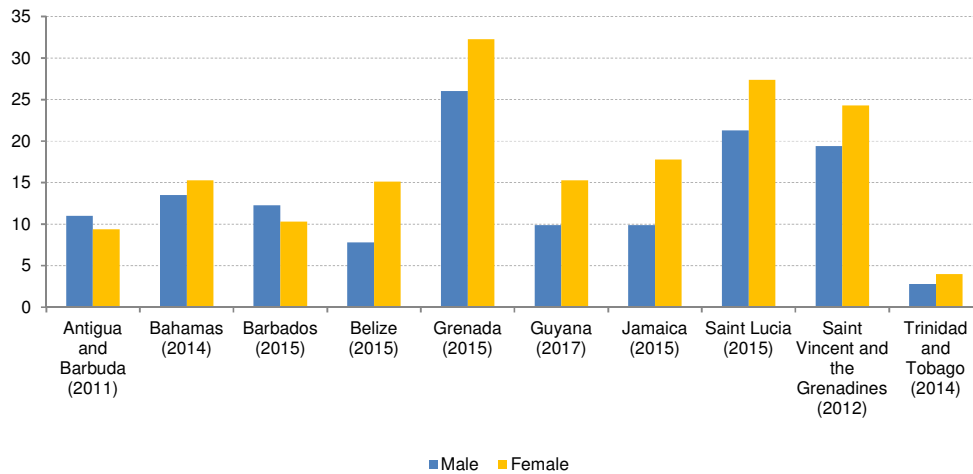
<sup>68</sup> Barbados, CEDAW/C/BRB/CO/5-8, (24 July 2017), para. 37.

<sup>69</sup> The Bahamas, CEDAW/C/BHS/6, para. 13.

In addition, the Caribbean remains the only subregion yet to carry out a full-scale time-use survey to quantify unpaid work so as to comprehensively address entrenched inequalities linked to the gender division of labour within the household.<sup>70</sup> There is therefore a need to measure time use and the distribution of unpaid domestic and care work within households and to design redistributive policies to break the cycles that lead to the disempowerment of women. In 2013, a National Minimum Wage for regular Working Hours Order was introduced in Guyana that has established a national minimum wage and there was also a Tripartite Body that acts as an advisory board to the government about labour legislation and the situation of unpaid domestic and care workers and their economic contribution will be considered as a priority issue for the next reporting cycle.<sup>71</sup> Jamaica reported that the national minimum wage is being reviewed and the Jamaica Household Workers Union is being involved in this process. In 2016, the Government of Jamaica also ratified the ILO Convention 189 promoting Decent Work for Domestic Workers, and the Employment Act of 2014 provides a framework for employers to establish flexible work hours to facilitate the needs of families and workers.

Another trend in the region is the constant high levels of unemployment among women, in particular young women (see figure 11), for instance in Antigua and Barbuda, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago which reflect the gendered labour markets. In fact, according to the 2015 Labour Force Survey in Antigua and Barbuda, women were more likely to be unemployed than men across all age groups except for those in the 45-54 years age group.<sup>72</sup> In Suriname, the unemployment rate for female youth was 40 per cent compared to 16 per cent for males. The vast majority of job seekers registered as unemployed are women, 75 per cent in 2013. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Government adopted the programme called ‘Non-traditional occupations for Women’ in order to enable women to acquire job skills that are not often performed by them, without facing any form of discrimination.

**Figure 11: The Caribbean (9 countries): unemployment rate by sex, latest year available  
(Percentages of the economically active population)**



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of S. Stuart, S. L. Gény and A. Abdulkadri, “Advancing the economic empowerment and autonomy of women in the Caribbean through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, *Studies and Perspectives series-ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean*, No. 60 (LC/TS.2017/128; LC/CAR/TS.2017/8), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2018.

<sup>70</sup> Stuart, Gény and Abdulkadri, Advancing the economic empowerment and autonomy of women in the Caribbean through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, *Studies and Perspectives series-ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean*, No. 60 (LC/TS.2017/128; LC/CAR/TS.2017/8), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2018, p.26.

<sup>71</sup> Guyana’s report on the Implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.37.

<sup>72</sup> Antigua and Barbuda’s report on the Implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, p.10.

The level of unemployment, and the employment situation more generally, is one of the causes for high levels of emigration to other countries in the Caribbean, the United States of America and Canada, and impacts the Government's capacity to execute their own development programmes.<sup>73</sup> To address this concern, there were several programmes being implemented to facilitate women becoming economically independent and empowered, through the Office of the First Lady of Guyana with its capacity building workshops targeting female single parents and female young adults; and the Ministry of Social Protection and the Ministry of Finance, with small grants to disadvantaged women. It was also reported that the Hinterland Green Enterprise Development Centre is being constructed to foster job creation in indigenous communities. The Centre is expected to focus on training for both males and female indigenous students to leverage indigenous and traditional knowledge and drive upstream demand for local products and services.

## 5. Conclusions

Five years after the adoption of the Montevideo Consensus, it is possible to note that Caribbean countries have been giving more attention to gender concerns in their institutional and normative frameworks. This is reflected in the increased level of responsibilities given to national mechanisms for the advancement of women to mainstream gender at all levels of government, in spite of the limited human and financial resources at their disposal. It is also shown by the development of national gender policies in a few countries, as well as selected sectoral policies aimed at improving access to health and education for all, and eliminating domestic violence.

Nonetheless, serious obstacles to achieve gender equality still remain in the subregion, in particular concerning women's participation in the political and decision-making processes and the unbalanced sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the care economy. Little progress has been made in these two areas, as countries have not yet developed or adopted targeted mechanisms and policies to address women's underrepresentation in the political and employment arenas through temporary special measures, such as time-bound goals, quotas or a parity system for political appointments<sup>74</sup>. Additionally, gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices, often reinforced by the lack of recognition of the value of their domestic and care work, still characterize the labour market.

Although several draft policies and legislation have been developed, most have not been finalised or are awaiting for Cabinet's approval, which also contribute to legal and implementation gaps to achieve gender equality. In fact, there are persistent weaknesses in the established mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of gender policies and programmes, which slow the process of identifying solutions and overcoming challenges faced by certain groups. Therefore the following priority measures should be considered for the next review process.

The National machineries for the advancement of women continue working with restricted visibility, human, technical and financial resources that limit their effective potential to mainstream gender in all levels of the government. Caribbean governments should regularly review the current status of their national machineries in order to ensure that they are able to perform their duties with autonomy and additional human and financial resources, including logistical support such as transportation, and to establish offices on other islands or hinterlands, where applicable, in order to decentralise the services and reach those in need. Gender-responsive budgeting should be conducted, as well time-use surveys in the subregion as part of the strategy of integrating a gender perspective into all policies and programmes across all sectors and government ministries.

Caribbean countries should ensure that their current normative and legislative frameworks to advance gender equality are in compliance with international and regional standards, in particular CEDAW, the Belem do Para Convention, and the regional gender agenda, including the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030. In fact, this latter document has not been mentioned in the reports on the review of the Montevideo Consensus, but it is strongly recommended to use it in the next review process as it

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<sup>73</sup> Guyana, CEDAW/C/GUY/9, paras 6-7.

<sup>74</sup> Please see more examples concerning temporary special measures: General Recommendations n.25 adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

(2004)[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1\\_Global/INT\\_CEDAW\\_GEC\\_3733\\_E.pdf](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_3733_E.pdf)

provides a roadmap to promote gender equality in the subregion. Legal gaps still persist in terms of the definition of discrimination against women, including direct and indirect forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex or gender in the private and public spheres, as well as with regard to intersecting forms of discrimination and effective enforcement mechanisms and sanctions. Laws and policies are also needed to comprehensively tackle gender-based violence, and not only domestic violence and human trafficking, with the establishment of mechanisms for victims to access adequate protection, justice, redress and reparations.

Only a few countries in the subregion have developed national gender policies, including the Bahamas, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Jamaica, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago. The adoption of equality plans are tools that serve to direct the action of the State and promote cross-cutting and inter-agency collaboration between the different sectors in order to enhance the institutionalization and mainstreaming of gender. Draft laws and policies related to gender equality should be finalised and adopted expeditiously, therefore it is suggested to identify and address the challenges delaying the adoption of the draft legislation and policies on gender related issues in each country. Gender mainstreaming should also be included in the design of national development plans, disaster risk reduction strategies and disaster recovery processes. The latest development in the human rights frameworks with the General Recommendation No. 37 on the Gender related dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in the context of Climate Change of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women could provide guidance to the Governments of the subregion.<sup>75</sup>

In the process of reviewing current policies and programmes, specific attention should also be given to vulnerable and marginalised groups, including youth, those with mental health needs, persons with disabilities, male and female single households, those underemployed or unemployed, female teenagers, indigenous older persons, LGBTI persons, sex workers, those in detention facilities, among others, in order to address the specific needs and challenges faced by these groups. Caribbean countries are also encouraged to mainstream youth with a gender perspective in all policies and programmes in order to continue their efforts in including boys in the education system as well as girls in non-traditional fields of education, such as ICT, engineering and economics to prepare professionals for the jobs of the future, including the blue, orange and green economy.

Caribbean countries should continue their efforts and provide education and capacity-building to address deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men at all levels of society, to all relevant government officials, including political leaders, parliamentarians, and other stakeholders on the different legal and normative frameworks aimed at achieving gender equality. Law enforcement officials, civil society organisations, the media, teachers, academia, and the private sector should receive specific training on gender mainstreaming.

In this process, it is important to develop more targeted child/youth friendly and accessible communication and social awareness raising activities in schools aimed at sensitizing them and fostering deep-rooted cultural changes in favour of respectful relations between women and men.

Some initiatives have been taken to address the situation of certain groups, including women and other groups who are seen as specially disadvantaged, but much more should be done to tackle their specific challenges, such as women in the lower socio-economic levels, women with disabilities, in rural or remote areas, in other sister-islands, migrant and refugee women, LGBTI persons, as they are the most marginalized groups of in the countries.

Gender data is crucial for decision-making to monitor and evaluate the impact of the implementation of current policies and programmes. The inclusion of a gender perspective in national statistics systems will therefore help Caribbean government to obtain up-to-date baseline information, promote evidence-based policies and specific programmes and measures towards reducing the inequalities and monitor progress, regression and persistent challenges in the implementation of any gender related plan, with a people-centred approach. In fact, to promote gender data, there is a need for greater awareness in the value of gender statistics as well as increased investments in statistical literacy. Stronger

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<sup>75</sup> Please see:

[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/GC/37&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/GC/37&Lang=en)

collaboration among multiple stakeholders including national statistical offices, national machineries for the advancement of women, ministries, academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector is essential. Such a strong collaboration will enhance the working relationship between producers and users of gender data, from both traditional and non-traditional sources, and promote the sharing of good practices in addressing the challenges that currently face the production and dissemination of robust gender statistics in the Caribbean.

## **F. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND PROTECTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL MIGRANTS**

The management of international migration is of particular importance to Caribbean countries which, in proportion to their size, see large flows of emigrants, migrants in transit, immigrants and return migrants. A central commitment of the Montevideo Consensus is the protection of the human rights of all migrants, avoiding any form of criminalization of migration, and guaranteeing migrants access to basic social services in education and health. Additional commitments include the provision of assistance and protection to migrants; taking advantage of the benefits and facing the challenges arising from skilled migration, for example relating to remittances or social security. The Montevideo Consensus also made reference to a number of important principles: dialogue and international cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination; adherence to the principles of consistency and reciprocity; asserting the interests of Latin American and Caribbean countries; and the need for special attention to highly vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied minors, displaced persons in an irregular situation, women who are victims of violence, victims of trafficking, returnees and forcibly displaced asylum-seekers.

International cooperation on migration takes place through several different fora and frameworks. This year should prove to be something of a landmark in respect of international cooperation on migration with the anticipated adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. This will be the first, intergovernmental agreement, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, to cover migration in all its dimensions. It is anticipated that the Global Compact will be adopted at an intergovernmental conference in December 2018.

In 2014, member States of the region adopted the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action, a regional framework to address new displacement trends and end statelessness by 2024. Chapter five of the Plan of Action addressed the special challenges faced by the Caribbean highlighting the importance of protection of migrants at sea, in particular during interception, disembarkation and return procedures, as well as maritime law and agreements. This chapter also acknowledged the limited financial, technical, human and material resources to respond in an adequate manner and the importance of subregional collaboration for the efficient management of mixed migration.

A forum was subsequently established –Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC) – a space for the exchange of information and cooperation on migration, which has been supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In 2016 and 2017, the meetings addressed border management, data collection and exchange, and refugee protection. There is also an online platform, the Caribbean Platform for Migration Governance, which provides resources and facilitates networking. In future, these meetings should greatly facilitate the implementation of the Global Compact.

### **1. Recent trends in international migration**

There has been some decline in emigration over the last decade although outflows of migrants from the Caribbean remain at high levels. The United States of America and Canada remain the most common destinations for Caribbean migrants. In 2015, 86 per cent of emigrants from Caribbean countries went to the United States of America or Canada. The total annual outflow of migrants was 83,000 in 2010, falling to 77,000 in 2015.<sup>76</sup> This is a continuation of a trend seen since the 2008 financial crisis. From 2007 until 2015, the flow of emigrants to the United States of America and Canada fell from 74,000 to 67,000, driven by a mix of economic factors and immigration policies.

Table 5 provides estimates of the number of migrants to American and OECD countries (where the vast majority of migrants go) by country of nationality. High levels of emigration have continued in recent years although some countries have seen reductions in the outflow, for example Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. In most cases the leading destination was the United States of America although the more popular destination for migrants from Saint Vincent

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<sup>76</sup> From the 13 countries appearing in Table 5.

and the Grenadines was Canada and for Suriname the most popular destination was France just ahead of the Netherlands.

**Table 5**  
**Outflows of migrants to American and OECD countries by country of nationality**  
(Numbers)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Antigua and Barbuda	600	653	723	667	724	673
Bahamas	2 348	2 372	2 269	2 397	2 595	2 734
Barbados	1 499	1 564	1 622	1 421	1 426	1 498
Belize	1 772	1 565	1 615	1 934	1 719	1 615
Dominica	1 267	1 107	1 004	1 030	1 064	776
Grenada	1 364	1 266	1 296	1 324	1 156	1 041
Guyana	11 325	11 090	9 738	9 503	9 831	8 597
Jamaica	44 099	45 964	44 763	45 556	46 875	46 937
Saint Kitts and Nevis	567	556	551	530	586	538
Saint Lucia	2 562	2 581	2 664	2 260	2 281	2 106
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	2 674	2 546	2 328	2 014	1 869	1 657
Suriname	2 092	2 223	2 173	1 975	1 864	1 802
Trinidad and Tobago	10 624	9 804	10 130	9 522	8 591	7 518
Total	82 793	83 291	80 876	80 133	80 581	77 492

Source: OAS (Organization of American States) (2017), International Migration in the Americas: Fourth Report of the Continuous Reporting System on International Migration in the Americas (SICREMI) 2017, Washington.

**Table 6**  
**International migrant stock by country**  
(Numbers)

	(Numbers)			(As a percentage of total population)		
	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017
Anguilla	4,063	5,103	5,579	36.7	37.1	37.4
Antigua and Barbuda	23,071	26,412	28,646	27.6	27.9	28.1
Aruba	30,104	34,327	36,356	33.1	33.8	34.5
Bahamas	36,454	54,736	61,806	12.2	15.2	15.6
Barbados	28,424	32,825	34,660	10.5	11.7	12.1
Belize	36,488	46,360	59,998	14.8	14.4	16.0
British Virgin Islands	12,958	17,074	19,959	62.8	62.7	64.0
Cayman Islands	19,253	24,057	24,355	46.2	43.3	39.6
Curaçao	..	34,627	38,396	..	23.5	23.9
Dominica	3,723	5,765	6,782	5.3	8.1	9.2
Grenada	6,825	6,980	7,124	6.7	6.7	6.6
Guadeloupe <sup>a</sup>	83,188	94,942	99,350	19.6	21.1	22.1
Guyana	8,610	13,126	15,530	1.1	1.8	2.0
Jamaica	24,952	23,677	23,332	0.9	0.8	0.8
Martinique	54,492	59,575	61,579	14.1	15.1	16.0
Montserrat	1,211	1,277	1,364	24.4	25.8	26.3
Saint Kitts and Nevis	5,871	7,245	7,587	12.9	14.1	13.7
Saint Lucia	9,868	12,100	12,889	6.3	7.0	7.2
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	4,307	4,485	4,595	4.0	4.1	4.2
Sint Maarten (Dutch part)	..	26,200	28,260	..	79.1	70.4
Suriname	27,506	39,713	47,699	5.8	7.5	8.5
Trinidad and Tobago	41,753	48,226	50,214	3.3	3.6	3.7
Turks and Caicos Islands	9,015	17,216	24,534	47.8	55.5	69.2
United States Virgin Islands	56,611	56,684	56,745	52.1	53.4	54.1
Caribbean	528,747	692,732	757,339	6.8	8.3	8.7

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division (2017). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017).

<sup>a</sup> Including Saint-Barthélemy and Saint-Martin (French part).

With such sizeable emigrant communities outside the region, remittances are an important source of income to many Caribbean countries. Based on World Bank estimates, remittances received by Caribbean countries were equivalent to 5.6 per cent of GDP in 2015 and have been at a roughly similar level since 2000, with some variation linked to the economic situations in the respective countries. The countries for which remittances are highest relative to GDP are Jamaica (16.6 per cent), Dominica (10.5 per cent), Guyana (9.5 per cent) and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (5.5 per cent). In other countries for which data was available, the figure was below 5 per cent, for example 0.7 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago.

Statistics on immigration flows are not so easily available although estimates of migrant stock in Caribbean countries show that it is increasing more quickly than the non-foreign born population. An estimated 8.7 per cent of the Caribbean population was made up of migrants in 2017 compared with 8.3 per cent in 2010 and 6.8 per cent in 2000 (see Table 6). In some overseas territories a majority of the population is foreign born. This is the case in British Virgin Islands, Sint Maarten, Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands. Migrants account for 28 per cent of the population in Antigua and Barbuda, 16 per cent in Bahamas and Belize, 12 per cent in Barbados, 4 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago, 2 per cent in Guyana and 1 per cent in Jamaica.

## **2. Migration and development**

With high levels of emigration, a key challenge for Caribbean States is coping with the continual loss of human capital, which affects health, education and other sectors. Migration policy therefore must be concerned with how this loss of skills can be addressed, for example through providing counter-incentives to encourage people to stay in the Caribbean; and how to capture the benefits, for example through engagement with diaspora communities, remittances and return migration. Another key focus of policy is countering irregular migration while protecting the human rights of irregular migrants, and especially trafficking victims. Migratory movements which are caused by disaster and emergency situations and climate change must also be managed.

The Government of Jamaica has developed a National Policy and Plan of Action on International Migration and Development, which is aimed at enhancing the development impacts of migration, and was published as a white paper in April 2017. There is a large Jamaican diaspora, similar in size to the current population of Jamaica and out-migration is likely to continue. Some of the measures to be implemented in the short to medium-term include, among others, a reduction in the costs of remittances, international agreements to facilitate labour migration, the regulation of recruitment bodies, bilateral agreements to ensure the portability and transferability of pensions, and incentives for investments in Jamaica by the diaspora (OAS, 2017).

There has been much interest in strategies to engage the diaspora in national development, for example through investment, trade or repatriation of skills (see for example World Bank, 2013 and 2016). Several countries have recently developed diaspora policies or strategies. For example, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines developed its policy in 2013. The country's diaspora unit, located in the Office of the Prime Minister, seeks to develop mutually beneficial partnerships between professionals and companies in the Diaspora with public, private and voluntary organisations at home. Jamaica and Saint Lucia also have draft diaspora policies. The Government of Jamaica's policy additionally recognises the role that it can play in advocating on behalf of the diaspora for the protection of their rights in their adopted countries. In 2017, the Government of Suriname, supported by IOM, launched a website to gather information on the skills, experiences and interests of members of the Surinamese diaspora. Saint Kitts and Nevis will hold its first ever diaspora conference in 2018. Diaspora policies can also address issues relating to citizenship, such as arrangements for overseas voting or coordination of diaspora support in response to disasters and emergencies.

Caribbean governments also have a role to play in protecting the rights of emigrants in their host countries. People who migrated from the Caribbean to the United Kingdom in the post-war period have, in recent years, been affected by changes to United Kingdom laws which made it more difficult for migrants to work, find housing, receive health care and claim benefits. These laws were aimed primarily at irregular migrants but also impacted upon regular migrants because of the way that they were required to provide



proof of their status in a way which was not always possible for them to do. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London in April 2018, numerous Caribbean governments made representations on behalf of their nationals, many who had been in the United Kingdom for 40 or 50 years, and some concessions were won, demonstrating how international forums are essential to the management of migration.

When migrants move between countries their right to social security can be affected either because the contributions they have made in one country are not recognised in another or because benefits are not portable. In the Montevideo Consensus, member States agreed to promote the signing of bilateral and multilateral social security conventions in order to close these gaps and therefore facilitate labour migration. There has been a CARICOM Agreement on Social Security since 1997 which covers all full members of CARICOM except Suriname and Haiti. The Agreement is intended to protect CARICOM Nationals' entitlement to benefits and provide equality of treatment when moving from one CARICOM country to another. There is also an Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Reciprocal Agreement which covers short term benefits which are outside the scope of the CARICOM agreement although not all OECS members are signatories to the convention.

Nine Caribbean countries have bilateral social security agreements with Canada, three with the United Kingdom but none with the United States of America. Migrants between countries not having a bilateral agreement may still be able to access the respective social security systems but since there is no mutual recognition, there is no portability of acquired rights from one system to the other, generally leading to a loss of protection. Bilateral agreements also address the portability of benefits, determining the terms upon which social security benefits can be paid from one country to recipients in another. New bilateral agreements could enhance social protection for migrants.

Collectively these agreements, most of which date from the 1980s and 1990s, play an important role in enhancing the portability of acquired social security rights. Implementation of the CARICOM Agreement on Social Security is complicated by the different rules used by each national social security system, and there may be some scope for improving its operation. With freedom of movement within the Single Market and Economy (CSME) not fully implemented, the number of migrants actually transferring acquired rights has been relatively small.

### **3. Protecting the human rights of all migrants**

There are particular challenges involved in protecting vulnerable migrants and refugees traveling by sea. The number of irregular migrants in the Caribbean traveling by sea has steadily increased over the years with regular reports of maritime incidents often involving migrants of Cuban or Haitian origin. There is a need for regional cooperation to put in place fair and efficient procedures for humane treatment of irregular migrants travelling by sea, and prevention of refoulement,<sup>77</sup> as well as access to fair and efficient procedures. This issue was identified as a priority by member States participating in the Caribbean Migration Consultations and at the 2017 meeting in the Bahamas, countries shared information about their work in this area.

Trinidad and Tobago has been receiving increasing numbers of migrants in recent years including larger number of asylum seekers and refugees since early 2017. Asylum seekers and refugees in Trinidad and Tobago come from six main countries – Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, Bangladesh, Jamaica, Colombia and Nigeria – representing a mix of both regional and extra-regional refugees (Nakhid, 2017). Like most Caribbean countries, Trinidad and Tobago does not have refugee legislation but, in 2014, adopted a National Policy to Address Refugee and Asylum Matters. The policy provided for a phased approach to the development of a Refugee Status Determination (RSD) mechanism and a transition of responsibility for the procedure from UNHCR to the government of Trinidad and Tobago. It provides for capacity building, the adoption of standard operating procedures, the enactment of legislation and the creation of a Refugee Unit within the Immigration Division (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 2016). In April 2018, a number of Venezuelan nationals were deported including registered asylum-seekers and individuals who

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<sup>77</sup> The forcible return of refugees or asylum seekers to a country where they are liable to be subjected to persecution.

had declared an intention to apply for refugee status (UNHCR, 2018). UNHCR continues to work with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to strengthen its implementation of the asylum policy.

The geographic position of the Bahamas renders it susceptible to large mixed migration flows. In 2016, more than 1,400 persons were interdicted in over 65 maritime incidents near the Bahamas (UNHCR, 2017). As in Trinidad and Tobago, refugee legislation, and a regulatory framework for the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees, are needed to guarantee protection against refoulement. Belize receives migrants (including refugees) from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala due to violence and socio-economic factors and there are refugee communities throughout Belize. This led the Government of Belize to re-establish its Refugee Department in 2016 and begin developing protection sensitive entry systems.

A Regional Refugee Transfer Mechanism (RRTM) was created to facilitate resettlement. Through this mechanism, refugees are transferred from isolated islands to Trinidad and Tobago for interviewing and resettlement processing, before their departure for resettlement to a third country. The RRTM started as a pilot for up to 20 cases in the first year.

Caribbean countries receive a steady flow of deportees that need assistance and support on return to their home countries so that they are able to become self-sufficient. Forced returnees have often been stigmatized as criminals which makes their reintegration difficult and this often leads to them being marginalized. In Jamaica, a National Plan of Action in support of the reintegration and rehabilitation of involuntary returned migrants was developed and launched in 2017. The Government of Jamaica has sought to mitigate the adverse effects of involuntary return migration through the provision of support such as temporary housing. Another set of risks threaten voluntary return migrants to Jamaica. They can be vulnerable to crime as they are commonly presumed to possess wealth. There have been several cases of returnees being targeted, and in some cases murdered.

Human trafficking and migrant smuggling are a concern in the Caribbean although there are no systematic statistics on the scale of the problems. Several Caribbean countries have established national counter-trafficking task forces and have made significant strides to strengthen their legal and institutional frameworks to combat crime and to identify and assist victims of trafficking. However, States that identify trafficked persons may put them in further danger if they return them to their country of origin without considering their protection needs and the risks that they may face upon return. Some trafficked persons may qualify for refugee status or other forms of protection. Victims of trafficking have a right to be informed of their legal options and there need to be mechanisms that provide for the referral of victims of trafficking in need of international protection.

In the region, cases of migrants, including very vulnerable ones, abandoned by smugglers in high-risk places are common. Very often, smuggled migrants who have been abandoned suffer injuries and some even die. More recently, migrants are at greater risks of finding themselves in trafficking-like situations and are increasingly becoming victims of numerous crimes, such as rape, extortion and kidnapping. Migrants and their families rarely denounce these crimes. Moreover, numerous other crimes are often linked to people smuggling – human trafficking, identity fraud, corruption and money laundering – creating shadow governance systems that undercut the rule of law. This situation calls for enhanced international cooperation (IOM, 2016).

Considerable advances have been made in the Caribbean in the fight against trafficking, including development of specialized police units and assistance protocols that involve multiple sectors, best practices, and minimum standards. Many countries now have anti-trafficking laws, for example Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. In 2018, a Caribbean regional counter-trafficking network was established with the support of the US State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) and the IOM. It is a forum to promote cooperation, sharing of information and best practice.

In 2016, Bahamians voted "no" in a referendum on gender equality in citizenship matters under Bahamian law. The proposed amendments –backed by the government– would have strengthened anti-discrimination protections based on sex. The result maintained inequality in Bahamian laws so that women and men pass on citizenship to their children and spouses in different ways. The result put at risk the

citizenship rights of families, in particular the risk of separation of families with diverse nationalities or children born outside of the Bahamas to Bahamian parents. An undetermined number of persons of Haitian descent born in Bahamas are estimated to be stateless as they are unable to acquire either Bahamian or Haitian nationality due to administrative barriers (UNHCR, 2017).

#### **4. Climate and migration**

In September 2017, numerous Caribbean islands saw hurricanes Irma, Jose and Maria lead to displacement either internally or across borders. The islands affected, were Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Martin, Sint Maarten, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. In the worst affected islands there was extensive damage to homes, businesses and infrastructure. Governments and international relief agencies provided shelter for people who had lost their homes and other humanitarian assistance. Hurricane Irma damaged 90 per cent of all structures on the island of Barbuda leading to a full evacuation. Approximately 1,500 people were evacuated to Antigua. The Government managed the reception and registration of these evacuees and made available accommodation, food and psychosocial support. Six months later, just 22 per cent of Barbuda's previous inhabitants had returned. Antigua also welcomed Dominicans who were displaced after Hurricane Maria while Guyana and Saint Kitts and Nevis also received displaced persons. Disaster response involves the collaboration of many organisations and coordination and collaboration are crucial. (IOM, 2017b).

Longer term climate change is also expected to lead to migration. The increasing frequency of extreme weather events increases the likelihood of weather-related humanitarian emergencies and related population movements. Rising sea levels may make low-lying coastal areas uninhabitable and the effect on livelihoods, public health, food security and water availability can exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities and provoke migratory movements (IOM, 2014). The OECS Commission is working on proposals for establishing social protection safety nets for climate change led migration and also developing of national disaster protocols.

#### **5. Conclusions**

Over the last five years, there has been significant progress in the level of international cooperation in migration in the Caribbean. The participation of Caribbean States in the adoption of the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action in December 2014 led to the creation of the Caribbean Migration Consultations. These, together with the anticipated agreement of a United Nations Global Compact later this year, are welcome developments which will provide frameworks for dialogue and international cooperation on the issue of migration.

The protection of refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants has been a focus of attention in the Caribbean Migration Consultations. Most countries have introduced legislation to address trafficking against persons although further work is required regionally and nationally to address the issue. Legislation on refugee protection and asylum is absent in many countries and matters relating to refugees and asylum seekers are handled with reference to policies or operational procedures which do not provide sufficient protection for the rights of migrants. Countries should consider the introduction of new legislation on the protection of refugees and asylum seekers. There is inadequate protection for the rights of migrants more generally, for example access to basic services in education and health is not generally guaranteed regardless of migration status.

The management of skilled migration is an ongoing challenge with the continual loss of skills undermining progress in education, health and many other sectors. In addition to measures designed to offer more attractive careers to Caribbean nationals, consideration should also be given to the extent to which skilled immigration can mitigate to challenges posed by skilled emigration. In addition, several countries have implemented measures to begin to take advantage of the benefits of relations with diaspora communities, and these need to be further pursued.

## G. TERRITORIAL INEQUALITY, SPATIAL MOBILITY AND VULNERABILITY

This chapter addresses vulnerabilities associated with territorial inequalities and spatial mobility. Key commitments include to guarantee universal access to basic services for all, including drinking water, sewerage and electricity. There is recognition of the need to promote sustainable urban development and strengthen city systems and their rural environments. Member States also agreed to facilitate the prevention and mitigation of the impact of socioenvironmental disasters and environmental vulnerability.

Latin America and the Caribbean is today a heavily urbanized region with over 80 percent of its population living in urban areas. Countries like Chile (88 percent urban) or Uruguay (95 percent) have already experienced their urban transition; however, the situation in the Caribbean is very heterogeneous. Partly due to recognised challenges in the statistical definition of ‘urban’<sup>78</sup> sectors and partly due to geographical and socioeconomic constraints, the Caribbean urban population varies widely from 100 percent in the Cayman Islands or Sint Maarten to less than 10 percent in Montserrat (see table 7). The Caribbean urban population is growing two to three times faster than the current average in the LAC region. Jamaica’s urban population will grow at an even faster rate in the future: while slightly over half of Jamaica’s population is urban, by 2050 two out of three Jamaicans will live in cities.<sup>79</sup>

Urban population projections present significant variations within the region, its territorial expression and growth patterns is also very diverse: new, more polycentric urban forms are expected in the Caribbean, different from the traditional mono-centric design of Caribbean cities. The Caribbean urban shift is observing the emergence of new “city-regions” and “urban corridors”. Urban sprawl in the Caribbean will entail a doubling to a quintupling of total urban land area<sup>80</sup>.

**Table 7**  
**Level of urbanisation<sup>a</sup> in the Caribbean, 2005-2050**

*(percentages of total population; population estimates and projections based on current urbanisation trends)*

Country	2005	2010	2015	2050
Anguilla	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Antigua and Barbuda	29.2	26.2	23.8	26.3
Aruba	44.9	43.1	41.5	47.3
Bahamas	82.3	82.5	82.9	87.0
Barbados	32.9	32.1	31.5	38.9
Belize	46.3	45.0	44.0	51.0
British Virgin Islands	43.2	44.6	46.2	57.8
Caribbean Netherlands	74.8	74.7	74.7	79.7
Cayman Islands	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Curaçao	90.5	89.9	89.3	90.7
Dominica	66.6	68.1	69.5	77.8
Grenada	35.9	35.7	35.6	44.0
Guadeloupe	98.4	98.4	98.4	98.8
Guyana	28.3	28.2	28.6	38.5
Jamaica	52.8	53.7	54.8	67.7
Martinique	89.3	89.0	88.9	91.3
Montserrat	9.3	9.2	9.0	12.7
Saint Kitts and Nevis	32.0	31.8	32.0	42.5

<sup>78</sup> See ECLAC (2017), *Subregional Action Plan for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the Caribbean: Prioritizing regional challenges and opportunities (2016-2036)*, ECLAC, MINURVI, UN-Habitat, p. 17.

<sup>79</sup> ECLAC (2017), *Statistical Yearbook of Latin America and the Caribbean*.

<sup>80</sup> McHardy and Donovan’s research has concluded that by 2050, the urban area of the Caribbean will include somewhere between three times the size of Barbados and the entire surface area of Trinidad and Tobago. McHardy, Pauline and Michael G. Donovan (2016), *The state of housing in six Caribbean countries*, Inter-American Development Bank.

Saint Lucia	23.1	18.5	18.5	25.1
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	47.0	48.8	50.6	61.9
Sint Maarten	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Suriname	66.7	66.3	66.0	71.7
Trinidad and Tobago	9.9	9.1	8.4	10.7
Turks and Caicos Islands	87.7	90.2	92.2	96.2
US Virgin Islands	93.7	94.6	95.3	97.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	76.9	78.4	79.8	86.2
Latin America	77.3	78.8	80.2	87.2
The Caribbean	64.3	67.5	70.4	80.7

Sources: United Nations Population Division: World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision (<http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/>) except for the figures for Latin America which are from ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean).

<sup>a</sup> The definition of the term "urban" corresponds to that used in each country.

If managed well, the Caribbean urban transition may bring important benefits; however, it will also increase public responsibilities in dealing with the pressures on already stressed urban infrastructure and public services. A new focus on land governance will be critical, including measures to address tenure security, public land management, housing policy, transportation, waste management, water safety and security, and an integrated coherent approach to urban services. In order to avoid a critical increase in the vulnerabilities related to housing and basic urban infrastructure, urban management will need to put emphasis on building the resilience of the most vulnerable populations. As Caribbean urban population and urban areas grow, unprepared and unplanned territories pose a threat to Caribbean development patterns, multiplying existing vulnerabilities through sprawling informal settlements.

Climate change and exposure to natural hazards have been identified as risk factors in the international efforts to eradicate poverty by 2030. The impacts of climate change, and the vulnerability of poor communities to climate change may vary but, in general terms, climate change will aggravate the already existing vulnerabilities.<sup>81</sup> Vulnerability is not merely about poverty and aspects such as age, gender, and ethnicity must be factored in the definition. Nevertheless, research has shown that the poor tend to suffer the most from disasters and may also encounter more difficulties in responding to climate change impacts; in other words, impoverished communities are more likely to experience reduced resilience to climate change. This increased vulnerability is linked to territorial inequalities as the poorest populations tend to live in hazard-prone areas hence increasing the threat of natural disasters. In order to break the cycle of poverty and address the root cause of key vulnerabilities in the subregion, further planning efforts are required, with particular regard to territorial inequalities and spatial mobility, as proposed by the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, considering the characteristics of the region, the context-specific challenges for each country and the concern for the very high cost associated with natural disasters in the subregion.

This chapter may be subdivided into three main topics. The first theme is associated with the priority actions taken to guarantee universal access to basic services (drinking water, sewerage, electricity) for the entire population and in all territories. This topic also relates directly with the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDGs 1, 3, 6 and 11, as well as with the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and its contextualization at the subregional level through the "Subregional Action Plan for the implementation of the NUA in the Caribbean: Prioritizing regional challenges and opportunities (2016-2036)" (ECLAC, 2017e), which considers several of these aspects, in particular ensuring that no one is left behind, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions, ensuring equal rights and opportunities, improving housing, education, food security and nutrition, health and wellbeing, the promotion of security and elimination of all forms of violence, ensuring public participation, providing safe and equal access for all to physical and social infrastructure and basic services, as well as to adequate and affordable housing.

<sup>81</sup> African DB et al (2003), *Poverty and Climate Change: Reducing the Vulnerability of the Poor through Adaptation*.

The second theme relates to promoting sustainable urban development and strengthening of city systems and their rural environments, and addresses urban design and urban planning. This topic includes elements related to building resilience to climate change through concrete mitigation and adaptation measures and promoting spatial analysis to the study of specific vulnerable groups when formulating development plans and as a tool for territorial management. This topic is related in particular to the NUA, approved at the Habitat III meeting and to the 2030 Agenda, and in particular with SDG 11 pointing out to the need to promote inclusive and sustainable urbanization patterns.

The third topic in analysis in this chapter is the prevention and mitigation of the impact of disasters and environmental vulnerability, which considers the linkages to ecological sustainability, ecosystems based approaches, including green and resilient infrastructure to promote climate resiliency and its convergence within the broader SAMOA Pathway (2014), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), the Sendai Framework (2015), the Paris Agreement (2015) and the NUA (2016).

### **1. Universal access to basic services (drinking water, sewerage, electricity)**

In what concerns priority measures 77 and 79, the established monitoring indicators G.2 (travel time), G.3 (percentage of households that report being assaulted, suffering aggression or being the victim of a crime in the past 12 months, according to the minor administrative area), G.9 (proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge), G.11 (annual mean levels of fine particular matter) and G.12 (housing in location subject to risks: number of houses built in risk areas per 100,000 housing units) would be important indicators; however, at this time some of them cannot yet be calculated, or there is only information available at the national level. In order to review the access to basic services the information provided by the voluntary national reports (VNRs) is an important source to determine progress. In the absence of data to monitor the agreed indicators it is relevant to analyse the progress in implementation during the period 2013-2018 that may have provided efforts to improve access to basic services and reduce gaps in inequality at territorial level, while also contributing to improve water quality by reducing negative impacts resulting from inappropriate sanitation systems. This also includes the added environmental dimension linked to sanitation by reducing discharge of untreated wastewater and increasing recycling and safe reuse.

Water and sanitation are recognized as human rights<sup>82</sup> and as such, governments are expected to take concrete action to comply with these rights, by ensuring that appropriate services are put in place as agreed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's Goal 6.<sup>83</sup> Accessibility of basic services in the Caribbean is still a pressing issue. ECLAC reported in 2016 that "water availability is scarce if the minimum level of 1,000 m<sup>3</sup> per capita per year is considered as reference" since, on average, the subregion has 2,532 cubic meters of water per capita, considerably less than the availability for other SIDS. However, the countries of the subregion have made important achievements in terms of access to water and sanitation (see figure 12). Despite these, there is considerable weakness and institutional fragmentation both in policies and regulations, and in the provision of services, particularly due to the quality of infrastructure. Eighty-five percent of wastewater is not treated before reaching the Caribbean Sea and 51.5 percent of households lack a sewer connection. Only 17 percent of households are connected to treatment systems (ECLAC, 2016d).

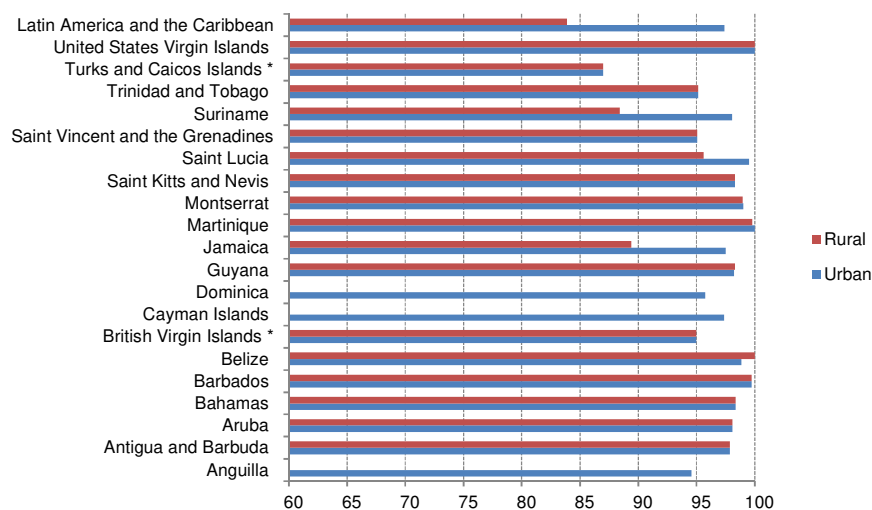
From 2013 to 2018, the region has implemented actions that have allowed advances in basic services, including: i) construction and rehabilitation of water and sanitation systems; ii) investment and management of sanitation systems to guarantee quality and sustainability in the service; iii) management programs that guarantee that the wastewater is sufficiently treated and reused under sanitary conditions; iv) accessibility to electricity in rural areas; and v) energy management and efficiency programme.

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<sup>82</sup> On 28 July 2010, through Resolution 64/292, the UN General Assembly acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realisation of all human rights. The Resolution calls upon States and international organisations to provide financial resources, help capacity-building and technology transfer to help countries, in particular developing countries, to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all. In November 2002, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted General Comment No. 15 on the right to water. Article I.1 states that "The human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights". Comment No. 15 also defined the right to water as the right of everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable and physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use.

<sup>83</sup> Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

**Figure 12**  
**Housing and basic services: population using an improved drinking water source and an improved sanitation facility, urban and rural areas, 2015**  
*(percentages)*



Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation. <http://www.wssinfo.org>

Progress and/or new actions are reported by Jamaica and Guyana governments: Guyana recognizes that access to safe drinking water is a fundamental basic service. In 2011, the Government of Guyana secured a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to finance the Water Supply Rehabilitation Programme. The programme improved the operational performance of the water supply system and ensured that the water provided to customers meets World Health Organization standards. Improvements in access to sanitation services for low-income people are associated with the replacement of its pit latrine with a septic tank system (with toilet) (Government of Guyana, 2018). For its part, Jamaica reports that inequalities of access to water occur between urban and rural areas: access to piped water has been consistently higher in urban areas than in rural areas. Over 75 percent of households have water closets, with a majority living in urban areas. Between 2013 and 2015, there was a 1.5 percentage point increase in the use of water closets in rural areas. In 2014, Jamaica launched its Social Protection Strategy. This strategy governs access to basic social services. During 2017 major initiatives were implemented to enhance the accessibility to electricity in rural areas, and as of 2017 the rural areas in the island have achieved 97.7 per cent electrification. This success can be attributed to programmes such as the Rural Electrification Programme – which has a vision to have 100 percent access to electricity in rural areas and has contributed to the 91 per cent usage by rural households by 2015. Important social protection policies in Jamaica were reinforced by sector specific policies such as the National Energy Policy which was awarded in 2016 by the IMF as the “Best Government Infrastructure Strategy, Caribbean 2016”. The framework of the NEP was also adapted into the CARILEC Energy Policy. The Electricity Act was updated in 2015 with a supporting Integrated Resource Plan including Renewable Energy and alternate energy integration into the grid. (Government of Jamaica, 2018).

One of the clearest expressions of inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean is territorial heterogeneity, visible in areas such as slums and informal settlements with inappropriate housing, reflecting the deeply rooted development gaps between the rich and the poor and the inherent urban segregation it entails. It is therefore crucial to recognize that “place matters”: the place where someone is born, grows up, lives, and works is an integral part of his/her development potential and will greatly influence that person’s chances of living in prosperity, equality and in achieving their fullest development. New research indicates that where you live affects the life you have and is just as crucial to an individual’s success as motivation and work ethic.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Stanford researcher Raj Chetty and his colleagues have shown clearly that simply moving to better neighborhoods leads to substantial “increases in children’s earnings as adults, increases in college attendance and reductions in out-of-wedlock births”. See: <http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org>

Indicator G.8 ( also corresponding to SDG 11.1.1), the proportion of the urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing, will allow measurement of progress on Priority measure 77, particularly in regards to full access to basic social services and equal opportunities. In the Caribbean region it is observed that population living in slums, informal settlements and inadequate housing, are often more exposed, due the lack of quality of the housing but also as a consequence of the lack of basic services and poor location, to bigger environmental and climate change related risks.

In what relates to slums, informal settlements, investments in improving housing and public spaces for the most vulnerable, two initiatives may be highlighted for the central role in the progress achieved: the discussions leading up to the Subregional Action Plan for the Implementation of the NUA in the Caribbean (2016-2036), and the Caribbean Urban Forum, the foremost subregional forum for publicizing and promoting the urban agenda and human settlements. Montevideo objectives address housing and basic services priorities linked to people-centred approaches, with a gender and human rights perspective and a vision of sustainability and environmental risk management. A number of actions have been taken to meet these objectives. Governments have continued with programmes for slum improvement although the absence of reliable and comparable statistics makes it difficult to assess the impact of these policies.

The review of national experience shows that countries have developed programmes of wide scope for strengthening housing policies. Caribbean countries report substantial work in the field of housing policies: Jamaica and Guyana have put in place National Housing strategies, for example. In 2013, Guyana's Ministry of Housing focused on promoting community development planning and implementing a hinterland housing improvement programme. This evolved into the Hinterland Sustainable Housing programme which is aimed at improving liveability of low income families in select communities of the hinterland through better access to housing, potable water, sanitation and the promotion of women's empowerment because they were given the opportunity to participate in project design and implementation (Government of Guyana, 2018).

The review of Jamaica's National Housing Policy and Implementation Plan is ongoing and the new plan will include climate change considerations, disaster risk mitigation, and will address issues such as squatting. In addition, the National Land Policy is at an advanced stage of revision and the National Spatial Plan will include a housing component, aiming to address provision of housing, using spatial policies/strategies. Other social amenities will also be assessed in the NSP. The Squatter Management Unit currently located in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC) is engaged in the preparation of a Squatter Management Policy and Implementation Plan. In 2014, a database on squatter communities was completed to be used as a guide for the policy. Other housing measures addressed aspects related to affordable housing, access to finance for low income groups with reduction of interest rates (Government of Jamaica, 2018).

## **2. Promoting sustainable urban development and strengthening of city systems and their rural environments.**

The consolidation of planning systems “will help to build societies that are equitable and free of social exclusion, by designing public policies geared to reducing gaps in the quality of life and in the exercise of the rights of all persons, with emphasis on the living conditions of human beings and their relationship with the territory where they live”.<sup>85</sup> Planning pressures in rapidly urbanizing regions such as the Caribbean often result from lack of access to structured information. In fact, the multitude of cross-cutting issues that confront the region require an integrated multi sector multi-stakeholder approach where planning both at national and sub national levels can address the new and severe social, economic and environmental issues posed by climate change and growing population in an inclusive manner, promoting participatory approaches and consultation with different social and stakeholder groups. Limited supporting documentation and lack of research on urban issues in the region has led to an ad-hoc retroactive planning culture in lieu of a practice of anticipating the needs of the population and planning for the future of island communities. Population statistics and community-based vulnerability assessments are the minimum basis to inform the urban analysis and consider the intricate relationships established in the urban realm. This multi-sector multi-stakeholder

<sup>85</sup> UN-ECLAC (2013), *Montevideo consensus on population and development*, First session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.



approach will allow planners to leverage decision makers' support towards a more sustainable urban future and tackle issues such as informal settlements, climate change, environmental degradation, resource efficiency, and underdeveloped infrastructure. This is particularly relevant as we wish to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups, those that are usually the worst-hit in case of disasters.

With respect to priority measures addressing urban and territorial planning (76, 78, 80, 81 and 84) these may be grouped to include urban policies and territorial management instruments developed to promote inclusiveness and reduce socio-territorial inequalities through specific measures to ensure sustainable land management, improve resilience and prevent impacts resulting from natural disasters. Strategies should also address decentralization through subnational planning and local development initiatives, investment in participatory processes, public-private partnerships, and collaborative multi-sector, multi-stakeholder coordination that may support local governance systems and community-led development. Indicators<sup>86</sup> addressing these priority measures have not been sufficiently developed yet in the Caribbean, including some which are also SDG indicators.

**Table 8**  
**Caribbean development planning policies and strategic development instruments**

Country	Policy/strategy
Anguilla	National sustainable development plan - Anguilla 2040 (in preparation; outsourced)
Antigua and Barbuda	Medium term strategic development plan (2016-2020); National development plan (in preparation, with ECLAC support)
Aruba	National Integrated Strategic Plan "Nos Aruba 2025" (2010)
Bahamas	The National Development Plan: Vision 2040
Barbados	Barbados Medium-Term Growth and Development Strategy 2013-2020 (BGDS); draft National Strategic Plan 2005-2025; National Development Plan (in preparation, with ECLAC support)
Belize	Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy of Belize (2016-2019)
British Virgin Islands	enVision 2040 Smart Land Use Planning; BVI's national physical development Plan (in preparation)
Cayman Islands	Cayman Islands Development Plan (1997, in review)
Curacao	National Development Plan Curacao 2015-2030
Dominica	Growth and Social Protection Strategy (2014-2018) of Dominica; National Development Plan (in preparation, with ECLAC support)
Grenada	Grenada National Sustainable Development Plan 2030 (2015)
Guadeloupe	Guadeloupe Strategy 2020, Action plan for the region of Guadeloupe for the programming of European Funds 2014-2020; Le Schéma d'Aménagement Régional (SAR, 2017)
Guyana	Green State Development Strategy of Guyana (2017)
Jamaica	Vision 2030 Jamaica. National Development Plan (NDP) (2010); National Spatial Plan (in preparation)
Martinique	Plan d'Aménagement et de Développement Durable de la Martinique (PADDMA; in preparation); Schéma Territorial de Développement Économique, d'Innovation et d'Internationalisation (STEDII, 2017).
Montserrat	Montserrat Sustainable Development Plan 2008 – 2020
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Adaptation Strategy in Response to The New EU Sugar Regime 2006 – 2013 of St. Kitts and Nevis (2006)
Saint Lucia	Medium term strategic development plan (2016-2020; review ongoing); National development plan (in preparation, with ECLAC support)
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013-2025 of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Sint Maarten	National Recovery Plan; National Development Plan (in preparation, with ECLAC support)
Suriname	Policy Development Plan 2017-2021)
Trinidad and Tobago	Vision 2030: National Development Strategy (2016)
Turks and Caicos	Turks and Caicos Islands development strategy 2013 – 2017
US Virgin Islands	-

Sources: ECLAC Planning observatory (<https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org>) and Caribbean Development Portal

Analysis is therefore based on submitted voluntary national reports and ECLAC's database of national planning policies and Caribbean development portal. It is quite clear that all territories are making efforts to develop national development policies mainstreaming resilience and climate change aspects as well as establishing links to the SDGs. The last five years have seen important advances in development

<sup>86</sup> Indicator G.1 (percentage of metropolitan governments or cities and local governments that have a geostatistical and georeferenced information system for territorial planning and management decisions); Indicator G.6 (proportion of population living in cities that implement urban and regional development plans integrating population projections and resource needs, by size of city.); Indicator G.7 (percentage of urban and territorial development plans that incorporate the rights, gender and interculturality perspectives); Indicator G.13 (the country has integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula); Indicator G.16 (percentage of municipal or local master plans that, in their preamble, provide for disaggregated and georeferenced sociodemographic analysis).

planning (see Table 8) and the efforts to incorporate measures to address disaster risk reduction and climate change impacts.

The NUA acknowledges the unique and emerging urban development challenges facing Small Island Developing States: through its Subregional Action Plan for Implementation of the NUA in the Caribbean, it presents a set of guidelines and priorities for adapting the global agenda to the subregional, Caribbean context, aiming to ensure high-level attention on issues pertaining to urban resilience. Action Areas defined for the Caribbean-specific objectives are: 1) National Urban Policies; 2) Urban legal frameworks; 3) Urban and territorial planning and design; 4) Financing urbanization; and 5) Local implementation. Action Area 6 defines the monitoring framework and mechanisms for follow-up. The document further recognises one key challenge for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs and the NUA within the region: the lack of quality urban and development data and analysis. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat is leading the development of a core set of SDG indicators that will constitute the monitoring framework on which Caribbean countries will be expected to report on SDG implementation.<sup>87</sup>

In what regards land management and territorial/physical planning, concrete advances and experiences from countries in the subregion may be highlighted: Grenada reports important work in the area of prevention, mitigation of socio-environmental disasters and environmental vulnerability, including the approval of the Physical Planning and Control Bill (2016), the National Physical Development Plan, the Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project and reports as main challenges access to funding, intersectoral collaboration, and supportive infrastructure (Government of Grenada, 2018). In the case of Jamaica preparation is underway for a National Spatial Plan and a Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience. Work began on the review of the National Settlement Strategy as well as background studies on Social Infrastructure and Housing, situational analysis, identification of issues and recommendations. (Government of Jamaica, 2018).

### **3. Mitigating of the impact of socioenvironmental disasters and environmental vulnerability.**

Hurricanes, like Irma, Jose and Maria, and tropical storms threaten the Caribbean with growing intensity. While hurricanes are not unusual in tropical regions, the frequency and intensity of these most recent storms are worsening with climate change, impacting the Caribbean with tragic effects and making it one of the most vulnerable regions on the planet. Disasters impact communities' livelihoods and their economic potential and it is imperative from the perspective of sustainable development to integrate disaster prevention policies as part of national development policies.

Issues of internal migration remain a matter of interest with new concern for environmental related migration. Resettlement or relocation have been traditionally more linked to economic growth and urban attractiveness but now take on a new shape which should be taken account of within regional development and territorial planning policies that have an influence on migratory patterns and on the geographical location of population. With high percentages of Caribbean populations living near the coast, many of them in low-lying areas, coastal floods, storm surges and inland flooding can cause serious social migration and/or displacement challenges. Some countries have begun to consider the issue of internal migration and population location in the context of natural disaster prevention—in the case of Haiti, for example, following the earthquake of 2010—and mitigating the effects of climate change.

Climate change impacts pose threats to countries' resilience in respect of biodiversity, coastal protection, water and energy security, and food security among other areas. Coral reefs and mangroves remain endangered and play a vital role in the resilience and wellbeing of many island communities. Healthy reefs and mangroves provide important ecosystems services: they are highly efficient in coastal protection, breaking waves and storm surges, while storing carbon and supporting biodiversity. Furthermore, they also play key functions in community livelihoods and support a variety of tourism activities. Due to increasing ocean acidification, the abundance of coral species is rapidly declining and in the Caribbean it has reportedly decreased by over 80 percent. In the World Resources Institute's *Reefs at Risk Revisited* report, Haiti and Grenada were identified as among the SIDS most vulnerable to the effects of coral reef degradation. Many Caribbean countries are also facing water stress and scarcity due to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme tides, sea-level rise and saline intrusion into coastal aquifers.

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<sup>87</sup> On this matter see Quarless, Diane (2017), "Implementing the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the Caribbean", *Focus*, Issue 3 July/September 2017, Magazine of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, ECLAC, pp. 2, 14.

The WRI's Aqueduct Country and River Basin Ranking, ranking the Baseline Water Stress, rates Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago as 'extremely high water stress', the highest possible score.<sup>88</sup>

**Table 9**  
**Caribbean Urban Statistics (adapted from UN-Habitat<sup>89</sup>)**

Caribbean Member States / Associated Members	Urban Population (thousands)	Total Population (thousands)	Percentage Urban	Average Annual Rate of Change of the Urban Population 2010-2015 (in %)	Population In the Largest City (% of Urban Population)	Largest City – (by Inhabitants)	Land area where elevation is below 5m (% of total land area)	Population living in areas where elevation is below 5m (% of total population), 2000
Anguilla	16	16	100	1.56	-	North Side	-	-
Antigua and Barbuda	27	90	29.8	0.96	100	<i>St. John's</i>	32.4	32.3
Aruba	51	108	46.8	0.54	69.9	<i>Oranjestad</i>	29.6	29.6
Bahamas	293	347	84.3	1.37	83.3	<i>Nassau</i>	72	46.5
Barbados	122	274	44.4	1.35	92.7	<i>Bridgetown</i>	15.7	15.7
Belize	142	318	44.7	1.54	-	<i>Belize City</i>	9.5	15.8
British Virgin Islands	10	23	40.6	1.48	-	<i>Road Town</i>	-	-
Cuba	8459	11254	75.2	-0.08	25.2	<i>Havana</i>	12.7	10
Dominica	45	68	67.1	0.18	30	<i>Roseau</i>	9.4	10.4
Dominican Republic	7007	10056	69.7	2.03	31.6	<i>Santo Domingo</i>	4.1	3
Grenada	41	105	39.1	1.24	100	<i>St. George's</i>	21.7	21.7
Guyana	214	756	28.4	0.53	59.5	<i>Georgetown</i>	2.7	31.3
Haiti	5409	10124	53.4	3.68	53.7	<i>Port-au-Prince</i>	3.9	5.4
Jamaica	1432	2751	52	0.51	41.4	<i>Kingston</i>	7.1	5.8
Montserrat	1	6	14.2	1.89	-	<i>Brades</i>	-	-
Puerto Rico*	3704	3746	98.9	0.06	74.1	<i>San Juan</i>	7.7	11.3
St. Kitts and Nevis	17	53	32	1.05	77.7	<i>Basseterre</i>	19	22.1
St. Lucia	31	176	17.5	1.1	45.6	<i>Castries</i>	8	8
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	54	109	49.3	4.65	53.2	<i>Kingstown</i>	22	22
Suriname	369	529	69.7	1.44	72.4	<i>Paramaribo</i>	3.4	68.2
Trinidad and Tobago	185	1346	13.7	2.21	32.9	<i>Chaguanas</i>	8	7.5
U.S. Virgin Islands	104	109	95.5	-0.1	52.8	<i>Charlotte Amalie</i>	31	22

Sources: UN DESA (2012); World Bank (2013)

Italics: Capital cities

Priority measures 82 and 83 relate to environmental issues and socio-environmental disasters. To monitor these two measures, five indicators<sup>90</sup> were identified, from which information is available only for G10 (see figure 13). The other indicators lack information, or its construction is still being discussed and therefore there is no metadata.

Table 9 presents an overview of the Caribbean urban reality, with striking evidence of the alarming geophysical vulnerabilities of the subregion. According to UN-Habitat data, countries such as Suriname (with almost 70 percent of its population living below 5m of sea level), Guyana or Antigua and Barbuda are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, not only due to sea level rise but also in regard to increased risks posed to population exposed to other extreme weather events affecting coastal areas. In particular, the majority of communities, infrastructure and economic activities are located in low-lying coastal areas. According to UNEP (2008), approximately 70 percent of the Caribbean population lives in coastal areas. In addition, as populations grow, and coupled with climate change impacts, relocation to higher ground or beyond national borders will be a major challenge. It is hence not surprising that analysis of the information provided in the voluntary national reports revealed the increased interest in these

<sup>88</sup> UN-OHRLS (2015), *Small island developing States in numbers*, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. Baseline water stress is defined as the ratio of total annual water withdrawals to total available annual renewable supply, by country and for agricultural, municipal, and industrial sectors.

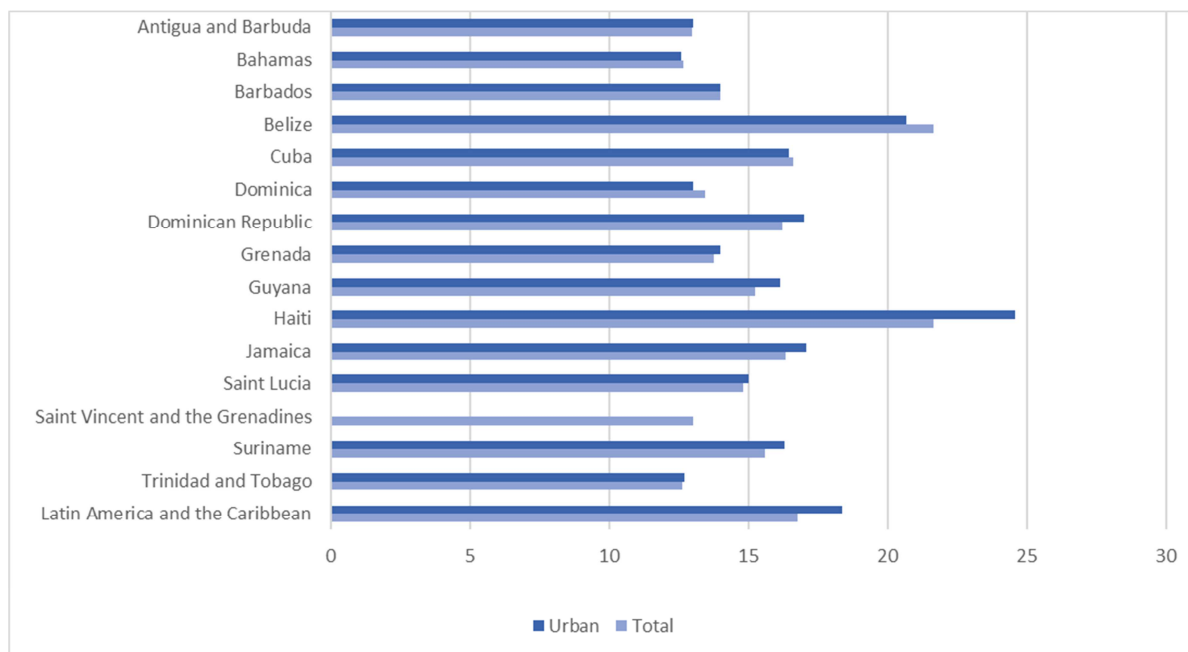
<sup>89</sup> UN-Habitat (2015), *Urbanization and Climate Change in Small Island Developing States*.

<sup>90</sup> G.10 (11.6.2 SDG, annual mean levels of fine particulate matter - e.g. PM2.5 and PM10 - in cities, population weighted); G.12 (housing in hazardous locations: number of homes built on hazardous locations per 100,000 housing units); G.13 (the country has integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula); G.14 (Percentage of energy generated through sustainable, clean and renewable production processes) and G.15 (Wastewater treated: percentage of all wastewater undergoing some form of treatment)

matters and the continuing development of environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes to support Caribbean countries to build resilience and adapt to climate change.

A number of governments have launched initiatives to address disaster risk reduction, as well as concrete adaptation measures. Jamaica reported the development of background studies in support of the ongoing national development planning process, including environment and disaster risk reduction related matters such as Natural & Cultural Heritage, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change, and Environment. Through its Vision 2030 Jamaica’s government is promoting, since 2012, a three-component project designed to increase the climate resilience of the Negril coastline, enhance the climate resilience of the agricultural sector by improving water and land management in select communities and improve institutional and local level capacity for sustainable management of natural resources and disaster risk reduction in the targeted vulnerable areas, awareness building and knowledge management. Farmers in five rural parishes have been exposed to alternative water harvesting and management methods such as mini-dams, rainwater harvesting and gravity drip irrigation systems; and have been trained in efficient water use and climate change adaptation and techniques to improve soil moisture retention and disaster risk management. The capacity of the Rural Agricultural Development Authority has been strengthened to train farmers in land and water husbandry. More than 150 community members, including 41 community leaders, have benefitted from the disaster risk reduction training and work on a Risk Atlas has been completed. Jamaica reports progress in the application of Geographic Information Systems to add a spatial dimension to the national planning framework in the areas of Water Resource Management, Health, Housing, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Urban and Regional Planning, Transportation, Waste Management and Forest Management (Government of Jamaica, 2018). Grenada developed a Comprehensive Disaster Management Policy and Strategy (CDM) designed to accomplish objectives such as: 1) enhancing the enabling environment for CDM; 2) improving disaster risk management; 3) building robust disaster resilience; 4) mainstreaming CDM in all areas of national planning and development and 5) strengthening partnerships for CDM. The policy recognizes the importance of addressing issues such as unsustainable land management practices (including inappropriate land use change, and land development in vulnerable locations, such as along steep slopes, river banks and coastal areas). Grenada recognizes that while all assets are prone to negative impacts in the latter areas, informal settlements are at greatest risk due to inadequate engineering and planning, aggravated by high exposure to hazard events.

**Figure 13**  
**Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities, 2012**  
*(Micrograms per cubic meter)*



Source: SDG Indicators, Global Database <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database>

Additionally, measures to promote energy security are underway and countries such as Guyana report actions promoting energy transition, and an ambitious plan to move to 100 percent renewable energy sources by 2025. As Guyana transitions to an oil producing nation, its government is eager to implement prudent structural reforms, environmental safeguards, and strengthen institutions to promote inclusive development of natural resources. Projects are currently being undertaken by Guyana Energy Agency to facilitate transition towards the use of energy saving lights, and a project for the first green town in Guyana (installation of solar photovoltaic systems). Furthermore, Guyana has acquired GEF (Global Environment Facility) funding to implement a project to “Mainstream low emission energy technologies to build Guyana’s Green Economy”. It aims to promote low-emission energy technologies across prioritized sectors, thereby increasing competitiveness and climate-resilience of the national economy. In 2017 construction of Guyana’s first ever solar farm was initiated and is expected to become operational in 2018. Feasibility studies have commenced for the establishment of solar farms in two other areas. Government buildings, including ministries, schools, and health centres, are being outfitted with solar photovoltaic panels, to reduce Government’s dependence on the national grid (Government of Guyana, 2018). Energy efficiency projects came on stream also in Jamaica, which had initiatives targeting energy efficiency within public sector agencies (Energy Security and Efficiency Enhancement Project and Public Sector Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Programme). One of the major initiatives in Jamaica was the Energy Management and Efficiency Programme, which began in September 2016 and was developed to: (i) install energy efficiency and energy conservation retrofits in government facilities; (ii) improve fuel efficiency in the transportation sector; (iii) Institutional strengthening to support Energy Planning. (Government of Jamaica, 2018). The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is establishing an adequate legislative framework that allows harnessing the renewable energy potential in the islands within a strategy to decarbonize the economy. It aims at tackling five main areas: energy efficiency and conservation; renewable energy; solid waste management; sustainable transport, and environmental conservation (for example protection areas or carbon sinks).

In regards to air pollution, which is highly detrimental to public health, the United Nations database on SDG monitoring presents data on annual mean levels of fine particulate matter in cities, for 2012. The majority of Caribbean countries are below the regional average of 16.8 micrograms per cubic meter, with the lowest averages in Trinidad and Tobago (12.6), Bahamas (12.7) and Antigua and Barbuda (12.9), and the highest Belize (21.7) (see figure 2).

#### **4. Conclusions**

Concepts of territorial inequality, spatial mobility and vulnerability are integrated within a wider scope where a Caribbean-specific urban debate is emerging, adapted to the specific governance, geographical, and cultural characteristics of the region. This new debate is rooted, on the one hand, on the perception that global approaches are not easily contextualised in the Caribbean and do not address specific critical issues and governance approaches, and on the other hand, on the discussion leading up to the adoption of the NUA, resulting from the Habitat III United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Quito, 2016). This dialogue has been promoted through the establishment of the Caribbean Urban Forum and the Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management (CNULM) and has resulted in a Caribbean-specific Action Plan. Despite the diversity of growth patterns and disparity of conceptual frameworks for the ongoing dialogue regarding the Caribbean urban transition, one common trend is recognised: the future of the Caribbean is urban.

During the period under review, countries of the subregion instituted various measures to achieve the objectives associated with territorial inequality. These efforts have benefited from the impetus of previous reference periods, from structural processes of social and cultural change, as well as from the development of specific agreements and commitments on urban issues (such as SDG11 and the NUA process), with clearly defined and workable monitoring mechanisms, and from the explicit and active commitment of various stakeholders (such as those related to the ‘right to the city’ movement and increasing efforts to improve participatory processes in local governance). Together with the Montevideo consensus, the SDGs and the NUA constitute the frameworks against which to measure key vulnerabilities in regard to territorial inequalities and spatial mobility in the Caribbean and to evaluate results obtained in implementing urban policies and programmes. Although the three global initiatives described above may sound different, they complement each other and all agree in one key aspect: in order to prevent and mitigate the impact of socioenvironmental disasters and environmental vulnerability, planning efforts alone will not suffice; priority must also be given to adequately measure and capture development progress

in these areas with appropriate data management systems put in place. In order to measure and fully understand the multidimensional expressions of local development progress in terms of territorial inequality, spatial mobility and vulnerability, as proposed by Montevideo consensus, improved monitoring mechanisms are required, providing a coordinated space for an effective contribution from all stakeholders, aligning to the efforts and actions of the 2030 Agenda and other international, regional, national, subnational and local development frameworks.

Countries of the subregion have made important achievements in terms of access to basic services. However, there is considerable weakness and institutional fragmentation both in policies and regulations, and in the provision of services, particularly due to the quality of infrastructure. In this sense, and in face of climate change threats, it remains a priority to implement programs to address water safety and security, as well as energy security.

Governments should continue to progress in the implementation of measures and policies linked to urban development, promoting participatory planning processes, integrating particularly vulnerable groups (such as people with disability, women, youth, indigenous groups, etc.), putting emphasis on public spaces as elements of socio-territorial connectivity and potential disaster risk mitigation, and pursuing efforts to identify sources of financing for local development.

In the Caribbean context, it is important to legitimize a culture of sustainable urban development as a transformational driver for human development, including participatory planning methodologies for the management of human settlements, ensuring gender and age sensitive approaches, as well as particular concern to sustainable urban mobility, safe and accessible to all, measures to reduce and manage risk and the promotion of low emission, climate resilient development. It is important to recognise that 'place matters' and is the terrain for structural inequalities in the subregion that, if left unaddressed, will remain key drivers of social unrest and a persistent face of the gap in access to basic human rights. The involvement of youth groups in community-led participatory planning processes is key to resolve social instability, improve resilience and promote long-term sustainable development.

Considering the high percentage of Caribbean populations living in low-lying coastal areas, increased impacts may be expected and consideration for social migration and/or displacement is required. Well planned relocation can be both a form of disaster risk reduction and a form of climate change adaptation. Addressing the inequalities linked to territorial development, particularly in view of climate change impacts, can serve as a preventative measure, through concrete programs and coordination mechanisms to address these risks. Further debate and public action is recommended in what concerns environmental migration and its impacts, notably through policies for planned resettlement and relocation, addressing vulnerable communities, forced relocation and the rights of affected communities. It is important for States and practitioners to draw lessons from past experiences to ensure that future action is planned, and carried out in a rights-respecting manner and leads to the most positive outcomes possible for those involved.

The links between development planning and reducing vulnerabilities of the poorest have been established. Integrating adaptation efforts into sustainable development planning is central to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Planning is regarded as a key element in sustainable development, fundamental to reducing territorial inequalities which may exacerbate economic, social and environmental inequities at the subnational level and between countries. For territorial development to take place in a sustainable equitable manner concrete governance and policy measures are required: a) regular update of development plans, integrating links to the SDGs and other development frameworks; b) clearer implementation, financing and monitoring systems put in place, establishing the required mechanisms for multi-sector multi-stakeholder coordination, monitoring and evaluation; c) promoting multilevel rights-based participatory processes.

## H. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: INTERCULTURALISM AND RIGHTS

This section of the Montevideo Consensus is concerned with the rights of indigenous peoples, making reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as Convention No. 169 of the International Labour Organization on indigenous and tribal peoples and calling for their implementation. The priority actions in this section call for particular attention to indigenous peoples' right to health, territorial rights, protection against violence and discrimination, the right to communication and information, and the right to participation in decision-making. Specific reference is made to sexual rights and reproductive rights, and indigenous peoples right to their own traditional medicines and health practices especially as regards reducing maternal and child mortality. The Montevideo Consensus also calls attention to the way in which extractive industries can threaten territorial rights and lead to forced displacements. In addition, it emphasises the importance of information about indigenous peoples including statistics and the principle of self-identification.

### 1. The indigenous population of the Caribbean

There are around 160,000 people that identify themselves as indigenous in the Caribbean which represents two per cent of the total population (see table 10). The country with the highest proportion of indigenous peoples is Belize (17.4 per cent) with two main groups, the Garifuna and the Maya. Around half of the indigenous people of the Caribbean live in Guyana where they represent 10.5 per cent of the population. There are smaller proportions of indigenous peoples in Suriname, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Dominica, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, and Trinidad and Tobago. Suriname also has a population of 118,000 Maroons (21.7 per cent of the population). The Maroons descend from escaped slaves and therefore are not indigenous. However, their circumstances are in some ways similar and international law provides a measure of protection for their collective rights, as it does for indigenous peoples.

**Table 10**  
**Indigenous peoples in the Caribbean by country**  
(Numbers and percentages)

	Population	Population as a percentage of the national population
Guyana	78,492	10.5
Belize <sup>a</sup>	56,146	17.4
Maya	36,507	11.3
Garifuna	19,639	6.1
Suriname	20,344	3.8
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3,280	3.0
Dominica	2,017	2.9
Trinidad and Tobago	1,394	0.1
Saint Lucia	775	0.5
Antigua and Barbuda	327	0.4
Caribbean	162,775	2.0

Source: Population and housing censuses of Antigua and Barbuda (2011); Belize (2010); Dominica (2001); Guyana (2012); Saint Lucia (2001); Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (2012); and Trinidad and Tobago (2011).

<sup>a</sup> The Belize Census allowed respondents to select two ethnicities.

In Belize, Guyana and Suriname in particular, there are numerous distinct peoples that are recognised. In Belize, the Maya are the direct descendants of the indigenous population and consist of the Yucatec, Mopan, and Q'eqchi' Maya. In contrast, the Garifuna descend from both Africans and Island Caribs who resisted English and French colonisation, and slavery, in the Eastern Caribbean before being exiled to Central America at the end of the eighteenth century. The Government of Guyana recognises nine Indigenous Nations: Wai Wais, Macushis, Patomonas, Arawaks, Caribs, Wapishana, Arecunas, Akawaio and Warraus. In Suriname, the four largest indigenous groups are the Kali'ña (Caribs), Lokono (Arawaks), Trio (Tirio, Tareno), and Wayana (Cultural Survival, 2016). The most commonly used terms in the Caribbean islands are Amerindian, simply meaning indigenous to the Americas, and Carib which is

slightly more specific and refers to indigenous people from the north coast of South America or the south and eastern Caribbean.

## 2. The situation of indigenous peoples

Where data is available, it strongly suggests that indigenous peoples are disadvantaged and more likely to be living in poverty, suffering from material deprivation or affected by other social inequalities. Data on poverty is not particularly up to date but for the three countries for which data was available, indigenous peoples were much more likely to be indigent or poor. In Belize, for example, the poverty rate among the indigenous (Maya) population in 2009 was 68 per cent compared to 30 per cent among the non-indigenous population. Fifty-one per cent of the indigenous population were indigent compared to just 12 per cent of the non-indigenous population (see table 11).

**Table 11**  
**Selected social and demographic indicators for indigenous and non-indigenous populations**  
(Percentages)

	Year	Indigence rate		Poverty rate		
		Indigenous	Non-indigenous	Indigenous	Non-indigenous	
Belize (Maya, Garifuna) <sup>a</sup>	2002	55 2	6	77 24	29	
	2009	51 12	12	68 39	38	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	2007	(7)	3	(48)	30	
Dominica	2003	(49)	14	(70)	38	
	2008/09	..	..	(50)	28	
	Year	Adolescent birth rate <sup>b</sup>		Total fertility rate		
		Indigenous	Non-indigenous	Indigenous	Non-indigenous	
Belize (Maya, Garifuna) <sup>a</sup>	2015-16	(92) (55)	72	2.9 2.9	2.6	
Guyana	2014	148	69	5.7	2.4	
	Year	Improved water sources <sup>c</sup>		Improved sanitation <sup>d</sup>		
		Indigenous	Non-indigenous	Indigenous	Non-indigenous	
Belize (Maya, Garifuna) <sup>a</sup>	2015-16	94 97	96	76 95	96	
Guyana	2014	59	97	78	97	
Suriname	2010	87	95	87	91	
	Year	Net primary attendance ratio <sup>e</sup>		Net secondary attendance ratio <sup>f</sup>		
		Indigenous	Non-indigenous	Indigenous	Non-indigenous	
Belize (Maya, Garifuna) <sup>a</sup>	2015-16	97 99	95	67 83	73	
Guyana	2014	97	97	73	86	
Suriname	2010	95	95	46	60	

Source: ECLAC on the basis of country poverty assessments and UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys.

<sup>a</sup> For Belize, figures for two indigenous groups are shown, firstly the Maya, secondly the Garifuna.

<sup>b</sup> Age-specific fertility rate for women age 15-19 years.

<sup>c</sup> The population using improved sources of drinking water includes those using any of the following types of supply: piped water (into dwelling, compound, yard or plot, to neighbour, public tap/standpipe), tube well/borehole, protected well, protected spring, and rainwater collection.

<sup>d</sup> An improved sanitation facility is defined as one that hygienically separates human excreta from human contact. Improved sanitation facilities for excreta disposal include flush or pour flush to a piped sewer system, septic tank, or pit latrine, ventilated improved pit latrine, pit latrine with slab, and use of a composting toilet.

<sup>e</sup> MICS indicator 7.4; MDG indicator 2.1 - Primary school net attendance ratio (adjusted) (ISCED).

<sup>f</sup> MICS indicator 7.5 - Secondary school net attendance ratio (adjusted) (ISCED).

Note: ( ) Figures that are based on 25 to 49 unweighted cases.



The fertility rate, including the adolescent fertility rate, is higher among the indigenous population especially in Guyana where the estimated adolescent fertility rate is double that for the non-indigenous population. Indigenous populations in Guyana are more likely to depend on sub-standard water sources and on sub-standard sanitation in Belize Guyana and Suriname. Rates of primary school attendance among indigenous peoples are similar to those for the non-indigenous population while the rates of secondary school attendance are significantly lower. This is partly due to the fact that indigenous children of secondary age are more likely to be in schools which are classified as primary (for example Guyana has 'primary tops' schools which educate children until the age of 15) but it is also true that indigenous children are more likely to be outside the school system.

In 2017, UNICEF published a Study on Indigenous Women and Children in Guyana. The study showed how indigenous communities do not have access to modern life facilities to the same extent as non-indigenous Guyanese. In the hinterland regions (regions 1, 7, 8 and 9) which are home to 80 per cent of the indigenous population, 44 per cent of households do not have electricity (compared with 13 per cent nationally and 6 per cent in urban areas). Unemployment and the lack of employment opportunities were identified as major problems for both the female and male villagers. It is common for men to migrate, for anything from two weeks to three months, to mining and logging areas to find jobs to support their families. Women typically stay at home taking care of the children and doing small-scale subsistence farming. Sometimes men do not return, leaving their wives to take care of the children without any type of support. (UNICEF, 2017).

An analysis of poverty by region in Guyana points very strongly to large differentials in the poverty rates between indigenous and non-indigenous populations and to high rates of not just poverty but extreme poverty among the indigenous population. Based on an analysis of data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey carried out 2014, 62 per cent of the population in the rural hinterland (where most of the indigenous population lives) were in the bottom wealth quintile nationally. The most recently available estimates of poverty, from 2006, showed a poverty rate of 74 per cent and an extreme poverty rate of 54 percent in the rural hinterland compared with rates of 19 percent and 7 percent in the urban coastal zone (Government of Guyana, 2011). The UNICEF report goes on to describe how the lives of indigenous communities are characterised by: low nutritional status; high incidence of disease (for example diarrhoea, acute respiratory infection and malaria); high suicide rates; poor water and sanitation services; and greatly reduced access to quality health and education services.

### **3. Governance of indigenous peoples' affairs**

Indigenous peoples have a right to self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, and to maintain distinct political institutions. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples requires member States to cooperate with these representative institutions of indigenous peoples. In this way, self-government coexists within the wider framework of governance provided by the normal institutions of the State. Two Caribbean countries have established Ministries of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs: Guyana and Dominica.

Guyana has had a Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (or Ministry of Amerindian Affairs as it was originally called) since 1992. The Government of Guyana passed the Amerindian Act in 2006 which includes provisions relating to rights over communal land; intellectual property rights; environmental protection; Amerindian rights to use communal land for mining and forestry; governance and the powers of village councils. The 2006 Act is now recognised to be deficient in a number of respects and for this reason the Government has recently been running formal regional consultations with a view to revising the Amerindian Act. The new revised Act needs to more explicitly recognise indigenous land rights and prevent the denial or other restriction of land titles being used to undermine those rights. The Act also needs to be revised to strengthen the principle of free, prior, informed consent and give greater freedom to indigenous peoples concerning their use of land.

The 2006 Act established the National Toshias Council (NTC) which consists of all Toshias (leaders of Amerindian communities). The NTC elects an executive committee. The Act sets out the functions of the NTC which include: national coordination of indigenous peoples; promoting and overseeing good governance in villages; promoting Amerindian languages; preparing strategies to address

poverty, health, education, conservation, land and natural resource management; advising the Minister on the protection of Amerindian culture and heritage, development and the impact of legislation or policy on villages.

The Ministry provides funding for infrastructure development, social and economic development projects in indigenous villages and communities, either in response to requests (for example from the NTC) or through support for Community Development Plans (CDPs) proposed and developed by the indigenous communities themselves. The Ministry is also implementing the Amerindian Land Titling project which is seeking to strengthen mechanisms to resolve disputes involving the territorial rights of indigenous villages, for example protections against mining and logging on indigenous people's land as well as to resolve all outstanding disputes. The Ministry also runs a Hinterland Employment and Youth Service and there is an annual one-month celebration 'to affirm and preserve indigenous customs, language and traditions by showcasing the works, literature, and art of Amerindians.'

In Dominica, there has been a Ministry of Kalinago Affairs (or previously the Ministry of Carib Affairs) since 2005. The Ministry works in collaboration with the Kalinago community and its leaders. The Carib Reserve Act dates from 1978 and provides the legislative underpinning for the Kalinago Chief and Carib Council to manage the Kalinago Territory on the east coast of Dominica (established in 1903). The Island Carib language fell out of use around 1920 (although some individual words and phrases remain in use).

In Belize, there is no specific legislation addressing the rights of indigenous peoples and no specific ministry for indigenous people's affairs. Some responsibilities fall to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration and others to the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation. In southern Belize, there is an alcalde system which is based on the customary law of the Maya villages. Alcaldes are effectively local magistrates operating at the village and community level and are paid a small stipend by the government. They have power to decide who can live in the village and are responsible for managing the communal land.

There have been some conflicts over territorial rights for Mayan communities and the powers of alcaldes. The 39 Q'eqchi and Mopan Maya indigenous communities have been involved in litigation with the Government of Belize over lands they have customarily used and occupied. A central issue has been the Government's issuing of permits for forestry and other resource extraction permits on Maya lands without the consent and consultation with the Maya people. In 2015, the Caribbean Court of Justice ruled in favour of the Maya but three years on the Caribbean Court continues to be involved, with the decision of the court yet to be implemented. There was also a controversial case, in 2015, in which 12 Maya including alcaldes were arrested and charged with unlawful imprisonment for their actions to remove a non-Maya individual from their village lands (OHCHR, 2015). Charges were eventually dropped.

In Suriname, the rights of indigenous and Maroon peoples has been an issue of some concern in recent years. Surinamese law does not adequately recognise the collective rights these communities, for example their collective ownership of their traditional territories. These rights place obligations on the state which include: free, prior, and informed consent in connection with development projects; sharing of benefits; and prior independent environmental and social impact assessments. There have been cases brought before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights which resulted in rulings in favour of the indigenous or tribal communities: the Saramaka in 2007 and the Kaliña and Lokono in 2015. In its national report submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council's (HRC) Universal Periodic Review in 2016, the Government of Suriname acknowledged the need to address these issues.

The indigenous population in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, around 3,000 people, is centred around Sandy Bay on the north-east coast. Some identify as Kalinago ('pure Caribs'), others as Garifuna ('black Caribs'). Unlike in Dominica, there is no ministry of indigenous affairs or equivalent of the Kalinago territory or the Carib Council. This may be because the indigenous population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is less visible and relatively more integrated into wider population. The greater visibility of the Garifuna people in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in recent years has been due to a revival of interest in Garifuna cultural heritage, prompted in part by interest and visits from the Garifuna

people of Central America (or the United States of America) who continue to regard Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as their original homeland.

In Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago there are small numbers of people who identify as indigenous but in these countries indigenous people are distributed throughout the respective countries as opposed to constituting a community in a specific location.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Comparing the arrangements of the respective governments for governance of indigenous affairs, there is a notable contrast between Guyana and Dominica on the one hand and Belize and Suriname on the other. In the case of Guyana and Dominica, there are Ministries responsible for indigenous affairs which work with the representative institutions of indigenous peoples. In Belize and Suriname, there is no single ministry responsible for indigenous peoples affairs. In the case of both Belize and Suriname, indigenous peoples have had some success through recourse to either the Caribbean Court of Justice or the Inter-American Court of Human Rights but these court decisions need to be implemented in full.

It is clear that in regard to many social indicators, indigenous populations fare much less well than non-indigenous populations. There is a need to target poverty alleviation, education, health and employment programmes towards indigenous peoples and eliminate the social inequalities by which they are systematically disadvantaged.

The only a legally binding international instrument which is addressed directly to indigenous peoples is International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples (1989). Its various articles provide wide-ranging protections for indigenous peoples, their communities, institutions, practices, territory and the right of indigenous and tribal peoples to exercise control over their own development. Of the Caribbean countries with indigenous populations, only Dominica has ratified the convention (in 2002). Other countries should also ratify this convention.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing chapters provide ample evidence of the measures taken to implement the Montevideo Consensus during the five years since its adoption, activities which represent a continuation of efforts to implement the ICPD Programme of Action since 1994. Equally, they make clear that there are areas marked by lack of progress.

Population and development issues are clearly taken into account in national development planning. The importance of population ageing, migration and the health and wellbeing of different population groups are all reflected in national development plans throughout the subregion. This is despite the absence, in most countries, of a unit responsible for coordinating population matters. In numerous countries, efforts are currently being made to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into national development planning, and this provides a further opportunity to place population matters at the heart of development planning.

Implementation, as distinct from planning, has been more challenging over the last decade which has been a period of poor performance by Caribbean economies generally. Real per capita GDP for the Caribbean<sup>91</sup> was around 4 per cent lower in 2017 than it had been in 2008 (ECLAC, 2018b). These were not propitious circumstances for the fulfilment of ambitious social development goals. Nevertheless, even in difficult economic times, social policy must also play its part; progress in education, health, social cohesion, citizen security and poverty reduction can and must contribute to creating the conditions for sustainable growth.

Despite these economic headwinds, measureable progress was achieved in a range of areas. There has been progress towards universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, with steady improvements showing in indicators of contraceptive use. Adolescent fertility continues to fall although there are wide variations across socio-economic groups. The number of AIDS-related deaths is down although more needs to be done to end the epidemic and national HIV programmes need secure and continued funding. In respect of maternal mortality the picture is uncertain with evidence of progress in some countries but not in others, and high levels of maternal mortality in Guyana and Suriname in particular.

There has been continued progress in reducing under-five mortality and infant mortality. Policies and programmes have been developed to protect the rights of older persons although, with limited funding, the reach and quality of services remains a problem. There has been a steady advancement of women into the political sphere although parity remains a long way off. Similarly in the workplace, which has improved the economic position of women although the world of work remains highly gendered and men still tend to dominate positions of power. The last five years has seen greater subregional and international cooperation in dealing with migration and countries have been active in developing diaspora policies. There has been strengthening of the protection for the rights of indigenous peoples in Guyana and Dominica in particular although deep social inequalities persist.

In other areas, progress has been much more difficult. Youth unemployment, for instance, was at almost the same level in 2016 as it was in 2002 and the shortage of decent work continues. Crime and violence continue to be a threat to all population groups but young people especially, and undermines social and economic development more generally. Prejudice and discrimination against LGTBI persons and persons living with HIV remain widespread. The Montevideo Consensus calls on member States to consider amending their laws relating to the voluntary termination of pregnancy although there have been no reforms of abortion laws. Laws related to corporal punishment are also outdated and refugee protection laws largely absent.

Protections for human rights generally are inadequate. Even where countries which have passed legislation providing legal protections for human rights, legal and regulatory enforcement is inadequate and there is limited access to mechanisms to make complaints and to seek redress. At present, national

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<sup>91</sup> Based on data for 13 Caribbean member States.

human rights institutions in accordance with Paris Principles are not in place, public prosecutor or ombudsman institutions have limited mandates and are under resourced, and justice systems are slow and often ineffective for the pursuit of rights claims. Avenues to pursue claims internationally are also extremely limited. Many countries do not recognize the Inter-American Court of Human Rights or the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Across the Caribbean, much remains to be done, both to strengthen and give practical effect to human rights law.

The 2017 hurricane season seriously impacted around nine Caribbean States or territories, some in devastating fashion. Building greater resilience to climate related disasters, and mitigating their impacts on the population, is an essential part of Caribbean development planning, otherwise hard won gains are at permanent risk of being either blown or washed away.

The Montevideo Consensus called for “full integration of population dynamics into rights-based sustainable development with equality” as the key to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action beyond 2014. In addition to weak economic growth, the absence of any measureable progress towards greater equality since the 1990s, also goes a long way to explaining the gaps and deficiencies in the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus. The currently underway round of Enhanced Country Poverty Assessments must kick-start a renewed drive to reduce inequality. Only with the combination of sustainable growth with reductions in inequality can we reasonably expect to see more substantial progress towards realising the ambitions expressed in the Montevideo Consensus.

There is now a toolkit to support the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus: a detailed operational guide and soon an agreed set of indicators for monitoring, indicators which are conveniently integrated with those for the Sustainable Development Goals. There are also many synergies with the work of other United Nations agencies as has been shown throughout this report. In this review cycle, five Caribbean countries submitted voluntary national reports, each providing a thorough assessment of the national situation and some orientation regarding the path ahead in those countries. It is to be hoped that more countries take the opportunity to carry out national reviews and present national reports in the future. Building the community of practice around the monitoring and follow-up of the Consensus would do much to advance the implementation of what remains a critical set of actions for the future sustainable development of the Caribbean.

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