

**STRATEGY PAPER:**  
**A Framework for Monitoring the MDGs and Sustainable  
Human Development in the  
CARICOM Region (FINAL DRAFT)**

**by the**

**United Nations Development Programme  
Sub-regional Office for Barbados and the OECS**

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# Setting the Context: Current Economic and Social Development Challenges

Governments in the CARICOM region have spent considerable resources in the last three decades in social and human development – representing a significant investment. Health care and education have been central to this development planning framework. Significant progress has been made with many countries already achieving or on track to achieve 100% access in a number of areas.

With few exceptions, however, CARICOM countries, particularly the OECS countries, are currently experiencing sluggish and job-less growth, persistent unemployment particularly among youth and women and the entrenchment of significant pockets of poverty – a combination of economic and social changes. In contrast to the current levels it has been suggested that, ideally, poverty and unemployment should not exceed 6% and that the region needs to achieve growth in excess of 4% for sustainable economic growth.

## *Economic Challenges*

It should be noted that the CARICOM regional faces similar and yet differentiated challenges. While the Windward Islands (namely Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines), on the one hand, are heavily dependent on agriculture as their main economic engine, the tourism sector plays a similar role for the Leeward Islands (namely of Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, and the British Virgin Islands). Additionally, Barbados and several OECS States have developed significant offshore financial services sectors. There is a recognition that within the context of declining aid flows, the closure of preferential markets for traditional export commodities and high external debt, countries like Barbados and the OECS have to forge common linkages to reposition their countries and the sub-region in the global economy. The stated strategy is to strengthen economic integration while achieving some measure of economic diversification.

The re-structuring of the banana industry in the Windward Islands has further meant that small farmers and those on marginal lands, e.g., in St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, have found their operations unprofitable. This economic shock has reverberated through the economies of the Windward Islands despite transfers to make up for the export loss by the European Union through its STABEX programme. Economic contraction in 1999 has had its social fall-out manifested by unemployment and many of the unemployed – particularly youth - resorting to socially unacceptable means of earning a living for themselves and their families.

For the countries for which tourism is the main anchor of the economy i.e. the Leeward States and Barbados, the reality is that tourism is itself, highly sensitive to the vagaries of natural disasters, changes in major markets, economic conditions and more recently international terrorism within those markets as well as the availability of airline routes, seats and size quality of tourism plant. In 1999, the tourism industry struggled against twelve named tropical systems including four major hurricanes and sustained cuts in the number of scheduled flights and seats to the region by one of the major carriers.

## *Poverty and Social Development in the context of the Caribbean*

In sharp contrast to the progress made in child and maternal health, universal access to primary education, improved access by women to education and employment and limited incidence of malaria of tuberculosis, poverty remains a serious issue for the region. A look at Table 1 (*next page*) shows a troubling picture – in some cases, poverty levels have exceeded 35% in two countries – St. Vincent and the Grenadines<sup>1</sup> and Dominica<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on CPA of 1996 and Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2003 and CPA, 2003

**Table 1. Selected Poverty Indicators for the Caribbean**

Country	Poverty Indicators				
	Year conducted	CPA % below the poverty line	% below the indigence line	Poverty Gap	FGT P2 (Severity)
Barbados*	1997	13.9	-	n.a.	n.a.
Belize <sup>R</sup>	1996	33.0	13.4	8.7	4.3
Dominica****	2002	39.0	15	-	-
Grenada	1999	32.1	12.9	15.3	9.9
Guyana*	1999	35.0	19.0	12.4	n.a.
Jamaica*	2001	16.8	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Nevis <sup>R</sup>	2000	32.0	17.0	2.8	1.0
St. Kitts <sup>R</sup>	2000	30.5	11.0	2.5	0.9
St. Lucia <sup>R</sup>	1996	25.1	7.1	8.6	4.4
St. Vincent & the Grenadines <sup>R</sup>	1996	37.5	25.7	12.6	6.9
Trinidad and Tobago*	1992	21.2	11.2	n.a.	n.a.
Turks and Caicos Islands <sup>R</sup>	1999	25.9	3.2	5.7	2.6

Source: Thomas & Wint (2002: p.5.); <sup>R</sup> : CPAs conducted by CDB Gaps; \*\*\*\* World Bank, Dominica Social Protection Review (July 11, 2003) p.3

One recent factor is that the fall-out from bananas, coupled with factory closures in manufacturing and the difficulties in the hotel sector exacerbated the unemployment situation especially among the rural population. It has been established that the rural poor have less access to land, credit facilities, social services, adequate infrastructure and organised agricultural support services (CDB, 2004). The “working poor” constitute a significant proportion of those found at or below the poverty line (OECS/UNDP, 2002)<sup>3</sup>.

Moreover, the Profile of the Poor emanating from the many national and regional assessments over the last decade provide us with the following picture:

- Low human capital (i.e., level of education and skills) base, with lesser accessibility to secondary level schooling
- Poor housing conditions with overcrowding being a problem
- Relatively high use of pit latrines
- Limited access to potable water
- High incidence of poverty in female-headed households
- High incidence of malnutrition among children in poor households
- High levels of employment in informal sector (acting as a cushion for unemployment in the formal sector)
- Little correlation between growth in informal sector and significant economic growth at the individual or country level
- Persistence of poverty in the above group

<sup>3</sup> OECS Human Development Report, 2002, prepared for the OECS with UNDP support.

In recent years, policy makers in the region have begun to pay particular attention to the relatively low level of educational achievements of males, in comparison to their female counterparts. The argument being, that since the emphasis has been the equality of girls, the boys have been neglected. However, the available statistical information demonstrates discrimination against women, and gender imbalances regardless of this 'achievement'. Throughout the region, females dominate the unemployed or underpaid listings. It also worth mentioning that low educational attainment is a defining characteristic of the poor in the region. It is also not clear why, despite the significant investment in welfare and social development programmes targeting education and health, poverty levels remain persistently high.

As part of the call for a revised construct for human and social development, is the recognition of the need to integrate "social vulnerability" as part of the operational framework. While economic vulnerability

has been accepted and environmental vulnerability increasingly so, there remains some lack of clarity and uncertainty around the concept of social vulnerability and its relevance to the policy debate. However, an examination of the concerns raised above, quickly suggests that it must be a critical part of the construct if programmes including social protection are to truly serve as a buffer to unexpected events and as a "hand-up" to those susceptible to other challenges. Asha Kambon, of the Caribbean sub-regional Office of the UN Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in her presentation at the recent *Launch of the MDGR for Barbados and the OECS and Dialogue to Review IPRSPs/PRSPs*<sup>4</sup> noted that "vulnerability" represented the dynamic and interplay between susceptibility and resilience and that the link becomes clear when one looks at the issues of *weak social capital, sub-standard housing, living in disaster prone areas* and the link to those who are most impacted on in natural or economic disasters (see diagram above devised by UNECLAC). These persons are more than likely in the event of a disaster to become "instantly poor" and to have great difficulty in transitioning from this to improved economic well-being. The example of Grenada and the impact on women in particular provide much evidence and support to this recommendation. While many of the factors associated with social vulnerability are also related to poverty, it should be noted that they are not one and the same.

Since 1994, a number of national poverty reduction surveys have been conducted and poverty-related policies, programmes, strategies and plans have been developed, primarily with support from the UNDP, DFID and the CDB. In addition, institutional mechanisms have been established mainly to address social development at the national level. In Barbados and Saint Lucia, this has taken the form of Ministries of Social Transformation. Further, with support from the CDB, DFID,

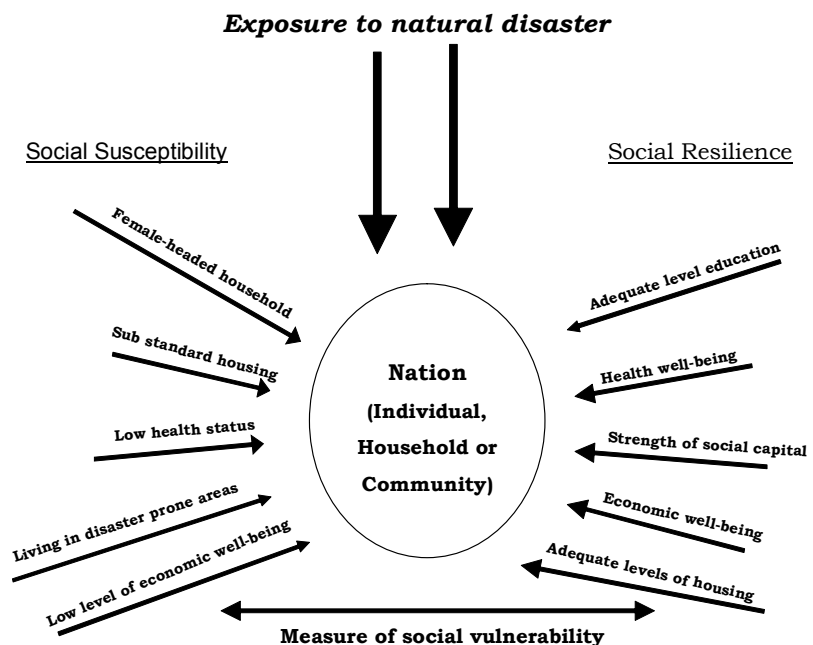


Figure 1. Construct of social vulnerability

<sup>4</sup> Meeting organized jointly by UNDP and UNIFEM and held at UN House from March 31<sup>st</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005.

World Bank and the EU, a number of poverty-specific mechanisms have been introduced, including Poverty Reduction Funds, Basic Needs Trust Funds and Social Investment Funds. The Governments are mindful of the nexus between unemployment, underemployment, poverty and crime, and are striving to:

- (a) increase access by the poor to basic services;
- (b) stimulate investment, enterprise development and economic growth so as to expand employment opportunities;
- (c) introduce accelerated skills-training programmes targeted at the unemployed and new entrants into the workforce;
- (d) provide continuous training and retraining of displaced workers; and
- (e) reform their education sectors to produce graduates with the skills and competencies required in an increasingly knowledge-based and competitive economy.

So, although adequate basic health provision has been a major achievement, the increasing prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other health issues, in particular diabetes, threaten to undermine this progress. Research conducted by the University of the West Indies and the Caribbean Epidemiological Centre (CAREC), for the Caribbean Commission on Health and Development, on the impact of non-communicable diseases on productivity as well as the potential impact of HIV/AIDS demonstrate a clear need to begin to address these issues at a level beyond the realm of health but also due to the implications for the medium and long-term development of the region. The implications for the human resource capacity development of countries and by extension the region is a cause for concern. It is evident, that efforts must be made to avoid the stagnation of efforts, after the “basics” have been met. Furthermore, it can be demonstrated that “quality and access to these services” continues to be a challenge for some.

## **The MDGs as a Structural Framework for Sustainable Human Development**

When Governments of the Caribbean signed on to the Millennium Declaration in 2000, they in essence agreed to an integrated framework for the achievement of poverty reduction and sustainable human development. Though the global targets are not always relevant to the region, they encapsulate eight (8) major areas required for sustainable human development through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), namely:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Promote of a global partnership for development.

The UN Millennium Project calls for greater commitment and actions to achieve the MDGs by 2015. 2015 is now only ten years away and while recent reports, both CARICOM-wide and OECS

specific<sup>5</sup>, suggest that the region has achieved or is on its way in some areas, it is also clear that much more concerted effort is required to meet and fulfil the goals relating to poverty reduction, partnerships, HIV-AIDS and gender equality. Greater effort, political commitment and outlay of resources will be required to address these issues.

The recent *Dialogue to review Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) held from March 31<sup>st</sup>-April 1<sup>st</sup> in Barbados* also recognized a need to link social development imperatives with economic planning and development. It is upon this foundation that human and social development goals can be achieved. It was further suggested that in our efforts to alleviate poverty we must assess social vulnerability as well as the state of poverty and hunger if we are to assist those who may fall into poverty, those who transit in and out of poverty as well as those who are face inter-generational poverty. Such an integrated analysis, it was suggested, is also key if social programmes are to achieve their desired impact and serve to buffer those suffering from shocks and provide the means for recovery.

A recent dialogue between donors (World Bank, European Commission, Caribbean Development Bank, the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom and the United Nations Development Programme) on social protection in the region, based on the findings of the Regional conference on Social Protection in October 2004, also called for “*Better data collection and improved monitoring and evaluation of poverty and SP programs, i.e. MIS systems, impact evaluation.*”

At the policy level, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and specific Social/Human Development Policies are a recent development in the region. Four countries in the OECS, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, Grenada and Saint Lucia, with support from UNDP through the OECS have developed Interim or full PRSPs. However, these strategies remain weak due, in the main, to the lack of recent relevant data on many of the social development concerns facing the countries including issues relating to the impact of economic stagnation on the vulnerable sectors of the nation. Much of the efforts over the last two or three decades and even the most recent policy efforts, have been implemented in the absence of a truly integrated policy framework or sound and reliable data on the status of poverty and vulnerability at the household, community, district or national level. These strategies can also be made more relevant by reflecting the MDGs and by providing the enabling environment for their achievement.

As the region faces new challenges as well as old ones, it is timely to seek to identify strategies and supportive environments that will facilitate development at all levels. While the attainment of the goals seems feasible, this is predicated upon the hope that the countries suffer no major setbacks like those resulting from natural disasters. The impact of Hurricane Ivan on Grenada has clearly impacted the country's capacity and the means by which they would achieve their goals by 2015. A preliminary report commissioned by ECLAC<sup>6</sup>) suggests that the Financing Gap for Grenada in 2005 is expected to reach 2% of GDP for 2005 and increase thereafter to a range comprising between 6% and 7% of GDP. It can therefore be concluded that the achievement of the MDGs is directly tied to the development fortunes of the region.

Further, if the MDGs are to serve as a guiding framework for the development of the region, the goals and targets need to be “localized” i.e. specific and relevant to the countries and the sub-region based on the attendant priorities as already identified by the countries. Given the continued role for donor support in many areas including human development activities, the MDGs also set the context for donor assistance and coordination in support of the efforts by

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<sup>5</sup> UNDP has provided support to the research on and publication of 2 reports on progress with the MDGs: i) Caribbean Regional Report on the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (2004) prepared by a team from the University of the West Indies Mona and more recently (ii) The Millennium Development Goals: Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean: A Progress Report (2004).

<sup>6</sup> A Preliminary Overview of Caribbean Economies 2004-2005 commissioned by ECLAC – published without editing.

countries. Ultimately, however, reliable data and information and access to it will be central to make these plans a reality.

## Role of Data in Addressing Poverty and Sustainable Human Development

The MDG reports, while positive regarding the progress made and the likelihood of achievement also point to significant data gaps, inconsistencies and the pressing need for credible, reliable, updated and gender-disaggregated data in order to facilitate planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and initiatives which will foster and result in positive human development in the region. How can we know where we want to be if we do not know where we are or why? As an example, information on the extent of HIV-AIDS was only available for eight countries in the Regional MDG report.

There is also a need for a policy position and strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation of poverty and sustainable human development within an MDG framework. Discordant approaches and inconsistent methodologies have often served to frustrate efforts to assess the state of play in social development. A lot of data on regional issues is still available mainly from multi-lateral agencies particularly in the health sector.

The evidence suggests, borne out by the Hutcheon Report of 2002, that regular surveys on social and demographic issues do not exist with the exception of Jamaica (see *Table 2, Appendix 1*). Even with the surveys that are completed, there is limited policy analysis and link to decision-making; external consultants (including from within the region) continue to conduct most poverty studies. Assessments of poverty or other social development issues have been spotty at best sometimes with ten years between surveys. Census data which is the foundation of all information on a country often remains only partially analyzed for 3-5 years or more after the assessment has been completed.

Consequently, poverty assessments and by extension poverty reduction strategies have been constrained by:

- Lack of ready access to reliable high-quality data and inadequate poverty analysis
- Inadequate poverty analysis
- Limited spatial analysis
- Absence of linkages among data collectors, analysts and policy makers.

Hutcheon (2002)<sup>7</sup> specifically notes the following issues:

1. overemphasis of technical support to the collection of economic and trade statistics;
2. significant gaps within data collection agencies in processing and communicating data;
3. variation in methodological approaches to data collection, leading to inconsistencies in poverty assessment;
4. limited analysis due to limited capacity;
5. inability to sustain the capacity built over the medium to long-term; and
6. no definitive national or regional poverty, social development, MDG targets or goals.

A Gender critique<sup>8</sup> of the MDGs and the recently launched report on the progress with the MDGs in the OECS suggests that the lack of data may also be contributing to a lack of appreciation of

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<sup>7</sup> Draft Final Report of a consultancy to design a Multi-donor Initiative to support collection of Social Data for Poverty Assessment and Reduction in the Caribbean countries, pp.3-5.

<sup>8</sup> *Gender Critique of the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals* by Peggy Antrobus. For UNIFEM Caribbean. March 2005

for the engendered nature of some of the issues presenting challenges to sustainable human development and therefore the inefficiencies of programme interventions in key areas such as HIV-AIDS and maternal and child health.

Additionally perhaps, we must also consider that we may be asking one survey to do too many things. Surveys themselves are limited in their design and construct in the type of information they can provide and the value it may have to questions which arise. This suggests the need for strategic thinking about the MDGs, poverty and social development, the attendant concerns and the depth, trends and specificity of the type of information required to serve effective policy-making and change. Only in this way, can we ensure a minimum core structure and capacity.

It can be concluded then that the problem of data deficiency in quantity, quality and dimension for monitoring the achievements of the MDGs including poverty and sustainable development targets stems from four main issues:

- a. lack of regular and consistent surveys that generate data at appropriate levels resulting in a lack of time-series data and the lack of capacity to establish baselines;
- b. lack of or limited technical capacity for data collection, analysis and primary research;
- c. lack of recognition of key factors such as gender, susceptibility and vulnerability to poverty and the link of the effectiveness or lack of social protection measures to poverty reduction; and
- d. limited financial and other resources to undertake the needed regular surveys.

In addressing these issues the role of *research* also must be considered including the role to be played by the University of the West Indies and the University of Guyana as well as other tertiary institutions in supporting and also conducting in-depth analyses of available data. In some cases, only preliminary analyses are conducted on survey data. However, more detailed analyses including the extrapolation of the issues with implications for policy and change are increasingly of paramount importance. Additionally, the research community can often provide guidance on how some of the difficult policy questions can and should be addressed and how assessment methodologies could be strengthened or made more specific to the Caribbean context.

## **A Framework for MDG and Poverty Monitoring in the context of an Integrated Social and Human Development Framework for the Region**

### **Conceptual Framework**

As we seek to move ahead, it is also clear that indicators and targets need to be established. As the operational framework for development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these should be based on the Millennium Development Goals. However, in order to avoid an overly ambitious plan, the MDGs should be selected based on the priorities of the individual islands and the region in general, particularly as some have already been said to be achieved. It is also important to note that indicators should be set for the medium term as well as long. They should also be direct, unambiguous, relevant, and consistent with data collection capacity.

Progress also needs to be monitored with regards to short-term reduction and Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) implementation. There is a need for more input and intermediate output indicators because poor performance of output and outcome indicators may reflect various problems in programme design and implementation or external shocks. Intermediate outputs focus on progress, so that alterations and adjustments can be made at timely and meaningful matter.



Equally as we progress into the new millennium, a confirmed feature of poverty wherever entrenched in the world, is a high level of inequality. The gini coefficient should therefore be a key indicator.

Moreover, a Social Policy Framework for the Region must be one that recognizes the role of economic development as an engine for growth while acknowledging the inherent vulnerabilities and the need for human and social capital for growth to be sustained. It should be an iterative process, flexible enough to respond to change and new priorities (*see figure 2 next page*). Further, the conceptual framework builds on a vision that while social protection and poverty reduction are not interchangeable processes, they should be integrated if we are to achieve what can be called “poverty avoidance” which is equally as important as poverty reduction. It is now widely recognized that social policy should not be only responsive to social challenges, but should be proactive; and should be an enabler of economic success.<sup>9</sup>

### Operationalizing the Framework through Support to Poverty Assessment and Reduction in the Caribbean

Development assistance to the region has been delivered mostly through donor coordination within the islands. External agencies such as the World Bank and DFID have collaborated with various regional bodies, and have agreed to a revitalisation of poverty reduction efforts. These donors are now collectively, the Poverty and Social Sector Development Donor Group (PSSDDG)<sup>10</sup>. Through many deliberations, the Support to Poverty Assessment and Reduction in the Caribbean, or SPARC initiative, has been revised as a first step in the process of addressing the challenges highlighted earlier. The strategy to improve monitoring and capacity is based on this initiative, with the overarching goal being to, ***“assist governments to design and implement a planning framework that speaks to the specific needs of the vulnerable and the disadvantaged in reducing poverty and enhancing social development.”***<sup>11</sup>. It is intended to foster an

integrated approach to human development recognizing poverty reduction, social protection and human capital development as integral parts of the process.

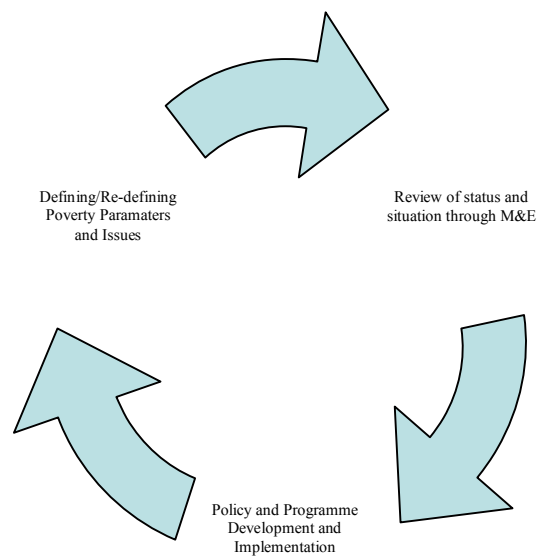


Figure 1. Iterative Process for SHD Policy

Discussions within the PSSDDG and an analysis of existing donor funded activities in 2004 highlights the fact that there are many donor activities many of which are uncoordinated leading to potential wastage of resources and duplication (*see Table 3, Appendix 1*).

<sup>9</sup> Exploring New Approaches to Social Policy, Government of Canada, Dec 2004.

<sup>10</sup> The PSSDDG includes the following donors/partners: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank (WB), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Organization of Eastern Caribbean States/Social Policy Unit, Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), European Commission (EC), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UK Department for International Development (DFID), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC).

<sup>11</sup> SPARC Revision 8 (Draft- March 31<sup>st</sup> 2005).

Presently, there are a number of on-going initiatives which have been targeted as donor support to SPARC including:

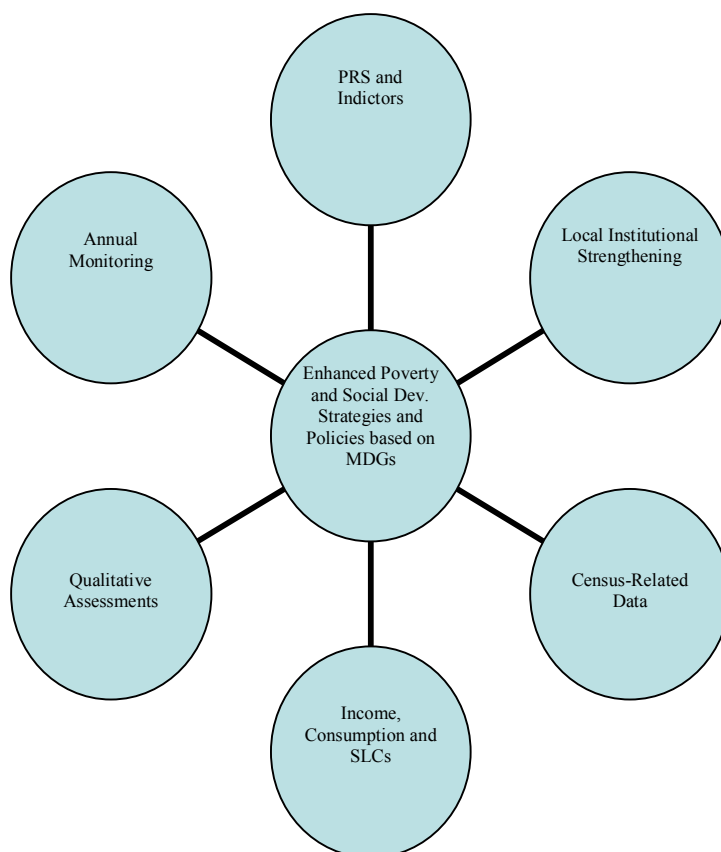
- World Bank approved \$200,000 of the Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building (TFSCB) grant to support follow up project for UNSD/CARICOM programme of capacity building for social, gender and environment statistics from 2004 to 2005.
- World Bank approved US\$400,000 of the Institutional Development Fund (IDF) grant in 2003 to support the mini-MECOVII component for strengthening, via the OECS Secretariat, the institutional capacity of the OECS member countries in survey capabilities, poverty analysis and social indicators for the three years of the programme period from 2004 to 2006.
- IDB approved US\$350,000 to support SPARC to facilitate, via CDB, the strengthening of institutional capacity in statistical offices in Caribbean countries to collect, analyze, and produce high quality statistical information required to formulate social policies and strategies, and to monitor their progress. CDB has indicated that it will seek to match this amount in providing support in similar areas.
- IDB approved a US\$3,450,000 for Guyana to improve and sustain the capacity of the country to generate social data, to undertake evidence-based policy analysis, and to monitor the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) implementation and impact.
- UNDP expects to commit US\$150,000 from a regional allocation to support the initiation of the SPARC initiative including providing direct technical advice to countries.

From the discussions, a six part monitoring framework was proposed for addressing poverty and human development in the region (see below). Those discussions also highlighted that despite numerous donor interventions, gaps still remained in the following areas:

- census related activities;
- qualitative assessments and regular monitoring of poverty programmes and/or initiatives; and
- annual monitoring and data capture to monitor the MDGs.

At a minimum, Caribbean countries need to be able to monitor:

- depth of poverty and other human development challenges;
- quality of challenges;
- change over time.



**Figure 2. Diagram of Overall Monitoring Framework**

**However, one survey cannot do it all.** Flexibility as data needs and needs change over time and the ability to respond to emerging issues is also key in the identification of a monitoring system and a system of surveys. In a recent presentation, Ms. Kinnon Scott of the World Bank at the MECOVI/SLC Regional Training workshop in Saint Lucia in 2005, proposed that consideration be given to a system of surveys which provide information and data in various streams and depth thereby providing a breadth of information which could respond to most questions which could arise. She further suggests that (i) the degree of representativeness and (ii) subjectivity and objectivity be also considered in selecting our instruments. Clearly, the impact of any initiative on living conditions or livelihood cannot be feasibly measured in less than five years.

Based on this and the recognition of a need for institutionalized M&E based on tried and tested appropriate methodologies, **the Support for Poverty reduction and Assessment in the Caribbean programme (SPARC)** is being proposed. SPARC was a result of the Hutcheon study of 2002 and has been reinvigorated in the last year based on renewed commitment and concern regarding the need for a framework to address these concerns. It will harmonize existing donor efforts and also specifically address the gaps identified above.

SPARC has been presented at a number of regional fora and found to be an appropriate framework for addressing the issues and deficiencies of data while enabling the monitoring of the MDGs. It has been presented at the CARICOM Fourth Advisory Committee Meeting on Social and Gender Statistics (June 2004), at the OECS Expert Group Meeting on a Social Policy (December 2004), the MDGR Launch and Dialogue on PRSPs March/April 2005 and the WB/OECS SLC Regional Training Workshop in Saint Lucia April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Based on feedback from these fora, it has been refined and enhanced.

SPARC is intended as.....

- An overarching framework for a strategic approach to the Poverty Assessment linked directly to Reduction and positive human development (HD) outcomes;
- An opportunity for an integrated, collaborative and joint effort by donors ;
- Enhance quantitative and qualitative assessments;
- A means to: improving regional and national capabilities in surveys and poverty analysis, i.e., establishment of baseline surveys, data processing, poverty monitoring, programme evaluation, data dissemination , test new methodologies, support long-term training needs, localization of global targets;
- Mechanism to regularize and institutionalize poverty assessments at the national and regional level;
- Provides basic resources to pilot the approach and support the institutionalization; and
- Localization and Regionalization of the MDGs.

SPARC is comprised of several components, but of particular concern to this paper is the Monitoring and Evaluation of the MDGs, Poverty and Human Development Policies and Strategies, as outlined in component 2 of the document. SPARC links the data to the poverty reduction and HD goals and to M&E frameworks and tools to represent a comprehensive supportive framework for Sustainable Human Development (SHD) in the CARICOM region.

Monitoring systems need to be kept simple, and flexible and built with the intention of monitoring outputs being fed into the policy making process. The system needs to have clearly defined roles that are efficiently allocated. Coordination, duplication, delays and gaps all need to be addressed and managed. To this end, it is important to note the role and necessary involvement of all ministerial sectors alongside the statistical institutions, as poverty is a multidimensional issue. For example, statistical information and tracking of HIV/AIDS is not only the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. HIV/AIDS impacts all sectors, including education, agriculture and also tourism, a very vital sector in the current economic development of the region. In addressing poverty reduction, there must be a recognition of responsibility of both social and economic

sectors, and need in addressing the MDGs with holistic approach. The system must also provide for a feed-back loop which can influence a revision or re-engineering of policy or initiatives based on the findings of assessments and evaluations.

The specific programme objectives of SPARC are, to:

- **Improve country-level capacity** for continuous poverty and human development assessments, analysis, post-disaster socio-economic assessment, evidence-based policy-making and programmes;
- **Enable effective processes and institutional arrangements** for monitoring and evaluating poverty reduction and social development policies;
- **Facilitate collation and dissemination of social and poverty data and improved access to multiple and compatible data sets;** and
- **Coordinate and harmonize donor support and resource mobilization** linked to MDGs/PRSPs and other development strategies.

### Strategy

It envisions a programme of continuous poverty assessments using local and regional capacity comprising:

1. annual CWIQ surveys;
2. Country Poverty Assessments (CPAs) comprising Surveys of Living Condition(SLC) and Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA) every 4-5 years;
3. Household budget surveys every ten years but in different years to the census;
4. testing of other methodologies and tools;
5. other assessments e.g. community analysis, post-disaster socio-economic assessments
6. facilitating the harmonization of data sets so they can be compiled for both national and regional benefits;
7. specific gender analyses on critical social issues;
8. support to evidence-based policy-making;
9. regional data base of comparable social administrative and survey data;
10. access to data through websites and web-hosting; and
11. standardization of definitions, methodologies and the development of regional indicators and targets.

SPARC will build on the CPAs, which have been supported by the CDB over the last decade, and on the recent positive results of the first pilot of the Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire (CWIQ) in Saint Lucia.

The proposed Monitoring Framework is built on the following system of tools:

- ✱ **Tools for measuring depth & determinants of poverty (Understanding the Issues):** Household Budget Surveys (HBS), Living Standard Measurement Survey (LSMS), Survey of Living Conditions (SLC), qualitative assessments &

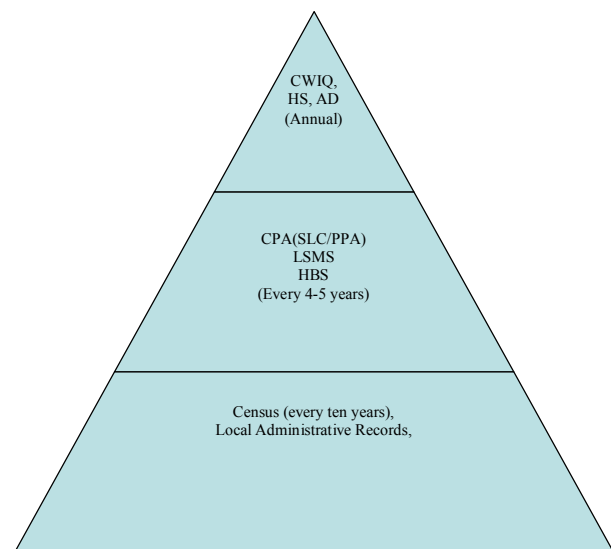


Figure 3. Proposed Pyramid Approach

- participative monitoring (Participatory Poverty Assessments is part of the Country Poverty Assessment(CPA))
- ✱ **Tools for comparing differences over space (Targeting):** Local Administrative Records, Population Census, Household Surveys (HS), Poverty Maps
- ✱ **Tools for monitoring changes over time (Tracking):** Service delivery monitoring, Administrative Data, Household Survey (HS), Institution-based Surveys, Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ)

#### *SPARC Components and Expected Outputs*

- Component 1: *Building National Capacity for Assessments*
  - (a) Capacity to conduct CWIQ, CPA and to utilize other appropriate assessment tools;
  - (b) Proposed M&E framework institutionalized;
  - (c) enhanced primary research capacity;
  - (d) establishment of a Regional Training Programme
- Component 2: *M&E for policy and implementation*
  - (a) Improved National policy frameworks,
  - (b) Specific M&E guidelines,
  - (c) M&E plans for PRSPs,
  - (d) Enhanced capacity for reporting on policies
- Component 3: *Dissemination of Data*
  - (a) Increased reporting on the state of poverty and social development;
  - (b) readily available data and data sets,
  - (c) Annual/Bi-ennial Monitoring Reports,
  - (d) Biennial Human Development Reports
- Component 4: *Regional Coordination*
  - (a) Regional Fund for training and capacity development;
  - (b) Regional Strategy and Plan for MDG and Poverty Monitoring;
  - (c) Effective programme implementation enabled by a fully functioning and operational RSC and Secretariat

#### *Proposed Implementation Arrangements*

SPARC is proposed as a three-year programme in the first instance with most of the initiatives targeted at the OECS region which is facing many of the specific economic, social and environmental challenges which have been raised in this paper. It is to be based on a multiple modality framework funded by various donors contributing to specific components through (i) a single mechanism or (ii) through their own mechanisms operating under one overarching umbrella or framework. The programme is expected to be inherently flexible to enable the provision of support and Technical Assistance (TA) to countries on request.

It is proposed that this be a common programme where donors can pool resources, in the form of the Caribbean Technical Assistance Centre (CARTAC) and managed in a coordinated manner.

A Regional Steering Committee (RSC) made up of senior managers of respective institutions is suggested as the governing body for inter-institutional coordination. A Technical Coordination Committee to coordinate technical and programme inputs under SPARC. The PSSDDG will continue to serve as a coordination and reporting mechanism. **The project would be implemented from 2005-2008 in the first instance/phase.**

## **Conclusion**

Countries in the region have recognized a need to specifically design policies, initiatives and responses to a number of social issues, challenges and ills. In order to make these effective and

impactful, a rigorous and comprehensive framework is fundamental. The SPARC initiative is such a framework. It will allow the region, through concerted efforts and supportive mechanisms to find data, statistics and indicators that can measure **poverty** in the sense that:

*“the poverty of a life lies not only in the impoverished state in which the person actually lives but also in the lack of real opportunity-due to social constraints as well as personal circumstances-to lead valuable and valued lives”  
(using the capability concept)*

With SPARC effectively implemented and successful, the Caribbean region will be better placed to address its medium and long term needs and improve the efficiency of both local and external resources. Countries will be enabled to undertake regular assessments and to report and assess progress with the MDGs. Ultimately, countries will be finally have the capacity to set achievable targets, monitor progress and redefine and adjust as necessary.

Through the proposed framework and methodological approach, SPARC is well positioned to enable countries to strategically target the deficiencies and gaps as well as to enhance indicators for continued progress and quality outcomes as follows:

**Table 2. Expected Outcomes of the SPARC programme**

<b>Programme Scope</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
<b><i>Assessment of poverty and human development</i></b>	(i) improved data and indicator framework to influence policy (ii) availability and quality of poverty and human/social development data (iii) Comparable data sets
<b><i>Analysis of the findings of assessments</i></b>	(i) analytical framework and capability at the country level (ii) Improved basis for action
<b><i>National Planning, Review and Refinement of Policies and Strategies</i></b>	(i) institutionalization of continuous assessment (ii) enhanced broad-based and integrated policy and strategy (iii) evidence-based PR/MDG policies and strategies
<b><i>Improved targeting and planning of poverty and human development interventions</i></b>	(i) Improved Poverty and Human Resource outcomes (ii) Improved efficiency of public and donor resources
<b><i>Effective Monitoring and Evaluation</i></b>	(i) Improved impact and effectiveness assessment of development initiatives

It should also enable the implementation of a social and human development policy framework that links social capital, social relations, participation, community, market, state and household in a broad canvas that recognizes that economic development must serve a platform for social and human development and that economic growth is dependent on social capital.

Further to the presentation at COHSOD, it is expected that the document would be refined based on feedback and a project support document prepared by early May 2005. A regional meeting will then be held to review and finalize the project. It is hoped that implementation of the framework would commence as early as July 2005.

Table 3. Pattern of Poverty Assessment 1993-2003

<i>Caribbean Countries</i>	<i>Implementation of Poverty Assessments</i>												
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>1. Surveys of Living Conditions</b>													
Jamaica							×	×	×	×	×	×	
Trinidad and Tobago	×						×						
Guyana	×						×						
Barbados				×									
Belize				×							×		
Saint Lucia				×									
St. Vincent & the Grenadines					×								
Grenada							×						
St. Kitts and Nevis									×				
Bahamas										×			
<b>2. Labour Force Surveys</b>													
Saint Lucia						×		×		×			
St. Vincent and the Grenadines					×	×	×	×					
Dominica	1983					×						×	
Grenada													
<b>3. Social Survey</b>													
Montserrat						×							

Table 4: Varied Donor Interventions in Poverty and Human Development

Intervention and Donor	Regional/Country	PRS & Indicators	Local Inst. Strengthening	Census-related	Income, Consumption, SLCs	Qualitative Assessments	Annual Monitoring
<b>CDB</b>							
Social Analysis Training	Regional		X				
PRAPS	SKN & Anguilla	X					
Poverty Mapping	Dominica	X		X	X	X	X
Basic Needs Trust Fund	10 BMCs	X					
<b>DFID</b>							
SD Assist. to CDB	10 BMCs		X				
PR and Gender/CS Dev	BRB, SVG, GUY, JAM & T & T		X				
<b>EU</b>							
Social Data Capture	SLU	X	X	X	X	X	X
PSAF*	SVG	X	X		X	X	X
<b>UNDP</b>							
Capacity Building for Social Data etc	Regional		X				
SD for Poverty Erad.	Grenada	X					
Social Stats and Indicators	Regional	X	X	X	X		
Prep. Asst - Poverty Erad. in OECS	Regional	X	X			X	
Poverty TTF	BAR & OECS, T & T, JAM & GUY	X					X
SD & Poverty - Harmonization*	Regional	X	X				
CWIQ Pilot	Saint Lucia						X
<b>UNIFEM</b>							
Women, Gender & Poverty in Wis	Grenada & SLU		X				
Gender & Budgets	Belize	X	X				
Gender Analysis Training	BAR & OECS, T & T, JAM, GUY		X				
Gender & PRSPs*	OECS Sub-region	X					
Gender and RBA*	OECS Sub-region	X	X				
<b>WB</b>							
Mini-mecovi	OECS	X	X				
<b>IDB</b>							
SPARC	Regional		X				
Social Data	Guyana	X	X			X	X