



Regional Conference
on Social Development
in Latin America and the Caribbean
Mexico City, 1–3 October 2019



Integrated approaches towards resilience building in the recovery process

Introductory webinar

26 May 2021

Background

The countries of the Caribbean are facing important challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a context of poor economic growth, high unemployment and growing exposure to climate change impacts. These challenges are now further exacerbated by the unprecedented socioeconomic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the subregion's public debt burden and the associated focus on fiscal consolidation have limited governments' capacity to sustain investments in social development, raising concerns on how the Caribbean will advance in the promise to leave no one behind in what has been coined the 'decade of action' to deliver the Global Goals.

Following the massive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is now a greater agreement on the critical role of institutions and on the value of public policies to ensure adequate supply of public goods, boost growth, encourage development of technological capacities, intervene in territorial development and promote egalitarian policies to expand rights. For the Caribbean, institutional strengthening is seen as key to addressing resilience building and it will be decisive to build institutional capacities and reinforce an integrated response to act in disaster and emergency situations.

Progress has been recorded in the subregion in the formalization of institutional arrangements for SDG implementation, mainstreaming of the SDGs, and in building national ownership of the global agenda. In the Caribbean, this has been largely facilitated by several projects through which beneficiary countries received technical assistance in the establishment of an institutional framework for SDG implementation, the integration of the SDGs in their national development planning processes and strengthening of institutional capacities for national development planning which integrates the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SIDS agenda in the subregion.

Therefore, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, Caribbean countries have a unique opportunity to address institutional deficiencies that cause or accentuate structural imbalances by implementing recovery strategies that are just, human-centred, and inclusive, and which promote green growth. Efforts to promote sustainable development should also address equality, entailed in new strategic alliances that tackle poverty and address longstanding discriminatory practices in access to resources (such as land, natural, and financial resources), housing, infrastructure and services (such as education, health and basic urban services). These subregional priorities are and will remain critical in the recovery context, and in addressing the growing needs of its populations. Integrating these priorities and managing any resulting trade-offs thus requires a sound national institutional infrastructure for policy making. Such priorities are



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aligned with the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development (RAISD), in particular with the axis on Institutional Strengthening.

Within the current context and as Caribbean countries advance with SDG and RAISD implementation, it becomes clear that sustainable development outcomes cannot be achieved if development action remains within traditional social, economic and environmental silos. Instead, a more holistic or “integrated” approach is necessary. It is therefore, necessary to breakdown the barriers to collective integrated action and promote the connections between social progress, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. Collaboration, partnerships and exchange of experiences will be crucial to advance the integration of SDG implementation at local, national and global levels.

The introductory webinar discussions therefore introduced some of the existing platforms available for decision makers to draw on when designing their own policies, programmes and measures in line with their countries’ priorities and conditions and aimed to exchange knowledge and experience about policy coherence, particularly in the context of disaster and emergency response.

Main Outcomes

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Blue Economy, Antigua and Barbuda, in her opening remarks acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented economic and social disruptions across all countries including the Caribbean subregion. There has been increasing levels of poverty, as individual and household incomes have sharply decreased, and vulnerable groups such as children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, single parents, and female-headed households have been particularly hard hit. The Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development therefore fosters a strong and positive platform geared towards achieving the SDGs, and to help countries build resilience in the COVID-19 recovery process.

The Director of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional Headquarters emphasised that resilience building has assumed utmost importance for the Caribbean during these challenging times. COVID-19 has dealt a devastating blow to the subregion, which has not yet fully recovered from a successive series of challenges that have stunted growth and development over the past decade. As such, integrated development strategies would need to be harnessed to help the most vulnerable, reduce risk and build resilience to future shocks, if the subregion is to avoid a protracted period of development. To move forward post pandemic, the Caribbean subregion needs to focus on recovery strategies that are just, human centred and inclusive. There will be the need for strong and dynamic institutions that are agile in their responsiveness to shocks and policy frameworks that are attentive to the welfare of all citizens. If social protection programmes are to play a more effective role in mitigating and dislocation, national institutional architecture should be appropriately equipped to respond to these shocks, with improved information systems, enhanced data capacity by evidence based decision making, better coordination and financing systems.



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The Programme Director, Vision 2030 Jamaica, gave an overview of the experience of Jamaica in the implementation of SDGs and the national development plan. The national development plan of Jamaica “Vision 2030 Jamaica” (2009 to 2030) is a culmination of bipartisan support and ownership, which has been continuously implemented through changes in political administration, largely owing to the fact that both leading and opposition political parties that make up the Government were involved in the planning process. The planning process was also based on a participatory development model, which included all stakeholders from the local to national level, across all sectors.

Vision 2030 Jamaica is embedded in a national results framework and an implementation framework. The national results framework is goal oriented towards Agenda 2030 which provides the sectoral areas of development that the country is focusing on for the 21-year period. The implementation framework is guided by the successive three-year medium-term socio-economic policies which outlines the social, economic and environmental strategic priorities to advance the national development plan, as well as a roadmap for SDG implementation which was developed in 2017 with support from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). There is also reporting mechanism in place for Vision 2030 Jamaica which includes results-based monitoring, evaluation and reporting on implementation and performance (results-based management framework). The development and strengthening of governance and institutional frameworks and mechanisms including monitoring and evaluation, have been integral in the implementation process of Vision 2030 Jamaica.

It was pointed out that defining priorities for resilience, institutional building, sustainability and inclusion all depended on the national context at certain times. The implementation of Vision 2030 Jamaica commenced in the peak of the 2008 global financial crisis where the focus on resilience was largely at the time articulated as macroeconomic stability and building the foundations for competitiveness and growth and social protection. Within the context of planning implementation, Jamaica also experienced damage and loss from natural disasters and other shocks and the focus on resilience was largely articulated as environmental and climate resilience. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has facilitated an approach that gives focus to systems integration and the circularity of the social, economic and environmental systems and interdependence, and has allowed for a broader definition of sustainability, inclusion, multi-dimensional justice, resilience and understanding of the need for strong institutions. There has also been a facilitated demonstration of the role of governance and strong institutions and institutional processes in responding to crises. Strong institutional processes have helped government to be more responsive to the population needs.

Based on Jamaica’s experience, the Programme Director highlighted a few lessons learnt in the approach of institutional building for sustainable development.

- i. There must be clear articulation of institutional processes and arrangements and a clearly defined institutional framework to support the national development plan.



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- ii. National development plans must be built on the integration of evidence and results-based management.
- iii. It is important to build the capacity of stakeholders.
- iv. Understanding the environmental context to determine institutional processes is critical to ensure more responsiveness in planning processes.

The Policy consultant, UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, provided some insight into UNEP's approach to policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD), along the lines of SDG 17 which focuses on partnerships. SDG 17 on partnerships and the related indicators and targets- SDG 17.14.1 speaks to enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development, which UNEP is the custodian. UNEP sees policy coherence for sustainable development as the state in which policies work together effectively to achieve national development goals while minimizing negative impacts that policies in one area may have on policies in another area. This requires meaningful collaboration to ensure that the implementation of policies is coherent, and that people are at the centre of all the decision making. There should also be the alignment of policies to the international processes which drive the development agendas, as well as a monitoring framework for the effectiveness of these policies.

The Sustainable Development Officer, Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) presented on accelerating effective partnerships for the SDGs. He highlighted key principles that should be considered for building partnerships – (i) the world has limited resources (financial, technological, natural and human), which must be optimized in the most efficient way; (ii) the ideas, people and resources are already available to achieve SDGs; (iii) effective partnerships are therefore crucial to be able to deliver on the SDGs.

SDG 17 recognizes the importance of multi stakeholder partnerships and the UN has continued to emphasize the need to mobilize everyone, everywhere. While partnership may have varying definitions, the UN speaks to three types based on a partnership spectrum. One has to do with leveraging resources for organizations, the second looks at combining complimentary resources between organizations, and the third and most effective type is described as transformational partnership where different actors in society come together to create the leverage that could not have been done by one actor working alone. There has also been an emerging trend of partnership platforms which are basically national based platforms that has the role of convening dialogue and brokering partnerships. They have a very strong role in aligning equity investments and funds, and support governments and the UN in building and supporting enabling environments for collaboration.

In order to foster effective partnerships, there need to be a policy environment that is supportive of collaborations as well as institutions and individuals with the skills to properly collaborate. Additionally, there needs to be a whole of society approach to fostering effective partnerships. UNDESA recently launched a Partnership Accelerator project that provides a support mechanism for existing efforts by the



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UN and government in enhancing this collaboration between sectors and stakeholders and providing the support structures to make this collaboration happen.

Discussions focused on better data and information management mechanisms for data collection, production and dissemination. The Jamaica experience highlighted the need for strengthening data planning processes to ensure that national results are based on proper evidenced based information and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Results frameworks and national strategy frameworks must be clearly aligned to data planning and data production.

It was also acknowledged that there is a need for more dynamic institutions. While there are institutions in many countries in the subregion, the question still remains on the ability to respond and adapt to future challenges and shocks.

Programme

Moderator: Sandra Joseph, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Transformation and the Blue Economy, Antigua and Barbuda. (TBC)

Welcome remarks (10 minutes)	Ms. Sandra Joseph, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Transformation and the Blue Economy, Antigua and Barbuda Diane Quarless, Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean
Introduction: Comprehensive and integrated approaches for Sustainable Development Goals Planning (10 minutes)	Key issues and challenges in the implementation of SDGs and national development plans - Ms. Peisha Bryan-Lee, Programme Director, Vision 2030 Jamaica
Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (10 minutes)	Introduction on PCSD – Ms. Deirdre Shurland, Policy consultant, UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, ROLAC
The 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator (10 minutes)	Accelerating effective partnerships for the SDGs - Mr. Ola Göransson, Sustainable Development Officer, Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)
Discussion (70 minutes)	Facilitator: Catarina Camarinhas, Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean Questions for the debate: 1. What is institutional integration for implementation of SDGs and the RAISD?



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	<p>2. Is there a lead institution that guides implementation of SDGs or the decision making on the subject is spread among a number of institutions?</p> <p>3. How is policy coherence for sustainable development assessed?</p> <p>4. Is there an entry point that could be used for information, capacity and resource-sharing to mainstream resilience building into national and sectoral planning processes and to enable the implementation of priority actions?</p> <p>Discussant: Ivica Trumbic, Consultant, ECLAC</p>
Conclusions and closure (10 minutes)	Representative of Government of Dominica (TBC) Mr. Rodrigo Martinez, Senior Social Affairs Officer, Social Development Division, UNECLAC