



**The CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government: Past, Present and
Future**

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**A thesis submitted for the Joint Master degree in
Global Economic Governance & Public Affairs (GEGPA)**

Academic year
2019 – 2020

July 2020

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Acknowledgements

I must express immense gratitude to Professor Richard Byron-Cox (Ph.D.), my thesis supervisor for his consistent encouragement, support, and guidance throughout this writing journey. I would also like to say thanks to Arnaud Leconte, GEGPA programme Director at CIFE, Professor Giovanna Orsina, Director Luiss School of Government (SoG) and Christian Blasberg (Ph.D.)-Luiss SoG International Master's Coordinator, for providing me with guidance in determining the scope of my research paper. Thanks, should also be extended to my friends Themba Mkhize, Jaiida Sutton, Hasani McDonald and Akila Moore for constantly supporting me along this journey. Finally, I say a hearty thank you to my Creator for gifting me with the abilities and strength to complete this project and my father, Lenworth Harris for his un-wavering support and for creating an environment at home which was conducive to the successful completion of my thesis.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	1
List of Acronyms.....	3-4
Introduction.....	5-8
Literature Review.....	9-13
Chapter One : The Birth and Evolution of Caribbean Regionalism.....	14-34
1.1 The Beginnings of Caribbean Integration.....	14-18
1.2 The Birth of Independent Caribbean Leadership.....	19-22
1.3 From CARIFTA to CARICOM.....	23-25
1.4 A Brief Overview of the Structure and Function of CARICOM.....	26-34
Chapter Two: The Conference and its Practice.....	35-56
1.1 The Origins of The Conference.....	35-37
1.2 The Structure of The Conference.....	38-39
1.3 The Practice of The Conference.....	40-56
Chapter Three: The Conference and the Future of Caribbean Integration.....	57-67
Conclusion.....	68-70
Bibliography.....	71-79
List of Figures	
Figure 1: Map Displaying Islands of The West Indies Federation.....	16
Figure 2: Map Displaying Countries with Full Membership with CARICOM.....	25
Figure 3: Chart Displaying an Overview of the Hierarchial Structure of CARICOM.....	40
Figure 4: Table Displaying CARICOM's Intra and Extra Regional Goods Trade.....	46

List of Acronyms

ACCP - Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians
ALBA - Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas
CARDI - Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CARICAD - Caribbean Centre for Development Administration
CARICOM – Caribbean Community
CARIFORUM – The Caribbean Forum
CARIFTA - Caribbean Free Trade Association
CARPHA - Caribbean Public Health Agency
CCCCC - Caribbean Community Climate Change Center
CCJ – Caribbean Court of Justice
CCLEC - Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council
CCM - Community Council of Ministers
CDB – Caribbean Development Bank
CDERA - Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency
CDF – CARICOM Development Fund
CDM – Comprehensive Disaster Management
CEHI - Caribbean Environmental Health Institute
CEO - Chief Executive Officer
CET – Common External Tariff
CFATF - Caribbean Financial Task Force
CFNI - Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute
CLIC - Caribbean Law Institute Center
CMI - Caribbean Meteorological Institute
CMO - Caribbean Meteorological Organization
CoHG - Conference of the Heads of Government
COHSOD - Council of Human and Social Development
COFAP - Council of Finance and Planning
COFCOR - Council of Foreign and Community Relations
CONSLE - Council for National Security and Law Enforcement
COTED - Council of Trade and Economic Development
COVID-19 - Coronavirus Disease
CRIS - Caribbean Risk Information System
CSM – CARICOM Single Market

CSME - CARICOM Single Market and Economy
CSOs – Civil Society Organizations
CXC – Caribbean Examination Council
ECCU - Eastern Caribbean Currency Union
EPA – Economic Partnership Agreement
EU – European Union
GCF - Green Climate Fund
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
IMF – International Monetary Fund
IMPACS - Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
ILO – International Labour Organization
JRCC - Joint Regional Communications Centre
MFN – Most Favoured Nation
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding
NAFTA – North American Free Trade Agreement
OAS – Organization of American States
OECS – Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PAHO - Pan American Health Organization
RBM - Result Based Management
REPAHA - Regional Education Programme for Animal Health Assistants
RIFC - Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre
RRM – Regional Response Mechanism
RSS - Regional Security System
RTFCS - Regional Task Force on Crime and Security
SEPAC - Security Policy Advisory Committee
SG – Secretary General
SME - Single Market and Economy
SMEs – Small and Medium Enterprises
SVG – St. Vincent and the Grenadines
UG – University of Guyana
UN – United Nations
US/USA – United States of America
UWI – University of the West Indies
WHO – World Health Organization
WWII – World War II

Introduction

The Caribbean is a large region that is marked by diversity- from mainland territories to islands and archipelagos¹. It is therefore difficult if not impossible to give an all-embracing definition of the Caribbean as it lends itself to varying definitions. In accordance with socialists' precedence, the Caribbean can be defined geologically, geographically, historically, and politically. In its geographical term the Caribbean is defined by the notion of the 'Caribbean Basin', where the central identifying feature is the Caribbean Sea rimmed by mainland territories of central and south America². This definition excludes countries which are usually accepted as Caribbean such as Belize, Barbados, Guyana and even the Bahamas. The defining feature of the geological definition takes within its reference the countries which lie on the Caribbean Plate³. Though the Caribbean plate may be an essential feature to conceptualize the Caribbean region, it excludes Guyana, The Bahamas and much of Cuba. The historical definition of the Caribbean embodies the idea that these countries share a similar historical process in their struggles for independence against English, French, Dutch and Spanish colonization⁴. Seen from the standpoint of political independence the Caribbean presents an odd mixture of independent, associate, and colonial dependent states⁵. The first are former possessions of European colonizers, now self-governing with, -in the majority of cases- some remnants of colonialism where the Queen of England remains constitutionally the Head-of State, albeit represented by a local Governor General. Secondly there are Associate states such as Anguilla that is not independent but is a state "in association with Britain" enjoying certain rights and privileges from this association. Colonial dependencies are countries which are governed as colonies, The Turks and Caicos is one such example.

For the very specific purposes and objectives of this research, the definition of the Caribbean is that which flows from the context, spirit, and letter of the Original and Revised Treaties of Chaguaramas. The Treaty of Chaguaramas, 1973, i.e. the Original Treaty, established the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM)⁶ with a determination to consolidate and strengthen the bonds which have historically existed among their peoples⁷ and support the strengthening, coordination and regulation of the economic and trade relations among Member States in order to promote their accelerated harmonious and

¹ See Module 1: Caribbean society and culture published in the Jamaica Gleaner available online at <https://www.pressreader.com/jamaica/jamaica-gleaner/20170926/282514363723584>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ See the Original Treaty of Chaguaramas

⁷ Ibid.

balanced development⁸. The Contracting Parties of the 1973 Treaty of Chaguaramas, established among themselves a Caribbean Community which would then be referred to as “the Community”⁹. The membership to this Treaty was opened to the following countries: Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla¹⁰, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

In 2001 the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas came into effect. The Revised Treaty sort to answer the call for deeper economic integration through the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) in order to achieve sustained economic development based on international competitiveness, coordinated economic and foreign policies, functional co-operation, and enhanced trade and economic relations with third States¹¹. Although the Revised Treaty was opened for membership to the countries which were Parties to the Original Treaty excluding Anguilla and including Suriname, along with any other State or Territory of the Caribbean Region that is, in the opinion of the Conference, able and willing to exercise the rights and assume the obligations of membership; not every country which partook in the Original Treaty signed on to the Revised Treaty. The signatories of the Revised Treaty included Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Notably, the Revised Treaty gave a new definition to the term “Community”. In the Original Treaty of 1973, the term “Community” referred to contracting Parties of said Treaty. However, in the Revised Treaty under Article 1, the use of term “Community” means the Caribbean Community established by Article 2¹² and includes the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) established by the provisions of the Revised Treaty¹³. In essence, the term “Community” in the Revised Treaty refers to countries that hold memberships in either the Original and or the Revised Treaty and encompasses the Caribbean Common Market as well as the Single Market and Economy. Using this understanding, the Community then is comprised of the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ St. Kitts & Nevis at the time was St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla until Anguilla seceded in 1980. Nevertheless, up until now the National Bank of St. Kitts and Nevis is officially St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla National Bank

¹¹ See the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas

¹² See Article 2 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas: ‘Establishment of the Community’

¹³ Ibid.

The regional body that is the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) comprises several principal and associate bodies and institutions of which the Conference of the Heads of Government is the supreme organ. With its primary function being to determine and provide policy direction¹⁴ to CARICOM, the Conference of the Heads of Government also called the Conference, is made up of the Heads of Government of the member states or any other representative designate by the Head of a member state¹⁵. In its quest to fulfill such a mandate the Conference of the Heads of Government has established several supporting organs and institutions to facilitate the economic, security, international relations, and the human and social development of the Community.

The aim of this research paper is to examine the past, present and future role of the CARICOM Conference of the Heads of Government in the process of regional integration. In doing so, the paper first looks at the origin and beginnings of Caribbean integration, moving on to an analysis of the current practice of the Conference, and based on the said analysis, highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the Conference, before ending with contemplation on ways in which its role may be enhanced and improved to further facilitate the deepening of the regional integration of the Community as part of the overall integration process. To fulfill its aim, the paper employs a qualitative approach in tracking the progress of the Conference through the use of secondary sources of data including *inter alia* books, articles, reports published by the Secretariat and other bodies, addresses by Heads of Government, as well as through the observation of practice to support integration in particular as this pertains to the adoption of particular decisions and recommendations and their implementation.

Qualitative analysis was also carried out through *inter alia* a comparison of what has been, what is and what is supposed to be as regards the realization of the goals as set out in the legal framework establishing CARICOM. This qualitative approach deemed most suitable for the purpose of this research paper which explores and examines the role of the Conference in the process of regional integration. And based on this examination, puts forward suggestions for the cause of enhancing the role of the Conference now and in the future. Furthermore, the qualitative research approach gives the advantages of using documents, reports and case studies which allowed the researcher to conveniently and in a timely manner, obtain necessary data under the challenging circumstances of the 2020 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This form of data collection is also relatively less time-consuming and less costly. However, this form of research approach is not without limitations as access

¹⁴ See the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas

¹⁵ Ibid.

to some useful documents was limited due to them being classified as private and/or confidential.

The structure and content of the paper in general is as follows: (1) The literature review gives an overview of the literature used in the preparation of this paper. (2) Chapter One details the birth and evolution of Caribbean Regionalism, that is the story from the formation of the Federation to CARICOM. Chapter Two looks specifically at the CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government and its practice, while Chapter Three addresses the future of the Conference and includes suggestions for enhancing its effectiveness as the key driver of regional integration. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the essential parts of the paper and key recommendations made as per the role of the conference.

Key words: Regionalism, Regional Integration, Caribbean Integration, Functional Cooperation, CARICOM, the Community, Original Treaty of Chaguaramas, Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, CSME, Common Market, Single Market and Economy, Foreign Policy Coordination

Literature Review

Caribbean Integration falls under the overarching subject of regionalism and regional integration. Regionalism is generally referred to as the formal economic cooperation and economic arrangements of a group of countries aimed at facilitating or enhancing regional integration¹⁶- which is understood as the process by which two or more nation-states agree to cooperate and work closely together to achieve peace, stability and wealth¹⁷. With the onset of globalization came an increasing shift towards regionalism as the world began to see a renewed interest in the potential of intra-regional cooperation through formal regional integration agreements, both multilateral and bilateral¹⁸. In describing integration using a scale, John McCormick proposes that 0 would represent no integration, 10 would represent total integration and the formation of a new country, while 1-4 represents economic integration and 6-10 political integration with the half-way mark at 5, representing a single market or the completion of economic integration¹⁹.

The history of the Caribbean includes that of colonialism, and it is in the desire of Caribbean people to overcome such through the use of, among other methods, the mechanism of Caribbean integration. Consequently, the ending of one saw the beginning of the other. The peoples of the then British colonies in the West Indies wanted improvement in their lives. The failure of Great Britain to understand and deliver this led to demands for self-rule beginning in the 1930s²⁰. However, Britain thought that the islands were too small to be individually independent, and so proposed a plan to grant the islands their independence as a unit²¹. This idea called for the integration of these Caribbean islands, colonies of the United Kingdom including Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Barbados, and those belonging to the Leeward²² and Windward²³ islands. Notwithstanding that they had vast differences in geography, population size, wealth, and natural resources²⁴, available literature records the ambition and enthusiasm of Caribbean people to join together in order to accomplish the goal of achieving their independence²⁵.

¹⁶ Saini, G. K., 2012. Prospects of Regional Economic Cooperation in South Asia: With Special Studies on Indian Industry.

¹⁷ McCormick, J. S., 1999. The European Union: Politics and Policies. 2nd ed.

¹⁸ Sideri, S. 1996. Globalization and Regional Integration.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Sewell, S. C., 1978. British Decolonization in the Caribbean: The West Indies Federation, Massachusetts: Bridgewater State College.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Antigua and Barbuda, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, and the Virgin Islands

²³ Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica

²⁴ See Sewell, S. C., 1978. British Decolonization in the Caribbean: The West Indies Federation.

²⁵ See Wallace, E., 1962. The West Indies Federation: Decline and Fall. International Journal, 17(3), pp. 269-288

On Friday January 3, 1958, the West Indies Federation came into being, where the British colonies in Caribbean were integrated. creating in essence, one country. In documenting the making of the West Indies Federation, S. Sewell noted how the member islands were optimistic that they were on the road to complete self-government²⁶; and in her article titled 'The West Indies Federation: Decline and Fall' published in the International Journal, E. Wallace concurred with Sewell pinpointing out that the West Indies Federation was launched "amid what then seemed the general enthusiasm of its people, the unqualified support of Britain and the friendly good-will of other members of Commonwealth"²⁷. And echoing both Sewell and Wallace, C. Bourne agreed that the advent of the Federation was "greeted with much enthusiasm in the West Indies"²⁸. However, the differences of the islands proved to be quite divisive and thus four years later in 1962, the West Indies Federation disintegrated ahead of its set date for independence²⁹. Many critics have pointed to the weak leadership and the insularity among the islands as the cause for the Federation's failure³⁰. The literature claims that geographical and cultural differences of the islands are factors which contributed to the failure of the West Indies Federation, with Sewell further noting that "divisive issues of economic and political control" played a role, but that the real problem for the Federation, was the idea itself³¹.

The literature available on the supposed beginnings of Caribbean integration, i.e. the West Indies Federation is quite reveling with scholars such as C. Bourne, E. Wallace, C. Archibald and E. Dale among others addressing the same in great detail. Notably, in his analysis of the West Indies Federation, Archibald observed that despite the collapse of this attempt at Caribbean integration, The Federation had gained support in West Indian thought as a useful framework for future self-government³².

What followed the failure of an attempt at total integration via the creation of a West Indies Federation was the successful establishment in 1965 of the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA). K. Hope in his article 'CARIFTA and Trade: An Overview' published by the Institute of Caribbean Studies, chronicled the CARIFTA agreement as a "tribute to Commonwealth Caribbean industry and statesmanship"³³. Noting that it was the first time in the history of the region that such an agreement would have been worked out,

²⁶ See Sewell, S. C., 1978. *British Decolonization in the Caribbean: The West Indies Federation*.

²⁷ See Wallace, E., 1962. *The West Indies Federation: Decline and Fall*.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ See Sewell, S. C., 1978. *British Decolonization in the Caribbean: The West Indies Federation*

³⁰ See Bourne, C., 1960. *The Federation of the West Indies*. *The University of Toronto Law Journal*, 13(2), pp. 135-165

³¹ See Sewell, S. C., 1978. *British Decolonization in the Caribbean: The West Indies Federation*

³² See Archibald, C. H., 1962. *The Failure of the West Indies*. *The World Today*, 18(6), pp. 233-242.

³³ See Hope, K. R., 1974. *CARIFTA and Caribbean Trade: An Overview*. *Caribbean Studies*, 14(1), pp. 196-179.

drawn up and agreed upon by Caribbean scholars, public officers, and politicians³⁴. He considered this a hybrid between a free trade area and a more advanced form of integration resulting in a somewhat loose form of integration³⁵. He further pointed out that the important point to grasp was that CARIFTA was only a beginning. That is, a first step towards closer forms of Caribbean integration and was neither an end in itself, nor limited to what was its present structure and member countries. He went on to note that CARIFTA was thought to be a starting point of economic integration needed to accelerate economic development in the Caribbean³⁶. Likewise, in his article ‘The Caribbean Free Trade Association’ published by the University of Miami Law School, R. Abbott shared the thought of Hope. He affirmed that the execution of the CARIFTA Treaty was a significant step in the economic progress of the many political entities of the Caribbean, considering the futile efforts of the past to unify the various Commonwealth Caribbean territories into some form of viable political or economic unit³⁷.

Evidently, Caribbean integration did not stop at CARIFTA as this was only a starting point as confirmed by the evolution of the integration in 1973 into what was called the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM). In his article ‘Processes of Regional Governance: The Agony of the Fifteen’, published by the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies in 2005, Edward Seaga, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, rightly described CARICOM as a 15 member regional body established under the Treaty of Chaguaramas in 1973, as a broad successor to CARIFTA³⁸. Further noting that the shores of CARICOM countries except Barbados are washed by the Caribbean Sea, 13 being English speaking, one French (Haiti) and one Dutch (Suriname). In same article he affirmed that the purpose of the grouping was more than fraternal; declaring that CARICOM is a serious association of states pursuing common interests for mutual economic, social, and other benefits³⁹. Furthermore, in his publication ‘Caribbean Integration: Is the Glass Half Full or Half Empty?’, Maurice Odle records that a Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the Caribbean Community to include the Single Market and Economy (CSME) arose out of a 1989 meeting at Grand Anse, Grenada but would only be functionally established in the year

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ See Abbott, R. L., 1969. The Caribbean Free Trade Association. University of Miami Inter-American Law Review, 1(2), pp. 2-20.

³⁸ See Seaga, E., 2005. Processes of Regional Governance: The Agony of the Fifteen. Social and Economic Studies, 54 (3), pp. 128-144

³⁹ Ibid.

2001⁴⁰. He duly noted that this Revised Treaty spoke of achieving sustained economic development based on international competitiveness, coordinated economic and foreign policies, functional cooperation and enhanced trade and economic relations with third states⁴¹.

Since then, Caribbean leaders, economists, scholars, international consultants and the likes, have explicitly lamented at the slow pace of the implementation of the CSME⁴². In 2004 at the 13th Anniversary distinguished lecture of CARICOM, the Rt. Hon. Owen Arthur, then Prime Minister of Barbados, declared that the creation of a CSME would have “unquestionably be the most complex, the most ambitious and the most difficult enterprise ever contemplated in the region”⁴³. A region which, as he said, “Philip Sherlock has observed has division as its heritage, contrast as its keynote, and competition as its dominant theme”⁴⁴. In light of this, he confirmed that economic integration requiring cooperation on the scale and of the depth envisioned by the CSME would be substantially more difficult to attain than integration on the political plane⁴⁵. It is correct to say that economic integration within the Caribbean has indeed not been easy, but rather quite challenging due to various internal and external factors⁴⁶. Such challenges have and continue to so profoundly impact the Caribbean integration process that political leaders, economists, scholars, international consultants, and the likes are all appreciative of this.

The Landell Mills Development Consultants were commissioned in 2010 by the CARICOM Heads of Government to review and make recommendations on the reform of the CARICOM Secretariat which is a key body of the integration process. Its report published in January of 2012 declared that CARICOM was in a crisis such that its continuing existence was in question⁴⁷. Caribbean economist Norman Girvan, a pioneer and contributor to the process of Caribbean integration⁴⁸ agreed with the opinion put forward by the Landell Mills Report when, in his 2013 address entitled ‘Reinventing the CSME’ made to The Caribbean Association of Judicial Officials, he stated that there was indeed a major crisis in the regional economic integration movement⁴⁹. Further, the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, in a letter to the Secretary General on February 29 2012 declared that CARICOM was sliding backwards since its leaders including himself decided at

⁴⁰ See Odle, M., 2016. Caribbean Integration: Is the Glass Half Full or Half Empty? The CLR James Journal, 22(1-2), pp. 87-94.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² See Norman Girvan ‘Reinventing the CSME’

⁴³ See Owen Arthur ‘The Caribbean Single Market and Economy: The Way Forward’

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See Landell Mills Report: ‘Turning around CARICOM’

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ See the Girvan Report ‘Towards a Single Development Vision and the Role of the Single Economy’

⁴⁹ See Norman Girvan ‘Reinventing the CSME’

a special conclave in 2011 to put the single economy process on pause, a decision which he acknowledged as a mistake⁵⁰. The opinion of Dr. Kenny Anthony, then Prime Minister of St. Lucia must be added to these references. In an address to the Barbados Chamber of Commerce on October 2012, concurring with the views of Girvan and Landmills; he expressed that the region was in “throes of the greatest crisis since independence, with societies and economies at risk and on the brink of collapse”⁵¹. And most recently, in the Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica’s Relations with CARICOM and CARIFORUM, published in 2017, the Commission opined that the Single Market and Economy which is so often declared as not working, cannot in reality be expected to work because it has not yet been functionally established⁵². The Commission further argued that much time has elapsed, and so much that should have been done has not been accomplished; that CARICOM is in danger of succumbing to integration fatigue without having actually integrated, and is having difficulty sustaining or reviewing its commitment to the process⁵³.

The evolution of CARICOM to include a Single Market and Economy has inspired new thoughts on integration and optimism into the region. Still, even with the framework and other relevant working papers and signed agreements being all in place, it is clear, according to the accounts of many Caribbean leaders, scholars, economists and the likes, that the implementation has been a slow process.

Taking into account the relevant background of Caribbean integration and using the existing literature as a backdrop, this academic work in the form of a thesis seeks to add to the discourse on Caribbean Integration. Notwithstanding, this research paper, unlike most work before, takes a close and specific look at the CARICOM Conference of the Heads of Government. It then seeks to, examine its origins and history, assess how it facilitates integration through its present practices, and suggests how it may be able to deepen the integration process through the explicit and detailed involvement of its most valuable resources and assets; its peoples.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² See Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica’s Relationship with CARICOM and CARIFORUM

⁵³ Ibid.

Chapter One

The Birth and Evolution of Caribbean Regionalism: From Federation to CARICOM

1.1 The Beginnings of Caribbean Integration: The West Indies Federation

Regionalism is generally referred to as the formal economic cooperation and economic arrangements of a group of countries aimed at facilitating or enhancing regional integration⁵⁴- which is understood as the process by which two or more nation-states agree to cooperate and work closely together to achieve peace, stability and wealth⁵⁵. The history of English-speaking Caribbean nations' attempts at integration, that is to say regionalism, has been well documented over the years. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), established under the Original Treaty of Chaguaramas (1973) and Article 2 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas of (2001) which includes the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), is today, the Anglophone Caribbean's prime machine of regional integration . This chapter recalls the birth and traces the evolution of Caribbean Regionalism from the formation of the West Indies Federation in (1958), to the establishment of CARICOM in (1973). The review of this journey demonstrates, *inter alia*, that the push for regional integration was and is part of the Caribbean people's desire for self-governance, independence, and sovereignty.

From the end of the First World War and onwards in the 1930s, leaders of Caribbean labor organizations and trade unions constantly pointed out the need for political and social reform of the British colonial regime in the West Indies⁵⁶. In 1928 at the British Labour Commonwealth Conference held in England, the leader of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association, Captain A.A Cipriani stressed the need for a West Indian Federation and self-government for the Caribbean⁵⁷. The leaders of the working peoples' associations felt that the British colonial overlords in the "Mother Country" were disconnected from the living realities of the people in these Caribbean colonies. These Caribbean leaders saw the need for self-governance in these territories as a prerequisite for addressing some of the basic needs of their people to ultimately improve their overall living conditions.

Oblivious to the many pleas for change by these leaders of the various labor organizations, the British made no serious efforts at improving the deplorable living conditions of the people. This neglect led ultimately to a series of riots and disturbances in the then British West Indies of the 1930s, all in an attempt to catalyze change. These disturbances in the midst

⁵⁴ Saini, G. K., 2012. Prospects of Regional Economic Cooperation in South Asia: With Special Studies on Indian Industry.

⁵⁵ McCormick, J. S., 1999. The European Union: Politics and Policies. 2nd ed.

⁵⁶ See Basdeo, S., 1997. The "Radical" Movement Towards Decolonization in The British Caribbean In The Thirties. Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, 22(44), pp. 127-146.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 132

of the Great Depression were loud calls for serious changes in and to colonial rule in the British colonies in the West Indies. In its response to same disturbances which happened across its Caribbean colonies, the British government appointed the West India Royal Commission (the Moyne Commission), to investigate the reasons for the increasing violent disturbances in these colonies, tasking it with formulating recommendations aimed at improving the existing conditions⁵⁸. The Moyne Commission conducted a comprehensive survey of West-Indies socio-economic, political and labor conditions during the 1930s and its report became the basis for the development of a policy of colonial reconstruction for the Caribbean in the post-World War II (WWII) period. The Moyne Report which was published in 1945 advocated for a series of measures to improve the lives of peoples in the West Indies. Among its recommendations was the suggestion that the British explore the possibility of federation among these colonies in preparation for independence⁵⁹. Hence, the British explored the idea of federation among the islands in preparation for their collective independence as a single federal state, since at that time Britain felt that the idea of granting independence to each colony was all but inconceivable as it believed that the colonies were too small to survive as individual independent states in the post-war world⁶⁰ period.

Subsequently in 1947, the British Secretary of State for the colonies, Arthur Creech Jones, invited the West Indian governments to meet in Montego Bay, Jamaica. There, the decision was taken to advance the idea of establishing a Federation of the British West Indies⁶¹. The journey to the creation of the West Indies Federation took about 11 years. Throughout those years, it seems that the leaders of the different colonies debated on every possible issue under the sun covering, *inter alia*, the financing of the federation, the location of its capital site, the form of government, and the number of representatives each island should have. Years of heated negotiations and the endless back and forth highlighted many of the very stark differences in the needs and wants expressed by the leaders of the different colonies. These leaders finally decided that the federation would be patterned following the Australian constitution of that time, where the federal government would exercise powers in areas specifically allotted to it such as defense, exchange control and immigration, while the local governments would continue to exercise much of their previous powers⁶².

On January 03, 1958, the Federation of the West Indies came into being. It consisted of ten British island colonies namely: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada,

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 136

⁵⁹ See Sewell, S. C., 1978. British Decolonization in the Caribbean: The West Indies Federation

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 3

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 39

⁶² See Archibald, C. H., 1962. The Failure of the West Indies. *The World Today*, 18(6), pp. 233-242.

Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. Thus, The West Indies Federation stretched over 8,005 square miles with a population of over 3 million; with Jamaica being about half of the size of the Federation in area and population, and Trinidad being its second largest in population and its wealthiest economically speaking.

Figure 1: Map Displaying Islands of The West Indies Federation (highlighted in green)



Source: <http://www.robinsonlibrary.com/america/westindies/general/wif.htm>

The first federal elections took place on March 25 of that year⁶³. Under the Constitution of the Federation, candidates could not be members of their local government and due to this stipulation, several leaders in some islands; most notably Norman Manley of Jamaica and Eric Williams of Trinidad and Tobago, who had been a part of the negotiations to create of the Federation, decided not to run for federal office. The results of the federation elections inevitably meant that the leaders of the political parties who had guided the pre-federal process would not be the ones to control the new Federal Government. Of great importance, were the elections results at the local level where the ruling parties of Williams in Trinidad and Manley in Jamaica both suffered a loss⁶⁴. The result proved to be more significant in Jamaica since Manley's political opponent and Leader of the Opposition

⁶³ See Sewell, S. C., 1978. British Decolonization in the Caribbean: The West Indies Federation, pg. 81

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 82

Jamaica Labour Party, Alexander Bustamante, strongly opposed Jamaica's participation in the Federation from the very beginning.

The federal elections saw Grantley Adams of Barbados becoming the first Prime Minister of the Federal Government. On taking the oath of office he immediately began confronting major issues which had been debated upon during the years of preparation for the Federation⁶⁵. In confronting various issues including that of the location of the federal capital, the Prime Minister quickly found himself butting heads with the leader of the island of Trinidad and Tobago, Eric Williams. The negotiations over the location of capital involved the leader of The Federation, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (USA/US) which had a military base in Chaguaramas, in Trinidad; the proposed site for the Federal Capital. Through these negotiations the US agreed in 1960 to release some 21,000 acres of land⁶⁶ including unused portion of Chaguaramas to the government of Trinidad and Tobago. It is worth noting here that those negotiation also revealed that Trinidad and Tobago was growing in an attitude of nationalism and separation from the federal government⁶⁷.

Another notable issue which gave rise to heated debates and underscored the differences among the members of the federation was that of immigration. Whereas, the leaders of Barbados, the Leeward Islands⁶⁸ and the Winward Islands⁶⁹ saw freedom of movement of people within The Federation as a fundamental feature in reaping much of its possible benefits; Eric Williams of Trinidad and Tobago was not enthusiastic about the idea. He believed instead that his country would be burdened with a rush of immigrants leading to an exacerbation of its social and economic ills⁷⁰. In May of 1961 at an intergovernmental conference, Williams emphasized that migration would have a negative impact on his country which he would not allow and threatened to withdraw Trinidad and Tobago from The Federation if it lost its efforts to restrict migration⁷¹. Added to this problem of migration as postulated by Trinidad and Tobago, the Federation was being confronted with protectionist measures by Jamaica which proposed to implement custom measures in favor of its oil refinery. That proposition directly contradicted the idea of free trade within The Federation and did not sit well with its other members, especially Trinidad and Tobago which was also developing its oil industry. After much heated discussions on these and other disagreements,

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 83

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 84

⁶⁷ See Mordecai, J., 1968. *The West Indies: The Federal Negotiations*. London: Allen & Unwin, Ltd.

⁶⁸ These were Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Montserrat & St-Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla

⁶⁹ Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, the Grenadines, Dominica, and Barbados

⁷⁰ See Sewell, S. C., 1978. *British Decolonization in the Caribbean: The West Indies Federation*, pg. 85

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 87

and being pressured by his opponent, Bustamante, Norman Manley decided to carry out a referendum for the people of Jamaica to decide if that country should remain in or leave The Federation.

Resultantly, on September 19, 1961 Jamaicans went to the polls and voted to leave the Federation. At that time, there was no provision in the Federation's Constitution for secession and furthermore, The Federation was merely months away from achieving its independence from Britain. Therefore, the British agreed to release Jamaica from The Federation no later than March 1962. Upon Jamaica's leave a proposal was put forward to form an Eastern Caribbean federation with Trinidad and Tobago included but she refused this proposal⁷². On such refusal its leader, Eric Williams, uttering his now famous words, "One from ten leaves naught". Trinidad and Tobago followed Jamaica and withdrew from the West Indies Federation. With the exit of the largest and wealthiest members of The Federation, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago respectively, The West Indies Federation collapsed ahead of its 31 May 1962 fixed date of independence⁷³.

Despite its challenges and short life span, the idea of federation had gained support in West Indian thought as a useful framework for self-government⁷⁴. It is very clear from what transpired from the idea of the Federation, to its establishment and ultimate demise that the leaders were and will be central in driving any process of integration. They were and are the key mechanism if regionalism of any form was and is to be achieved. And thus, the roles of Manley, Bustamante, and Williams during this period of federation would more or less set the pace for all other leaders involved from then to present day.

⁷² See Wallace, E., 1962. The West Indies Federation: Decline and Fall. *International Journal*, 17(3), pp. 269-288

⁷³ See Archibald, C. H., 1962. The Failure of the West Indies. *The World Today*, 18(6), pp. 233-242.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

The Birth and Evolution of Caribbean Regionalism: From Federation to CARICOM

1.2 CARIFTA: The Birth of Independent Caribbean Leadership and the Integration Process

In the same year of their withdrawal from The Federation i.e.1962, both Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago achieved their independence from Britain. Soon after his country's departure from The Federation, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Eric Williams advocated for the formation of a Caribbean Economic Community which he proposed, would not have only consisted of the ten members of the failed Federation, but also the Guianas⁷⁵ and all the islands of the Caribbean Sea. To further his idea, in 1963 Dr. Williams called a meeting to which Errol W. Barrow, Linden Forbes S. Burnham and Michael N. Manley who were then leaders of Barbados, British Guiana⁷⁶ and Jamaica respectively, participated. The records show that much was not achieved from this meeting vis a vis the idea of Williams. Two years later, i.e. 1965, en route to attaining independence for their countries, Errol Barrow and L. Forbes Burnham discussed the establishment of a free trade area between their two countries. Vere C Bird, then Chief Minister of Antigua and Barbuda joined this discussion resulting in the signing on 15 December 1965 by these three Heads of government, of the Dickenson Bay Agreement⁷⁷ establishing the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA). Here again we see the political leaders driving the process of some form of integration.

The agreement between these countries aspired *inter alia* to provide full employment for and improve the living standard of the peoples of their countries, and to immediately established a Free Trade Economic Community⁷⁸. Article 1 of the agreement established an association which was to be called the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA), which would apply to the territories signatories of the agreement thus making this the Caribbean Free Trade Area. To facilitate the latter, the Dickenson Bay Agreement made provisions for the establishment of a wider Caribbean free trade association to include the other Caribbean territories and proposed that the governments of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries use its framework *mutatis mutandis* as a basis for freeing trade. Indeed, the objectives of the CARIFTA Agreement included *inter alia*: to promote the expansion and diversification in trade in the Area of Association, to encourage the balanced and progressive development of the economies of the Area, and to foster the harmonious development of Caribbean trade and its liberalization by the removal of barriers to trade⁷⁹. Markedly, the Fifth Schedule, Article

⁷⁵ See 'Kamal, a True Caribbean Man', (available online at <http://www.guardian.co.tt/article-6.2.426174.89c5397239>)

⁷⁶ Now known as Guyana since 1970

⁷⁷ See the Dickenson Bay Agreement (available online at <http://www.sice.oas.org/Trade/CCME/dikson.asp>)

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ See Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA)

5(d) of the agreement outlined several resolutions which were adopted at the Fourth Conference of Heads of Government of Commonwealth Caribbean Countries, held in October of 1967. One of which declared the body's intention to introduce free trade throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean by May 01, 1968⁸⁰. In this regard, once accomplished, the CARIFTA agreement would then be used as the basis for freeing intra-Commonwealth Caribbean⁸¹ trade.

Subsequently on May 01, 1968, with little to no changes, the Dickenson Bay Agreement evolved into what is officially known as the agreement which established CARIFTA. By this time Barbados and the former British Guiana (Guyana after independence) had joined in the glory of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago in gaining their independence and so now there were four independent states in the British West Indies. It can therefore be said that CARIFTA began with the birth of independent Caribbean leadership, determined to promote Caribbean Regionalism. The CARIFTA Agreement signed at first by leaders representing the governments of Barbados, British Guiana, Antigua and Barbuda and Trinidad and Tobago would be joined several weeks later by Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, and Montserrat. A few months later Jamaica became a member, and in 1971 the then British Honduras, and since independence, Belize, acceded to the agreement⁸².

CARIFTA: A product of Caribbean Leadership

Article 28 of the CARIFTA Agreement established a body called 'the Council'. The Council comprised of leaders representing each member territory of the Association and was given the responsibility to exercise the powers and functions as conferred upon it by the Agreement. The responsibilities of the Council included : the task to supervise the application of the Agreement and keep its operation under review, to determine whether further action should be taken by member territories in order to promote the attainment of the objectives of the Association, and to facilitate the establishment of closer links with other countries and unions of countries of International Organizations. Each member of the Council had the privilege of one vote, decisions were made by majority vote and were binding on all member states⁸³. The Agreement also included provisions with respect to the authority of the Council regarding new members joining the Association, withdrawal of members from the

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ The Commonwealth Caribbean is the term used to describe the English- speaking islands in the Caribbean and the mainland nations of Belize (formerly British Honduras) and Guyana (formerly British Guiana) which made up the Caribbean portion of the British Empire

⁸² See 'History of CARIFTA', (available online at <https://web.archive.org/web/20080916111317/http://www.caricom.org/jsp/community/carifta.jsp?menu=community#>)

⁸³ Ibid. p. 21

Association, and provisions for the acquisition of sovereign status⁸⁴; since not all member territories had already achieved independence from Britain. Finally, the Council was also given the supreme responsibility of entrusting the Commonwealth Caribbean Regional Secretariat as the principal administrative organ of the Association along with the ability to set up other organs to assist in accomplishing its tasks.

All *supra dictum* shows that the Council comprising of the leaders of the member states was given the task to essentially drive the integration process of CARIFTA forward, by holding among other things, the authority to put in place various mechanisms for the achievement of the objectives of The Agreement. Here, it can already therefore be seen that the Heads of Government of the members states, that is to say, the Council of CARIFTA held the key to pushing the integration process. Further, this chapter will illustrate how the Council continued to play this role ultimately evolving into the Conference of CARICOM.

The Secretariat

As part of its efforts to meet its objectives CARIFTA founded two very essential institutions namely, The Commonwealth Caribbean Regional Secretariat and the Caribbean Development Bank. The former was established in 1968 under Article 28 (3) of the CARIFTA Agreement as the principal organ of the Association and the Council with its headquarters in Georgetown, Guyana. Barbadian, Frederick L. Cozier, OBE was the first Secretary General who almost single-handedly established the then Regional Secretariat; putting systems in place to ensure effective communication flows between it and the member states⁸⁵.

The CDB

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), a regional financial institution having its headquarters in Barbados, was established by an agreement reached in Kingston, Jamaica in 1969 and came into force in 1970. The Agreement was signed by members of CARIFTA, and by countries outside of the region, that is to say the United Kingdom and Canada⁸⁶ which are non-borrowing members of the CDB. Article 1 of this Agreement outlines the purpose of the bank as: to contribute to the harmonious economic growth and development of the member countries in the Caribbean and to promote economic co-operation and integration among them, having special and urgent regard to the needs of the less developed members of the region⁸⁷. Both the Secretariat and the CDB as institutions established by the agreement of

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 24

⁸⁵ See Tribute to Frederick Lloyd Cozier, available online <https://caricom.org/tribute-to-frederick-lloyd-cozier/>

⁸⁶ See Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Development Bank

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 8

Caribbean leaders, have played essential roles in the fulfillment of the objectives of CARIFTA and the overall process of regional integration.

It is fair to say that regional integration did advance through CARIFTA as compared to efforts made for the creation of a West Indies Federation. Fair to say also that in the creation of CARIFTA, Caribbean leaders began fashioning a Caribbean Regional Integration largely independent of colonial interference. But regional integration could not and did not stop at the CARIFTA as these leaders saw the need to deepen the integration process, and so sought to move from a Free Trade Association to the creation of a Caribbean Community and Common Market, the discussion of which this work now turns.

The Birth and Evolution of Caribbean Regionalism: From Federation to CARICOM

1.3 From CARIFTA to CARICOM

Although Caribbean leaders had taken steps to manifest the idea of Caribbean regional integration through CARIFTA, there was still much to be desired. In 1972 the Seventh Heads of Government Conference was held in Chaguaramas, Trinidad and Tobago⁸⁸. At this meeting, it was decided that a Caribbean Community and Common Market should be established. In April of the following year a series of meetings were held in Georgetown, Guyana, aimed at facilitating the implementation of this decision ultimately leading to the Georgetown Accord embodying the conception of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and outlining *inter alia* the pre-requisites for its establishment⁸⁹. It stipulated that CARICOM shall replace CARIFTA which would cease to exist from May 01, 1974⁹⁰. It also stipulated that on and after August 01, 1973, the Commonwealth Regional Secretariat, though continuing to be the administrative organ of the CARIFTA, will become the principal administrative organ of CARICOM and would thence be known as the Caribbean Community Secretariat⁹¹. Furthermore, the leaders agreed through the Georgetown Accord, to set out the guidelines for the establishment of: a Common External Tariff (CET) as an integral feature of the Common Market, a Caribbean Investment Corporation; a Regional Commission and a scheme for the Rationalization of Agriculture in the region.

On July 04, 1973, the Treaty of Chaguaramas, i.e. the agreement formally establishing the CARICOM, came into being. The Treaty was clear as to what constitutes “the Community”; that is, the parties establishing the same and being members of a Caribbean Community⁹². Membership of the Community was opened to thirteen Caribbean territories⁹³ and any other state of the Caribbean region which the existing members deemed fit to join. Whereas the objectives of the CARIFTA were limited to issues of trade, those of CARICOM expanded beyond trade to include subjects of, but not limited to economic integration, coordination of foreign policies, and functional cooperation including to facilitate social, cultural and technological advancement. On August 01, 1973, the Treaty of Chaguaramas came into force with four signatories namely Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad and

⁸⁸ See the History of the Caribbean Community (available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20121021204409/http://www.caricom.org/jsp/community/history.jsp?menu=community&prnf=1>)

⁸⁹ See the Georgetown Accord (available at https://web.archive.org/web/20161003184937/http://archive.caricom.org/jsp/secretariat/legal_instruments/georgetownaccord.jsp?menu=secretariat)

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² See the Original Treaty of Chaguaramas, 1973

⁹³ Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago.

Tobago. Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines joined in 1974.

During the mid-1970s the islands of the Caribbean experienced great challenges which unveiled major differences in policy stance and ideology which still exists today and will be further explored in Chapter Two of this work. Suffice to say here that these challenges and differences affected the integration process being pursued through the CARICOM mechanism, so much so that Community Heads of Government did not meet for seven years; 1975 – 1982⁹⁴. Among these challenges were those relating to foreign policy approaches which were further intensified by the Grenadian Revolution of 1979 – 1983. By this time, according to Dr. Kurtleigh King who was Secretary General for the period 1978-1982, it became impossible to bridge the ideological and foreign policy gulf which existed among CARICOM member states⁹⁵. This was a period where the serious paucity of meetings of the Heads and consequently an absence of proper leadership in the promotion of Caribbean regionalism nurtured the spirit of nationalism and separatism. This greatly hampered and stalled the implementation of decisions intended to bring the region's leaders closer together and push Caribbean integration further. Common sense prevailed however, and in November of 1982, the Heads of Government met convening their 3rd gathering since CARICOM's 1973 inception. At this meeting it was agreed that going forward there would be annual meetings of the Heads of Government⁹⁶.

At the Tenth Heads of Government of CARICOM meeting held in Grand Anse, Grenada in July of 1989, the leaders adopted the Grand Anse Declaration⁹⁷; setting out among other things, a work programme and specific initiatives which were to be implemented by and through CARICOM over the following four years. The Declaration set out the intention and guidelines for the establishment of a Single Market and Economy, an Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians and Ministerial group, an independent West Indies Commission for advancing the Goals of the Treaty of Chaguaramas and the convening of a Caribbean Economic Conference. It also set out for the elimination, by December 1990 of the requirement for the use of passports for CARICOM nationals travelling within the community and the elimination of the requirement for work permits for CARICOM nationals in specific work areas.

⁹⁴ See Hall, K. O., 2000. CARICOM: Unity in Adversity. Georgetown: UWI-CARICOM Project.

⁹⁵ See Dr. Kurtleigh King's Profile available online at https://caricom.org/secretaries_general/dr-kurleigh-king/

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ See the Grand Anse Declaration (available at <https://caricom.org/grand-anse-declaration-and-work-programme-for-the-advancement-of-the-integration-movement-july-1989-grand-anse-grenada/>)

In essence, the Grand Anse Declaration laid the basis for adoption in 2001 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). In keeping with the Original Treaty of Chaguaramas, the conditions of membership remained the same and the objectives included but were not limited to: improving the standard of work and living conditions, coordinated and sustained economic development, expansion of trade, and enhancing functional cooperation⁹⁸. Notably, with the Revised Treaty also came the revision of the definition of the term ‘Community’. It consolidated the meaning of the Community to be, the Caribbean Community established by Article 2⁹⁹ and included the CSME which was established by said Revised Treaty. Today, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is comprised of fifteen full members¹⁰⁰, five associate members¹⁰¹ and eight observer states¹⁰². The following section will provide a brief overview of the structure and function of CARICOM.

Figure 2: Map Displaying Countries with Full Membership within CARICOM



Source: <https://energy.caricom.org/member-states-2/>

⁹⁸ See The Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas
⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 6
¹⁰⁰ Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.
¹⁰¹ Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos Island.
¹⁰² Aruba, Colombia, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Sint Maarten, and Venezuela.

The Birth and Evolution of Caribbean Regionalism: From Federation to CARICOM

1.4 A Brief Overview of the Structure and Function of CARICOM

CARICOM is comprised of various organs, supporting bodies and associate institutions including its Secretariat, all working together to fulfill its objectives. This section of the paper seeks to give an overview of the different components of the CARICOM machinery and undertakes a brief examination of their functions.

Under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 10 establishes two principal organs of the Community, namely the Conference of the Heads of Government (CoHG), and the Community Council of Ministers. The first is as its name suggests, made up of Heads of Government of the member states and any minister or other person assigned the responsibility of representing any Head of Government at any meeting of the Conference. This body will be examined in depth in Chapter Two of this study which is solely dedicated to explaining its structure and functions, and roles and responsibilities.

The second principal organ, the Community Council of Ministers (CCM) is appointed by the Conference and is composed of ministers or designated delegates responsible for 'Community Affairs' (a term which is not well-defined under the treaty). Nonetheless, following the policy directives set out by the Conference of the Heads of Government, the CCM is tasked with formulating coordination plans relating to the objectives of The Treaty, namely: economic integration, functional cooperation, and external relations¹⁰³. It is also the role of the CCM to approve programmes proposed by other organs of the Community, and to promote and monitor the implementation of Community decisions in the member states. It should be noted that the CCM shares in some respects, similar responsibilities with the Conference. These include but are not limited to, attending to the financial affairs of the Community such as examining and approving the Community budget, and mobilizing and allocating resources for the implementation of the plans and programmes of the Community. With the aim of enhancing the decision-making and implementation processes of the Community, the CCM is mandated to set up a system through which regional and national consultations can be conducted, function as a preparatory body for meetings of the Conference, oversee the growth of the CSME, attend to disputes between organs of the Community¹⁰⁴, and undertake any additional functions assigned to it by the Conference as allowed by The Treaty. The last of these stipulations point to the fact that the CoHG is the ultimate authority as regards the Community and driving the integration process.

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 9, Article 13

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 10

Subsidiary Organs of the Community

Article 10(2) of the Treaty sets out four subsidiary organs intended to assist the principal organs in executing their functions. These are: The Council of Finance and Planning (COFAP), the Council of Trade and Economic Development (COTED), the Council of Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR), and the Council of Human and Social Development (COHSOD). These subsidiary Councils, excluding COFCOR which is made up Ministers of Foreign Affairs, essentially consist of ministers or alternates designated by the Heads of Government of the member states. These Councils carry out critical functions in support of integration.

The COFAP for example has the primary responsibility for economic policy coordination and financial and monetary integration of member states, as well as the duty to promote and establish measures necessary to the finance and economic affairs of the Community¹⁰⁵. The COTED is essentially responsible for trade affairs such as: keeping a watch of the growth and development of the CSME, ensuring international competitiveness among markets within the Community, promoting and establishing measures to expand and increase trade relations and trade in the areas of agriculture, services, energy and technology, as well as measures to ensure the sustainable development of the Community¹⁰⁶. The role of COFCOR is basically to coordinate foreign policies and positions of member states in internal and external relations and undertake any additional functions assigned to it by the Conference within the perimeters of the Treaty¹⁰⁷. Finally, the role of the COHSOD is to promote and establish measures regarding the improvement of health, education, living and working conditions, youth and women empowerment, culture and sports, and any additional functions designated to it by the Conference¹⁰⁸. Given the roles and responsibilities of the aforementioned Councils established by the Treaty, it is apparent that these Councils designated by the Conference of the Heads of Government play a very crucial part in ensuring the movement and progress of the vehicle that is CARICOM and the integration process as a whole. Here again underlines the key role of the CoHG in the integration process.

Bodies of the Community

According to the Treaty there are three bodies of the Community: The Legal Affairs Committee, the Budget Committee, and the Committee of Central Bank Governors. The Legal Affairs Committee is comprised of ministers responsible for legal affairs and or Attorneys

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 10-11

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 11-12

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 12

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p.13

General of member states. It is tasked with the responsibility of advising the Community regarding any legal matters including the creation and revision of treaties, issues concerning international law, and the harmonization of laws of the Community¹⁰⁹. The Budget Committee is made up of senior officials of member states who act in a professional capacity. Its duty is to examine the draft budget and work programme of the Community prepared by the Secretariat, and to provide recommendations to the Community Council responsible for the financial affairs of the Community¹¹⁰. The Committee of the Central Bank Governors consists of the Heads or their nominees of member states' Central Banks and is responsible for making recommendations to the COFAP relating to monetary and economic cooperation and integration along with any other related issues referred to it by the organs of the Community¹¹¹.

Other Key Institutions of the Community

The Community is also made up of key institutions and associate institutions which were established and endorsed by the Conference and thus form part of its fabric, help to advance its cause, and thereby helping to fulfill its objectives. The listing of all the institutions and associated institutions and exploring and detailing their functions go beyond the purposes of this work. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Article 21 of The Treaty establishes the following institutions : the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), the Caribbean Meteorological Institute (CMI) and the Caribbean Meteorological Organization (CMO), the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute(CEHI), the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Caribbean Regional Education Programme for Animal Health Assistants (REPAHA), the Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians (ACCP), the Caribbean Centre For Developmental Administration (CARICAD) and the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI). These institutions provide direct and technical support to member states in various areas of their competencies and play a critical partnership role in the implementation of the Community strategic plan.

In addition to those listed under Article 21 of the Treaty, the CoHG also created several other institutions as it saw fit and as The Treaty empowers it so to do. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) established 2005, was in 2009 renamed the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). It is primarily responsible for the coordination of emergency response and relief efforts to member states upon their request. And mention must be made of the recently established Caribbean Public Health

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 14

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Agency (CARPHA). CARPHA, legally established in 2011, began operations in 2013 and is a leading Community institution in the fight against the novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Being the only CARICOM regional reference laboratory accredited to test for COVID-19, the institution has been actively working with various Ministries of Health in the member states to provide various testing services. This has been of tremendous benefit to the member states since they are then able to gather the appropriate information necessary for the development and implementation of suitable policies in relation to the battling of COVID-19.

Associate Institutions of the Community

In addition to the aforementioned bodies, Article 22 of the Revised Treaty established as associate institutions: the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the University of Guyana (UG), the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Caribbean Law Institute Center (CLIC) and the Secretariat of the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). These associate institutions in tandem with others, play an increasingly significant role in the life of the Community, affecting the daily lives of its peoples. For example, the CDB has been a cushion and buffer for the economies of many, if not all the member states of the Community as it invests in the economic and social development of its borrowing member countries. Such investments are geared towards, *inter alia*, poverty reduction and span sectors such as agriculture and rural development, energy, water, and sanitation. Notably, in March of 2020, the CDB made up to US\$140 million available to be used by the Bank's borrowing member countries to tackle the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and other shocks to their economies¹¹².

The associated educational institutions facilitate the human and social development of the peoples of the region. They play a key role in educating and equipping citizens of the Community with essential scientific, technical and leadership skills and tools necessary for the success of the Community. These educational institutions also facilitate the integration process in a very real and personal way as they draw people from different member states to reside in other member states as both students and teachers where these institutions are hosted. This in turn, allows the peoples of the Community to experience the different lived realities of the various members of the Community, and thereby gain a better appreciation of the culture and nuances existing in the various states. Furthermore, this helps to solidify the “commonness” concept in peoples’ minds through the experiencing of varying similarities and the feeling of one Caribbean home.

¹¹² See <https://www.caribank.org/newsroom/news-and-events/cdb-makes-us140-million-available-counter-covid-19-pandemic-and-other-disasters>

The CARICOM Secretariat

The Original and Revised Treaties which govern CARICOM, established the Secretariat as the principal administrative organ of the Community. In carrying out its mandate the Secretariat plays a crucial role in: ensuring the functioning of all organs, bodies and institutions of the Community, the successful implementation of decisions made at the Conference and the maintenance of relationships with associate institutions and external partners. It is headed by a Secretary General (SG) who is appointed by the CoHG and is staffed as deemed necessary to realize its duties. As per The Treaty¹¹³, the Secretary General is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Community and is mandated to act in such capacity at all meetings of community organs and bodies. Part of the responsibility of the Secretary General is to provide an annual report to the Conference on the work of the Community. Six of these reports (2007, 2008-2009,2010,2011,2012,2013) are available on the website of the Secretariat. Although the SG formulate the Staff Rules, it is the Conference which approves these rules, while the Community Council is charged with approving the financial regulations governing the Secretariat. In accordance with Article 23 (4) of The Treaty, it is imperative that the SG act independently and without influence of any member state or authority external to the Community.

The SG is approved by the CoHG upon the recommendation of the CCM for a term not exceeding five years initially but may be reappointed by the Conference. As stipulated by Article 24, the SG is expected to: represent the Community, formulate decisions of community organs and bodies into implementable proposals, mobilize the necessary resources for the implementation of such proposals, and see through the implementation process at the regional level¹¹⁴. The SG is also tasked with monitoring and reporting on the implementation of Community decisions. He or she oversees the functions of the Secretariat including: the servicing of meetings of the organs and bodies of the Community, the conducting of studies on issues relating to the objectives of the Community, and assisting Community organs in developing and implementing proposals and programmes in an effort to strive to achieve the objectives of the Community. The SG is also responsible for coordinating activities with donor agencies as well as international, regional and national partners, preparing the draft budgets to be examined by the Budget Committee, and when requested, providing technical assistance to Member States on the implementation of Community decisions¹¹⁵. In January of 2012, an Audit Committee of the Secretariat consisting of an Auditor General, a Director of

¹¹³ “The Treaty” refers to the most recent Treaty of Chaguaramas which is The Revised Treaty

¹¹⁴ Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, p. 15

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Audit and three other members from varying islands was established by the Secretariat with the approval of the CCM. As its title indicates, the primary role of the Audit Committee is to audit the internal affairs of the Secretariat and other institutions of the Community through various assessments, as and when requested. In welcoming the Committee, the Secretary General explained that the creation of the Committee was a step in strengthening the governance framework of the Secretariat¹¹⁶.

Many reports have called for and indicated the need for CARICOM to strengthen its Secretariat in an effort to boost the implementation process. Specifically, the 2012 Landell Mills Report commissioned by the CoHG, emphasized the significance of the role of the Secretariat and opined that if CARICOM is to survive as a regional body, then it must reorganize its Secretariat and its other institutions which are focused on the management of implementation¹¹⁷. Given the scope of the roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat outlined in The Treaty, it is quite clear that the Secretariat, positioned as it is, at the heart of the Community, has a cardinal role to play in ensuring its survival and prosperity.

The Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas

The primary purpose of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas adopted in 2001 is the replacement of the Common Market agreement of The Original Treaty and creating the framework for a Single Market and Economy. This means first and foremost that where a common tariff and some duties were imposed on trade among member states, there would now be no tariffs or restrictions to trade among member states. The CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) is the primary mechanism through which the Single Market is expected to operate. January of 2006 saw the implementation of the initial phase of the CSME which was the CARICOM Single Market (CSM) after signature of the agreement by six member states namely: Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) and Suriname. Additionally, six member states which like SVG belong to the OECS¹¹⁸ subgrouping, signed an agreement expressing their intent to join the CSM later that year.

Many brainstorming sessions as well as consultative and technical meetings were held, and drafts of concept papers were discussed at the 27th Conference of the Heads of Government held in July of 2006. Here, the Heads agreed that Professor Norman Girvan would be tasked with producing a revised version of the original Concept Paper which he

¹¹⁶ See CARICOM inaugurates Audit Committee available online at <https://caricom.org/caricom-inaugurates-audit-committee/>

¹¹⁷ See Turning around CARICOM - Landell Mills Final Report .

¹¹⁸ Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Lucia.

submitted in December of 2005. His Report, ‘Towards a Single Economy and a Single Development Vision’, was after revision, approved by the 28th Conference of the Heads of Government in July of 2007. The Girvan Report¹¹⁹ thus became the leading document guiding the full implementation of the CSME. The Report underscored the aim of the CSME as, the establishment of a single economic space wherein business and labor operate in order to stimulate greater productive efficiency, higher levels of domestic and foreign investment, increased employment and the growth of intra-regional and extra-regional exports; whereas the Single Market component aimed at achieving the freedom of movement of goods, services, capital, business enterprise and skilled labor circumscribed by a customs union¹²⁰.

The implementation of the Single Market was expected to take place sequentially. Phase One, scheduled from mid-2007 to end-2008 was meant to be focused on the consolidation of the Single Market and the initiation of the Single Economy. With this goal in mind, this period should have seen a list of implementation actions achieved including but not limited to : the adoption of the CARICOM Investment Code, the adoption of CARICOM financial agreement, an extension of free movement of labor to include teachers, nurses and domestic workers, the establishment of a Regional Stock Exchange and the establishment and commencement of a Regional Development Fund¹²¹. Phase Two which should have seen the completion of the Single Economy was scheduled for the period of 2009-2015 and should have included *inter alia*, the implementation of a CARICOM Monetary Union, the harmonization of taxation systems, fiscal and monetary policies, and the implementation of common sectoral policies¹²².

The implementation process of the CSME as lamented in many reports, has been severely slow¹²³. After the member states adopted the schedule for the phased implementation of the Single Market and Economy by 2015 as proposed in the Girvan Report, there was a marked decline in information on the CSME in official communication. And in 2011, the Conference of the Heads of Government at a special conclave in Guyana, decided to put the Single Economy process on pause¹²⁴. In his 2013 address to the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers, Girvan stated that at the 33rd Regional Summit in July of 2012, the Heads of

¹¹⁹ See ‘The Girvan Report’

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 8

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 35

¹²² Ibid. p. 36

¹²³ See Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica’s Relations with CARICOM and CARIFORUM

¹²⁴ See Norman Girvan, 2013: ‘Reinventing the CSME’

Government agreed on a new implementation schedule but this was never published nor was any mention of CSME implementation made at the 34th Summit in July of 2013¹²⁵.

The declaration of the pause on the implementation of the CSME was preceded by great unfortunate and contending events of global and regional origin. In 2008 the world was plunged into a global financial and economic crisis which severely affected the economies of the CARICOM member states. That year also saw the establishing of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Europe which was signed by individual states of the Community instead of CARICOM as a whole. Girvan believes that this latter event caused member states to pay greater attention to the implementation of the EPA which consisted of strict, detailed, time-bounded obligations under law to the detriment of the implementation of the CSME¹²⁶. Girvan further asserts that since the endorsement of the 2007 implementation schedules, there have been notable failures to achieve consensus on important issues such as the CARICOM Financial Service Agreement, the CARICOM Investment Code, and a regional agreement on tax incentives¹²⁷. To add pain to injury, in 2010, the OECS which includes six full members of CARICOM advanced their intention of establishing the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union under The Revised Treaty of Basseterre¹²⁸.

It is very important to note that in July of 2016, the Prime Minister of Jamaica appointed a CARICOM Review Commission to review Jamaica's relationship with CARICOM and within CARIFORUM¹²⁹. Accordingly, in March of 2017, the 'Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica's Relations with the CARICOM and CARIFORUM Frameworks¹³⁰ was published. The Commission *inter alia* proposed a list of recommendations relating to the restructuring of CARICOM and the implementation of the CSME. In the same breath the report boldly advised the Government of Jamaica to withdraw from the regional body if, within five years the proposed recommendations for the implementation of the CSME were not fully applied and operational¹³¹. This Report, otherwise known as the Golding Report, commanded the attention of other member states and in particularly Trinidad and Tobago. So much so, that at a press conference during the 18th special meeting of the CoHG held in Port of Spain in December of 2018 to specifically address the issue of the CSME, the Prime Minister of that country expressed the view that Trinidad recognized that if the CSME

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid. p. 8

¹²⁷ Ibid. p. 24

¹²⁸ See Revised Treaty of Basseterre

¹²⁹ The Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) is a subgroup of the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States. Its membership includes the 15 CARICOM states along with the Dominican Republic.

¹³⁰ See Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica's Relations with CARICOM and CARIFORUM

¹³¹ Ibid.

could not be made to work, Jamaica would reconsider in five years its status in CARICOM¹³². That meeting resulted in the St. Ann's Declaration on the CSME where member states agreed to move forward with the rigorous plan of getting the CSME fully established and operational within three years. At the aforementioned press conference, Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley who then held the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the CSME, listed a number of measures that would be taken in order to make the CSME a reality. This list included: the introduction of an administrative process for the freedom of movement of goods by the end of 2019, the creation of a regional deposit insurance system and credit information sharing system, a single window for region-wide company registration by the end of 2019, the completion of the review of CARICOM institutions in early 2020, the harmonization of companies law by the end of 2020, a single window for intellectual property registration, patents and trademarks by the end of 2021, and for those states that have the will, the total freedom of movement for all Caribbean people by the end of 2021¹³³.

After years of being impeded to come into full functionality, the 2018 special meeting on the CSME is said to have breathed some life into its establishment. However, the beginning of 2020 has seen an unprecedented global crisis in the form of the COVID-19. This crisis has caused governments all over the world to turn inwards; to close their borders and to focus on national resilience and survival. In effect, regionalism seems to have been tentatively abandoned worldwide and the implementation process of the CSME has yet again been halted. Only this time, not due to the actions of its own Conference of Heads of Government. Regardless of the numerous challenges faced in the past and those to come, the CSME holds the potential to radically transform the economic, social, and human development of the Caribbean Community.

The foregoing recalled the laying of the foundation of the establishment and the evolution of CARICOM into the mechanism that administratively drives the Caribbean regional integration process. The next chapter of this work takes a closer look at the establishment, structure, and practice of the Conference of the Heads of Government as the body tasked with steering the regional integration enterprise.

¹³² See 'At Last, A Time for Action on CSME' by David Jessop available online at <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/business/20181216/david-jessop-last-time-action-csme>

¹³³ Ibid

Chapter Two

The Conference and its Practice

1.1 The Origins of the Conference of the Heads of Government

The communique issued at the 2nd Conference of the Heads of Government of Commonwealth Caribbean Countries records that the first conference was held in Trinidad and Tobago from July 22 to 25, 1963 under the Chairmanship of the then Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Eric Williams. At same conference he was joined by Alexander Bustamante, Errol Barrow and Cheddi Jagan, leaders of Jamaica, Barbados, and British Guiana, respectively. At this point only Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were independent anglophone Caribbean states and there was no established body which mandated leaders to meet regularly or otherwise. Thus, this conference was merely the meeting of leaders as they saw fit. Though no communique for the first conference is available online, the communique for the 2nd conference held in Jamaica records remarks made by Dr. Eric Williams regarding the first meeting.

In his address Williams outlined that the first meeting was essentially convened in response to a general recognition by the four participating countries out of the urgent necessity for presenting as far as possible, a united front of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries to deal with the increasing pressures of an increasingly confused world¹³⁴. To further his point, he gave examples of events and threats which were taking place in the global community at the time. Among these he listed *inter alia* : the assassination of President Kennedy of the USA, political instability in Latin America which posed challenges to the effectiveness of the Organization of American States (OAS), and other issues relating to countries outside of the western world such as China, India, Pakistan and African countries¹³⁵. In addition to this list of global threats and events, Dr. Williams zoomed in on those directly affecting the Caribbean region, naming natural disasters as its traditional enemy, and concerns about world trade as pressing issues of concern to Caribbean countries¹³⁶. These are all issues which Caribbean countries continue to deal with today and increasingly so, given the onset of globalization and climate change. Returning to the first meeting, Williams and his contemporaries clearly understood the threats and pressures the region was and will face, and the need for them to work together if they were to be able to tackle these regional and global challenges. The decisions taken by the leaders at the first meeting clearly shows this intention

¹³⁴ See CARICOM Communique available online at <https://caricom.org/communique-issued-at-the-conclusion-of-the-second-conference-of-heads-of-government-of-commonwealth-caribbean-countries-13-17-january-1964-kingston-jamaica/>

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

as they covered such issues as Sea and Air communication, the University of the West Indies, Immigration into the United Kingdom, Trade and Development, Mutual assistance in disaster and education.

In his opening address at the 2nd meeting of the Heads of Government in Jamaica in 1964, Prime Minister Williams noted that amidst the challenges, Caribbean countries especially Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were able to work closely together as never before (given their history in the West Indies Federation), demonstrate a good sense of co-operation through successful bilateral negotiations, and spoke with one voice at international conferences¹³⁷. The second meeting focused on economic aid and foreign policy and resulted in declarations of policies regarding both subjects¹³⁸. Where economic aid was concerned, the leaders present considered the difficulties which the Caribbean countries had encountered in obtaining economic aid due to among other things, the criteria used by agencies involved in granting financial aid, both bilateral and multilateral. These criteria included per capita income, recent economic growth rates and balance of payment issues. As regards foreign policy, the adopted declaration shows that the countries shared certain basic principles already being practiced by the two independent countries, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and which were likely to be adopted by British Guiana Barbados once independence was attained. These foreign policy principles included matters related to the United Nations, Disarmament, Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and Lasting Peace, Friendship with all states, special relationships with Latin America and Afro-Asian countries, Commonwealth Caribbean co-operation, and international trade¹³⁹. In light of the issues covered in the declarations, the leaders agreed to *inter alia* establish a permanent agency to keep under continuous study and to analyze the economic problems and progress of the Caribbean countries, and to facilitate support in efforts to foster and maintain foreign relations¹⁴⁰.

At this second meeting leaders explicitly expressed their hopes that through the exchange of ideas, they will be able to lay the foundation of a Caribbean society superior to many existing in the world. Suggesting too that such a Caribbean society might become influential in its own way in contributing to the achievement of world peace. In essence it is clear that these meetings intentionally or otherwise laid the foundation for a future where Caribbean leaders would established a body which would require them to meet regularly in an effort to coordinate policy directives, mandated by a legal framework such as the current Revised

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

Treaty of Chaguaramas under which the current Conference of the Heads of Government operates.

Looking back, it can be ascertained that these initial conferences of the Heads of Government were crucial in laying the basis for the Commonwealth Caribbean regional integration process, and the establishment of the practice of the meetings of the heads. One would notice that this habit of the meeting of the Heads of Government was transplanted into the CARIFTA Agreement. Recalling ‘the Council’ of CARIFTA, it is clear that this body of the 1965 Treaty had almost an identical nature in form and functions, transforming what was the regular meeting of the Heads of Government of the newly independent Caribbean territories, into a standing practice as regards the CARIFTA process. This body called ‘the Council’ in the CARIFTA Agreement then evolved into the body now known as ‘the Conference’ under the 1973 Original Treaty of Chaguaramas and remained consistent under the 2001 Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, which is the current legal framework that guides CARICOM.

Looking at this evolution from the initial meetings of the Heads of Governments in 1963, to the establishment of the Council under the 1965 CARIFTA Agreement, onwards to the transformation of the Council to the Conference under the 1973 and 2001 CARICOM Treaties, one notices that the mission, vision and intention of the Heads of Government though having evolved overtime, has at its core remain essentially the same. It was and is, to come together as leaders of independent Caribbean states to create a system and practice of engaging one another in hopes of creating common policies which would help in the development of these small island states, while ensuring that they can cope with the various challenges of surviving and prospering in the global environment.

The Conference and its Practice

1.2 The Structure of the CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government (the Conference)

In 1963 when the first meeting attended by the newly independent states of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago and the soon to be independent states of British Guiana and Barbados was held, there was no existing agreement mandating that such a meeting should be held. In 1965 under the CARIFTA Agreement, a body comprising of each Head of Government was formed and called 'the Council'. Although the Council had various responsibilities similar to those of the present-day CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government, it was the Treaty of Chaguaramas that established the group of the CARICOM Heads of Government as 'the Conference' of the Caribbean Community, as a principal organ with the supreme responsibility of setting *inter alia* policy directives.

The Conference of the Heads of Government otherwise called 'the Conference' was given a substantial role when it evolved into a significant governance body in 1973 under Article 6 (a) of the Treaty of Chaguaramas. The 2001 Revised Treaty remained consistent with 1973 Original Treaty in describing the Conference as composing of the Heads of Government of member states or any designated official assigned by the Head of any government belonging to the Conference¹⁴¹. The primary function of the Conference as outlined under Article 12 of The Treaty is to determine and provide policy direction for the Community. In addition to this, the Conference holds the following powers: to establish and designate as such, institutions of the Community in addition to those specified in paragraphs (a) to (g) of Article 10 of The Treaty as it deems fit for the achievement of the objectives of the Community. Further powers include : to issue directions of a general or special character as to the policy to be pursued by the Council of Community Ministers (the Council) and other institutions of the Community, to be the final authority for the conclusion of treaties on behalf of the Community and for entering into relationships between the Community and international organizations and states (subject to the relevant provisions of the Treaty)¹⁴². Moreover, to take decisions for the purpose of establishing the financial arrangements necessary for meeting the expenses of the Community and be the final authority on questions arising in relation to the financial affairs of the Community and the power to regulate its own procedures¹⁴³.

The decisions and recommendations made by the Conference are done through voting. Each member of the Conference has one vote and unlike recommendations of the Conference,

¹⁴¹ See the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 10

¹⁴² See the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 12

¹⁴³ Ibid.

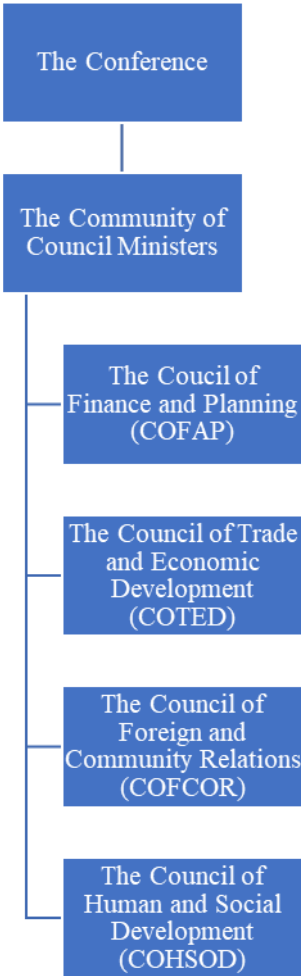
decisions made are binding upon each member to which they are directed. The Treaty however fell short in explicitly defining the term binding. The Conference has the power to appoint the Secretary General of CARICOM on the recommendation of the Council of Community Ministers, it approves the staff regulations governing the operations of the Secretariat, determines disputes concerning the interpretation or application of The Treaty and approve amendments by contracting parties. A subgroup of the Conference is The Bureau. This small body which is made up of the current chairman, the immediate outgoing and incoming chairmen, has been given the special responsibility of initiating proposals for development and approval of Ministerial Councils as it considers necessary, updating member states of issues to be determined by the Conference, facilitating implementation of Community decisions at both local and regional levels and to provide guidance to the Secretariat on policy issues. Having outlined the origins and structure of the Conference, the next section of this chapter turns to an evaluation of the practices of the Conference through its various channels and mechanisms.

The Conference and its Practice

1.3 The Practice of the Conference

The role of the Conference in regional integration will be analyzed in this section through an examination of its practice in areas representing each pillar of integration as established by the Original Treaty. These pillars are: economic integration, foreign policy coordination, human and social development, and security, and represent the real raison d’etre of the Caribbean Community. To assist in the performance of its tasks of providing policy direction for the Community, the Conference in accordance with Article 12(6) of The Treaty established several Councils. These Councils as recalled in Chapter One are: The Council of Finance and Planning (COFAP), the Council of Trade and Economic Development (COTED), the Council of Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) and the Council of Human and Social Development (COHSOD). The figure below provides an overview of the hierarchical structure of the Community.

Figure 3: Chart Displaying an Overview of the Hierarchical Structure of CARICOM vis a vis The Conference and The Community of Council Ministers



Source: Author

As said, this section of the paper seeks to examine the work of the Conference through its various mechanisms of execution, including the Councils and other bodies. This examination begins with a look at the work the Conference has done and is doing in relation to economic integration including trade. This shall be followed by an examination of its practice regarding foreign policy coordination, human and social development, and finally security.

The Conference and Economic Integration and Trade

As established by the Conference, the COFAP and COTED have responsibilities to support the advancement of economic integration including trade, and financial and monetary integration which are the main components of the Single Market and Economy (SME) aspect of CARICOM. At its 10th regular meeting of the Heads of Government, the Conference adopted The Girvan Report ‘Towards a Single Economy and a Single Development Vision’, as its leading policy paper to be used as a guide in the implementation of the CSME. In following the implementation strategies of The Girvan Report, the Conference agreed to put in place different legislative provisions and institutional arrangements. These included: a fiscal responsibility framework, a debt management strategy, the alignment of monetary policies, and the abolition of exchange controls and full convertibility of currencies in the region¹⁴⁴. These provisions related to the macroeconomic convergence of market capital and the CARICOM financial services agreement for the harmonization of laws and regulations relating to financial services, which was agreed by COFAP in 2013¹⁴⁵. Other measures include the protocol for cross-border regulatory cooperation, the realization of credit bureau mechanisms, and the establishment of the legal framework to allow companies to raise capital by public issues across the region¹⁴⁶.

At the 2011 inter-sessional meeting of the Conference, significant initiatives were taken. Here, the Conference mandated the COFAP to carry out a strategic assessment of the elements of the macroeconomic policy coordination work programme including the networks of institutions comprising the regional economic/financial architecture, in an effort to advance its single economy¹⁴⁷. In 2013 the Conference established a ‘Commission On The Economy’ which developed a proposal for a debt and fiscal sustainability framework, and in July of that same year it adopted the report on ‘Strategic Assessment of the Macroeconomic Policy

¹⁴⁴ See the Girvan Report

¹⁴⁵ See Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica’s Relations with CARICOM and CARIFORUM

¹⁴⁶ See the Girvan Report

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Coordination and Harmonization’ work programme¹⁴⁸. In July of 2014 at its regular meeting, the Conference received and adopted the ‘Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015-2019: Repositioning CARICOM’¹⁴⁹. This Strategy Plan was in direct response to the need to target a narrow range of specified outcomes within specified timeframes, focusing on a few practical and achievable goals in relation to the regional development agenda. It outlined the repositioning of the Community, focusing on a development agenda that include: a review of development needs, a Resilience Model for socio-economic progress, strategies to renew the commitment to and strengthen actions for enhancing regional unity, and an agenda for the reform of governance mechanisms to achieve its future goals¹⁵⁰.

Further, in January of 2020, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published its working paper (WP/20/8) entitled ‘Is the Whole Greater than the Sum of its Parts? Strengthening Caribbean Regional Integration’¹⁵¹. This paper records the regional process and progress of CARICOM, with special focus on economic integration and trade. Included in this IMF working paper is a table which displays actions taken toward implementation of the CSME. Under category C #7, re: macroeconomic policy harmonization and coordination, the table records that as of 2016, only one member state had taken incomplete action in the Financial Services agreement which was approved by the COFAP and adopted by the Conference in 2013¹⁵². Similarly, only one member state had taken incomplete action in the areas of capital market integration and investment policy and code. The same paper noted that a draft securities model law and regulations is still to be reviewed by a working session of securities regulation, while a draft CARICOM Investment Code considered in 2017, and a proposal for a harmonized regime of investment incentives have been prepared for further consultation with member states.

In tracking the economic integration within CARICOM, the paper reported that despite the progress made, the degree of Caribbean economic integration as measured by co-movement and evolution in a range of real, monetary, trade and financial indicators is relatively low¹⁵³. It also noted that while deviations among inflation rates across CARICOM countries have fallen drastically since mid-1990s, convergence has slowed down, or even reversed since mid-2000s¹⁵⁴. The report goes on to note that the presence of a relatively low

¹⁴⁸ See Report ‘Areas for Regional Macroeconomic Policy Coordination and Harmonization in Support of the CSME’

¹⁴⁹ See Report ‘Strategy Plan the Caribbean Community 2015-2019: Repositioning CARICOM’

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ See IMF Working Paper (WP/20/8)

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 16

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. 29

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 19

synchronized business cycle suggests that the economies of CARICOM countries are not highly interconnected and this disconnect is partly due to the absence of economic policy harmonization and the lack of financial and monetary integration¹⁵⁵. Notably, The Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas makes provisions for the abolition of exchange controls and full currency convertibility within the region. However, recent reviews by the CARICOM Secretariat on the progress of the CSME shows that liberalization of capital is incomplete.

Financial integration is a key component of economic integration and has been an explicit objective of the CSME in creating a common economic space. Although the Caribbean financial system seems well-integrated, the integration of financial markets is still ongoing, with markets remaining relatively under-developed and fragmented which somewhat reflects the lack of harmonization of regulatory framework across national securities market¹⁵⁶. Three major stock exchanges – Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados – lead the region’s equity market, while bond markets are dominated by government securities¹⁵⁷. Additionally, interest rate and asset price convergence has been uneven across different segments of the financial systems within CARICOM¹⁵⁸. Findings from the IMF study also suggest that there are great interlinkages across insurance companies, banks and sovereigns, based on reported balance sheet information¹⁵⁹. This of course is a result of members of the Conference actions, to implement through their national legislation decisions that were made at the regular meetings of the Heads of the Government of CARICOM.

Cross-border operations of the Caribbean insurers are large as a share of their total assets and span many countries in region¹⁶⁰. Remarkably, banking systems of several countries are highly interconnected (Barbados, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago), and in the insurance sector, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago-based insurance companies – Sagikor and Guardian - carry out operations in 8 and 9 Caribbean countries, respectively¹⁶¹. This increased interconnectedness in the banking sector of the region has resulted in the fall of cross-country standard deviation of lending deposit rates¹⁶². Still, the greatest convergence is seen in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) which is likely due in part to the union’s advantages of reduced cross-border transaction cost, and the fixed exchange rate

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 24

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 25

¹⁶² Ibid.

regime which facilitates more financial flows¹⁶³. As far as financial market integration goes, implementation of the formal integration arrangements has been slow. Although progress has been made in liberalizing the movement of finance across borders, very limited progress is recorded in harmonizing legal and administrative arrangements across the region¹⁶⁴. To date, no Caribbean-wide capital market exists despite the Conference's announcement in 2018 to establish such.

On Trade

The Caribbean Community was originally designed to, among other things, encourage production and trade among its members as a means of import-substitution. The Conference, through the signing of various agreements agreed to the lowering of tariffs and other barriers to trade. The transition from a free trade area (CARIFTA), to common market (CARICOM) then a Single Market and Economy (CSME) meant that there would be economic integration among members. Statistics show that between 1994 and 2015, intra-regional exports among CSME states increased nominally at an average annual rate of 5.9%¹⁶⁵. However, as a percentage of its total exports it has fallen from 15.6% to 13%¹⁶⁶. Little data is available regarding CARICOM intra-regional trade in services. In 2013, the Conference adopted the recommendation of COTED, the CARICOM Energy Policy. This policy included provisions for Intra-Community trade in hydrocarbon energy sources with the purpose of ensuring fair pricing and access to these resources by all member states. However, the Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica's Relationship with CARICOM and CARIFORUM noted that this policy failed to address the issue in any definite way since it only stated that pricing of regional energy sources should conform to Article 177 of the Revised Treaty Chaguaramas¹⁶⁷.

Apart from intra-regional trade, the Conference has on behalf on the Community, entered into bilateral trade agreements with neighboring countries such as Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Venezuela. The agreement between CARICOM and Dominican Republic covers *inter alia* reciprocal duty-free treatment of approximately 90% of the goods traded between the parties. The agreement with Cuba includes duty-free access on specified items from CARICOM's least developed countries into Cuba without the obligation to reciprocate. The agreement with Venezuela includes one-way duty-free access into Venezuela for a specified list of CARICOM goods and Most Favoured Nation (MFN) treatment of all

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ See Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica's Relationships with CARICOM and CARIFORUM

Venezuela goods entering CARICOM. The regional body also has bilateral agreements with Costa Rica, Colombia, Canada, European Union (EU), and the U.K. In addition to these, some member states such as Trinidad and Tobago and Belize which are larger exporters with stronger domestic producers have trade agreements with some countries in Central America such as Panama and Guatemala. Regarding trade, it is of notable importance the extent to which, the total revenues of CARICOM countries depend on import duties that ranges from a low of 6% in Trinidad and Tobago and 8% in Jamaica to a high of 22% in Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines¹⁶⁸.

Trade integration within the region has been ongoing. Although intraregional goods trade has grown from about 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the mid-1980s to about 4% in recent years, it has plateaued for more than a decade¹⁶⁹. Most of the increase in intraregional trade represents trade between commodity and non-commodity exporting CARICOM economies. Trade within each group has been no more than 1% of GDP; reflecting in part the specialization of production or lack of diversification and export structures within sufficiently high variety of goods to form a basis of trade¹⁷⁰. Intraregional trade is relatively low, while a large part of the CARICOM trade is with the rest of the world, the former's share is less than 20% percent of total trade compared to above 50% for the EU and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)¹⁷¹. Indeed, close to 90% of goods exported by CARICOM states go to non-CARICOM states (the US, Europe, and Canada), with intraregional trade dominated by a few countries led by Trinidad and Tobago¹⁷².

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ See IMF Working Paper (WP/20/8)

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

Figure 4 Showing CARICOM’s Intra-Regional and Extra-Regional Goods Trade (in percent)

Table 2. The Caribbean: Intra-Regional and Extra-Regional Goods Trade (in percent)

CARICOM Exports 2017	Total	CARICOM	EU	USA	Canada	R.O.W
Antigua and Barbuda	100.0	3.5	58.8	3.8	0.1	33.8
Bahamas, The	100.0	1.6	9.9	67.0	0.5	21.1
Barbados	100.0	42.0	9.0	31.7	2.2	15.1
Belize	100.0	14.5	46.3	18.5	0.1	20.6
Dominica	100.0	47.3	1.8	3.0	0.1	47.9
Grenada	100.0	36.8	10.1	23.9	1.4	27.9
Guyana	100.0	12.5	16.7	15.0	22.6	33.2
Haiti	100.0	0.2	4.5	78.3	2.9	14.0
Jamaica	100.0	6.0	14.4	36.9	8.0	34.8
Montserrat	100.0	8.7	10.0	8.7	0.3	72.4
St. Kitts and Nevis	100.0	21.9	5.5	60.9	0.2	11.5
St. Lucia	100.0	20.3	8.1	64.0	0.2	7.3
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	100.0	44.8	3.1	2.5	0.1	49.5
Suriname	100.0	10.0	11.9	2.0	0.2	75.9
Trinidad and Tobago	100.0	12.4	10.5	32.2	0.6	44.3

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics; authors’ computations.

Source: IMF Working Paper (WP/20/8)

Although tourism accounts for a substantial percentage of GDP of CARICOM member states, intra- Caribbean tourism represents less than 10% of the same¹⁷³. Further, data indicates that intra-CARICOM tariff barriers are low but intraregional nontariff barriers and trade costs are relatively high¹⁷⁴. Perhaps it is for this reason that the IMF working paper noted that trade integration has been undermined by the slow progress in lowering high Non Trade Barriers(NTBs) and trade costs in the absence of harmonized customs laws, regulations and institutional processes and frameworks.

The Conference and Foreign Policy Coordination

Foreign Policy Coordination is an important pillar of integration with Article 6 of the Revised Treaty declaring that an objective of the Community is, to enhance co-ordination of member states’ foreign and foreign economic policies. Further to this, Article 16(3) tasked the Council of Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) with establishing measures “to co-ordinate the foreign policies of member states and seek to ensure, as far as practicable, the adoption of Community positions on major hemispheric and international issues”¹⁷⁵. Indeed, in accordance with its treaty the CARICOM has practiced coordinating its foreign policies

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ See Article 16 (3) of The Revised Treaty

although not without failures. As a state's foreign policy is determined by its national interests, achieving a regional coordinated foreign policy inevitably necessitates the strategic alignment of the national interests of the countries concerned¹⁷⁶. In keeping with the relevant position of The Treaty, COFCOR and other regional organs have attempted to coordinate the foreign policy positions of CARICOM member states on social, economic, environmental, and humanitarian issues albeit not without obstacles, with the consequence that regional foreign policy coordination continues to be a work in progress.

Effective foreign policy coordination is viewed as an important enabler for building resilience by positioning CARICOM and its member states in the global arena through collaboration, cooperation, and strategic alliances¹⁷⁷. By doing so member states are able to promote and protect the interest of CARICOM as a whole and its individual states, to mitigate vulnerability and leverage resources for regional and national priorities. Indeed, there have been several instances where Caribbean countries have successfully leveraged their collective voice and numeric strength to their own benefit¹⁷⁸. For example, in the Organization of American States (OAS), CARICOM is seen as a crucial voting bloc since the vote of its fourteen countries amount to 40% of the votes. In other international bodies CARICOM voting weight is as follows: 7.2% in the United Nations (UN), 27% in the Commonwealth, 7.5% in the International Labour Organization (ILO), 7.3% in the World Health Organization (WHO) and 14% in the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). For this and other reasons foreign policy coordination then becomes an integral tool for the advancement of the interests of these small Caribbean states.

The practice of the Conference in its foreign policy coordination can also be seen in the selection of candidates for high level positions in international organizations, specifically at the UN where CARICOM missions are small and thus collaboration becomes extremely important¹⁷⁹ if CARICOM nations are to have any effect in advancing their cause and letting their concerns be heard. Additionally, foreign policy coordination has also been relatively successful in areas like climate change where Caribbean countries see their national interests as inextricably linked; but even on this important issue, there is some policy incongruence¹⁸⁰. On the one hand, CARICOM countries have demanded more urgent global action to fight

¹⁷⁶ See CARICOM Foreign Policy Coordination: Priority or Pipe Dream? Available at <https://caribbeantradelaw.com/2019/02/03/caricom-foreign-policy-coordination-priority-or-pipe-dream/>

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ See Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica's Relationships with CARICOM and CARIFORUM

¹⁸⁰ See CARICOM Foreign Policy Coordination: Priority or Pipe Dream? Available at <https://caribbeantradelaw.com/2019/02/03/caricom-foreign-policy-coordination-priority-or-pipe-dream/>

climate change, while on the other, some CARICOM member States are still pursuing hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation as part of their economic development strategy¹⁸¹.

Notwithstanding CARICOM's accomplishments in foreign policy coordination, there have been several instances where member states displayed inconsistency and disunity in their foreign relations. Such instances can be traced back as far as the 1979-83, with the US invasion of Grenada facilitated by the OECS which Grenada is a member of¹⁸². More recently, this was seen in the division of CARICOM states on the selection of a single candidate for the post of Commonwealth Secretary General in 2015, as well as voting as regards the US's motion to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel instead of Tel Aviv¹⁸³. Further still, there is the division in the region's position on the One-China policy, where some states recognize the People's Republic of China while other states recognize the Republic of China (Taiwan)¹⁸⁴. Added to this record of CARICOM's disunity on some foreign matters, is the recent issue relating to the resolution of the internal problems in Venezuela.

The Venezuelan crisis has caused spillover effects to its neighboring countries including CARICOM member states such as Trinidad and Tobago where many Venezuelans have migrated seeking 'refuge'. On January 10, 2019, the OAS Permanent Council approved a resolution not to recognize the legitimacy of the second term of current Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro Moros. CARICOM member states differ greatly in views re: Venezuelan crisis and this was expressed through their voting on the issue. CARICOM members in the names of : The Bahamas, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Saint Lucia were among the 19 OAS member states which voted to approve the resolution; while Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname were among the 6 which voted against the resolution¹⁸⁵. St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Belize abstained, whereas Grenada was absent for the vote¹⁸⁶.

This fragmentation in CARICOM as a voting bloc may be explained by the national interests of the varying countries in tandem with their individual relationships with Venezuela. For example, Guyana and Venezuela are currently engaged in a long-standing border dispute which has seem to have intensified under the Maduro presidency. This may

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² See Lewis, P., 1999. Revisiting the Grenada Invasion: The OECS' Role, and its Impact on Regional and International Politics. *Social and Economic Studies*, 48(3), pp. 85-120

¹⁸³ See CARICOM Foreign Policy Coordination: Priority or Pipe Dream? Available at <https://caribbeantradelaw.com/2019/02/03/caricom-foreign-policy-coordination-priority-or-pipe-dream/>

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

explain Guyana's vote in favor of the resolution. The same can be said of Jamaica which had recently decided to reacquire Venezuela-owned shares in its petroleum company, Petrojam¹⁸⁷. On the other hand, some other CARICOM member states are members of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) and recipients of assistance from Venezuela through, *inter alia*, the PetroCaribe Initiative. This may explain why they voted against the resolution or simply abstained. Moreover, while the majority of CARICOM member states seem to have adopted a position of non-interference in the internal affairs of Venezuela, some member states (the Bahamas and Haiti) decided to join major Western powers in recognizing Opposition leader, Juan Guaido, as interim president of Venezuela¹⁸⁸. These examples of the demonstration of different foreign policy positions of CARICOM member states show that there is still much work to be done at the Conference level as concerns foreign policy coordination.

On issues where members take common positions such as climate change, health, security, and the delisting of member states from European Commission's blacklists on money laundering¹⁸⁹, there have been proven benefit and rewards. Examples of cooperation in health have been mentioned throughout this paper as it relates to CARPHA and other regional health bodies while examples relating to cooperation on security will be further explored later in this chapter when looking at security as a pillar of regional integration. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to mention here as example, the achievement of the regional Caribbean Community Climate Change Center (CCCCC) in gaining accreditation and funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Such funding amounted to almost US\$50M used to undertake and manage climate change projects and programmes in the region covering areas such as early warning systems, water and energy security, agriculture and food security, resilient health-care facilities, and climate-resilient buildings and ecosystem based adaptation¹⁹⁰. In this regard, the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres has lauded CARICOM's leadership on many global issues. Describing the Community as pioneers in elevating awareness on climate change with the CCCCC serving as a symbol of CARICOM governments working together to address the specific vulnerability of Caribbean states¹⁹¹. On the other hand, the display of public division among CARICOM member states on foreign policy does not serve the region well, and remains inconsistent with the objective of the

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ See the Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica's Relations with CARICOM and CARIFORUM

¹⁹⁰ See Caribbean Community Climate Change Center available online at <https://www.greenclimate.fund/ae/cccc>

¹⁹¹ See UN SG lauds CARICOM Leadership on global issues available online at <https://caricom.org/un-sg-lauds-caricom-leadership-on-global-issues-2/>

Community on foreign policy coordination as outlined in Article 6 and 16 of The Treaty, and can undermine the very mission of the Community.

On Human and Social Development

The third pillar of CARICOM, Human and Social Development is critical to the overall advancement of the integration process and that of the peoples of the Caribbean Community. As such the Conference in accordance with The Treaty has established the Council of Human and Social development (COHSOD), along with several other institutions with the responsibilities for advancing the community's development in this regard. For the purposes of this paper only four institutions will be referenced¹⁹².

With the aim of advancing agricultural production, the Conference has established the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI). The mission of CARDI is to improve lives through agricultural research. With a country office in each member state, CARDI has pledged to translate its vision into action by focusing its work over a five-year period following strategic programmes. According to CARDI, having key deliverables under the strategic programmes enables The Institute to contribute in the short term, to increase in food supply to the region, and in the medium term, to the stability of the agricultural sector, food and nutrition, security, and reduction in hunger and poverty¹⁹³. Thereby fulfilling many objectives which fall under the Human and Social Development pillar. CARDI's 2018-2022 strategic plan is aimed at building a productive and resilient agricultural sector, and focuses on value chain services, policy and advocacy, institutional strengthening and partnerships and strategic alliances. To date, CARDI has achieved successes in *inter alia*: seed production and technology to increase food production, the establishment of offshore seed production capacity and the establishment of integrated pest management technologies for diseases and pest affecting sugar, nutmeg, coffee and food crops, as well as the development of several improved technologies and animal feed systems¹⁹⁴. Agriculture is a highly significant sector to the countries of the Caribbean. Having realized and acknowledged this, the Conference established CARDI as the institution geared mainly towards the development of its agricultural sector which adds great value to the overall objectives of the region's human and social development objectives.

Another mechanism established by the Conference to promote human and social development is the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) which was established in 1979 and became fully operational in 1980. The Agreement establishing

¹⁹² Others may be found in the Golding Report or on the CARICOM's website

¹⁹³ See 'What We Do' at <http://www.cardi.org/>

¹⁹⁴ See 'Achievements in Research and Development' at <http://www.cardi.org/welcome-to-cardi/achievements-2/>

CARICAD gives it a mandate to render assistance to the countries of the Caribbean for the purpose of improving their administrative capabilities to accelerate their social and economic development¹⁹⁵. With such a mandate CARICAD prides itself as the regional's focal point for transforming and modernizing the public sectors of member states to better formulate and implement public policy towards the achievement of good governance¹⁹⁶. CARICAD's mission is to facilitate and enhance the development and sustainability of a strong leadership and governance framework within the public sector of the Caribbean Community¹⁹⁷. Its 2017-2019 strategic framework aimed at providing services in an innovative way, fully exploiting technologies for collaboration and cocreation¹⁹⁸. In order to advance its mandate, CARICAD provides assistance to CARICOM member states through *inter alia* leadership development, human resource planning and development, e-governance, and business process analysis and design. These actions are carried out through among other events, in-country activities, workshop, and conferences.

As mentioned in Chapter One, CDEMA holds the primary responsibility for coordinating emergency response and relief efforts to CARICOM member states. CDEMA is divided into three units. The first being the Caribbean Risk Information System (CRIS) which is a multi-faceted virtual platform that hosts risk management data and information accessible to stakeholders to facilitate analysis, research, greater awareness of risk management and climate change adaptation¹⁹⁹. The second is its Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) unit which was developed as an idea for reducing the risk and loss associated with natural and technological hazards and the effects of climate change to enhance regional sustainable development²⁰⁰. It engages in the management of all hazards through all phases of the disaster management cycle – prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation- by all peoples and sectors in hazard prone areas. CDEMA's third unit, the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) is a network of participating states, national and regional, and stakeholders in disaster preparedness through which external response and relief operations in support of participating states are coordinated²⁰¹. CDEMA has developed a number of regional projects geared towards strengthening integrated early warning systems for more effective disaster risk reduction in the Caribbean through knowledge and transfer of

¹⁹⁵ See 'What We Do' at <https://www.caricad.net/what-we-do/>

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

tools, a Caribbean Safe School initiative and other programmes in line with its mission to build resilience in the Caribbean.

A discussion of the pillar of Human and Social Development would be incomplete without highlighting the role of the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF). The CDF was established under Article 158 of the Revised Treaty with the mandate to provide financial and technical assistance to disadvantaged countries, regions, and sectors in the Community²⁰². However, it was only after the agreement relating to its operations was signed in July 2008, that it began work in November of said year. Although all the members of the CDF are eligible to receive financial and technical assistance support from The Fund, only designated disadvantaged countries (the OECS and Belize) and Guyana (as a highly – indebted poor country) received access to resource during the first contribution cycle which was from 2009-2014.

As of 2017, the CDF had approved 41 projects and funding of 36% in grants and 64% in loans covering areas relating to promoting investments, enhancing competitiveness in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and reducing regional disparities²⁰³. The CDF's 2015-2020 strategy plan aims to *inter alia*, reduce regional disparities through support for programmes which mitigate the negative economic and social impact of the CSME, as well as pre-existing structural constraints, and develop the human resource capacity of SMEs. Its 2017 Annual Report noted the completion of country specific projects such as the redevelopment of the lower St. John's cruise ship terminal in Antigua, the completion of The Learning Resource Centre at the Antigua State College and support for the National Centre for testing excellence in Dominica, amongst others²⁰⁴.

On February 19, 2020 at the 31st inter-sessional meeting, Prime Minister of Barbados and then Chair of CARICOM, Mia Mottley announced the restructuring of the CDF. Mottley stated that “its management has bedeviled the Community for some time and in so doing, hampers the realization of its purpose to assist disadvantaged countries, sectors and regions”²⁰⁵. She further noted that “there is more to be done and the restructuring of the CDF will allow CARICOM to raise additional funds from individuals, companies, institutions, and regional and extra-regional countries”²⁰⁶. According to Mottley, once the restructuring has been completed the CDF would become one of the key pillars of the integration movement as

²⁰² See the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 158

²⁰³ See ‘Overview of Our Programmes’ at <https://caricomdevelopmentfund.org/programmes/>

²⁰⁴ See CARICOM Development Fund 2017 Annual Report

²⁰⁵ See ‘CARICOM Development Fund to be Restructured’ at <https://gisbarbados.gov.bb/blog/caricom-development-fund-to-be-restructured/?fbclid=IwAR2JqVgpinqcbV8k5oMXStgFhOzxHX8ZHis-buWPl33mxkTXUKYv13ODN4I>

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

it will allow leaders to deal with the differences that exist as far as size and capacity are concerned.

The Conference and Security

The quest for partnership arrangements and regional security cooperation in the Caribbean has been long pursued as a preferred option²⁰⁷. Cooperation in Caribbean regional security can be traced back to the 18th Century with the British division of the West Indies into operational zones with a Southern Command in Trinidad and a Northern Command in Jamaica²⁰⁸. Much closer in history is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing the Regional Security System (RSS) in 1982 among Eastern Caribbean States following the 1979 Grenada Revolution. This MOU was later upgraded to treaty status in 1996 with Article 4(1) describing the purpose and function of the RSS as promoting cooperation among member states through the integration of military and police units as operational elements of the system in *inter alia* prevention and interdiction of drug trafficking, national emergencies, border control and fisheries protection²⁰⁹.

Notably, the 1983 US intervention in Grenada provided a significant milestone in the discussions on regional cooperation in the Caribbean, acting as a catalyst for increased security cooperation²¹⁰. To add to these events were two others of the 1990s which impacted positively on regional security cooperation namely: the 1990 coup attempt in Trinidad and Tobago and the US-led multi-national force intervention in Haiti in 1994²¹¹. The coup attempt in Trinidad and Tobago which was handled solely by troops within the Caribbean acted as a catalyst that encouraged participants at the Conference of the Heads of Government held in Jamaica of that same year, to seriously consider threats to parliamentary democracy²¹². At this conference, the Heads agreed *inter alia* to pursue the establishment of a regional security mechanism that would assist member states in clearly defined security situations²¹³.

Although the Caribbean islands have a history which is consistent with regional cooperation on security matters, it was only recently in 2001 that security was incorporated into the Community as its fourth pillar of integration. In 2001 the Conference at its 22nd meeting established a Regional Task Force on Crime and Security (RTFCS) to examine the

²⁰⁷ See Dillon, Edmund. "Security Cooperation in the Caribbean" available online at <https://www3.nd.edu/~ggoertz/rei/reidevon.dtBase2/Files.noindex/pdf/0/dillonpaper.pdf>

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ See Treaty Establishing the Regional Security System available at <https://www.rss.org.bb/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RSS-TREATY.pdf>

²¹⁰ Dillon, Edmund. "Security Cooperation in the Caribbean" available online at <https://www3.nd.edu/~ggoertz/rei/reidevon.dtBase2/Files.noindex/pdf/0/dillonpaper.pdf>

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

major causes of crime and to recommend approaches to deal with increasing levels of crime and violence and security threats in the region. A major outcome of the work of the RTFCS was the proposal for the creation of a framework for the region to effectively manage its crime and security challenges²¹⁴. The RTFCS report contained 113 recommendations that were endorsed by the Conference and as such this report set the parameters for greater regional cooperation and collaboration in security. Based on the said report, the Conference agreed at its 26th meeting to the establishment of a regional framework for the management of crime and security in CARICOM, and at its 27th meeting in July of 2006, established the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS).

Mindful of the growing importance of security to the region, a decision was taken by the Conference in 2007 to establish crime and security as a fourth pillar of the Revised Treaty, along with Trade and Economic Integration, Foreign Policy Coordination and Human and Social Development as outlined above. The security pillar also consists of the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre (RIFC) and the Joint Regional Communications Centre (JRCC). In 2013, the Conference at its 24th inter-sessional meeting adopted the ‘CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy’²¹⁵. This consisted of, *inter alia*, 14 strategic goals including : crime prevention, the increase of transborder intelligence and information sharing, enhance maritime and airspace awareness, the strengthening of mechanisms against human trafficking and the promotion of resilient critical infrastructure management and safety at major events²¹⁶. A Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) exists to provide policy direction and oversight coordinated through the Security Policy Advisory Committee (SEPAC) which is usually comprised of permanent secretaries of the member states’ ministries with responsibility for security. Security is a crucial issue for all member states given the level of crime some are experiencing such as dangers posed to the region by narco-trafficking, money laundering, human trafficking, international terrorism and more recently, transnational cybercrimes. To date, the IMPACS has implemented projects relating to CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy, regional integrated information network, cyber security, regional justice protection improvement programmes and counter trafficking strategy²¹⁷.

In December of 2012 IMPACS and the RSS formalized their relationship with the signing of a MOU. The RSS which prides itself on its motto ‘strength through unity’, was

²¹⁴ See Report ‘CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy 2013’ available at https://www.caricomimpacs.org/Portals/0/Project%20Documents/CCSS_STRAT.pdf

²¹⁵ See Report ‘CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy 2013’

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ See CARICOM IMPACS available at <https://www.caricomimpacs.org/>

created between members of the Eastern Caribbean grouping and Barbados out of a need for a collective response to security threats²¹⁸. Its mission is to ensure the stability and well-being of member states through cooperation, in order to maximize regional security in preserving social and economic development²¹⁹. In 2014, functional cooperation between RSS and IMPACS was evident through the collaboration in the establishment of a CARICOM mechanism for coordinated response to disaster and crises in the region. IMPACS also partners with CDEMA for coordinated responses relating to political, health, and disaster crises²²⁰. Furthermore, it works closely with CARPHA in the prevention as well as preparedness in dealing with patients or potential patients in the regional response to global disease outbreaks²²¹. Other partners include *inter alia* the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council (CCLEC), and the Caribbean Financial Task Force (CFATF). Both RSS and IMPACS conduct trainings, workshops, and conferences in an effort to build capacity in the region in the prevention of and counteraction to threats against security. Notably, on April 8, 2020, the CONSLE met for an emergency meeting to discuss matters of security, particularly related to the status of COVID-19 in the Caribbean as well as the implications for the region's response to the hurricane season.

A look at the CARICOM Conference of the Heads of Government illustrates that the role of the Conference is legally established under the Original and Revised Treaties of Chaguaramas. In fulfilling its role in the integration process, the Conference holds annual and inter-sessional meetings where key policy issues are discussed and fundamental decisions necessary to push the integration process forward are made. In addition to this, the Conference establishes subsidiary bodies and other mechanisms which deal with the practical decisions taken at said meetings of the Conference. Furthermore, the Conference not only establishes such bodies but supervises them including the Secretariat. Moreover, it commissions studies to assess particular challenges faced by the region, creates special frameworks to address specific issues, appoints significant figures of the body such as the Secretary General, steers extra community relations, and sets the future plans for deepening integration of the Community. Ultimately, the Conference is the only forum which exists where a true community approach can be designed. And, all other bodies are in effect accountable to the Conference due to its powers as regards giving direction and the setting the policies of and for integration.

²¹⁸ See 'Mission Statement' available at <https://www.rss.org.bb/about-us/>

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ See CARICOM IMPACS available at <https://www.caricomimpacs.org/>

²²¹ Ibid.

Throughout the examination of the history and the practice of the Conference, it became evident that the hand of the Conference maneuvers the ebb and flow of Caribbean Integration. From the disintegration of the West Indies Federation, to the formation of CARIFTA and its evolution to CARICOM; and from the pausing of the CSME to its resumption. Indeed, the Heads of Government, that is the Conference, drives the integration process and turns its wheels at every point. Notwithstanding the incredible role and power which the Conference wields within the regional body and in the overall integration process of Caribbean regionalism, there exists several challenges and shortcomings to the effectiveness of its role in these processes. Thus, the following chapter takes a closer look at some of these challenges while suggesting some possible actions that may help chart the way forward for the Conference and by extension that of Caribbean integration.

Chapter Three

The Conference and the Future of Caribbean Integration

This paper has so far looked at the origins and establishment of the CARICOM Conference of the Heads of Government and its practice in its first and second chapters, respectively. This final chapter aims to look at the future of the Conference and the regional integration of the Caribbean Community. In doing so, the chapter will highlight a few challenges experienced throughout the integration process and propose measures to possibly improve the effectiveness of the Conference in fulfilling its role. These suggestions are made under three categories namely: commitment, capacity, and community. This is so as based upon the research done, the conclusion has been drawn that for Caribbean regional integration to be enhanced it is and will be important for the Conference to assess and examine its commitment, focus on building capacity, and take action to foster the spirit of community.

On Commitment

In considering the way forward it is important for the Conference to examine its commitment to regional integration. In examining the practice of the Conference in Chapter Two key strengths and weaknesses of the Conference were highlighted. The record shows that it has performed relatively well in functional cooperation in areas such as health, education, agriculture, meteorology, and human development among others²²² and examples of these successes have been pointed out in Chapter Two. As briefly commented in education, associate institutions such as the University of the West Indies (UWI), the University of Guyana (UG) and the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) among others, continue to play significant roles in providing education and training in different fields of skills and subjects for citizens of the Community. In health, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) has been facilitating the assessment and monitoring of the new COVID-19 by providing *inter alia* valid test results to many CARICOM states, allowing them to keep a track of the total number of infected persons in respective countries. This action is very important as it allows policy makers, health and other government officials to remain informed and formulate related policies accordingly. In agriculture, CARDI has put in place many different training programmes and provided technological assistance to empower farmers to improve farming techniques and increase production yields. And there are many other examples of positive results of the practice as was indicated in Chapter two.

Similarly, this work has highlighted some of the shortcomings in the work of the Conference where it was unable to achieve the set goals. This is clearly seen in some

²²² See Chapter Two

instances regarding foreign policy coordination, the incompleteness of the process that should bring into being the CSME and paying less than adequate attention to weaknesses in accountability and transparency as regards the operations of the Community. In addressing the commitment of the Conference as regards to securing meaningful, functional and effective Caribbean integration in the future, this section seeks to investigate these weaknesses giving consideration to whether they are in and of themselves the problems, or merely symptoms of an underlying issue or issues.

The shortcoming in foreign policy coordination among CARICOM member states dating back to the 1979 Grenadian Revolution, and seen more recently in relation to the aforementioned Venezuelan presidency may stem from the continued collision between national and regional interests. Within CARICOM it seems that national interest and national politics are contrary to responsibilities and roles of the Conference within CARICOM and regional integration on a whole.

Glancing back to 1961 and the situation in Jamaica then, where Bustamante, the Opposition Leader, did not favor regional integration and so pushed the country to a referendum²²³ which resulted in its exit from The West Indies Federation, and gaining its independence; we are able to understand how Jamaica's departure contributed greatly to the disintegration of The Federation. In Mordecai's view, the collapse of the Federation is to be blamed on its leaders, particularly Grantley Adams of Barbados, Norman Manley of Jamaica and Eric Williams of Trinidad and Tobago²²⁴. He claimed that each leader failed to realize, at least until it was too late, that compromise was necessary for the success of The Federation but instead each tried to impose his own views on the whole²²⁵. E. Wallace too commented on the issue of conflicting interests, noting that Manley and Williams could not see beyond their local identities to support the Federation for the good of all the islands²²⁶. H. Mitchell also shared his view on this issue stating that the British history of keeping the islands separate encouraged isolation, and as a result each island's loyalty was first to itself²²⁷. And, J. Darwin blamed the death of The Federation on local island nationalism which contributed to the failure to develop a West Indian nationalism²²⁸. Here we see that events and desires influenced by national politics greatly affected the destiny of Caribbean integration for its inception.

²²³ See 'Brother's Keeper: The United States, Race and Empire in the British Caribbean, 1937 – 1962' by Jason C Parker

²²⁴ See Sewell, S. C., 1978. *British Decolonization in the Caribbean: The West Indies Federation*

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

Although a new form of regional integration has evolved from The Federation to CARIFTA and through to the present CARICOM, it appears that the issue of national vs regional interest still lingers. This is probably most vividly expressed in the area of coordination of, and cooperation and collaboration on foreign policy. This was made abundantly clear when in January 2020, US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, called a meeting to be hosted in Jamaica to include eight of CARICOM's fifteen foreign ministers, including having bilateral discussions with Jamaica²²⁹. Prior to the meeting, the Chair of CARICOM, Barbados' Prime Minister, Mia Mottley strongly rejected the US approach, drawing a clear line between her government's position and that of Andrew Holness – Jamaica's Prime Minister²³⁰. Mottley described the US approach as an attempt to divide the region. This position was backed by the leaders of Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda and the St. Vincent and the Grenadines²³¹.

In his response, Prime Minister Holness declared that in modern diplomatic relations and the exercise of foreign policy, the sovereignty of countries must be respected to determine how they structure their foreign policy²³². He further expressed that Jamaica is a friend of the United States and was happy to host the Secretary of State; underscoring the importance for Jamaica in the engaging and strengthening of its relationship with the US which is its largest trading and security partner²³³. This incident points to one of the challenges within CARICOM which will be addressed in this chapter under the issue of capacity. It also exposes the difficulty CARICOM has as regards capacity to meet its goals pertaining to security, and especially trade within regional integration framework. Still, there are other cases where individual member states have very different relationships with countries such as US and China. In the case of the latter, some CARICOM countries recognize the People's Republic of China while others recognize the Republic of China (Taiwan)²³⁴.

In charting its course forward and facilitating the CARICOM integration process, and to truly fulfill its role of providing and determining the policy direction for the Community²³⁵, it is important that the Conference of the Heads of Government sees regional interest as the crystallization of national interest instead of being in opposition to it. With reference to Prime Minister Holness' comment, CARICOM is indeed a community of sovereign states, but this

²²⁹ See 'Pompeo's meetings in Jamaica divides CARICOM' available online at <https://www.caribbean-council.org/pompeos-meetings-in-jamaica-divides-caricom/>

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ See 'CARICOM Foreign Policy Coordination: Priority or Pipe Dream?' by Alicia Nicholls available online at <https://caribbeanradelaw.com/2019/02/03/caricom-foreign-policy-coordination-priority-or-pipe-dream/>

²³⁵ See Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas

fact must in no way ever be an option for justifying disunity and or lack of coordination within CARICOM. The Community is the result of a legal agreement signed by the Heads of Government of same sovereign states. They all have the obligation of carrying out their legal obligation.

Since the dissolution of The West Indies Federation, Caribbean leaders have appreciated the need to come together and develop their economies and peoples on their terms²³⁶. This process of course will by its very nature, demand overcoming challenges and differences together as a community. Consequently, for a strengthened CARICOM regional integration in the future, it is important for the Conference to play its role and demonstrate its commitment to fulfilling the objectives of the Community including foreign policy coordination. If the regional integration process is to be deepened, and the pillar of Foreign Policy Coordination is to be strengthened, then member states must commit to these based on principles such as respect for international law and voting in other regional and international bodies such as the OAS and the UN. More importantly, there needs to be a reassessment by the Conference of these conflicts of national and regional interests as regards foreign policy wherein the latter must be understood to be the crystallization of the former, benefiting each other in the medium to long term.

Building Capacity

In taking additional measures to further improving the process of regional integration, it will be necessary for the Conference to take a close look at building the Community's capacities in various areas; especially its administrative capacity, and its capacity to fulfill the requirements of the CSME. The Secretariat is the principal administrative organ of the Community and has a mandate to *inter alia* facilitate the implementation of Community decisions²³⁷. However, the Secretariat does not act separate and apart from the Conference since it is the responsibility of the Conference to provide guidance to the Secretariat on policy issues and give directives aimed at ensuring timely implementation²³⁸. Article 20 of the Revised Treaty mandates the Secretariat to monitor the development and implementation of proposals for the achievement of Community objectives and keep the Community Council and by extension the Conference informed accordingly²³⁹. The SG, who is appointed by the Conference is mandated to make annual reports to the Conference on the work of the Community including work done by associate institutions²⁴⁰. Whether the SG does this is not

²³⁶ See Chapter Two

²³⁷ See Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas

²³⁸²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

apparent, but available statistics show that there are only six (2007-2013) annual reports by the SG.

The lack of reporting and consequently, accounting and transparency, poses a challenge in that it makes it difficult for the Conference and the peoples of the Community to track the integration process, and furthermore from recognizing what is being or not being done. And, cognizant of these, what other actions need to be taken. In The Golding Report, the Commission expressed the view that CARICOM lacks accountability and transparency and that there needs to be a body of eminent persons to assess and report publicly CARICOM's performance as regards the efficacious implementation of decisions²⁴¹. It must be remembered that CARICOM considers good governance as a core value²⁴². Under this banner the regional organization has declared that it provides proactive visionary leadership for promoting and retiring the spirit and commitment to regional integration, emphasizing transparency, accountability and operational excellence within all organs and institutions of the Community²⁴³.

The regional body seems to have fallen short on its aim of fostering accountability and transparency, a shortcoming which The Golding Report blames on the structure and capacity of the Secretariat. Accepting the findings of The Golding Report in this regard, the SG in February of 2017 agreed that gauging the impact of the regional integration movement was an integral part in reforming the CARICOM's Secretariat²⁴⁴. He went on to state that the regional institutions and the member states will be made more accountable in the conduct of their roles in the integration process through the establishment of a Result Based Management (RBM) system, which was part of CARICOM's reform plans aimed at measuring tangible results of regional integration mechanisms²⁴⁵. As part of a series of regional meetings and seminars on the RBM system, the Governor of Montserrat expressed the view that CARICOM needs to break the cycle of chain consultancies on consultancies on consultancies, noting that that there are consultancy reports analyzing previous consultancies going back decades²⁴⁶. Further expressing that there are consultancies on every conceivable thing one can

²⁴¹ See the Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica's Relations with CARICOM and CARIFORUM

²⁴² See 'Vision, Mission and Core Values' available online at <https://caricom.org/vision-mission-and-core-values/>

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ See 'CARICOM: Manage by Results! (To cure "implementation deficit disorder")' available online at <https://today.caricom.org/2019/01/16/caricom-manage-by-results-to-cure-implementation-deficit-disorder/>

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

think of ²⁴⁷. The governor's comments are profound as it clearly points to the serious lack of practical implementation in this regard, and therefore to the absence of tangible results.

To date there has been no report which assessed the impact of this RBM system, and the issue of accountability and transparency is not yet resolved. These are central to the concept of good governance as the disclosure of information and transparent decision-making processes enable citizens and other stakeholders to scrutinize actions and hold the necessary institutions to account. If CARICOM is to deepen its integration process, then the Conference must endeavor to build the Community's administrative capacity by establishing mechanisms which will enforce accountability and transparency within and across its various bodies. Institutionalized practices of reporting, accountability and transparency will definitely be an excellent measure not only to help monitor the integration process but ensure that corrective measures are taken when and where necessary to improve the same.

Another area in which the Conference should seriously look to build the Community's capacity concerns the CSME. In refuting the claim that CARICOM is on track to achieve its targets, The 2017 Golding Report stressed that the heavy lifting has not been done as yet as it is clear that it has fallen short in achieving many target areas- including those related to the CSME²⁴⁸ ; as not near 50% of mandates has been completed²⁴⁹. If CARICOM is to truly reach its goal in achieving a Single Market and Economy, then the issue of capacity for trade diversification must be addressed. Intraregional trade among CARICOM member states has been relatively low and has even fallen over the past decades²⁵⁰. CARICOM countries apart from Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname are predominantly service exporters, and although CARICOM as a whole mostly exports goods, this mainly reflects the export basket of Trinidad and Tobago²⁵¹. Further, service exports are concentrated in tourism especially for Barbados and the islands of the OECS. Hence, it is clear that there is need for trade diversification among CARICOM countries. However, trade diversification alone is not enough as a proposal to increase trade between member states, and/or for the furtherance of integration and the institutionalization of a single market. Still for all, the capacity for trade diversification is important and certainly needs to be discussed.

In diversifying trade CARICOM should take into consideration the creation of new innovative industries with a focus on technology and the blue economy, and the revitalization

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ See the Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica's Relations with CARICOM and CARIFORUM

²⁴⁹ See IMF Working Paper (WP/20/8): 'Is the Whole Greater than the Sum of its Parts?'
Strengthening Caribbean Regional Integration'

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

and improvement of needed existing industries such as agriculture and tourism region wide. Many CARICOM countries excluding Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, and Jamaica produce most of the same goods which are usually agricultural products. Therefore, the comparative advantage vis a vis each other in this regard is small or non-existent. This leaves trade diversification in services. There is no doubt that the people of the Caribbean are immensely creative and innovative, and ideas are generally in abundant supply. What is necessary therefore are the mechanisms to further develop and implement these ideas. While the development of most of these mechanisms may lie within the purview of the responsibility of each member state, there is an important role for CARICOM to play in terms of creating and enhancing capacities for the development and implementation of these ideas, and in the marketing of results of the same.

The capacity to market and export the commercial results of ideas is a challenging one for most member states even when funding is available, since the market of small countries may not be ready to embrace new products and services offered by the larger countries, and may represent increased competition to local producers. To solve this deficiency in the capacity to diversify trade, it will be necessary for the Conference of CARICOM to formulate a policy specifically geared towards capacity building and training in market intelligence. Such a policy must *inter alia* pay special attention to the youths of the Community; ensuring as far as possible that their creative energies and ingenuity are harnessed, exposed, and marketed within the Community and beyond.

In Addition, if the Conference is to fulfill its role as driver of the improvement and advancement of regional integration, then it must address itself serious to the question of the creation of a monetary union in support of a Single Market and Economy. Within CARICOM there are nine different currencies being used and all of varying exchange rates. And notably, the OECS subgrouping consists of 7 countries which use a common currency and share a single monetary policy. The member states of CARICOM also engage in different economic activities generally tourism-based or commodity-based causing them to have widely varied fiscal deficits and debt burden²⁵². These facts create additional challenges in the area of coordination of macroeconomic policy. The unification of national currencies and exchange rates while representing a severe challenge, hold the promise of benefits which could come with the formation of a monetary union.

²⁵² Ibid.

According to the Girvan Report²⁵³, the implementation of a monetary union would require that the following practical steps be taken. Firstly, the adoption of a protocol to the Revised Treaty, setting out the framework for the completion of the such union. This protocol would have to include the nature and scope of a common monetary policy, the relationship between national central banks, and a regional monetary authority²⁵⁴. Secondly, an agreement on the adoption of a numeraire CARICOM currency unit as a further step towards full monetary union²⁵⁵. And finally, the initiation of the Caribbean Monetary Union (CMU) with countries which satisfy the convergence criteria for the same²⁵⁶.

According to the IMF Working Paper (WP/20/8), interest rate and asset price convergence have been uneven across different segments of the Community, with the OECS having greater convergence thanks to the existence of the ECCU²⁵⁷. Economic integration in the region as measured by the key indicators of nominal and real convergence remains relatively low²⁵⁸. The issue of monetary union is a real concern for CARICOM integration and the lack thereof continues to be a stumbling block to the complete monetary and economic integration necessary for the fulfilling of the provisions of the CSME agreement, and the deepening of integration as a whole. This can best be solved through the implementation of the necessary provisions, protocols, and legislations as laid out in the Treaty itself.

It is incumbent on the Heads of Government, that is to say, the Conference, to show the political will necessary to incorporate such provisions and protocols into national legislation, thereby making them compulsory for the individual member states. It is of course understood that the implementation of a monetary union involves some serious structural changes to the concerned institutions of member states, but this must be done. The Heads representing the Conference must therefore decide whether they are committed and indeed willing to implement a monetary union as a measure to making deeper regional integration feasible.

Moreover, there is also a need to strengthen the capacity of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ). The CCJ is the regional judicial tribunal which was established in 2001²⁵⁹. It is a hybrid institution having authority to rule over two forms of jurisdiction. Its original

²⁵³ See The Girvan Report 'Towards a Single Economy and a Single Development Vision'

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ See IMF Working Paper (WP/20/8): 'Is the Whole Greater than the Sum of its Parts? Strengthening Caribbean Regional Integration'

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ See Caribbean Court of Justice webpage available at <https://www.ccj.org/court-instruments/the-agreement-establishing-the-ccj/>

jurisdiction in respect of the interpretation and application of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and the other in being a municipal court of last resort²⁶⁰. To date, the CCJ does not have the capacity to extend sanctions or penalties to member states that do not implement decisions agreed by the Conference. Thus, this final proposal on the issue of capacity is for the CCJ to be empowered to administer sanctions where member states fail to implement decisions taken at the Conference. This consideration seeks to act as a mechanism for the legal facilitation of the implementation of these decisions and thus further and deepen the regional integration process.

Fostering Community

Lastly, it is here proposed that the Conference takes solid action to facilitate the fostering of community in order to enhance the process of regional integration. Within the Caribbean it is understood that the ambit of the Caribbean Community stretches beyond the sovereignty of the member states. The core of the Community is enveloped within the cultural, sporting, artistic, musical, literary, culinary, political, economic, and social among other elements of its peoples. Thus, a sense of community in the Caribbean is greatly facilitated by various stakeholders of CARICOM including its core and associate institutions, the private sector, civil society, and most importantly, its ordinary peoples. Today, there is a CARICOM passport which should mean something to the peoples of the Community in terms of a sense of oneness and being of a common and shared identity. Yet, still many islanders feel distant, separate, isolated, and apart from one another. If the Conference of the Heads of Government as driver of the regional integration process is to ensure the continued growth and success of the same, then, as proposed herein, a bottom-up approach mass-education campaign about CARICOM and integration should be formulated and implemented.

Integration must be people-centric since it is the people who make up the market and the people who entirely make up the regional body that is CARICOM. Integration is of people, by people and for people. Consequently, the peoples of the Caribbean must learn, know, and understand the different ways in which CARICOM is of great advantage to their human and social development, and their continued wellbeing in a very practical and real sense. Aspiring students must be aware that they are able to earn various degrees of higher education at an affordable and reduced cost because they are CARICOM citizens. The students taking part in CXC examinations should be aware that CXC is a CARICOM initiative. The citizens of the region must be aware that CARPHA which provides COVID-19 testing for the entire region is in place thanks to CARICOM. And, it is important that they

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

know of the various infrastructural developments which take place in their individual countries thanks to CARICOM's different funding mechanisms such as the CDF. It is no small matter that many Community citizens both seemingly educated and uneducated citizens alike hold the view that CARICOM serves no purpose to them. Being unaware of the benefits to their countries in being a part of the Caribbean Community and more importantly, how this benefits their daily lives.

The aforementioned bottom-up approach to implementation of regional integration should heavily involve the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and local community leaders in running various CARICOM awareness campaigns; emphasizing how the Community is of great benefit to the people in each individual and collective (country) case. It is also recommended that CARICOM employs its youth ambassadors; deploying them to perform varying tasks in these awareness campaigns. Surveys should be distributed to every local community in every member state, and the results used to help the Conference of the Heads of Government to begin to better understand the peoples' sentiments as regards CARICOM. Undertaking such an initiative could give the Conference a better idea of the existing gaps between the reality of the actions of the Community and the knowledge of the citizenry of the same. It could also prompt it to take initiatives that will make real positive changes on the grounds which will deepen the integration idea, at least in the minds of the peoples; thereby encouraging their greater embrace of integration.

Finally, it is here proposed that the Conference institutionalize its commitment by implementing particular policy goals within a five-year period. These goals shall be specific to one of the four pillars of integration and focused on a specific area aimed at the advancement and deepening of regional integration. Having established a specific policy goal to focus on, the Conference will then outline targets to be reached by a certain time to help ensure that the policy goal is achieved within the specified timeframe. In order to track the targets of the goal, indicators should be developed to give the Community a general sense of where the institution is in reaching these specific policy goals. In addition to the establishment of a five-year policy goal and corresponding targets and indicators, a six-month assessment should be carried out to monitor the progress in every particular. The aim of this institutionalized commitment is to act as one of the driving forces to support the implementation of Conference decisions which aims to improve the overall integration process, which is the mission of CARICOM.

The proposals put forward in this chapter targets the areas of commitment capacity and community. It must be noted that no answer or solution is all encompassing and exhaustive.

Nevertheless, with a closer look at the ideas raised within this chapter it is possible that the adoption of one or several will enhance and or improve the role of the Conference as the key driver of the integration process necessary for the continued building of the Caribbean Community.

Conclusion

The paper considered regional integration within the ambit of the CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government. In doing so, it examined the specific roles and mandates of the Conference within the integration process as put forward by the Original and Revised Treaties of Chaguaramas, which provide the legal basis of CARICOM. In tracking the role of the Conference in the Caribbean integration process, Chapter One highlighted that there has always been a desire for the Caribbean people to have some form of integration²⁶¹. Highlighting that there is a real conviction that Caribbean islands are better off together and will be more able to operate in the global community as ‘the Caribbean’ rather than individual islands²⁶².

Thus, in examining the origins and beginnings of Caribbean Integration, Chapter One emphasized that there have always been efforts to bring the Caribbean together to ensure *inter alia*, effective leadership to represent the islands of the region. This unit is seen somewhat as a prerequisite for the ‘leaders’ to tackle together individual nations’ common developmental challenges born of a shared history. For all their commonalities, these islands do have the individualities and differences not only in geography but also in population size, natural resources, and wealth, among others. Still, the general commonness of the islands, is the basis for the leaders to come together to put forward, discuss and deliberate on ideas intended to aid in addressing, mitigating, and eliminating their developmental challenges²⁶³. So notwithstanding their individual independence, making them sovereign states, the need to work together to formulate policy guidelines and plans that will advance the interests of the region as a whole, is therefore the *raison d’être* of the CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government.

Chapter Two presented an analysis of the practice of the Conference and underscored the agreement of the Heads of Government on four broad targets as objectives, i.e., economic, human and social development, foreign policy coordination, and security; making them the pillars on which integration is to be built²⁶⁴. In essence the Heads of Government determined that working to achieve these targets would help facilitate the integration process. This examination of the practice of the Conference shows that there have been successes and challenges. As regarding the former, these are seen in the fulfillment of agreed objectives in areas such as human and social development and security, albeit to a lesser extent in security.

²⁶¹ See Chapter One: The Origins and Beginning of Caribbean Integration

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ See Chapter Two: The Practice of the Conference

Concerning the latter, the examination shows there remain many challenges, in particular where the CSME and foreign policy coordination are concerned. Given that the framework for the forward movement of the CSME has been in existent for quite some time (since 2001)²⁶⁵, some of the challenges surrounding its implementation are clearly linked to the poor, limited, or non-application of framework and agreements that are to facilitate this. Although Caribbean political figures, scholars, researchers, and economists have hinted, and at times clearly stated some of the factors that hinder the CSME implementation, remedial measures are yet to be taken by the Conference. It is therefore no surprise that some observers have declared time and time again that the regional body suffers from implementation deficit and fatigue²⁶⁶.

As concerns foreign policy coordination it seems fair to say that CARICOM member states are often influenced by their relationships with other countries outside of the region, especially superpowers. In this regard, in examining the practice of the Conference, it was noticed that whenever CARICOM members are faced with contentious foreign policy issues, they tend to envelope themselves in the international principle of sovereignty of state. Thus taking decisions based on what they perceive as serving best their individual interest, rather than their collective interest within the framework of CARICOM and thereby, defeating the very objective that they had set for themselves as Heads of Government, namely, the coordination of their foreign policy. To date, they have not designed a tool or mechanism to resolve this issue which has been noted as a common practice or rather malpractice of the Conference.

These challenges recognized throughout the practice of the Conference have no doubt affected the integration process of CARICOM. Thus in discussing the future of the Conference and its role in regional integration, this paper concludes that the Conference must first assess and examine its commitment to the integration process where leaders must resolve to put measures in place including legislation at the national level to facilitate the completion of the objectives of CARICOM, especially regarding the CSME. These actions will certainly significantly advance the idea of having a Single Market and Economy and give a great forward push to the integration process. Furthermore, it proposed herein that the Conference pay great attention to building capacity particularly in the areas of administration to address *inter alia* challenges in accountability and transparency, and those required for the full realization of the CSME.

²⁶⁵ See the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas

²⁶⁶ See Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica's Relations with CARICOM and CARIFORUM

Finally, if CARICOM is to truly go forward and succeed as an integration process, then it is necessary for the Conference to take action to foster the spirit of community within the region as it remains important for the people of the region to know CARICOM, to understand CARICOM, to feel a part of CARICOM and hence to individually facilitate CARICOM in its process of regional integration. For when all is said and done, integration is first and foremost of people, for people, and therefore must be done by people!

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