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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: charting a dynamic course for decolonization in commencing the Fourth International Decade and in the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, through commitment to mandate, collaboration, pragmatism and agility

**Parish of St. John, Dominica
25 to 27 August 2021**

STATEMENT BY

THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ECONOMIC

COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE

CARIBBEAN

(VIA PRE-RECORDED VIDEO MESSAGE)



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**STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Dale Alexander

Chief, Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre

Involvement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean in the activities of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Reporting period: 2020-2021

Madam Chair,

On behalf of the Executive Secretary, Ms. Alicia Bárcena, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) thanks the Committee for your invitation to participate in this Caribbean Regional Seminar.

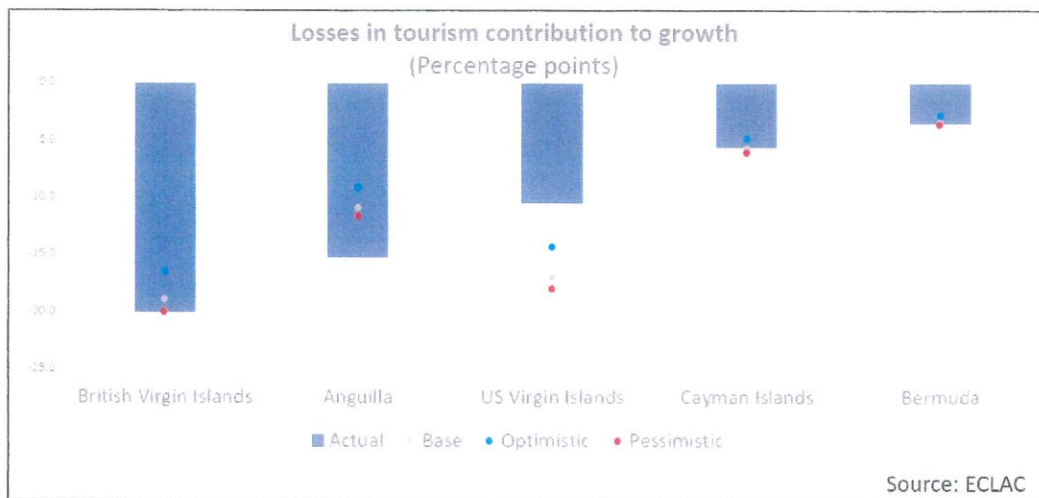
The past two years have been extraordinarily challenging for the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean¹. The COVID-19 pandemic, and the impacts of the measures taken to address it, have been defining features of this period. In addition, existing vulnerabilities, including those relating to climate change, remain a serious challenge. For the British Overseas Territories, the impacts of Brexit have begun to be felt, though the long-term consequences remain uncertain.

Over the next few minutes, I will briefly elaborate on the challenges I just mentioned, and share some information on the ways in which ECLAC engaged the Territories in 2020 and 2021. A table noting which Territories were engaged in our various activities is annexed to this statement.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic, and its associated impacts on health, education and economic activity, in particular tourism, has significantly impacted the spending and income of several of the Territories. The approach taken by the Territories to manage the COVID-19 pandemic has largely mirrored that taken across the Caribbean, including, restrictions on travel and gatherings, extensive school closures and occasional lockdowns in the face of outbreaks. This approach, while effective in saving lives, has often resulted in large-scale unemployment and the closure of small businesses. The impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector and on the economy as a whole varied greatly across the Territories, with the Territories most dependent on tourism generally suffering the greatest impact. Losses in contribution to GDP growth from the tourism sector due to COVID-19 range from 3.5 per cent for Bermuda to over 20 per cent for the British Virgin Islands.

¹ Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands.



In some Territories, stimulus packages were enacted to mitigate the worst impacts of these restrictions. However, in some cases, disagreements between Territories and the Administering Power regarding financial management led to delays in the provision of support.

Given its profound impacts on sustainable development, the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on the region became a priority topic for ECLAC. Several of the Territories have been involved in this work, taking part in research, conferences and meetings relating to COVID-19.

Climate change and natural disasters

The COVID-19 pandemic has further increased the vulnerability of the Territories, several of which are still recovering from the devastation wrought by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. The Caribbean continues to be the second most disaster-prone region in the world, and the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season was the most active on record. 2021 is expected to be another above-average hurricane season, and climate change impacts are being felt in other ways across the Territories.

The first comprehensive assessment of climate change impacts on coasts and seas across the British Overseas Territories highlights for the Caribbean Territories, that sea-level rise and changes in extreme weather events constitute the biggest risk. The loss of natural coastal protection from the growing threat of erosion and flooding is already a major issue. Further, sea temperature rise is also noted as a major threat to habitats, most notably when marine heatwaves hit coral reefs and their associated communities.

ECLAC's work to address these challenges has revolved around finding ways to increase the resilience of Caribbean countries and territories, both specifically in relation to natural disasters, as well as more generally. This included a seminar on disaster risk management, a training on evidence-based policymaking, and a workshop on building resilience through universal social protection, all of which were attended by representatives from the Territories.

Brexit

The impacts of Brexit are also being felt across most of the Territories. The British Overseas Territories were not included in the United Kingdom-European Union (UK-EU) Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and as such no longer enjoy quota free and tariff free access to export goods to the European Union. Additionally, trade in services, including financial services, are now subject to the rules of each EU Member

State, instead of the common framework that previously applied. Two Territories have also been blacklisted by the European Union with regards to financial services within the past year, of which one remains blacklisted. Lastly, the British Overseas Territories also no longer have access to the European Development Fund, which was previously used to tackle issues such as climate change, marine biodiversity and to pursue renewable energy goals.

While the long-term impacts of these changes are unclear, the situation has called for increased support to the affected Territories from other sources, in particular the United Nations System. ECLAC's role in that process has been to support and partner with the affected Territories to advance their national sustainable development plans.

2030 Agenda

Madam Chair,

The Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean are all Associate Members of ECLAC. As such, we are aware of the particular challenges they face, and we strive to involve them in all our activities to support sustainable development across the Caribbean. Under the leadership of the Executive Secretary, the adoption of the "Caribbean First" strategy within ECLAC has provided further impetus for this work. We have also worked to ensure that the Associate Members of ECLAC, including the Territories, are able to express their political voice on their concerns and share priorities through dedicated fora.

For example, the Premier and Minister of Finance of the British Virgin Islands, welcomed the inclusion of the associate members of ECLAC in the discussions of the Fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development (15-18 March 2021). Further, in his capacity as Vice-Chair of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) of ECLAC, the Premier and Minister of Finance of the British Virgin Islands also chaired the High-level Meeting on the challenges faced by associate members of ECLAC in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, convened prior to the Forum. At that high-level meeting, representatives from the Territories, highlighted specific challenges they faced related to administrative capacity, policy expertise, technology transfer and financial resources, all compounded by COVID-19 and the climate emergency and called for sustained cooperation in advancing resilient and sustainable development and identifying common responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Within that context, the British Virgin Islands is formulating a sustainable development plan to guide work in the decade ahead, a process that is being led by a consultant provided by ECLAC.

ECLAC attaches great importance to the sustainable development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean. CDCC resolution 85(XXV) directly informs the way in which ECLAC engages with the Non-Self-Governing Territories and our other Associate Members. ECLAC will continue to be engaged through our interventions, technical assistance, research and flagship publications to actively support the sustainable development aspirations of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean.

Madam Chair,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you.

Annex

Coverage of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Strategic Interventions of ECLAC (2020-2021)

Date	Title/Event	Data on NSGT/NSGT participated ²						
		AIA	BMU	VGB	CYM	MSR	TCA	VIR
Intergovernmental meetings								
15-18 March 2021	Fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
15 March 2021	High-level meeting on the challenges faced by associate members of ECLAC in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
13 January 2021	Fourth Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean	X	X	X	X		X	
23-26 November 2020	Seventh Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean	X	X	X		X		
26-28 October 2020	Thirty-Eighth Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean		X	X	X	X		X
10 September 2020	Twenty-eighth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee	X		X	X	X		X
4 August 2020	Thirty-fifth session of the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC	X	X	X		X		
Technical meetings								
4 February 2021	Expert group meeting on selected online learning experiences in the Caribbean during COVID-19			X				
11 December 2020	Expert Group meeting on the Evaluation of South-South Cooperation in the Caribbean			X		X		
8 December 2020	Dialogue on population impacts and policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Caribbean			X	X			

² Country Codes: AIA: Anguilla; BMU: Bermuda; VGB: British Virgin Islands; CYM: Cayman Islands; MSR: Montserrat; TCA: Turks and Caicos Islands; and VIR: United States Virgin Islands.

Date	Title/Event	Data on NSGT/NSGT participated ²						
		AIA	BMU	VGB	CYM	MSR	TCA	VIR
17 November 2020	Seminar on sustainable development and disaster risk management: financing and planning for disaster risk management in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States	X		X			X	
10 November 2020	Expert group meeting on statistical disclosure control for Caribbean census tables			X		X		
10 September 2020	Sixth meeting of the Caribbean Development Roundtable	X		X	X	X		X
25-27 August 2020	Nineteenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC	X	X	X	X	X	X	
28 April 2020	Meeting of Ministers of Finance to discuss the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Caribbean	X		X	X	X		X
21 April 2020	Virtual meeting on the role of Social Development Ministries in the Caribbean in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic	X	X	X	X		X	
8 April 2020	Briefing of Ministers and high-level authorities of machineries for the advancement of women in Latin America and the Caribbean	X		X			X	
Capacity-building								
10 December 2020	Training in evidence-based policy planning for sustainable development in the Caribbean			X				
6-7 October 2020	Workshop on Leaving No One Behind in the Caribbean: building resilience through universal social protection	X		X	X	X		
Technical assistance								
June 2020	Preliminary overview of the economies of the Caribbean 2019–2020	X				X		
Flagship Publication								
December 2020	The Caribbean Outlook: Forging a people-centred approach to sustainable development post-COVID-19	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Research Publications								

Date	Title/Event	Data on NSGT/NSGT participated ²						
		AIA	BMU	VGB	CYM	MSR	TCA	VIR
16 March 2021	Building forward better: Action to strengthen the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Fourth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean					X	X	
February 2021	The case for financing: Caribbean resilience building in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2 November 2020	Creating an enabling environment for e-government and the protection of privacy rights in the Caribbean: A review of data protection legislation for alignment with the General Data Protection Regulation				X			
27 January 2020	A review of Caribbean national statistical legislation in relation to the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics	X	X	X	X	X	X	

