

**REPORT  
OF  
THE CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON  
EDUCATION FOR RURAL PEOPLE:**

**FOOD SECURITY, AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIVENESS  
AND  
SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS**

**18 and 19 May 2006  
Royal St. Lucian  
Rodney Bay, Saint Lucia, West Indies**

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**Report on**  
**The Caribbean Conference on Education for Rural People**  
*Food Security, Agricultural Competitiveness, Sustainable Development*

**Rodney Bay, St. Lucia**  
**May 18 -19, 2006**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The conference reported here is part of three concurrent global drives: sustainable development with poverty reduction, education for all and gender equity. It is the latest of the series organised under the joint FAO/UNESCO flagship, *Education for Rural People*, (ERP), that aims to contribute to the achievement –particularly for rural people- of the first three Millennium Development Goals: [1] the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; [2] the achievement of universal primary education; and [3] the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. This conference focused on what the three goals and the special concern for rural people imply for the countries of the Caribbean, most of them small island states. As planned, the participants came from agencies that deal with rural development and education: government ministries of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, social transformation and education joined with their counterparts in the private, voluntary and international sectors to consider the needs and to identify possible solutions. Above all, they worked to name the specific actions that each participant could and would undertake to advance education, training, capacity development and poverty reduction for their rural people.

As Chair of the opening session, Mr. Martin Satney, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the host Government of St. Lucia, welcomed the participants and briefly set the scene of the challenges that faced small island states. He noted that they were manoeuvring to adjust to a world that was globalising, even as they worked to achieve in full measure the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), along with the goals set for Education For All (EFA) at the Dakar World Forum in 2000. He was joined in his welcome by the Honourable Mario F. Michel, Minister of Education, Human Resources Development, Youth and Sport in the Government of St. Lucia.

Noting that in addition to the Cabinet Ministers from St. Lucia, Cabinet Ministers from five other Caribbean states were present at the session, Minister Michel said this reflected and underlined the importance of the conference and the issues it was about to address. The need to marry education and agriculture in some mutually supportive way at every level of education was indeed vital to the Caribbean states, since agriculture in its various forms still occupied large proportions of the labour force and still contributed significant proportions of gross domestic products. Combining the two in ways that served the ambitions of students and their families and also prepared the students for a productive rural career was a challenge that had been recognised for a long time, but not completely settled.

However, education for rural people needed to be different in the Caribbean from what it might be in other parts of the world. The reason was that the rural-urban divide did not exist in the stark and contrasting forms found elsewhere. Primary schools existed in all communities, so that universal primary education had been already achieved, as had virtually universal primary completion. Also, secondary schools permeated all communities, even though universal secondary enrolment had not yet quite been attained. Where the urban-rural divide was more noticeable was in the matter of employment: communities further from the larger population centres did indeed tend to suffer higher rates of unemployment. In St. Lucia, for instance, the area of Gros Islet, near the capital, Castries, had an unemployment rate of around ten per cent. Communities further away and in that sense more rural, however, had rates of unemployment that exceeded 20 per cent and could be as high as 30 per cent.

The issues that helped to explain these differences had to do with trade, economics and access to markets and were still unresolved. The chief agricultural products of the Caribbean, bananas and sugar-cane, were in effect being sacrificed by Europe on the altar of free trade. The task of education at all levels was to enable people of all ages to understand the new realities being forced upon agriculture and the rural people of the Caribbean and to equip them respond productively to them.

After this introduction, the Honourable Ignatius Jean, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of St. Lucia, launched the discussions. He took as his theme the role of education in promoting agriculture, integrated rural development and sustainable livelihoods. He noted first that the government of St. Lucia had recently declared 2006 to be the year of Universal Secondary Education: this implied that the country had already achieved one of the Millennium Development Goals, namely Universal Primary Education. Yet it had to be acknowledged that ‘universal’ did not include ‘equal’ automatically, for disparities of quality and functionality did exist between urban and rural schools.

Agriculture blended the dimensions of art, science, culture, politics, environment, technology in a perpetually and rapidly evolving dynamic. To deal with the challenges of globalisation, diversification, productivity and competitiveness, it had to be supported by an education of high quality and relevance. Uncontrollably rising energy costs with their negative implications for food security underlined the need. Curricula often stressed facts and statistics, but omitted an element of crucial relevance: psychology and a person’s ‘mindset’ have an impact on the incidence of poverty and the will to combat it. Curriculum design should include ‘resilience building’, along with consideration of the inherent vulnerabilities of small island economies and the value of food security, good nutrition, health and sanitation. Against these needs, however, few schools in St. Lucia or indeed in the Caribbean region had either curriculum specialists or teachers for agriculture.

The Minister concluded with highlighting two issues that impact directly on fisher and agricultural communities, who necessarily operate within rural environments. First, the region should capitalise on the increasing availability and accessibility of the tools of information and communication technologies: they could help to bridge what is often termed the technological gap, to enhance productivity and competitiveness and, perhaps most vital, to combat the brain drain.

Second, the region must urgently address the re-education of its producers in the practical aspects and fundamentals of agri-business operations and management. They drive the processes of production and business, which in turn generate sustainable jobs and family incomes.

A quote from Zig Ziglar ended the Minister's address and encapsulated the need for the conference to think boldly:

*“You can't fly with the eagles, if you continue to scratch with the turkeys.”*

### **Italy and ERP**

Taking up the remarks of Minister Jean, Ms. Emanuela Benini of the Italian Development Cooperation General Directorate stressed that the government of Italy supported the ERP flagship because it appreciated the importance of rural people. It also noted the disadvantages and poverty under which too many of them laboured and it believed in the fundamental importance of education to the reduction of poverty. Speaking on behalf of the Director General for Development Cooperation (DGCS, Cooperazione allo Sviluppo) in the government of Italy, Ms. Benini pointed out that Italy had supported and helped to finance the ERP flagship from its inception in 2002 and had consistently backed the work of FAO and UNESCO. Support for the flagship was part of the Italian government's commitment to the goals of the World Food Summit and to the Dakar goals for Education For All.

Italy's strategy was to:

- Support locally owned development strategies;
- Give priority to the education sector within national poverty reduction and development strategies;
- Define a reliable system to evaluate results and measure progress;
- Identify 'best practices';
- Train teachers and strengthen educational strategies.

Consistent with this strategy, Italy had strongly supported the 'Education For All – Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI)', which had not only helped countries to mobilize more of their internal resources for education, but had also maintained pressure on governments to allocate adequate domestic resources to education. Italy had also supported the FAO project, 'Capacity building in Education for Agriculture, rural development and food security' and catalysed further resources for the ERP from a range of other donors. It had enabled not only the present conference in St. Lucia, but several others, too. Italian funding had also enabled the production of books which would serve as training and awareness-raising material.

As regards the priorities of Italy's regional office in the Caribbean, these were territorial food security and competitiveness in regional and world markets for the distinctive products of the Caribbean. In both these areas, the regional office made a strong point of cooperating with CARICOM. Further, the regional office recognised that food is part of culture and that the region's rural people had knowledge of foods and nutrition that could be tapped for the benefit of other peoples. Bound up with this was the issue of gender, as much of the knowledge was held and used by women. The regional office therefore worked to promote gender equality and inter-cultural

exchange through its support for the uncovering and dissemination of such knowledge. It also felt that the region should rely more on its youth to assess the potential of these stores of knowledge.

Ms. Benini noted the presence of Cabinet Ministers and Permanent Secretaries of Agriculture and of Education of several Caribbean states at the conference: she commended their commitment and willingness to work together with civil society and local communities to promote ERP. She urged them to build, even redouble, their efforts at stronger coordination and coherence in the service of rural people.

### **Why is ERP important?**

Dr. Lavinia Gasperini, the representative of FAO, opened her discussion of ERP with a story of a doctoral student from St. Lucia, who had originally focused her dissertation on rural education. As she had researched and thought further, she had broadened her study into an examination of rural education as an instrument to reduce and eventually eliminate rural poverty. Fashioning such an instrument formed the core of the ERP flagship's mission and the central purpose of the present conference.

Dr. Gasperini followed the Minister's use of traditional wisdom by quoting two more proverbs, both also drawn from agriculture and fisheries: "Do not *give* a poor person a fish. It is better to *teach* him *how* to fish.", and "If you are planning for a year, sow rice. If you are planning for a decade, plant trees. If you are planning for a lifetime, educate people." They illustrated her theme, which identified rural people as a hidden constituency of the goals for Education for All and Millennium Development. They also underlined her observation that education is the only asset that no shock, man-made or natural, can take away from a person: it is in fact the key asset to rural livelihoods that are productive and sustainable.

People might question why an initiative in education, 'Education for Rural People' is led by an organization that specializes in agriculture and related industries, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The reason is the deepening appreciation of a single fact: most of the people who are poorest, who suffer hunger, who have no easy access to education and what access they do have is to education of comparatively low quality, are rural people –they form a single constituency. It makes sense that the agencies that are working to reduce their poverty, increase their food supplies and provide good quality education should fuse their efforts in a single and coordinated thrust through partnerships. In 2002, then, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the Directors General of UNESCO and FAO launched a flagship initiative to promote education of high relevance and high quality for rural people, ERP .

A few statistics highlight the magnitude of the task. More than 1,000 million people live below the level of absolute poverty, approximately 850 million people do not enjoy food security, and 1,010 million adults and children do not enjoy access to education and are illiterate. Two-thirds and more of these people live in rural areas and two-thirds or more are women. This situation will change only marginally during the next few decades. FAO's projections predict that more than half the world's population and close to half of the world's workforce will still be rural in 2030. Ideally, to serve these people most effectively, the technical agencies for development,

food, health and education should act as one. Interdisciplinary perspectives and inter-ministerial partnerships are necessary: no agency can succeed alone or by continuing business as usual. The ERP initiative aims to mainstream its perspective within plans for national rural development and education. The comparative advantage of the ERP partnership lies in harnessing together the separate forces of agriculture, rural development and education, as well as those of non-governmental entities, to design, promote and implement new policies to increase access to services that will deliver education of clear relevance and high quality to rural people. The initiative aims to build on earlier efforts to forge, sustain and encourage such coordination. FAO and UNESCO together confront a global problem. But they recognize that it has local variations: they and their international and national partners need to develop a wider and deeper understanding of the specificities of different populations of rural people.

The need for specificity was pointedly relevant to this conference of the mainly small island states of the Caribbean. Many have already attained Universal Primary Enrolment –indeed, the host country, St. Lucia, is about to launch a drive for Universal Secondary Education. The first questions then were: Who are the rural people in this region? What are their needs? How might we address them most effectively?

In general terms, rural people are those who live in small, sometimes isolated, settlements and in geographical spaces often dominated by farms, forests, mountains, coastal zones and/or deserts. Typically, they are farmers, nomads and pastoralists or fishermen. Agriculture is their main occupation, and frequently their labour is cheap. They deal with animal production, transformation and marketing of land and forest products and services. Because they are distant from the main commercial centres, they incur high transaction costs for services received. Prevailing western models of development accord higher priority to the industrial and services sectors of the economy as the engines of national economic development. As a result, rural people are often an overlooked majority of the world's population, marginalized, even neglected. This happens despite their critical role in determining food security (MDG1) and environmental sustainability (MDG7), for agriculture is the primary interface between humanity and the environment. The reason is that they often have little, if any, political voice in influencing the policies of their governments.

What are their needs? First, despite their agricultural occupations, many do not have the resources to produce enough food for themselves and their families. Next, the basic social services provided for them are not only often inadequate, but they are almost always inferior to those provided for the urban populations. Addressing their needs for food security and meeting those of rising populations translate into requirements not only for more food production but also for more food production per capita. Addressing their needs for social services will require enabling them to develop an effective political voice. The international community had not only to chart a technologically effective way of producing additional food from limited land and water resources, it had also consider the social, environmental, political and cultural components of the equation.

The global objectives of the ERP initiative were

- Increasing access to and equity in primary education, adult literacy and skill training for rural people.

- Improving the quality of the primary curriculum and its relevance to rural people
- Building the capacity of Ministries of Education and Agriculture to address the education needs of the rural poor, to work in partnership with civil society, to mobilize donor support in favour of ERP and to monitor progress towards universal ERP.

Access to and equity in Education for Rural People could be expanded by focusing on groups that have been historically underserved or discriminated against. This required adapting the systems to their needs, for example through introducing flexible school calendars for working children; or “nomadic/caravan” schools for nomadic populations. They could be expanded also by addressing

1. *Physical constraints:*

- Increasing the availability of schools in rural areas and reducing the distances between homes and schools, as well as by increasing boarding schools
- Introducing alternative delivery systems, including distance learning (and especially rural radio, and where appropriate, television and the newer information and communication technologies (ICT)).

2. *Economic Constraints*

- Sponsoring school feeding programmes to counter poverty and hunger
- Abolishing all forms of fees and charges
- Abolishing uniforms or providing them free
- Providing books, pencils and other common learning materials
- Developing alternatives to education solely through conventional primary schools (e.g. non-formal classes, adult literacy, extension and skill training;)
- Strengthening Early Childhood Development programmes
- Reducing the opportunity costs of children’s labour by introducing economic incentives for poor families

3. *Socio- Cultural constraints*

- Supporting girls’ enrolment with targeted interventions (incentives for female teachers, scholarships for girls or incentives to families)
- Utilizing local languages as at least initial languages of instruction.

ERP could also improve **quality and relevance** by

- Improving training for rural teachers and introducing incentives for them (such as special allowances, free housing, vegetable gardens)
- Fostering curriculum relevance by reforming the assessment and qualification system so that the inclusion of indigenous knowledge, local agriculture, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, health and basic skills for locally available livelihoods can all count towards academic competence and excellence
- Encouraging school gardens as a way to foster better nutrition and experiential learning of agricultural and other basic skills
- Ensuring the availability of relevant teaching/learning materials
- Promoting community involvement and ownership of school plans
- Strengthening skills development to support diversification of employment patterns in agriculture and off-farm activities
- Using information and communication technologies (especially rural radio) as appropriate

In the four years since its inception, the ERP flagship had:

- Assisted the government of Kosovo to formulate a national ERP strategy
- Delivered regional capacity building workshops in Latin America and Asia
- Delivered capacity building workshops for bilateral and multilateral donors
- Established an ERP web site
- Published monographs under the joint sponsorship of FAO and UNESCO-IIEP
- Disseminated an initial ERP tool kit through the coordinated effort of all departments. It will be progressively enriched by the contributions of other ERP members, and is available for extension personnel, teachers, trainers and students.

In November 2005, the Director General of UNESCO convened the High Level Group on Education for All in Beijing. A large number of heads of state and ministers of education participated and heard two important contributions. First, the Director General of FAO advocated ERP as one of the three key issues for the world's education policy agenda. Second, the High Level Group listened to a report from a conference of African ministers of education and ministers of agriculture (September 2005), which highlighted the key policies necessary for ERP, their financial implications and a range of possible operational solutions. The African ministers had drawn these last from examples of successful programmes in different regions of the world.

Dr. Gasperini concluded by saying that, although the importance of ERP was now widely and well understood, working on it to ensure the achievement of at least the first three Millennium Development Goals required two fundamental elements. One was the sustained commitment of governments, their officers and the organs of civil society to promoting ERP. The second was a steadfast commitment to collaboration and partnerships in support of rural people. Specialist practitioners and researchers in rural development, agriculture and education, whether in government or civil society, needed to concert their efforts. This was crucial. The challenge was formidable but the knowledge and expertise to meet it were to hand, provided the partners involved could sustain their collaboration.

### **Rural Is Plural**

Dr. David Atchoarena, representing UNESCO/IIEP, pursued Dr. Gasperini's theme further. He pointed out that 'rural is plural': there was a tendency to lump rural people into a single stereotype and associate them with conditions of deep poverty; whereas their realities are in fact highly variegated. The most recent examples of this tendency were the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers produced by a number of governments in response to incentives to do with debt relief and increased aid. The papers aimed to reduce poverty, but made little distinction between urban and rural poverty; and where they did make a distinction, mentioned rural people as though they were a completely homogeneous group. Defining rurality may indeed require several criteria involving place of residence, size of neighbouring populations, means of earning livings, quality and range of infrastructure, or access to markets and social services. In short, identifying the nature of the rurality of particular groups of rural people was essential and would indicate specific strategies to address them.

Although rural people continued and would continue to form the majorities of populations in developing countries, and although agriculture remained the mainstay

of the subsistence of both rural majorities and urban minorities, there currently existed patterns of declining support for both. Ongoing efforts at poverty reduction tended to favour urban populations and efforts to reduce inequalities between urban and rural areas seemed to be weakening. Special initiatives were needed to bring home to policy makers the overriding rural character of poverty.

The task of reaching different rural clienteles effectively still posed problems of design and implementation. For simple instance, how should a programme deal with the inequalities that exist between the rural rich and the rural poor? Given the range and variety of occupations that prevail in many rural areas, what would constitute core competencies and what vocational skills should attract priority? What capacities –at both the private individual and the social levels- should be built? Beyond identifying what might constitute a relevant school education for given rural populations, what kinds of literacy education, other non-formal education and access to information would be most productive for particular rural groups? Since vocational and higher education remained important dimensions of skill development for agriculture and all other spheres of rural advancement, these questions did require adequate responses.

An aspect that had so far not drawn sufficient attention but that bore directly on these questions was the impact of globalisation on rural labour markets. The spread of non-farm employment and sources of income had led in some parts of the world to 30 and even 40 per cent of rural households' income arising off the farm –South Asian countries provided examples. It had also diversified the range and patterns of rural employments well beyond what had been thought traditionally. It was increasingly recognised that there had in the past been an excessive focus on public sector jobs and on-farm employment. Over the past two decades there had been a shift of view from thinking in terms of waged jobs of a set description to sustainable livelihoods that might include two or more occupations, each of which would generate a portion of a family income.

The slow recognition of these relatively fast moving changes naturally involved a lack of recognition and consideration of areas of new skills. Perceiving changes in the environment, managing and steering them so as to protect it from damage, managing natural resources so as benefit from and develop them simultaneously, perceiving the potentials of biotechnology, developing the skills and networks for agribusiness were all examples of emerging needs that development specialists and planners had not fully appreciated. The resulting situation was one of fragmented delivery, a lack of clear pathways for taking learning forward and an exacerbation of the mismatches between what the providers of education and training offered and what the evolving labour market sought. There had been a strong focus on tertiary education and training, but the internal incentives of academic and training institutions, as well as the usual institutional inertia, had led to weak articulations between research and training. In turn, despite the challenge of food security and the need to increase the productivity of labour, land and food crops, funding for rurally oriented education had declined and the enrolment capacities of educational institutions remained low and inadequate.

Governments therefore faced a range of rural challenges. As regards the environment, they had to consider how to protect their countries' soils, coastal areas, forests, while at the same time enhancing their production and productivity. As regards economics, they had to balance encouraging economic growth and greater competitiveness for

their agricultural products in the world's globalised markets against the risks of environmental damage and disruptive shifts in employment patterns. In social matters, they were challenged to reduce poverty, expand employment and build social capital in the form of wider ranges of skills and flexible adaptability. Dealing with this set of challenges required them to pay specific attention to agricultural as well as more general rural needs and development, as they reformed their systems for technical and vocational education (TVET) and training within their institutions of higher education.

Within all this, governments also needed to include provisions to teach the skills of designing and implementing interventions with rural populations as part of their strategies for poverty reduction. They also needed to broaden their agendas for Education For All beyond the current almost exclusive focus on the second Dakar goal for primary education to take account of the third Dakar goal to ensure that the learning needs of young people and adults are met: the majority of these young people and adults are rural.

Dr. Atchoarena pointed out that the benefits of vocational education did not stop at the knowledge and skills acquired by individuals. Given the right conditions, they could be transformative, in that individuals were equipped and enabled to contribute to the economic regeneration of their rural areas. Also, as different branches of agriculture developed and their needs for labour declined, individuals were better able to consider out-migration. This observation tied in with his earlier observation that the ongoing evolution of rural occupations required vocational education for rural development to create what might be called 'livelihoods approaches' that embraced all the skills helpful to rural life, rather than simply 'agricultural education'. Along with this was the desirability of articulating vocational education with actual projects in rural development.

Despite the generally less than satisfactory situation, there did seem to be signs that rural issues were attracting increasing attention in policy and planning. For instance, many national poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) made special reference to TVET as a critical component of capacity building, while the target groups of such training included not only the rural poor, but also the decentralised levels of government, which serve mainly rural populations, as well as the dispersed organisations of civil society. Further, proposals seemed more and more to go beyond dealing with education in a kind of isolation to viewing capacity building as inter-sectoral, embracing economic, social and institutional dimensions. In their discussions of agricultural development, they took into consideration wider rural issues, such as housing, health, social protection, public sector management and other necessary components of a comprehensive, holistic plan for development. That said, it remained the case that skills development for rural people was seldom mentioned as a specific area for intervention.

Even more seldom was there recognition that skills for rural people must encompass more than narrow agricultural competencies. They needed to include skills for good interpersonal relations, effective communications, productive management, team work, active and influential citizenship, advocacy skills, flexible negotiation. Above all, rural people needed to learn how to sustain and increase their capacities to learn, how to be open to and even stimulate innovation, and to enhance their own productivity continuously. These were challenges that ERP needed to address.

## **The Evolution of ERP and the Present Conference**

Dr. William Seiders then focused the attention of the participants on the purposes of the present conference. The assembly was part of the joint strategy of FAO and UNESCO to work on ERP at both national and international levels. Discussions such as the present one aimed to promote exchanges of knowledge, experiences and good practices between countries, as well as to identify possibilities for new cross-national partnerships in support of ERP. They might also suggest areas where the countries of participants might use technical support in developing specific plans for addressing the educational needs of particular rural groups for inclusion in larger national plans. Bringing together senior officials and others from ministries of agriculture, ministries of education, non-government organizations, the private sector, universities, international development agencies and international donors aimed to stimulate reviews and possibly fresh ideas for the entire range of education and skills training that affected rural people: from early childhood education, through all the stages of formal education, to community-based learning, literacy programmes, agricultural extension education, and any manner of short courses and other structured non-formal education and training opportunities.

A particular benefit of the conference should be illumination of the question whether the issues, needs and strategies under the framework of *Education for Rural People* were different for the Caribbean than for many other parts of the world? For example, ERP in Asia, Africa and Latin America focuses on dramatic rural-urban discrepancies concerning **access** to and **quality**; do the key issues for the Caribbean relate more to **quality** and **relevance**? Which of the issues important elsewhere are of similar weight in the Caribbean: HIV/AIDS, gender, links between agriculture and tourism, retaining youth in agriculture, preparedness for emergencies like hurricanes or volcanic eruptions and measures to reduce the risks of damage, avian influenza, access to the emerging information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Through reviewing how current programmes of education and training help people living in rural communities to increase employment and enhance their livelihoods, the conference should come up with recommendations for productive reforms and for specific actions that interested stakeholders could carry out at home. The immediate output of the conference should be the draft of a “Communiqué on Education for Rural People in the Caribbean”.

## ***SETTING THE STAGE FOR JOINT ACTION***

### ***Education for Rural People in Latin America***

Ms. Vera Boerger of the FAO Regional Office in Santiago, Chile, prepared the way for more detailed comparisons of the varying status of ERP by focusing on the countries of Latin America. The characteristics were large disparities between the rich and the poor in both urban and rural areas. Table 1 showed that higher proportions of rural people were poor and that the degree of severe poverty or indigence was much higher among the rural poor. Technological developments had enabled the farming sector to transform itself and, as agro-industry was developing fast, non-agricultural employment was increasing among rural people. Nevertheless, the pattern of development brought about by the pressures of globalisation for efficiency and cost reduction had meant that the actual numbers and proportions of people in poverty and

indigence in both urban and rural areas had increased over the decade, and, for the purposes of this conference, increased more among the rural populations.

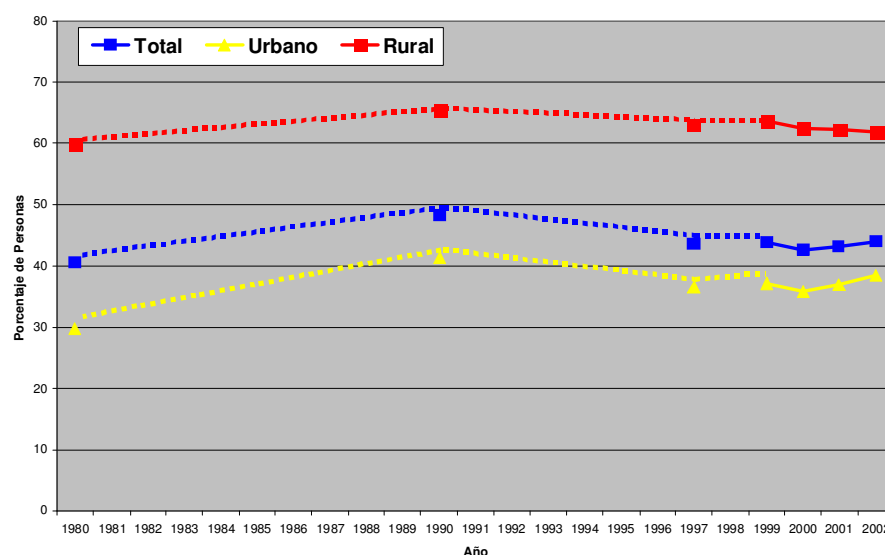
**Table 1: Rural and Urban poverty and indigence in Latin America**

Year	Percentage Poor: rural	Percentage Indigent among the rural poor	Percentage Poor: urban	Percentage Indigent among the urban poor
1980	25	54	9	28
1990	36	56	13	33

Source: CEPAL, La brecha de la equidad, CEPAL, Santiago, 1999.

Table 2 offered more recent data and traced the evolution of poverty in Latin America between 1980 and 2002. It made very clear that the overall situation for poor people had not improved at all in either rural or urban areas and that the proportions of poor people had remained consistently higher in the rural areas. Obviously, economic growth and modernization in the region had continued to benefit the rich more than the poor.

**Table 2: Percentage of population with income below the poverty line, 1980-2002. CEPAL.**



However, it was important to recognise that the countries of the region did differ markedly from one another in terms of rural and urban populations. As could be seen from the list in Table 3, only three countries came anywhere near the broad profile of developing countries that suggested that rural people formed the overwhelming majority of their populations. Indeed, 15 of the 18 countries had the majorities of their peoples classed as urban, while eight had 75 per cent or more of their people in towns.

Far from providing comfort, however, this fact could well indicate that the rural minorities could be even more marginalised than the majorities in other countries.

**Table 3: Distribution of population according to area (percentage)**  
**Source: Machado, A.L., 2004**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>
Uruguay	92,6	7,4
Argentina	89,6	10,4
Venezuela	87,4	12,6
Chile	85,7	14,3
Brasil	79,9	20,1
México	75,4	24,6
Colombia	74,5	25,5
Perú	72,3	27,7
Bolivia	64,6	35,4
Ecuador	62,7	37,3
República Dominicana	60,2	39,8
Panamá	57,6	42,4
Paraguay	56,1	43,9
Nicaragua	55,3	44,7
El Salvador	55,2	44,8
Costa Rica	50,4	49,6
Honduras	48,2	51,8
Guatemala	39,4	60,6

It had to be acknowledged, however, that the countries of Latin America had built a better general coverage in basic education for their peoples. On the other hand, it was also true that the rural areas did offer much poorer access to education –more scattered populations, distance, poor infrastructure and transport were all factors. They were also less well equipped with facilities for early childhood development, while relatively large numbers of primary schools had to operate multi-grade classes, which called for special skills in which the teachers were generally not trained. The actual buildings and equipment of many schools were poor, while the availability of texts and other learning materials was erratic. Secondary schools also tended to be relatively scarce and difficult to reach.

These factors lay on the supply side. On the demand side, as would be expected, such rural areas tended also to be home to ethnic minorities, who spoke languages that were not shared with the majority. Unfortunately, not all teachers were skilled in teaching children in the languages of their homes and helping them to become proficient in the official language: pupils could be frustrated and feel that they were failures. Compounding this was the problem of a standard and inflexible curriculum that did not make immediate sense to the children or their parents and thus encouraged premature desertion. The fact that many rural parents had themselves not been to school –this was especially true of mothers- made it more likely that they would fail to see the importance of regular attendance: instead, they would permit domestic needs for their children’s help to take priority over schooling. Girls tended

to be more severely affected by such decisions than boys, even though overall the enrolments of girls and their regular attendance and attainments were more favourable than those of boys. Poor nutrition and long distances to schools also played a part in eroding demand in terms of regular attendance and premature desertion. Taken together, these factors on the supply and demand sides of education militated more severely against rural poor children than against their urban age-mates.

To help correct these imbalances, the ERP initiative opened in Latin America in 2003 with a seminar held in Santiago, Chile. A year later, also in Chile, the flagship convened a second seminar, this time with the ministries of agriculture and of education from 19 countries, along with numbers of non-governmental organisations and international agencies. In 2005, FAO, UNESCO, the International Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) cooperated with the World Bank's Global Learning Development Network to convene a video-conference for nine countries on the theme of "ERP: Organising Alliances and Networks to Articulate the Private and Public Sectors in Contributing to the Development of Policies". They followed this up in 2006 with a video-conference on the theme, "ERP: Professional Development of Farmers –a Challenge to Increase Human Capital". The conference discussed the issues of certifying competences, enhancing competitiveness, and improving management and production.

These discussions encouraged in ministries a livelier and more urgent understanding that education, health, agriculture and overall rural development had to work more closely together for the sake not just of rural populations but even more for the good of the entire society. The school garden was selected as the axis or vehicle to achieve the required synthesis of interests. It had the potential to serve several goals at the same time.

The science that underlies the cultivation of vegetables, fruit and small livestock would provide an education the value of which would be readily obvious to parents and the community at large in both academic and applied, practical terms. That should facilitate engaging the community in supporting the school's efforts to mobilise more and better learning materials and to keep its pupils learning actively and regularly. Managing school gardens and their products should also impart the principles of management and possibly of effective marketing, as well as the value of accurate mathematics. Contributions to school feeding programmes, the development of sound nutritional habits and a growing awareness of the environment, natural resources and what their care requires would all be part of this potential. It is obvious also that collaboration between the personnel of the technical ministries would need to be channelled through the teachers of a school and would help build and widen the capacities of the teaching force. This interconnected set of benefits explained the choice of the school garden as the axis of ERP in Latin America.

However, implementing the policy throughout countries and schools posed heavy challenges in changing long ingrained habits and practices. Programmes that were intersectoral and called for interdepartmental planning and implementation were no easier to sustain in Latin America than in other parts of the world. They and needed alliances between public and private sectors and between the respective trades unions faced obstacles from entrenched territorial attitudes that demanded clear divisions of labour and strict respect for boundaries. Somewhat connected with

these was the failure of professionals highly trained in mainstream knowledge, science and practice to notice local knowledge and practice, let alone appreciate its value and the need to incorporate it in the curricula of local schools, if only to raise their relevance for parents and local community leaders. Many would accept in principle the need for life skills education, but would tend to see it only in terms of their own perceptions, rather than in terms of the skills needed to live both locally as rural people and more flexibly as citizens of larger societies.

In conclusion, Ms. Boerger noted that, despite advances that placed the region in a category of its own, Latin America still had to pay sufficient attention and allocate sufficient resources to a number of educational areas that particularly affected rural people. She listed:

- Early childhood education
- Nutrition and environmental education
- Increasing the availability of secondary and higher education
- Including new aspects like entrepreneurship, eco-tourism
- Improving access to ICT and capitalising on infrastructural technologies that enabled wider and more reliable use of them
- Literacy and adult education on ranges of issues that affect the quality of rural life
- Professional development to stay abreast of economic and technological changes that alter the terms of earning livings and interacting with the larger society and wider world; and pathways to certification that would enable people to have their knowledge and expertise recognised and valued more widely than in their own localities.

### ***Rurality and Sustainable Livelihoods in the Caribbean***

After these broad perspectives on the status of ERP around the world and in the Latin American region, the conference turned to look at the more immediate contexts of the Caribbean. Mr. Joseph Peltier of the IICA began with some facts about the region. He based his remarks on 14 states, 12 of them islands, with a total population of 22.27 million (see Table 4).

As with the Latin American states, the Caribbean group differed considerably between themselves. The range in populations extended from just 42,000 to about nine million, with nine of the states having fewer than half a million people. The percentages of rural populations ranged between 11 in the Bahamas and 90 in St. Lucia. The differences in GDP per capita were less stark, with only two countries at a level below US\$1,000 per person that would attract concessional lending from the World Bank. However, the percentages of national income derived from agriculture showed a very wide spread between three in the Bahamas and 77 in St. Lucia. The case was much the same with poverty rates: 21 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago to 65 per cent in Haiti. Among the Anglophone countries, about 350,000 people, comprising some 8 per cent of their populations, were deemed to be living in extreme poverty. All the governments were agreed that poverty levels and their attendant inequalities persisted at unacceptably high levels (see Table 5).

The Caribbean offered an example of the effects of globalization in the sense of increasing competition under regimes of reducing protection: a substantial proportion

of people in poverty were rural and had lost their livelihoods in banana production through the removal of the trade preferences that used to be available to them in the European markets. A second large group comprised people who lived in areas that were particularly vulnerable to natural disasters, such as hurricanes and volcanic eruptions. In both groups, rural women and youth were disproportionately represented. In addition, there were of course various groups of people who for a variety of reasons were socially excluded.

### *The New Rurality*

Thinking about rural people and rural development was shifting towards what could be termed a 'new rurality'. Traditionally, rurality had centred on agriculture, increasing production through capital intensive investments and reliance on technological innovations. To cope with groups displaced by these processes, public policy resorted to compensation and welfare payments. Currently, agriculture tended to feature as an important but just one component of a sectoral approach to developing a comprehensive rural economy. Such an economy had to be not only comprehensive, but also competitive, while its growth had to take into account the needs for maximum participation and equity. That meant that investments had to look for and favour strategies that diversified employments and supported varieties of sustainable livelihoods.

The shift to the term 'livelihoods' rather than 'employment' or 'jobs' reflected the view that previous policies and strategies had focused too much on waged and salaried employment and particularly on public employment, and had neglected the clear fact that most agricultural and rural occupations involved self-employment and family employment. A livelihood comprised the capabilities, assets and activities required for making a living and was sustainable, when it could cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets now and in the future, while not compromising the natural resource base. The outcomes of an adequate livelihood would be increased income, improved levels of well-being, reduced vulnerability to losses of income and assets, improved food security and more sustainable uses of natural resources.

Under this revised view, the question that had to be answered from the perspective of ERP was whether training and education programmes were putting people at the centre of their own development? Did they promote improved access to high quality education at every level, to the information necessary to keep livelihoods abreast of changes in the wider society and world, to emerging technologies that would help improve productivity and competitiveness, and to the training necessary to capitalise on such technologies? These requirements related to individuals. They needed to be supported by adequate social infrastructure: services for better health and nutrition, serviceable infrastructure in terms of roads and transport, access to the necessary natural resources and help in managing them, fair and effective access to markets, adequate access to the financial resources required for further investment –all of course underpinned by a stable, secure and cohesive social environment.

The questions did not stop there. Further critical issues that governments had to consider were:

- Are rural communities appropriately supported to take advantage of emerging opportunities in agriculture through the introduction and adoption of new technological developments to produce high value crops?
- Is the pace of decentralization of governance increasing, in step with building social capital by strengthening the capacities of community based organizations and by helping them expand their membership?
- Are community based organizations being assisted to enhance their capacities to plan and formulate projects for the development of their rural communities?
- Is the non-agriculture rural economy being promoted by strengthening the capacity of rural citizens to provide services and take advantage of other economic opportunities in the rural sector?
- Is the capacity of rural people to be more competitive being promoted through training and education in areas such as entrepreneurship?

Mr. Peltier suggested that the conference should confront these questions as a first step towards framing sound policies for ERP among the varied societies of the Caribbean.

<b>Selected Indicators</b>					
Country	Total Population	Rural Population	% of Total Population	Poverty Rate %	Contribution of Agriculture to GDP %
Antigua and Barbuda	68,000	27,000	40	N.A	4
Bahamas	317,000	35,000	11	N.A	3
Barbados	267,000	135,000	51	N.A	6
Dominica	70,000	40,000	57	33	18
Dominican Republic	9,000,000	3,000,000	33	25	11
Grenada	102,000	61,000	60	32.1	8
Guyana	770,000	532,000	69	40	31
Haiti	7,000,000	5,000,000	71	65	42
Jamaica	2,600,000	1,300,000	45	19	7
St. Kitts & Nevis	42,000	27,000	40	31	5
St. Lucia	160,000	96,000	90	25.1	77
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	120,000	52,000	44	33	12
Suriname	450,000	108,000	24	70	13
Trinidad & Tobago	1,300,000	336,000	26	21	2.2
Total	22,266,000	10,749,000	Av. 47		

Table 5: **COMPARISON OF POVERTY & INEQUALITY**

Country	GDP per cap. US\$	Population	% of people below national poverty line	Number of people below national poverty line	% of population classified as indigent poor	Number of indigent poor	Gini Coefficient of inequality
St. Lucia	3,840	159,000	25.1	39,909	7.1	11,289	0.43
Grenada	3,500	102,000	32.1	32,742	18.0	18,360	0.45
Dominica	3,180	72,000	33.0	23,760	13.0	9,360	0.49
St. Vincent	2,820	117,000	37.5	43,875	25.7	30,069	0.45
Belize	2,960	253,000	33.0	83,490	13.4	33,902	0.51
Jamaica	2,820	2,613,000	16.9	441,597	3.2	83,616	0.38
Dominican Republic	2,320	8,635,000	20.6	1,778,810	3.2	276,320	0.49
Suriname	1,960	423,000	47.0	198,810	--	--	--
Guyana	840	772,000	36.3	280,236	19.1	147,452	0.45
Haiti	440	8,286,000	65.0	5,385,900	--	--	--

### ***Agricultural Competitiveness and Food Security in the Caribbean***

Mr. Gregg Rawlins of CARICOM then focused the discussion on the major occupation of rural people, agriculture, in the context of the first Millennium Development Goal, the reduction of poverty and hunger, and its applicability to the Caribbean region. A prime element in the abolition of hunger was food security. Beyond that, in the context of improving livelihoods, was the issue of agricultural competitiveness. Finally, the link between rural people, food security and agricultural competitiveness had to be clarified to ensure the formulation of helpful policies for both agriculture and ERP.

There had been numerous attempts to define what food security actually entailed: these underlined the fact that it is a multi-faceted concept, which meant that those who discussed it needed to make plain what they had in mind. Food security as a concept emerged in the mid-1970s, when there was a global food crisis. The focus then was on the supply side: was there enough food available, were the quantities of various foodstuffs sufficiently stable and reliable, were prices high enough to encourage production, but low enough to be affordable by poorer people? Did vulnerable populations have access to whatever supplies were available? Over the past thirty years, official thinking on food security had evolved in such a way that there had been a shift of emphasis to the demand side.

In the mid-1980s there came a more definite recognition of the dynamics of food security over time: the distinction between chronic and transient food insecurity became explicit. By the mid-1990s that recognition had broadened to include issues of people's preferences for particular kinds of food, the needs for nutritional balance

and measures to promote it, the safety of particular diets. In 1996, the following definition was agreed:

***“Food Security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”***

Conversely, food insecurity would of course prevail, when people did not have physical or economic access to such foods.

Under that definition, food security had four dimensions:

- **Availability** – was food being produced in sufficient quantities and varieties, were countries able to import what they needed, did they have sufficient stocks to satisfy demand and to cover temporary shortages, was food aid sufficient to help out countries in temporary difficulties?
- **Access** – both physical –was the food actually available?- and economic –did everybody have the means to buy the food? This dimension encompassed levels of poverty among different population groups, the purchasing powers of those groups, marketing and transport infrastructure and food distribution systems to ensure that food supplies did reach where they were needed.
- **Stability** – of supplies and access – how vulnerable were supplies of particular foods to interruptions by the weather through drought, flood or frost, or through disasters, whether natural or human-induced? How might the ensuing price fluctuations affect access by disadvantaged population groups?
- **Safe and healthy food utilization** – under this rubric came concerns first for the safe and healthy storage and transport of food, for the insurance and preservation of its quality; then for its treatment through care and domestic storage, processing and cooking through access to clean water in sanitary and healthy conditions and careful handling and feeding.

‘Food security’ took care of the supply side. On the demand side, the concern was for ‘vulnerability’. The operational use of the term covered the full range of factors that placed people at risk of becoming food insecure. The degree of vulnerability was determined by exposure to risk factors balanced against the availability of coping mechanisms. Four areas of potential vulnerability were identified. The first was the socio-economic and political environment: were some population groups marginalized by tradition and custom, institutionalized neglect or deliberate policy? The second was the performance of the food economy: did either supplies or prices deny some people access to food? Third was the matter of care and feeding practices: did mothers for instance know enough about feeding their infants nutritiously? Finally, there was the issue of sanitation: were the conditions of some groups such as to make the way they had to process their food actually dangerous to their health?

From there, thinking moved to identifying three particularly vulnerable groups. There were those who would be vulnerable under any circumstances – through disability, chronic illness, very young or very old age or some other characteristic. Second were those whose resource endowment was inadequate to provide sufficient income from any source available to them; while third were those whose characteristics and resources rendered them potentially vulnerable in the event of possible social and economic shocks.

*Factors affecting food security outcomes in the Caribbean*

Within the Caribbean, six factors were currently threatening food security, three on the demand side, three on the supply side. On the supply side, there had been declines in both the productivity and incomes from crops that the region had traditionally produced. Third were the actual and threatened erosion of trade preferences in traditional export markets. On the demand side, there was first of all the increasing incidence of pockets of poverty –more people had less economic access to the foods that they needed to maintain their health. Second, changes in food preferences had led to high dependence on imported foods, while, third, these changes of preference seemed to have led to a growing incidence of food related diseases.

Despite these threats, the current total availability of food in the Caribbean was not a major issue. Average dietary energy consumption, expressed as calories per person per day, varied between a low of 2,109 calories in Haiti –with the lowest per capita national income- to a high of 3,123 in Barbados, where the per capita national income was nearly ten times that of Haiti. Indeed, with the single and actually marginal exception of Haiti, all the countries that participate in CARIFORUM enjoyed average diets that yielded more than the recommended 2200 calories per person per day.

However, despite the total availability of food, universal access to it was a concern, as some islands had relatively high rates of poverty, especially among their rural populations. Percentages of population below the national poverty line ranged from a low of eight per cent in Barbados to nearly 65 per cent in the case of Haiti (see Tables 4 and 5). Similarly, levels of undernourishment in the population varied between less than 2.5 per cent in Barbados, 27 per cent in the Dominican Republic and 47 per cent in Haiti. One cautionary note had to be sounded: high levels of national income did not necessarily all the concerns involved in food security, for inappropriate patterns of consumption were already giving to diet related diseases. These might be non-communicable, but they were readily imitable, in the sense of children and young people following poor examples from their parents or other cultures.

Moving on from food security, Mr. Rawlins addressed competitiveness, especially from the perspective of agriculture. In the simplest meaning of the ability to compete, agriculture could be assessed at three interrelated levels: the country, the industry and the firm. At the basic level of the firm, competitiveness could be defined as the sustained ability of a given firm to participate in a given domestic or foreign market, that is, to compete with others for a share of the market sufficient for it to maintain its existence and operations. In analyzing the firm's competitiveness, the next questions are, "With what is this firm competitive? In what aspects is it at a competitive advantage? In what aspects is it at a competitive disadvantage?"

The countries of the Caribbean were necessarily participants in international competition, both in their own domestic markets, as well as in the markets of other countries. They had to assess whether local producers of a given product were able to compete with imports of that product, and whether the exports of their local producers were able to compete in given export markets.

What drove the competitiveness of a firm was the quality of two sets of decisions, both taken by its managers. One set was technical: how did managers use the factors

of production, how did they apply technology and keep abreast of improvements in it, how good were they at maintaining technical efficiency, how good were they at managing their labour force? The other set of decisions concerned marketing: how well did managers take advantage of existing opportunities, how did they develop new opportunities, how did they add value to expand opportunities?

However, in agriculture, particularly in the setting of agri-business and the food industry, a firm's managers were not the only decision makers. Some crucial decisions are controlled by the government, while others are influenced by conditions that may well be beyond either the firm's or the government's power to control. The government's policies in macroeconomic management, taxation, investment, trade and the regulation of industry would constrain a firm's ability to manoeuvre, while the government's policies and effectiveness in education and training would influence the quality of personnel that a firm would find available for its operations. The government's effectiveness in providing and maintaining the necessary infrastructure will affect a firm's ability to produce and market its products, while the government's policies in support of research and development would influence a firm's willingness to experiment and innovate.

Beyond the firm and only partly under the influence of the government would be the market conditions of demand and the international trade environment, influenced as they are by regional, bilateral and multilateral agreements.

The firm had also to keep its eye on what might be called the non-price factors in competitiveness: these were the trends in consumers' preferences and the shifting patterns of their purchases. Beyond the natural tendency for buyers to look for greater convenience, or for more variety and excitement, they were showing increasing attention to quality, greater concerns for nutrition, health and safety, and importantly a growing sensitivity to environmental and social issues. Failing to remain alert to such shifts among their customers could cost a firm or indeed a country its competitive edge.

The determinants of competitiveness could be summarised in a list of ten markers, if not commandments:

1. Is there a natural resource advantage?
2. Is there a quality enhancing technology?
3. Is there a cost reducing technology?
4. What is the quality of the human resources, both line and management?
5. Is the value added through production sufficient?
6. Do the product's characteristics take account of the buyers' preferences and non-price concerns?
7. Are the supplies of inputs reliable?
8. Is the infrastructure for power, water, transport, adequate and reliable?
9. Are the government's regulatory environment and trade policies supportive?
10. Is there a comprehensive, forward looking strategy for production, marketing, further development?

Mr. Rawlins then connected the themes of food security and agricultural competitiveness with the concern for rural people. He pointed out that the first two were intrinsically and inseparably linked to rural people and their livelihoods. Indeed,

rural people held the key to enhancing agricultural competitiveness and ensuring food security. On the other hand, ironically, the majority of the poor in the Caribbean lived in rural areas and were vulnerable to food insecurity through limited, sometimes insufficient, economic access to food. Their general lack or insufficiency of economic, social and physical assets made them highly susceptible to external shocks. Natural disasters, shifts in market preferences, price fluctuations had more severe impacts on them than on other groups, while their general conditions tended to make them less resilient.

Since agricultural activity of one sort or another provided their main avenues of employment and income, the rural poor stood to be the worst affected by trade liberalisation, the loss of preferential treatment in important traditional markets and the consequent decline of employment and earnings. These forms of vulnerability were compounded by the frequent inadequacies of health and sanitation facilities, while the often lower than average quality of educational services could mean a lack of nutrition education and less than ideal practices in the handling and processing of food –to the detriment of health and well being.

Rural people clearly did hold the key to increasing agricultural competitiveness, as well as assuring food security. They had the potential to contribute to enhancing the performance of the agricultural sector and the macro-economy generally. It thus made sense to enable them to develop and expand their own capabilities –in other words, to improve the quality of their human resources, both female and male.

Mr. Rawlins argued in conclusion that it followed that education and training had to be at the core of strategies to modernise and transform the rural sectors of the Caribbean region. The first necessity was to develop a clear plan and strategy to achieve rural transformation. That would enable the identification of specific needs for education and training. It would also point to the modalities that would ensure the most effective delivery of ERP.

#### ***Agricultural Research and Development in Support of ERP***

Ms. Claudette de Freitas then described for the conference the contributions that the **Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute (CARDI)** was making to ERP. It was generally agreed that the agricultural sector was a major contributor to livelihoods in the Caribbean. It helped ensure food and nutritional security, and provided employments of many kinds that generated incomes and alleviated poverty.

However, it was also true that both agriculture and the rural sector generally faced some threats. There was unsteady growth in several sub-sectors, while some of the traditional commodities for export were actually in a crisis of decline. The application of steadily more exacting international standards of health and safety had, on the one hand, increased the expenses of production, while increasing production in other parts of the world had made competition in global markets more severe. Caribbean producers had been relatively slow to respond to these challenges, so that their levels of competitiveness were limited and low.

One of the key binding constraints in confronting these threats was weak capacity and action in research and development in the agricultural sector. CARICOM had therefore undertaken the ‘Jagdeo Initiative’, named after the Lead Head of Agriculture.

In addition to mobilising greater investment in research and development, it would foster a more regional approach that would focus on every link in the chain of production and processing between the farmer and the consumer. The initiative would also seek to help the region to capitalise on the developing regimes for intellectual property right, patents and geographical indicators. Other issues that would be explored intensively concerned patterns of production, trade regimes, market niches and market development, the improvement of transportation facilities and the prevention of praedial larceny.

Under this initiative, CARDI was to be the lead agency for CARICOM with a mandate to develop, adapt, validate, disseminate and transfer appropriate new agricultural technologies that would help make the sector more competitive in both domestic and international markets. It was required also to undertake and to coordinate market-led development that would help ensure more relevant research by investigating and taking into account the needs of consumers and producers. The mandate would generate a work programme that would of course cover crops and livestock. It would also have to encompass natural resources management beyond the usual land and water management to include managing pests with an integrated approach, intervening to manage invasive species, and fostering organic agriculture and biotechnology. Further, it would need to cover the areas of post-harvest technology, marketing and agribusiness.

To support such a comprehensive set of thrusts, the corporate strategy of CARDI had to be correspondingly comprehensive. Apart from assuring adequate finance and sufficient high quality human resources, the Institute had to develop dynamically its capabilities in information and communications: network development, staying abreast of state-of-the-art information technology, public relations and communications, supporting the Caribbean Agricultural Information Service as well as the regional branch of the 'African-Caribbean-Pacific and European Union Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation' (CTA) and the Agricultural Knowledge and Information System.

In addition, to accomplish its mandate with any degree of satisfactoriness, CARDI had to make sure that it kept its key stakeholders involved with its programmes and its own institutional development. It took care to keep its lines of communication open and alive with farmers, extension agents, researchers, policy makers, educators and information brokers, to name the most prominent.

In its contributions to education and training, CARDI ran two streams, one directed at organisations and their employees, the other designed for particular groups of rural people. The first stream focused mainly on what might be called formal skills development and training, with a strong element of building institutional capacity in the better application and use of agricultural technologies, as well as in developing better access to information.

As regards the second stream, CARDI used a range of well-known tools to work directly with farmers and other rural groups: on-farm demonstrations, field days, demonstration stations, fact-sheets and other summary guides are among them; as were regional workshops, national courses linked to ongoing projects, a new online course developed with FAO and the CTA, support for participation in regional and

international conferences and seminars, student attachments, projects and on the job training for technical and tertiary level personnel in agricultural science, library science, marketing and agribusiness.

CARDI aided the formation of sustainable commodity and thematic networks to promote and facilitate the exchange of information and collaboration in experiments or research. There were numerous examples: the Caribbean Farmers Network, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism –which CARDI helped to mobilise the resources for the Caribbean Network of Fisher-Folk Organisations- the Caribbean Agricultural Marketing and Development Network, the Caribbean Agricultural Information Service. CARDI had, too, its internal networks on commodities like sweet potato, hot pepper and small ruminants, as well as supporting regional PROCICARIBE networks on genetic resources, integrated pest management and natural resources management.

In response to training needs identified by rural groups, CARDI frequently partnered with other institutions to organise the required courses for the rural people concerned. In addition to the expected agricultural topics, it had helped with training in organisational and financial management, group leadership, advocacy, resource mobilisation, project preparation and management.

Like any long established institution, CARDI faced new challenges continuously. It had trained thousands of persons over the past 30 years: now it faced questions on the impacts of all that training and needed to institute measures for impact evaluation. It had observed that among its participants were a number of ‘professional’ course participants –the same people came to a wide range of courses. CARDI needed to ensure a better spread of training and to reach the right clientele. It had noted that the majority of its participants were in the 40-50 year age range: the institute had to find ways of reaching and attracting younger people. Fortunately, in recent years the ratio between the genders had improved and was no longer a major issue.

CARDI had felt that in a substantial proportion of cases, the training it provided was not quite enough to achieve the objectives in mind for the learners. Longer forms of education were required, but had to fit into the constraints of time that clients like farmers or small agribusiness-people faced. CARDI needed to innovate in ways to construct and package education to make it accessible to such clients.

The brain drain presented a different kind of challenge. CARDI had experienced a 50 per cent decline in its corps of scientists and researchers. It needed to create ways to reverse that situation and to build critical masses of such personnel in at least half a dozen fields: agronomy, biometrics, biotechnology, integrated pest management, land and water specialists, livestock genetics, plant breeding, rural sociology, plus specialists in communication, information and facilitation.

CARDI, a regional institution, recognised that major shifts in thinking were necessary at both regional and national levels: rural communities and their several stakeholder groups had to be empowered in ways that enabled them to perceive, grasp and capitalise on opportunities, both traditional and novel. They needed to learn not only how to generate possibly disparate streams of income, but also how to lobby to promote their own interests effectively. The institutions that existed to serve them and

their communities needed first to adopt more participatory approaches to form better understanding of issues that are key for such people and then to devise more collaborative ways of developing policies and programmes to address those issues. Their motto should be ‘Learning for development’, not ‘Teaching for development’. These institutions also needed to learn how to make more strategic uses of information and communication technologies in the service of rural people.

CARDI also recognised fully that, while training and education are critical for change and development, they are by no means sufficient. The right policy framework, infrastructure, institutions, resources, equipment must also be in place, while socio-cultural issues had to be acknowledged and addressed. That said, there was still a strong need for advocacy and sensitisation about the central importance of education and systematic, continuing training in building on the lessons of experience. There had also to be brief but well facilitated forums where experiences and lessons could be shared and disseminated. In short, the countries of the Caribbean needed to work towards a more strategic approach to education and training, one that, like the present conference, would foster the linking, even the integration, of the thinking of ministries of education with the thinking of ministries of rural development, labour and employment, natural resources, water, agriculture, veterinary services, fisheries, forestry, energy, transport, trade, commerce.

### **Relating the Scene to Local Contexts**

Having heard the presentations that set the scene of ERP at the global and regional levels, the participants discussed the relevance of the observations to their own particular contexts. They divided into two sets of three groups each. One set reviewed “*The current status of Poverty, Food Security, Employment, Agricultural Competitiveness and Sustainable Livelihoods in the Caribbean: Implications for Education and Training*”, while the other focused on “*The current status of access, quality and capacity issues related to ERP (MDG2) in the Caribbean.*” Each group elected a rapporteur, who at the conclusion of its discussions, took the group’s views to the other two rapporteurs of the set and with them worked out a synthesis that adequately reflected the conclusions of all three groups.

Although the two sets of groups reported separately, they held two points strongly in common. First, for most of the small island states of the Caribbean the sharp urban/rural divide observed in larger countries like Guyana did not exist. The distances across the islands were too short to permit the kinds of remoteness and isolation that could characterise countries with large geographical areas but relatively small and scattered populations. This did not preclude the fact that some population groups were disadvantaged as compared with others, but the extreme distinctions that were found in other parts of the region were not true of the islands.

The second common point was that the participating countries were for the most part middle-income and had already developed education systems that had virtually achieved universal primary completion. Indeed, several of them were now preparing to push for universal secondary education. Primary and secondary schools for all intents and purposes permeated all communities. While it could well be true that some of the schools in the larger centres of population offered a higher quality of education than some of those that served smaller communities, extreme contrasts of quality were not typical.

The groups that reviewed *“The current status of Poverty, Food Security, Employment, Agricultural Competitiveness and Sustainable Livelihoods in the Caribbean: Implications for Education and Training”* began by emphasizing that the gains their countries had already made towards achieving and even exceeding the Millennium Development Goals for the reduction of poverty and hunger were under threat of derailment by external forces. These were not the natural forces of hurricanes or volcanoes, but regimes imposed on small countries by alliances of larger ones. Specifically, the new rules created by the World Trade Organisation and the European Union for the production, export and marketing of bananas and sugar could well reverse all the progress towards the elimination of poverty and hunger in the states participating in the conference. Some of the countries that offered aid for development with one hand, used the other to remove markets and opportunities for development through trade.

Second, the groups acknowledged, indeed stressed, the need for policies that would effect holistic rural transformation through sustainable developments in education, agriculture and all the social and economic sectors. However, they argued that such policies were feasible for smaller countries, only if the larger and more powerful blocs shaped their policies for trade and international cooperation in ways that did not undermine what the smaller countries were striving to achieve for their rural peoples.

#### *Current patterns in poverty and employment*

The main safeguard against poverty is remunerative employment –self, family or waged. However, the figures for unemployment are high throughout the Caribbean. As the introductory presentations intimated –but with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago- their statistics showed a higher incidence among the people who could be considered more rural than urban. For example, in the host country of St. Lucia, the area of Gros Islet, which included the capital, Castries, had a current unemployment rate of ten per cent, which was high by any standard, whereas the more rural areas suffered even worse rates of between 20 and 30 per cent. While such high rates were certainly bad, it made more sense to focus on the age distribution of unemployment rather than on its geographical distribution. In most of the countries, unemployment was concentrated among the youth, that is, people aged between about 18 and 25 years of age. What were needed were intervention strategies that were carefully targeted to specific groups of young people, such as teenage mothers, youth who were disabled in some way and, in some countries, the youth of the indigenous populations.

However, it was also true that in many of the countries the informal sector of self and family employment did absorb proportions of youth, as well as other age groups, and enabled them to generate incomes for themselves and their dependents. Precisely what proportions were so engaged and what they were able to earn were not known. Governments should then undertake proper surveys of this area of society and the economy to reach more realistic estimates and statistics of poverty and unemployment.

Also, the relatively high quality of education in the participating countries, coupled with the difficulties of finding employment, moved quite large numbers of people to emigrate for employment elsewhere. Their success enabled them to send substantial remittances to their families. The actual volumes of these remittances were known only imperfectly, even though they clearly affected the real levels of poverty. Here,

too, governments should work to capture a more accurate picture of their quantities and a truer estimate of their impact on levels of living.

#### *Current patterns of food security*

Most of the participant countries enjoyed adequate and affordable supplies of food. Apart from the normal potential vulnerabilities of small islands, there appeared to be at present no realistic threats to suppliers or supply-lines. Nor did there seem to be any population groups obviously lacking sufficient economic access to what they needed.

However, there was concern that low grade food imports and the increasing consumption of junk-foods were leading to the spread of eating patterns that were in turn leading to poor nutritional status among many people. There was in fact some incongruence between income levels, choices, spending patterns and consumption patterns: the higher income levels, which presumably reflected higher education levels, appeared to be choosing the less nutritional consumption patterns. No doubt, the imported low grade and junk-foods enjoyed some kind of cachet among those who could afford them. Compounding this were the increasing numbers of vendors of prepared foods, whose practices in handling and preparing food could only be termed inadequate, if not unhealthy and dangerous.

There seemed to be grounds for proposing educational programmes to help people reorient their budgeting practices and to develop their skills in selecting, preparing and consuming nutritious foods.

#### *Current status of agricultural competitiveness*

In a world trading economy with giant, globally based agro-industries and agribusiness corporations, small island economies suffered at least two inherent and inescapable handicaps that affected their products for both domestic consumption and international exports. The first was that they could not develop the efficiencies of economies of scale. They were thus at a permanent disadvantage in relation to their competitors, in that their production costs would tend to be always higher. It was even possible for imports to be cheaper than domestically produced foods.

The second handicap was that their small domestic markets meant that much of their production had to be for export and had generally to be transported long distances by either sea or air. The costs of transportation were high and in many cases were made higher by the less than ideal local infrastructure for communications and marketing.

A couple of remediable deficiencies exacerbated these handicaps. On the one hand, most governments had failed to develop packages of incentives that would help make agriculture, livestock production, fisheries and other 'rural' occupations attractive to people with the education and entrepreneurial drive. On the other hand, the institutions that should support the producing communities in seeking greater productivity, efficiency and competitiveness tended to be either weak or, in the cases of some occupations, non-existent. Farmer, fisher and other cooperatives and collectives needed to be encouraged and strengthened, so that they could provide leadership to their communities in innovation and increasing efficiency. These kinds of support and encouragement were important, as many of the people who currently made up the farming and fishing populations tended to be risk-averse and hesitant to take up new technologies and new varieties of crops or other products. They tended

also to lack knowledge of how to improve the management of their operations and achieve greater efficiency. Well focused information, training and education, coupled with well conceived incentives could contribute powerfully to improving a range of rural occupations in their productivity and competitiveness.

The states, their institutes of research and development, the associations of rural producers, stakeholders in the private sector, and all their international partners should devote their efforts to identify what are today called niche products in which the small island countries of the Caribbean might have or be able to develop a comparative advantage. They should also pursue farming patterns that combine intensive and organic methods, along with more conserving techniques of water management.

#### *Current patterns of sustainable livelihoods*

In agriculture, the current customary and widespread use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides to achieve quick yielding cash crops has led to the depletion of many of the soils and so rendered some types of farming unsustainable. It has also tended to result in unsteady supplies of local products, with periods of glut –with attendant low prices and the waste of what cannot be sold- alternating with periods of scarcity, with attendant inconvenience for the consumers, higher prices, plus encouragement for imports that with proper management should be unnecessary. Where such imports have turned out to be cheaper and more reliable in supply than local products, they have of course rendered local livelihoods more vulnerable and unsustainable.

In forestry, there has been a willingness to exploit the natural woodlands of the region without a parallel willingness to ensure either proper conservation for the soils or sufficient reforestation of the land. Inevitably, livelihoods dependent on forests and their many products have become more precarious, if not wholly unsustainable.

As populations have grown and as land available for cultivation has become scarcer, there has been a tendency to open up land of marginal quality in efforts to wring at least some yield from it. Failures to tend such land appropriately have led not only to low productivity, but also to its complete depletion, with the natural implication of the collapse of any livelihood dependent on it.

In fisheries, tendencies to over-fish in the coastal waters of the island have led not only to less sustainable livelihoods, but also to risks of border conflicts.

In sum, there has not been sufficient attention given to enabling the operators of the current range of rural livelihoods to sustain themselves; nor has there been sufficient attention to enabling people to generate new sustainable livelihoods.

#### *SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats*

**Strengths:** The Caribbean region has considerable strengths in the institutions that currently undertake research, development and training –the University of the West Indies with its several campuses, CARDI and the IICA are examples: each serves the entire region and does not restrict its attention to a single country. At present these strengths have for various reasons not attained the maximum of their potential to contribute to the economic and social development of rural people. Governments and international agencies should work more extensively with these institutions to agree on the kinds of support and incentives that would enable and challenge them to do so.

A second potential source of strength is the large population of youth. As noted above, levels of unemployment among the youth are high and represent an unacceptable underutilisation of talent. The states and their several partners, both domestic and international, should work with these young people to identify and acknowledge the opportunities that could be available in what might be termed rural areas and to capitalise on their talents in ways that would create livelihoods that would be entrepreneurial, innovative and flexibly sustainable.

**Weaknesses:** The catalogue of weaknesses in addressing rural development and the training and education necessary to underpin it was long. At the very foundation of rural life was agriculture. Agriculture required land, systems of secure land tenure and a sound framework of policies for land utilisation and development. Most Caribbean states had limited land in terms of areas that could be brought into profitable production. Most had not formulated consistent policies on the utilisation of lands that could be used for agricultural purposes and, in most, patterns of land tenure tended to lack the kinds of security that would induce users to invest in raising the quality of the holdings.

Agricultural produce had of course to be marketed and efficient marketing required intelligence that was comprehensive and continuously updated. This requirement was particularly strong in the case of produce for export markets. In contrast with needs such as these, the systems for gathering marketing intelligence and then disseminating it to the producers and exporters were poor, to say the least. The producers of bananas and sugar might possibly have responded more flexibly to the challenges of the losses of trade preferences and the imposition of more demanding standards of quality, if the institutions created to serve them had ensured a timely, steady and sufficient flow of marketing intelligence to them. If the systems for such intelligence were inadequate for such core produce, they would be even weaker for other rural products that were less prominent and less crucial for the revenues of Caribbean governments.

An associated weakness was the endemic difficulty of securing and sustaining a high degree of coordination between the several government departments concerned with rural, agricultural, forestry, fisheries, industrial and social development. Their policies, practices and regulations were not always in complete harmony and could be frustrating for producers and manufacturers.

**Opportunities:** Naming the weaknesses helped to identify the most important opportunity. This regional conference could prepare the ground for a regional agricultural and rural development policy. From that would follow an integrated approach to training to support a balanced development between the various sub-sectors that constituted the rural economy and that would take into account the ways in which the rural economies of the region differed from one another.

**Threats:** The most obvious set of threats to the states of the Caribbean region come from nature. All of them are vulnerable to hurricanes, some of them are vulnerable to volcanic eruptions. Both hurricanes and volcanoes could disrupt island economies suddenly and disastrously –there were several recent examples.

The next most obvious set of threats issue from the World Trade Organisation. The term 'Free Trade' had become almost an altar on which the economies of the Caribbean region were in danger of being sacrificed. The people who negotiated the shifting regimes of regulations that govern international trade seem not to appreciate or make allowances for the disadvantages under which small island states labour. Instead, they insist on an ideology that opposes the former privileges and preferences that offset the disadvantages and enabled Caribbean producers to compete on a more equal footing with those privileged by either geography or natural endowments.

Less obvious, but no less threatening to productivity and competitiveness, were the fast rising prices of imported inputs essential to modern agriculture, especially those of fuel, in particular petroleum derivatives.

#### *Education and Training Policies*

It is clear that, if the Caribbean countries wish to continue fashioning better living standards for themselves, they have no option but to accept that they must continue to import much of what they need, and that in turn their economies must continue to be successful exporters. Governments should then formulate national development frameworks that adopt an integrated approach to balancing rural and urban responses to the tasks: this should aim to facilitate efficiencies in the deployment of resources. They should also aim for a regional development framework that would enable them to complement rather than compete with each other's strengths.

As regards education and training, a first most helpful step would be common accreditation standards for the national colleges that provide training in agriculture and associated professions. Within that would need to be flexibility for curricula to respond to the needs of particular economies, while at the same time satisfying the standards of accreditation.

Second, consideration of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats outlined above points to an overriding need for the Caribbean states to steer their peoples into an entrepreneurial culture. That calls for training for entrepreneurship and all that effective entrepreneurship entails. Transforming entire cultures would of course be beyond the capacities of the regional institutions, excellent as they are. To achieve the required reach, the task would necessitate the involvement of the national colleges also.

In so far as the traditionally rural occupations are concerned, the range of training for rural entrepreneurship would need to include all manner of courses and periodic updating in management. The term would have to cover not only the management of enterprises, but also natural resource management for land, water and the environment. Along with that would be needs for updating in advances in food technologies and processing, as well as in alert marketing for both domestic and international markets.

#### *Developing the necessary institutions*

It goes almost without saying that the regional institutions that specialise in research and development will have to be strengthened, so that they can broaden the range and depth of their programmes. Given the relative poverty of the average rural Caribbean population and its constraints in mobilising capital for investment, the R & D

institutions will also have to be offered incentives to focus on developing low cost technologies that are relatively cheap to adopt and implement.

There will have to be institutional development at the national level, too. The national colleges have already been mentioned. In addition to them, there need to be training centres serving and within easy reach of groups of small communities. They would probably best be satellites of national colleges, so that their personnel hold the right levels of qualifications and can keep close touch with advances in their respective fields. In both the national colleges and these proposed satellites, a new kind of training would be needed for the lecturers. It should enable them deliver their education and training in ways that will inspire a practical and entrepreneurial spirit in their students.

It would be wise also to foster and strengthen community based groups and their decision making capabilities, so that they can keep the training centres and national colleges apprised and abreast of their perceptions of their changing needs -and newly perceived possibilities- and how they might be met most effectively.

Given the problems of an ageing population in rural occupations and of high rates of unemployment among the youth, an additional category of institution is needed. Its object would be to attract young people into agriculture, agribusiness and other rural forms of enterprise. It should support them not only with training and subsequent technical advice and guidance, but should also devise innovative forms of finance to provide capital for investment and operations without demanding high interest or the requirements of the usual forms of collateral.

#### *Good initiatives*

Finally, four promising initiatives are noted for monitoring and possible adaptation more widely in the Caribbean:

- Decentralised short-term training and support community centres
- Multi-purpose community centres
- The micro-credit facilities that Barbados has established to encourage entrepreneurship throughout its people
- The development of small, sweet bananas that are special to the Caribbean but might prove a popular export
- Jerk, a sweet drink that has been developed in the Caribbean and that might have much wider appeal.

Last, “Let’s translate this talk shop into workshops in our countries!”

#### ***“The current status of access, quality and capacity issues related to ERP (MDG2) in the Caribbean.”***

The groups that focused on “*The current status of access, quality and capacity issues related to ERP (MDG2) in the Caribbean*” began by noting that ‘rurality’ has to be defined contextually and that Education for All must meet the specific needs of rural people. That is, school and college curricula designed on the basis that a single form of ‘general education’ would be equally valid for all population groups, would be simply inadequate. An education system that addressed different population groups differently might be termed ‘EFA-plus’.

*Access:* The concept of ‘access’ should not be confined to the usual channels of delivery, e.g. schools. It has to be broadened to encompass a diverse range of modes such as forms of distance education and of non-formal education. Adopting a broad approach would encourage flexible and resourceful thinking and planning that would reach out to rural people, rather than unrealistically expect them to exert themselves beyond their capacities to make their ways to whatever is on offer.

Planning to create such access will need to recognise what it has too often failed to recognise before. Rural people, and particularly poor rural people, are confronted by numerous barriers to education and training. Domestic issues can and do prevent poor women –single and married, with and without children- from taking up opportunities of education. Poor health induced by poor nutrition grounded in poverty may cause people to be irregular in following a course, as well as to have learning difficulties. If the training involves costs of a substantial nature, poverty may be the block to taking it up. If the training is scheduled more for the trainers’ convenience than for that of the student, the opportunity costs may be too high to accept. If the training is located at a centre that is distant and is poorly connected by road or transport to the student’s residence, it will be difficult for the student to respond. Numbers of the potential students may have special needs. In essence, many of these problems of access could be addressed through proper ‘market surveys’: the insights from them would enable planners to identify the barriers that face particular rural groups and to design programmes that would circumvent them.

It goes almost without saying that, whatever delivery channels are created, it will be necessary to make available the qualified personnel, physical structures and other supports that will be required to deliver the education and training.

*Quality:* The countries of the Caribbean region have dedicated large proportions of their resources –human, intellectual, financial and physical- towards achieving a high quality of education for all and towards providing high quality training to cope with the demands of the globalising world. However, it has to be acknowledged that as far as rural people are concerned there have been limitations that have affected the quality of what is available for them.

The first limitation is of relevance to the full range of rural livelihoods and life styles. More detailed observation of the many ways in which livelihoods are made and more flexibility in responding to the variety of circumstances in which rural people have to live and work could result in curricula and programmes that generate stronger demand for education and training and that are more effective in raising the quality of rural life, enhancing rural incomes and reducing rural poverty.

The second limitation is related. It concerns teacher training: school teachers and other educators are not normally made aware that dealing with rural populations may call for adjustments in expectations, approaches, teaching styles and course scheduling. The ‘market surveys’ suggested above would provide the kinds of information that could orient teachers and trainers to the adjustments that would make their efforts more productive and indeed make their work and lives more satisfying.

Another limitation to quality education for rural people is the actual supply of trained educators. There is a shortage of educators generally, but it tends to affect rural people disproportionately: it reduces their access to any education at all and it also reduces the quality of what is accessible. Governments would do well to devise systems of incentives that would make it worth the while of well qualified, effective teachers and trainers to serve rural populations.

A further issue that affects quality and bears investigation is the appropriateness of the current measures of learning achievement and the current methods of monitoring and evaluating how teaching and training are delivered. The issue is particularly pertinent to learning centres that aim to impart relatively limited sets of knowledge and skills for immediate application, rather than to prepare students for general exams and certificates.

*Capacity:* The capacities of Caribbean countries to provide an education of good quality for all vary from country to country, but on the whole are comparable with those of other middle-income countries. That is to say that they could all be expanded and improved, as their governments and peoples recognise the existence of shortfalls. The capacities to provide and maintain the basic infrastructures for water, roads, electricity, telecommunications –including radio, television, fax and the capabilities of the information and communication technologies that are evolving with such astonishing speed – could all be expanded, until they matched those enjoyed by the rural people of countries like the U.S.A. or Canada. In education, the capacities to design, produce and distribute learning resources that are derived from local, rural contexts, environments and resources and are affordable by even the poorest rural person could quite clearly do with strengthening. So could the capacities to design and deploy modes of delivering education and training that are tailored to the contexts and conveniences of the rural people for whom they are intended.

*Opportunities:* There seem to be several opportunities actually available now to take positive, concrete steps to promote better education and training for rural people. In the very first place, this conference offers a forum in which different ministries and departments responsible for rural development in several different countries can make a start on encouraging and sustaining collaborative efforts in terms of framing holistic and integrated policies to discharge their responsibilities. They can also make a start on instituting –or even possibly strengthening- mechanisms of informal but regular liaison and exchange both between policy and other decision makers within a country and between counterparts in several countries with issues in common.

With such liaison as a base, ministries have an opportunity to formulate a joined-up national policy with supporting strategies for ERP. Every participant in the conference has an opportunity to start planning how to influence her or his ministry's thinking on such a national policy.

Participants could also plan beyond their governments' agencies to consider how best to involve institutions and groups that already support ERP, for example the 4-H Clubs and the Scout movement. The voluntary sector is of course not the only potential source of collaboration and local initiative. Industries, commercial firms and other organisations that operate in the rural areas and employ rural people are further potential allies in ERP. They would certainly appreciate and benefit from being able

to draw on better educated and better trained personnel. They are in fact stakeholders in ERP and rural development. The conference offers an opportunity for its participants to stimulate each other's resourcefulness in seeing how such potential allies can be converted into active supporters.

Focusing on ERP and the challenges of reaching out to include all sections of rural populations naturally provides a forum to review the possibilities of entirely new opportunities that the evolving technologies of information and communication (ICT) may be opening. How do ministries concerned with education and rural development ensure that they stay abreast of the new technologies and systematically examine them for possibilities of educational outreach in the particular contexts of their countries? This is a question that the participants of the conference can investigate with their own ministries.

There is also an opportunity to consider how government ministries, private sector enterprises and the voluntary sector can work together in different rural contexts to orient and assist rural people through appropriate training to seek and to detect unsuspected possibilities of using local resources for new products. This will help to maximise the use of what is at hand to develop even more sustainable local livelihoods.

The opportunities described above offer another obvious opportunity: ministries and indeed countries and regional organisations could cooperate to establish and develop on a continuous basis a database of good and best practices in all the areas mentioned. Quite as important as setting it up would of course be the resources to maintain it and to make it known and easily accessible to practitioners and policy makers. Four cases of very good practice that would repay study and adaptation could be suggested immediately.

*Best practices:*

1. CASE (Jamaica):
  - College of Agricultural Science and Education – Community outreach as part of its mandate
2. GARD (Antigua):
  - Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Centre – training for youth and women and persons involved in rural enterprise
1. NEW HORIZONS PROJECT (Jamaica):
  - Literacy and numeracy project for rural and remote schools
4. REAP (Jamaica):
  - Rural Economic and Agricultural Project conducted by Roman Catholic charity organization “Food for the Poor” in collaboration with the Jamaica Agricultural Society, CASE and other partners
  - Provides assistance to farm families plus training.

## **Good Practices and Lessons Learned**

The conference now turned to learn about and discuss some experiences in promoting the kinds of education that would enable rural people to expand their knowledge and skills and use them to raise their levels of income and well being.

Ms. Una May Gordon, Representative of the International Institute for Caribbean Agriculture (IICA) in the Eastern Caribbean States, presented some of the institute's work in promoting rural development. After reminding the conference of the dictum of Gunnar Myrdal, a Nobel Laureate in Economics, that, "It is in the agriculture sector that the battle for long-term economic development will be won or lost.", Ms. Gordon pointed out that, while agricultural production and productivity were the bedrock of the rural milieu, the general levels of technical knowledge, business organisation and management efficiency in the Caribbean region were lower than those found in other parts of the world. If improvements did not occur in all three aspects, agricultural production would not be able to keep pace with the rate of population growth and would find it impossible to provide even the essentials for life.

Key determinants of improvement on each of those three aspects were on the one hand the character of education and the character of training in the region and how they related to agriculture and to the development of agribusiness, and, on the other, the actual levels of education, literacy and numeracy of the rural populations and the scope they perceived for further education and training. These two sets of factors then needed to be set against the patterns of agricultural development in the last 40 years from the 1960s to the current millennium, their current actual character and their influence on the rural milieu.

An examination of the three sets makes clear that there are serious disconnects between the programmes of longer term education and shorter term training and the actual characters of the rural populations and their milieu. The effect of these disconnects is the movement of the region's rural populations away from agriculture. It provokes the questions whether education should be about sustainable agricultural development or whether it should be about sustainable combinations of agricultural with rural development. In 1996, the CARICOM Heads of Government responded to the questions by deciding on the Regional Transformation Programme for Agriculture.

The University of the West Indies (UWI) was to lead the programme through the newly established Caribbean Council of Higher Education in Agriculture (CACHE) that would review and revise all the more formal, longer term educational courses that led to higher qualifications. In this framework, IICA was specifically mandated to participate in the sub-programme of Human Resource Development. It was to help to create effective institutions that would nurture rural entrepreneurs through shorter term training courses.

In November of 1997, IICA brought the official representatives of eleven institutions of higher education in agriculture in the Caribbean to a meeting in the Dominican Republic. Together they formally launched CACHE as a non-profit organization, committed to fostering human resource development for the sustainable transformation of agriculture in the Caribbean. The Council aimed to achieve the enhancement and development of tertiary education for agriculture, to promote academic excellence and to mobilize stronger support for these efforts. In addition to

focusing on the steady improvement of the quality of educational programmes in agriculture, the Council would work to help the participating institutions strengthen themselves through intra-council cooperation, as well as through better systems for self-evaluation and accreditation. Beyond that, the Council would work towards establishing a regional programme for evaluation and accreditation to foster common standards and the reciprocal recognition of qualifications. To promote these objectives, it would train a cadre of specialists to serve the region.

In the eight years of the Council's existence, the most successful collaboration so far has been the 'Cooperative Masters Programme in Natural Resources Management' that is jointly implemented by the University of the West Indies and the Universidad Nacional Pedro Henriquez Ureña of the Dominican Republic. IICA continues to support CACHE by acting as its official executive secretariat and by providing logistic, technical and financial support as necessary.

Along with these efforts in the higher education sector, IICA has been building new and effective institutions to serve different constituencies with training in short term courses. Three examples are the Caribbean Agribusiness Association (CABA), the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP) and the Caribbean Agriculture Forum for Youth (CAFY). The training aims to help people change their mind-sets so as to transform themselves into entrepreneurs and create agribusinesses.

While each institution addresses a particular regional constituency, it also respects and tailors its courses to the conditions of its constituency in particular countries and to their local needs. To do this optimally and to foster continuity, each institution forms appropriate local partnerships and uses both national and regional facilitators to deliver its courses. Taking into account the average levels of education among the constituencies, the teaching-learning approach relies substantially on demonstrations of best practice, supplemented by simple and amply illustrated resource materials.

Much of the training deals of course with agricultural topics. However, much has to do with managing a business –basic accounting, cash flow management, computer training- and with developing effective institutions – leadership, priority setting, group dynamics, organisation management. In addition, past inadequacies in the provision of education necessitate a certain amount of training in literacy and numeracy.

In the five years since the three institutions were established, each has used help from IICA to create and operate a network of local branches and membership across the region, while their programmes of short term training have so far reached more than 700 people.

In reviewing the record, IICA recognises that simply putting more and more people through higher education in agricultural and rural development is insufficient to create sustainable societies: focused and practical training for wider constituencies needs to go hand in hand with such education. That means that IICA and its partners have to maintain and increase their efforts to bridge the gaps between what might be termed the formal and the non-formal systems. Networks provide a mechanism that will help initiate, enhance and continue the kinds of key partnership at each level that will construct those bridges.

### **Formal – Non-Formal Partnerships**

An example of a partnership between formal and non-formal systems came from the 'Caribbean Integrated School Gardening Initiative'. Dr. Carmen Dardano of the FAO office in Barbados described the programme and its effects for the conference. It aimed to use practical learning in actual gardens to improve the nutrition of current students and the longer term food security of their families and involved both primary and secondary schools. For the consumption of food was not a simple matter: it was in fact a complex sociological phenomenon that incorporated not just individual hunger and appetite or momentary states of mind or temporary states of health. Cultural patterns and social influences about what made for good food played a strong role, as did patterns of distributing food within families and the kinds of food habits they fostered. In addition, the kinds of nutritional information available from educational sources and perhaps even more strongly from advertising sources were as influential as the actual availability of food and the power to purchase it. A gardening project that educated young people into awareness of these factors and enabled them to gain some influence and control over them clearly had the potential to improve nutrition in the immediate term and to lay the ground for food security in the future.

Of course, the utilization or biological use of foods was quite as important as their production. So the integrated gardening project included information and, where appropriate, practice in food preparation –especially the balance to be sought between frying and other methods of cooking- hygienic habits and safety in handling food, the effects of different foods on health, access to medical attention and the environmental conditions. This kind of nutritional information and education informs and empowers young people and facilitates change in their eating practices and habits. In addition to developing knowledge, healthy attitudes and good food practices, it promotes good eating habits and healthy patterns of behaviour, which all of course contribute to building a healthy population and healthy future generations.

It now goes almost without saying that a garden project needs to be integrated with and not take away from the ordinary school curriculum –if it appeared to distract the pupils from their proper studies it would be unacceptable to the schools, as well as to the parents. The project needs also to be systematic in its introduction, absorption and articulation with the main curriculum.

The basic level of the natural sciences for the first grade of primary school was a good example. The central thematic idea is human beings and health. The garden project would promote awareness, knowledge and understanding of the importance of plants in the pupils' own lives and of what humans and other animals get from plants. It would involve understanding the needs of plants, how they produce oxygen, so that they assure basic nutritional standards and help with environmental protection. More, a little thought would reveal how a garden project would help reinforce almost the full range of subjects in the curriculum. Measuring plots or plants and quantities of water or fertilisers would clearly exercise and strengthen mathematics. Assessing the numbers of persons needed to maintain a school garden would help demographic education. The handling of nitrogenous organic compounds and learning how the elements of water are utilised would reinforce chemistry. Rain, humidity, wind, erosion, irrigation systems and their use of gravity would help interest in physics. Learning what is and what is not possible to grow in different regions of a country

would complement geography, while learning about the eating habits of earlier generations would aid history. When children draw and colour the plants they grow, their art education is expanded.

Beyond the curriculum, a garden project actually encouraged social integration by having pupils work together for common purposes and goals, and beyond the school it brought the teachers, parents and wider community together in providing the facilities and other support to keep the project going. Further, it could actually stimulate the development of family and even community gardens.

In sum, a school garden project integrated agriculture, education and health. It laid the ground for reducing malnutrition, avoiding chronic diseases and reducing food insecurity.

A Planning Guide (PG) was now available to help plan nutrition education action programmes for primary schools and provided guidance in all the steps of the planning process. It could help re-design a classroom curriculum from scratch, or to refine and extend an existing programme. It aimed to result in action plans adapted to the local circumstances and resources of a given primary school and applicable for a two or three year period.

At national level, working with the PG should result in recommendations for national action. At any level, it could be used as an awareness-raising exercise after which the participants could act in their regions or schools as they saw fit; or it could be used for in-service teacher training in local curriculum development, or (with suitable case-study material) as pre-service teacher training in colleges of education or on teaching practice.

For secondary schools, FAO was encouraging an approach that would cover every aspect of food from farm to table, that was science-based, linked to agri-business and marketing, and that included provisions for cost-recovery.

FAO enjoyed the support of several partners in promoting school gardens in primary and secondary schools. There were of course the other UN agencies, such as UNESCO and WHO. In addition, FAO worked with the associations concerned with combating heart disease, diabetes and other diseases that arise from faulty diets, private companies dealing in food stuffs and pharmaceuticals and, in particular, the Agricultural Education Department of USAID.

Two more successful Caribbean cases of combining school education with non-formal education and action through partnerships between agencies that normally have only slight interactions were the 'Sandwatch' and 'Youth PATH' projects. The cases featured in the presentation by Mr. Santosh Khatri and Ms. Ushio Miura of UNESCO on connecting 'Education for Rural People' with the 'Decade of Education for Sustainable Development'. As will become clear, it illustrates the blurring of the boundaries between 'rural' and 'urban' in some regions and in some projects.

The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) starts from the recognition of the Brundtland Report of 1987<sup>1</sup> that development must “*meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*” It also recognises that sustainability depends crucially on the interplay of three key factors, namely, the environment, the economy and society. The ‘Sandwatch Project’<sup>2</sup> aims to educate young people about the three factors through the educational principles of ‘Learning to know’, ‘Learning to be’, ‘Learning to live together’ and ‘Learning to do’. In brief, the young people involved acquire the instruments of understanding, begin to see themselves as main actors in identifying and defining positive outcomes for the future, learn to cooperate and act responsibly –as well as creatively- with other people to achieve the outcomes in their environment. Specifically, Sandwatch seeks to develop young people’s awareness of the fragile nature of the marine and coastal environment, the need to use it wisely and the need to change some aspects of their lifestyle and habits on a community-wide basis.

The project was the outcome of an Environmental Education workshop in Tobago in July 1998. A group of teachers and students saw at first hand many of the problems facing the coastal zone –erosion, pollution, negative side effects of economic development – and resolved to do something about these issues themselves. They aimed to involve school students of all ages in the scientific observation, measurement and analysis of beaches and to assist them, along with their teachers, parents and communities, to apply the information to the wise management and enhancement of their beaches. They hoped that this would also help reduce the levels of pollution in the surrounding seas. Their scope was ambitious: it ranged not only through the whole Caribbean from the Bahamas, and Cuba in the north to Trinidad and Tobago in the south –including the San Andres Archipelago of Colombia- but also included the Pacific and Indian Oceans through the Cook Islands and the Seychelles, thirteen countries in all.

Pedagogically, the project had to be interdisciplinary. Its scientific observations and measurements had to be not only physical, like measuring erosion or analyzing the composition of the beach sands or the quality of the water; but also social, like observing the behaviours of different groups of people on the beach and the kinds of debris they leave behind them; and botanical and zoological, like observing the different kinds of plants and animal life that exist on the beaches. Oceanography also entered the curriculum, as the students studied the nature of the waves and the longshore currents that run by the beaches. Of course, the students have to organise all the data from these observations into inferences, conclusions, pointers to action and issues for further observation and discussion with their fellow students and teachers, as well as with the community.

The UNESCO presenters offered five examples of how Sandwatch worked as both education and action. One example each came from Cuba, the Bahamas and Dominica, and two came from Barbados. In Cuba, students approached the workers constructing

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<sup>1</sup> *Our Common Future*, 1987, The World Commission on Environment and Development, New York, United Nations

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO sponsors ‘Sandwatch’ through its Associated Schools Project Network for Environment and Development in Coastal Regions and Small Islands. The Office for the Caribbean acts as the local coordinator.

a beach hotel about the effects on the beach and were able to stimulate measures to conserve its quality. In the Bahamas, where the 2004 hurricanes had damaged areas of sand dunes, Sandwatch students worked with their communities to replant the dunes. In Dominica, primary school students found their beach badly polluted. They wrote poems and stories, drew pictures, made placards, which they then brandished in a march around their village, as they chanted, “Let’s get it right!”. These primary school children were effective: the very next day, the community organised a voluntary clean up of the beach and, a year later, were still keeping it clean. Secondary students in Barbados provided two examples. In one school, they observed the range of animals used on the beaches and evaluated the health risks raised for humans.

The students of the second surveyed 127 users of a beach to assess local satisfaction with its state and to identify what improvements were wanted. They also conducted two litter surveys and observed the practices of the beach maintenance workers. Not surprisingly, their analysis showed that the community did want a cleaner beach, plus lifeguard services and better facilities. The students responded to their findings by first organising their own clean up of the beach. Then they took their findings to the appropriate government agencies to back up their demand for action. They also turned the project to their own advantage by using it for the ‘School Based Assessments’ of the Caribbean Examinations Council. The school plans to continue sensitising the community about the beach. As first steps, it will hold an exhibition about the project and also publish a book about “Sandwatch in Speightstown’.

The second case, ‘Youth PATH’<sup>3</sup> aims to alleviate and reduce poverty among young people through activities that utilise their communities’ heritage through responsible tourism. Its intended clientele are young men and women in the Caribbean between the ages of 15 to 25: they are to be enabled to develop innovative skills to generate sustainable employment in what is known as Heritage Tourism and in the preservation of ‘Heritage’ sites and to become ‘green’ entrepreneurs, conscious of and conscientious in their responsibilities to the environment.

The range of skills is varied and was well illustrated through eight examples, all from Caribbean countries, all run with local partners and all involving rural youth and their communities. Some emphasised cultural features that focused on a community’s origins and history, such as the village of Gambier in the Bahamas. First settled in 1841 by Africans rescued and freed from slave ships after the abolition of slavery, the village is now a ‘Cultural Heritage Site’. Others, like the Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve in Belize –a World Heritage site- and the Carib Territory in Dominica, base themselves on natural features like mangrove islets, forests, wildlife and marine life. Others of course combine natural and cultural resources to develop what they intend to be ‘green’ and sustainable tourism.

Quite apart from the general skills of business and financial management required for any modern business that depends on international communications, these projects encompass the knowledge needed to know and understand one’s heritage, the skills to interpret it to strangers, to guide tours of it safely and pleasantly, the skills of customer relations, hospitality, marketing, food preparation, wildlife viewing, kayaking, sailing, diving, as well as the more traditional ‘tourist’ skills involved in

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<sup>3</sup> The acronym ‘PATH’ stands for Poverty Alleviation through Tourism and Heritage’.

producing and marketing local arts and crafts. They also need to include conflict management and first aid. Clearly, the education and training that these rural young people have to undertake are substantial.

So far, just 150 young men and women have taken such training and launched themselves as green tourism and heritage business people, undertaking new and possibly innovative enterprises. However, Youth PATH has established a strong network of partnerships with local, national, regional and international organisations: these will underpin the sustainability of heritage tourism and ensure its gradual expansion and development, for the rural and littoral Caribbean still has much more to offer the world.

Three implications seem clear for education for sustainable rural development. First, alternatives and innovations that combine school and out-of-school education and training for both children and adults need to be devised, explored and developed. Phrased slightly differently, lifelong and life-wide learning require attention.

Second, education for rural people needs to find out and build on what already exists locally –resources, networks, knowledge.

Third, the key to transforming education for rural people is to involve everyone, children and adults across multiple sectors –education, agriculture, health, tourism, environment- and at all levels from school and community through to central ministry.

### **A Non-Formal Case**

From programmes designed to partner schools with other forms of education for children –and reaching out also to adults- the conference moved on to non-formal education and considered a programme for skills training and capacity building for rural adults in Guyana. A special aspect of this effort was its focus on communities with high rates of HIV/AIDS. Mmes. Vanessa Thompson and Jean Lowry, Country Directors of the agency CHF, presented the programme. As CHF is an international organisation, it carries out its mission by working through local voluntary or civil society organisations (CSO), both national and community-based. Building core capacities to deliver enhanced poverty reducing programmes constitutes the main work of CHF in Guyana in the Caribbean, and since 1996 has been financed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the ‘Building Community Capacity Project’ (BCCP).

One of the 35 Guyanan CSOs cooperating with CHF is the Adult Education Association (AEA): it recently completed a 15-month project with 389 adults – including 129 women- on the west coast of Berbice with ground-breaking success. The participants were trained in a range of skills that they could use to earn incomes on sustainable bases. The CHF contribution was to use intensive coaching and mentoring to develop AEA capacities in fund-raising, mobilizing resources, reviewing financial systems, analysing job markets, developing appropriate curricula, managing an entrepreneurship programme, developing and implementing a sustainability plan, and evaluating programmes in participatory ways.

Among the lessons learned with AEA is that modern skills, such as computer skills, have local applications and can enable local people to earn decent incomes. This is so, even though few salaried or waged jobs tend to be available in rural areas, so that people need to develop forms of self-employment. And rural people are able to learn and deploy these skills, even though the average levels of formal education tend not to be high. Of course, rural people who are poor do not have much disposable income, so that they cannot afford to pay even minimal fees for the courses. They have then to be awarded full subsidies to enable their participation.

AEA has also observed that, whereas young women tend to want to access both academic education and skills training, young males tend to be more interested in skills and less attracted to academic subjects. This implied that different educational packages needed to be designed for the two genders. Along with this observation was the further observation that influencing plans to address the learning and educational needs of rural people seemed to make faster headway, when undertaken at the local or regional level than at the central level. The implication was that organisations like AEA should perhaps focus more of their energies on local initiatives than on efforts to influence national policies.

From 2000 to present, AEA has trained more than 8000 disadvantaged adults and youth from small rural communities. Although it is aware that more and more trainees have used their new found knowledge and skills either to create self employment or to enhance their marketability, it can document only about a hundred adults and youths who have indeed commenced either small cottage industries or small businesses.

### **Non-Formal Education against HIV/AIDS**

The problem of HIV/AIDS exists in Guyana and is a particular concern for rural communities, who tend to lack information on the nature of the infection, how it is spread and how to combat it. Although a number of local CSOs are working on the problem in efforts to reduce the infection rate, they often lack the necessary capacities to raise the resources they require and to work effectively with the communities they want to help. Indeed, funds are available to help combat HIV/AIDS, but many CSOs and certainly many rural communities either do not know about them or do not know how to go about drawing on them. This is especially true of very remote communities, such as those on the borders of the country, and of what might be called ‘transient communities’, where the mobility of members is high. In response to such situations, CHF has helped build the capacities of five CSOs in resource mobilisation, project planning, results based management, recruiting and managing community volunteers, using participatory approaches with rural communities and groups and in counselling skills.

The work has confirmed experience elsewhere by showing once again that working through participatory approaches takes time and that bringing about behavioural change in individuals and communities is a slow process. It has shown, too, that education about HIV/AIDS, its sources and prevention needs to be culturally appropriate and in many communities it is culturally appropriate just to follow the instructions of senior or influential community members. This means that a community’s information on the infection and its capacities to act against it are best developed through significant community members acting on a voluntary basis.

However, an obstacle here is that such members are also likely to be struggling to meet their basic everyday needs and are therefore reluctant to volunteer time for community development. Further, the more energetic and ambitious among them are also more prone to migrate in search of opportunities for employment or at least better earnings and living conditions: their leaving often slows down or even halts initiatives.

These sorts of problems, as well as the high cost of providing programmes for very remote and isolated communities, tend to constrain CSOs to rely on providing information and education by radio, as radio remains the major medium of communication for such people.

### **Youth and Agriculture**

Following these experiences from Guyana, Mr. Calvin James of the Institute for Integrated Food Systems and the Food and Agriculture Youth Association of Trinidad and Tobago reported the outcomes and signals from a survey of rural youth in his country. The main aims were to identify the challenges that young people who were already working in agriculture faced, as they tried to achieve sustainable livelihoods; and to identify the constraints that deter Caribbean youths from pursuing careers in agriculture. Beyond that, the survey attempted to identify the conditions youths believe must exist in the sector to make it an attractive career for them, so that it could offer specific recommendations on how to reverse the trend away from agriculture and the non-participation of youth in the sector.

The survey sampled young people aged between 18 and 30 years who were already working in the agriculture sector. Fully half the sample were in the oldest group of 25 to 30 years, while only 10 per cent were in the youngest group of 18 to 20 years, with 40 per cent aged between 21 and 24 years. This composition already hints at the ageing of the agricultural labour force and the tendency for younger people to avoid agricultural occupations. Virtually all of them had access to land, good roads and good water supplies, and had on-farm accommodation. Eighty per cent also enjoyed electricity supplies. On the negative side, more than half had had problems with flooding, while more than 90 per cent had suffered damage from natural disasters like hurricanes.

As regards services, the overall picture was similarly positive. All the respondents participated in tractor pool services, had access to reasonable and timely credit, had reliable suppliers of inputs and good landing and berthing facilities. All of them said they were able to meet the costs of inputs and had adequate sales outlets. More than 90 per cent had good veterinary services, and two-thirds enjoyed government extension services. Their only universal lack was satisfactory weighing and certification services, and the only universal complaint was about theft of produce or 'praedial larceny', to use the local term. Ninety per cent of them had had contact with regional agencies concerned with agriculture and rural development, but only half had had any contact with analogous international agencies.

Despite this apparently positive picture, the agricultural sector was haemorrhaging young and skilled people at a rate that caused the government concern. The information garnered from these young agriculturalists about their conditions and what they needed suggested that the government, the private sector and the education sector all had a role in mitigating and reversing the situation. The thrust of needs and

thinking indicated that what younger farmers sought were crops and produce that yielded relatively quick returns and incomes. Short term cash crops like lettuce or seasonings could offer this, as indeed could pig farming and a combination of vegetable and pig farming. Land reform policies that made land tenure and leasing more secure would help, as would the creation of credit or finance facilities geared to the specific conditions and possibilities of younger farmers.

From another angle, young farmers needed training in the skills that would enable them to become young businesspeople as well. Although the young farmers in the sample were overall quite satisfied with markets and their access to them, access could in fact be improved and further facilitated. Alongside such measures, government could do a lot more in terms of promoting the image of agriculture as a vital industry that yielded good incomes and satisfying lifestyles. More encouragement and support for the organisations that currently serve and are currently led by youth could help in this.

The survey has guided the development of a strategy called 'Package for Young Farmers'. It identifies the young farmer as a key solution to the problems currently besetting the agriculture sector and as a key agent in the regional agricultural master plan and it approaches agriculture through the perspective of an integrated and multifunctional business. Viewing the farmer as an entrepreneur, the strategy suggests that finance be divided into two streams, one deemed to be 'installation aid', which helps the farmer set herself or himself up in business, the other deemed 'investment aid', which enables the purchase of the inputs for production. Information is as vital an input as any other to enable the farmer to keep up with technology, market trends and prices, so the strategy proposes an information portal that would make available the professional advice necessary on all elements of setting up and running a farm of a particular specialisation. As vital as access to current information is training in all aspects of running a farm as a modern business, responsive to market demands and shifts. The strategy therefore envisages the reform and reorientation of the range of training institutions and training programmes available to the young farmer.

While the longer term measures are developed and put in place, the 'Package for Young Farmers' proposes three short term steps. The first is immediately to set up a web-based learning resource centre to answer the requirements of young farmers and young businesspeople in a range of agricultural specialisations. The second proposes that a competition be instituted to promote innovation in agri-business approaches and practices: the aim would be to orient young farmers and young people in the agricultural sector to the conviction that change and improvement are continuous and ceaseless and that they should be helping to drive and steer them. The third is to work and negotiate for increased access to a number of markets that are presently restricted.

### **Transforming Agriculture**

Ms. Maxine Harris of the Caribbean Development Forum took up the theme of the necessity to transform the rural and agricultural workforce through programmes of skill enhancement. The background was that the Caribbean had seen a significant decline in the productivity of its agricultural sector, as well as a significant decline in the volumes of its agricultural exports. Across the member countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) 16 per cent of the labour force depended on agriculture for employment; but agriculture contributed only seven per

cent of the region's GDP. The sector was now operating in a global trading environment that was unsympathetic –to say the least- to weak and uncompetitive production. It was also operating with a workforce and rural population whose skill sets were very limited in comparison with the workforces of competitor countries. The Caribbean rural workforce was particularly slow in applying new production and processing technologies, in developing new markets and marketing strategies and in managing businesses. Its situation was aggravated by policy supports and business services that remain weak and uncoordinated. In sum, the Caribbean was losing its competitiveness and needed new strategies to regain it. Key to such a recovery would be the enhancement of the skills base of the workforce and its responsiveness to new or developing challenges. As the World Bank had recently observed, “*With the recent weakening of the traditional sources of growth, and given that wages are high, [businesses] need to move up the value chain...making the need for skilled labour paramount*”. In other words, low cost, low value work was “out”. New products, new markets and more efficient ways of production must be found to achieve future competitiveness and increased employment.

Five sources of higher value suggested themselves. First and most obviously, the region had to develop new and technologically advanced production processes to improve the productivity and quality of its traditional range of crops and other products. Second, its agricultural and other industries needed to deploy marketing techniques that would differentiate its products and services from those of its competitors and give them a particular distinctiveness. Third, the region needed to encourage innovation through creating new products and possibly new processes. Fourth, it needed to review its traditional products and develop new uses and applications for them, while, fifth, it needed to learn, absorb and apply modern business principles.

Taking advantage of these sources and to move the agricultural –indeed, entire rural- sector to the next level entailed a challenge to the educational sector. First of all, although universal primary education was no longer a problem, universal secondary education was imperative: without it, the rural and agricultural workforces would be handicapped both in adapting to new technologies and in responding to new global conditions and demands.

But secondary education itself needed to change in response to the changing world. Its aims should include not only the formation of educated young people fulfilling their potential, but young people who are also adaptable, trainable and learning worker-citizens, who understand what working in a market environment means and who can identify and capitalise on market opportunities. Educators should find ways of incorporating subjects like technological and business processes in the curriculum in ways that would foster and form what might be called the ‘soft skills’ of critical thinking, problem solving, team work, applying theory to practice, deriving sound theory from practice and experience, learning to learn continuously. Given Caribbean conditions, secondary education should include some teaching or orientation to entrepreneurship for self-employment. Secondary schools need to strengthen career guidance as well and also help to improve the image of the rural and agricultural entrepreneur.

Responding to these demands will require the education system to assess the skill sets broadly relevant to the rural and agricultural sectors, as well as the more detailed components and building blocks of each of the skills in each set; and to find ways of incorporating them into the curricula of secondary schools. Then the education system will have to find ways of equipping the secondary schools to handle the reformed and updated curricula. Equally important, the education system will have to establish a monitoring mechanism to keep itself abreast of shifts in the skills needed to keep the rural and agricultural sectors modern and competitive, so that it can responsively adjust the secondary curricula.

From another angle, as the Sandwatch experience above showed, the education system needs to help secondary schools move as it were into their communities, rather than function as virtual ivory towers. The schools should act systematically as instruments to ensure that the new ideas, attitudes, knowledge, skills and practices spread beyond the walls of their classrooms into the lifestyles of their catchment communities. In some rural communities, this may even involve setting up carefully tailored literacy programmes to help people capitalise on what their children are learning.

Although there can be a tendency to think of the rural sector wholly in agricultural terms, the work of 'Youth PATH' has demonstrated that there are opportunities for different kinds of businesses and, within each kind, opportunities for what might be called sub-species. Within the general title of tourism, for instance, there are new niches for eco-tourism, for historical and cultural tourism, for rural community tourism, for agro-tourism, and there will even be a conference on health tourism that the Inter-American Development Bank is convening; while sport tourism offers such possibilities as golf course planning and golf course maintenance. Similar, but closer to agriculture, are the possibilities for producing and marketing ranges of distinctively Caribbean herbs either as simple spices or for quasi medicinal purposes in teas, tonics and general health care. These are examples of 'thinking outside the box' and 'expanding the box', both of which the region will need and must cultivate, if it is to keep its societies prospering.

This search to add value to fields in which Caribbean countries are already active can be applied to foods and drinks, fresh and processed, frozen or canned, for regional markets and for wider international export. In this area, organic foods represent a new and expanding international market that the region has not yet fully tapped. Again, more value could be added through skilful marketing. Guaranteeing high quality, good branding, distributing to specialty stores, all offer opportunities to differentiate regional products from those of other regions and to gain a competitive edge. It should be possible to develop a Caribbean brand, which could take advantage of the markets opened up by tourism and sports. It could of course also be franchised around the world.

Reducing the current mismatch between the skills fostered by the schools and those required by the shifting demands of the economy calls for a system of integrated educational planning. Governments should ensure that planning for education is not left wholly to the ministry of education. Instead, they should arrange for the sectors – not only the ministries, but also the businesses- of labour, agriculture, environment, social transformation, information technology, commerce and industry to make inputs

to the curricula at the secondary and tertiary levels of education. They should also institute systems of regular two-way flows of information between the field and the classrooms, and of consultation with post-secondary graduates on how well they feel they have been helped to equip themselves for their employments. As part of such a system, joint ventures with post-secondary students to promote innovation in a range of rural and agricultural fields could be envisaged.

### **Pledges from the Participating Countries**

Following the sample of good and promising practice, the next step in the conference was to ask the participants what steps they could pledge to take in their own countries as a result of what they had learned. Some countries had sent more than one participant: in these cases, the group of participants reported as one, but only in a personal capacity. Similarly, where a country had sent only one participant, she or he described the possibilities that seemed open to individual initiative on a personal basis, taking into account the participant's organisation and her or his position within it. The pledges from ten Caribbean countries and one sub-regional institution are reported below in alphabetical order.

#### **Antigua, Dominica, St. Kitts & Nevis joint statement**

The participants from Antigua, Dominica and St. Kitts & Nevis teamed up to offer a joint statement.

All three of their governments had made and demonstrated their commitment to quality education for all. What the participants themselves were pledging was then simply support for measures already in train, plus the possibility of personal contributions to improvements and innovations. Now that their countries had achieved Universal Primary Education (UPE), they had personally embraced the goal of Universal Secondary Education (USE) and lifelong learning. Indeed, Dominica aimed by 2015 to have at least one university graduate in every household of the country. All three countries looked to the day when they could attain Universal Tertiary Education (UTE).

Before the participants could pledge anything, they needed to think of the resources that would be required to make their pledges a reality. They therefore called for partners –local, regional and international- to help make sure that the necessary resources would indeed be forthcoming. If that could be assured, despite the current economic shocks that their countries were enduring, the participants pledged the following:

They would press to have national policies ‘in every nook and cranny’ so conceived that they incorporated a ‘rural’ framework. In other words, the rural dimensions, implications and requirements of every sector policy and measure would have to be fully thought through.

They would be on the alert for duplication and waste in programmes of rural development. If there were five players in the field, the participants pledged to compare the five plans or programmes and call attention to areas of possible and needless overlap.

To the extent of their capabilities, the participants would work to have policies and practices reviewed and evaluated particularly for their effects on equity for rural learners. They would work to have this perspective built into the evaluations and reviews that their ministries of education undertook from time to time.

As regards the policies and strategies for rural development, the participants would review them with special attention to particular areas to assess their effectiveness in promoting education and reducing poverty.

The participants recognised the need to look at the provision of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) for their rural people, as well as the support for sports and the aesthetic aspects of culture. They would work to have these various forms of training and lifelong learning feed into systems of accreditation and qualification that had validity at the national, sub-regional and CARICOM levels.

Finally, they would press for the creation of a 'Human Resource Bank' of people who were well qualified and respected in their professional fields and who were willing to share their expertise with rural people in suitable modalities. The participants would aim to ensure that the Human Resource Bank was established within an adequate and sustainable framework of financial support.

### **Barbados**

The Ministry of Education of Barbados already had a national plan that included the upgrading of all schools, including all the rural schools. The intent was that every school would have as high a standard of provision of infrastructure and equipment as every other school without exception.

It was also the intent that the schools, primary and secondary, would become hubs for their communities. Whereas historically schools had been shut, once classes had ended, they were now to be open to their communities for whatever range of activities a particular community needed.

As regards rural schools, a further step was planned: they would now respond to the fact that many rural people actually travelled to towns for work. To facilitate early departures to and later returns from jobs on the part of parents, without putting children at risk, the schools will be equipped to offer before and after school care for children between the ages of 6 and 18.

There will also be more focus on inclusion in rural schools, in the sense of involving parents more closely in school affairs. The intent is to increase enrolments and to promote more regular attendance.

Finally, the Ministry of Education of Barbados is committed to providing universal nursery education by 2007. The private sector will be involved, but no family will be denied good quality nursery education for their children on financial grounds. For the rural communities, wherever the private sector is deficient, the state will step in to ensure that every child has ready access to nursery education.

### **Belize**

Speaking only in a personal capacity, the participant from Belize noted that the Ministry of Education is obliged to provide basic education for everybody. However, five points could be made.

First, Belize has a National Commission for Education that includes representatives from all agencies and institutions that have an interest or stake in the availability and quality of education and training. Apart from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health are represented. As several community and district business organisations also take part, rural interests tend to be represented adequately.

Second, although Belize has a programme for school gardens, so far only the Ministry of Agriculture has any capacity for supporting and promoting it. The participant pledged to see what could be done to develop capacities within the Ministries of Education and Health to expand the programme and make it more effective.

Third, there was room to improve the quality and relevance of the primary and secondary school curricula in regard to sustainable development.

Fourth, local bodies and communities in Belize were currently not too strong in their capacities to plan their educational and other development. The participant would see what steps were possible to upgrade these capacities.

Finally, Belize did need to strengthen the links and cooperation between home, school and community. The participant pledged to examine what concrete steps might be possible.

### **Grenada**

The participant from Grenada reminded the conference that the recent hurricane that hit the country had destroyed all plans for development, as plans for rehabilitation had perforce taken their place. The country had no money and would welcome help.

There had been an education sector plan, but the hurricane had forced the postponement of the targets and several initiatives for improve access and quality had lost their funding in favour of rehabilitating the numerous severely damaged schools. A revision of the primary curriculum, the replacements of outdated textbooks, the introduction of Universal Secondary Education had all been put on hold.

Nevertheless, a programme to ensure universal adult literacy would be going ahead in September 2006 with the support of Cuba. Using an approach through popular theatre, local actors had developed 52 lessons with an accompanying textbook. To assess the actual status of adult literacy prior to the programme, Grenada would appreciate assistance with a preliminary literacy survey.

Apart from that programme, Grenada had in mind several initiatives. At the secondary level, there was the 'Smart School' project that proposed installing computer technology for schools. Parallel with that was a feasibility study on a possible mobile computer unit. A school feeding programme was to be linked with

school gardens and was seeking a connection with business management and development with the intent of interesting young people in agriculture.

At the pre-school level, Grenada intended to expand programmes of Early Childhood Development and Education with the intent of preventing learning difficulties at later stages of education, rather than have to expand measures for remedial education. It hoped to extend the current 'Rovers' programme from its present 80 per cent access to a full 100 per cent.

As regards relations between schools and their communities, Grenada intended to extend the use of school buildings so that adults and community organisations could also benefit from them. The reason was that using 'hurricane-proof' technology to replace the buildings brought down by the hurricane was very expensive, so that arranging for them to be available for multiple purposes would make the investments more productive. However, Ministry of Education had to overcome resistance from the school principals, who seemed to be very possessive of their territories.

These were all intentions. The current state of Grenada forbade any firm pledges.

## **Guyana**

The conference participants from CHF-Partners in Development, an international NGO, spoke on behalf of Guyana, on the understanding that their pledges did not necessarily represent the views of the government of the country. They noted at once that the national educational strategy plan had been formed through a process of wide consultation during 2000 and 2001, so that it could truly be called a national plan. However, many of the proposed initiatives remain unimplemented as yet. Even so, the national priority accorded to education can be seen from the fact that the country now allocates some 10 per cent of its GDP to the sector. Despite that, the constraints that hinder Guyana can be gauged by comparing the resources available per child with those available per child in Barbados: US\$300 in Guyana, US\$2000 in Barbados.

As in many countries, there is a major divide in primary school enrolments between the urban centres and the rural hinterland of Guyana. Whereas the average national attendance is 90 per cent, it falls to only 79 per cent in the hinterland. In response, the government has put before the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) proposals for raising the quality of primary schooling in the hinterland to equal that of the urban and more advantaged rural areas. The World Bank has appraised the proposals and found them to be sound, so that some \$50 million is awaited to implement them. They include larger and more continuous supplies of books, school feeding programmes and special allowances for teachers posted to the more remote areas.

At the secondary level and for adult education, an initiative aims to upgrade the range, quality and relevance of courses available for TVET (technical and vocational education and training). The initiative includes skills for life, second chance education and re-training that will enable the learners to acquire modern and widely marketable skills. In support of this, the initiative will upgrade rural and hinterland teachers in every relevant subject, taking them subject by subject. It is worth remarking that the subjects and skills have been identified through ongoing consultations with the relevant stakeholders. These have helped build a national awareness of the process, as well as ensure that the reforms will achieve the outcomes intended.

As members of CHF, a civil society organisation (CSO) dedicated to social and economic development, the participants pledged that they would look for ways of working better and more effectively with the government of Guyana.

### **Jamaica**

The conference participants from Jamaica began by noting what their government was already doing to upgrade education for the country's rural people. Policies were already in place to strengthen links and coordination between the ministries concerned with rural development. The process had begun with the ministry of education and the ministry of agriculture. It would then bring in the ministry of health. As part of its unfolding, there would be training for community based organisations (CBO), which the community colleges and their networks would make responsive to local felt needs through their consultations with local populations.

From the supply side of the process there would be an emphasis on encouraging entrepreneurship with a particular focus on exploring and utilising local resources; while farmers would be encouraged to think in terms of rural diversification, particularly in response to the shifting policies and restrictions of the European Union. As one part of the package of changes, the Ministry of Agriculture has formulated an initiative that would enable university graduates in agriculture to obtain the land and the required resources to start new farms. The aim is of course to attract well educated young people to replace an ageing farm community that had fewer and inferior opportunities for education, training and recurrent upgrading.

The existing movement for school gardens is to be strengthened and linked to the school feeding programme.

There will be a levy on firms specialising in ICT (information and communication technologies) to create a 'Universal Access Fund' which will, as its name implies, promote access to information technologies. The participants pledged to press for the fund to be used particularly to connect rural institutions and organisations to the new technologies. The potential stakeholders would include farmers producing vulnerable crops, rural entrepreneurs working in sunset industries, community groups, NGOs, youth clubs, rural schools and other institutions in the education sector, including entities in the private education sector.

In considering how to take the idea forward, the participants could not commit their government but felt it would be useful to organise a forum of all the potential stakeholders to seek a consensus on a strategy and policies for ERP and to follow that up with an advocacy campaign with the stakeholders. It would of course be essential to include rural people in all the discussions on strategy and plans.

### **St. Lucia**

The participants from St. Lucia reported that they were all personally committed to the principles of ERP. However, two points needed to be made. As regards rural people, the nature of their island's geography and the distribution of their population had generated an intense debate on whether 'rurality' meant anything in their context. Although the government had no specific strategic plan for rural education, measures

to cater for what could be called rural conditions were included in overall education and development planning. In this connection, agriculture is at the core of any concept of 'rurality' and agricultural education and training necessarily addresses rural people. For instance, the St. Lucia Agricultural Diversification Agency has helped with skill development and has provided what might be called incubator systems to help set up young people in careers on the land.

Second, in regard to education, St. Lucia was at the point of Universal Secondary Education, so that the second MDG had little relevance even to the country's rural pupils. Further, as St. Lucia allocated seven per cent of its GDP to education, well above the international average, and was behind only Barbados among the Eastern Caribbean States in its expenditures per pupil, it could hardly be said to neglect education. A budgetary allocation of \$168.2 million for education ensured that access and quality extended to the entire country, not just the towns.

Beyond that, as all government agencies impacted directly or indirectly on rural people, it was of course desirable that they should actually plan and be aware of the impacts their activities would have on different population groups. These included of course those who would fit some definitions of 'rural'. The participants acknowledged that fostering a more integrated approach between the several agencies and between them and the communities they serve could enhance the benefits of programmes for development, education and training.

Although all government agencies did affect rural people, the strongest impact came from the Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Social Transformation. This last ministry dealt with cooperatives, NGOs, CBOs and faith-based institutions, many of them active in many communities that could be termed rural. This would seem to give the ministry a potentially pivotal role in developing linkages, complementarities and partnerships between the several state and non-state agencies and the communities they serve. It could take a lead in reviewing the plans and programmes that involve aspects of education and training for rural people, identifying the intersectoral linkages and possibilities for forms of harmonisation. The Agricultural Sector Plan, the Heritage Plan and the plans for social transformation were three examples which could well yield opportunities for better coordination that would in turn produce greater benefits for people, including rural people. An exploratory forum with these front-line agencies could be a start.

In this connection, St. Lucia would actually be getting off the mark very early, as in November 2006 the Ministry of Agriculture would be hosting a conference with other ministries on sustainable development. An especially important –indeed, crucial- participant would be the Ministry of Finance. A vital –indeed, critical- ingredient of sustainable development was entrepreneurship: it would need to part of education and training not only for townspeople, but equally for rural people.

The St. Lucia participants pledged themselves to work for sustainable development, not for sustainable conferences.

### **St. Vincent & the Grenadines**

The Minister of Education for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Hon. Girlyn Miguel, spoke for her country. She began by bringing to the notice of the conference the fact

that five years previously, in 2001, the government of the islands had launched an 'Education Revolution' under the motto, 'No Child Must Be Left Behind!'. But the revolution did not involve only children: it also made the country know that no one was ever too old to learn and that learning and education were the surest ways out of poverty. Now, five years after the launch, the government was moving to consolidate, extend and deepen the revolution across the entire range of education levels and fields: early childhood development and education, primary and secondary schooling, vocational and technical education for every profession were all under close review.

One target had already been crystallised: there would be universal provision of ECD programmes (Early Childhood Development and Education) for children aged 3 to 5 years by 2010. 'Universal' meant of course that no rural child would be left out. Besides that, several needs had been acknowledged and plans were in train to meet them. For one thing, the teaching and learning of mathematics needed enhancing and the potential of distance learning modes to answer that need for the more remote or isolated students had to be explored and developed. For another, there had to be at least one learning resource centre in every community, rural and urban. Once that was achieved, the next step would be to equip each centre with computers and access to the Internet with all its learning resources. An integrated Community College of high quality was a parallel necessity. For a third, the government recognised that the conditions of employment for teachers were not ideal and that their pay had slipped relative to their comparators: steps would be taken to see that both improved. Along with this, a state insurance system for both teachers and students was under construction.

Motivating all young people, perhaps especially all young men and most especially rural young men, to complete their schooling successfully through passing the examinations set by CXC, (the Caribbean Examinations Council) was a further challenge: it might take actual cash incentives to meet. The help available to disadvantaged students required enhancement and transportation for all students, rural and urban, to get to and from school had to become universal.

Finally, the Ministry of Education itself needed and would get a more modern facility to be able to serve the country's education system more efficiently.

There was no need to make a pledge to implement all these measures: they were all at some stage of implementation already.

### **Windward Islands Farmers' Association (WINFA)**

The Windward Islands Farmers' Association (WINFA), as a sub-regional institution, committed itself to strengthening its linkages with institutions and other stakeholders engaged in the promotion of 'Education for Rural People'. It will use strategic alliances to enhance collective action and raise the productivity and impact of the available human, physical and financial resources in effecting the transformation of rural communities and their environments in the region in a sustainable manner.

### **Conference Communiqué**

After the collective group reports and the individual country pledges, the conference considered the communiqué it should issue on behalf of all its participants at the conclusion of its discussions and resolves. It produced the following:

## Communiqué of the Caribbean Conference on Education for Rural People

We, the participants of the Caribbean Conference on Education for Rural People, must preface this communiqué with two statements. First, our countries are already making huge efforts and great strides in promoting poverty reduction, food security and education for all at all levels and in all areas. Second, we can pledge ourselves only in our individual, personal capacities, for we are not empowered by our governments or agencies to make pledges on their behalf.

In the light of this preface, we pledge to use our best efforts to reinforce action to further reduce poverty among communities dependent on agriculture, fisheries, forestry and micro-enterprises for their well being, whom we here call ‘rural people’. We will focus on action to reorient education and training. Diversifying opportunities to train for current, emerging and novel employments and reforming educational curricula to keep pace with the globalising world will comprise our main strategic thrusts. We will use our official positions and our unofficial influence to heighten the awareness of our societies of the disadvantages and exclusions suffered by rural people; and to encourage fresh thinking on how to overcome them. In this way, as we support our own people, we shall contribute also to the world’s drive to the first two Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and EFA.

Our countries vary widely. Rural people currently constitute between some 25 and 70 per cent of our peoples, while agriculture, fisheries and forestry occupy on average some 16 per cent of our workers. Our rates of poverty vary between 16 and 37 per cent, while the rates of severe poverty or indigence vary between 3 and 25 per cent. Their incidence is usually highest among the people we have called ‘rural’. Along with these differences we have two things in common. First, the opportunities and facilities for education and training available to our people are variable in quality and those of lower effectiveness are often the only ones readily accessible to rural people. Partly because of this, rural people tend to make less use of them. The result is that they are inadequately equipped to respond to the shifting demands of their markets and the losses of previous protections.

Our second common feature is high rates of unemployment among our rural youth. It also seems to be the case that the unemployed include large proportions of young people who did not benefit to the fullest extent from their schooling.

The primary production sectors will remain important constituents of our economies and employments for some time to come. Food security and maintaining their competitiveness -not only in world markets but also locally- challenge us to educate ourselves to be positively responsive to –and even ahead of – changes in tastes and methods of production, distribution and marketing. They also require us to be prepared to train and re-train ourselves throughout our lives.

### ***Working with governments...***

We shall press our governments to raise the priority they give to reducing the inequalities of provision and quality that rural people experience. We shall advocate a closer and more transparent monitoring of actual resource allocation, so that existing inequities are visibly reduced. We shall keep ourselves alert for opportunities for

fostering and sustaining inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral coordination in both policy and implementation. We shall press our governments to consider how they can promote a more enabling environment for agencies of civil society to develop helpful initiatives for educating and training rural people. We shall also press for better and more transparent systems of monitoring, so that progress in education for rural people can be easily assessed and kept on track.

***Working within Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Rural Development and Social Transformation...***

As many of us come from Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Rural Development and Social Transformation, we shall find allies within our own ministries and partners in other ministries to identify opportunities for formulating joint targets, action and indicators for work with rural people. We shall use these alliances and partnerships to foster the preconditions for the successful decentralisation of responsibility for initiatives and action to communities and community groups. We shall also use them to monitor progress and improvements in access to opportunities for training and education, as well as in the quality of what the opportunities offer.

***Working with civil society and the business sector...***

We recognise that the agencies of civil society, whether local, national or international, often have more intensive relations with and better understanding of particular groups and communities. We shall work to develop our relations with those agencies that focus on rural people and, if needed, to encourage them to form networks among themselves. Where occasions arise, we shall do our best to facilitate their work. Also, where appropriate, we shall bring to their attention opportunities for new work, either by expanding to new communities or by initiating work on issues arising.

We recognise, too, that businesses in particular localities and the business sector in general could be effective allies in identifying and supporting relevant training opportunities for rural people. We shall seek ways to encourage businesses to ally themselves with community organisations and civil society in mobilising rural people to define what training would be really helpful, settling the terms on which it would be maximally utilised, and implementing it to full effect.

***Working with cooperation agencies...***

Research, monitoring, evaluation are activities the necessity of which is always acknowledged, but less than always implemented. We shall use the contacts we have made through this conference with FAO, UNESCO, IICA, CARDI CARICOM, OECS, ILO, UNICEF and others to mobilise assistance to see that the three activities are implemented in sufficient breadth, frequency and quality for us, our allies in government, civil society and the business sector, and the wider world to learn from our successes and mistakes and reciprocally from the successes and mistakes of others.

***Working with the donor community...***

Raising the priority and increasing the action for educating and training rural people will inevitably demand additional resources. While we can certainly expect our governments, our civil societies, our business sectors and even our rural people themselves and their communities to support local community initiatives in ERP, we shall need and indeed require the support of the CDB, the World Bank and our bi-

lateral partners. We call on them to go this extra mile with us to help us ensure that we fully achieve the goals to which they and we have signed up.