

**Caribbean Sub-Regional Dialogue**  
*For the Participation of Young People  
in the Process of the Summits of the Americas*

**Preliminary Report**  
Prepared by YABT

*“Youth have been urged to play a role in ensuring that the Summits of the Americas process is as inclusive and as people-centered as possible by participating more actively in its preparations” – Hon. Gary Hunt, Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In preparation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in April 2009, a series of Dialogues will be held throughout the Americas to gather the input and recommendations of the young people of the 34 OAS Member States on the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

The first of three Dialogues was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on October 29 and 30, 2008 in a collaborative effort between the OAS Summits of the Americas Secretariat, the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas and the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT). Ten Caribbean countries were represented by a total of 43 young participants, representing NGO's, Ministries, Universities and other institutions.

The Hon. Gary Hunt, Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, made opening remarks highlighting the importance of increasing youth participation in decision-making processes. Also participating in the opening ceremonies were Mr. Mobafa Baker, representative of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago; Ms. Ravia Harribans, representative of the National Secretariat for the V Summit of the Americas; Ms. Jessica Grebeldinger, Representative of the Secretary of the Summit of the Americas of the OAS; Mr. Riyad Insanally, OAS representative in Trinidad and Tobago; and Mr. Roy Thomasson, CEO of the Young Americas Business Trust.

Following Mr. Roy Thomasson's presentation of YABT's programs and activities, participants gave brief presentations in the form of National Reports outlining the situation of young people and youth development programs in their respective countries.

The participants were divided into four groups to discuss topics linked to the theme of the Summit: “Securing Our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability”. A representative from each group then presented their recommendations to the assembly. These recommendations, together with recommendations from upcoming regional dialogues, will be developed into a final report to be submitted for inclusion in the Process of the Summit of the Americas.

On the second day of the Dialogue, participants attended a similar event, the Caribbean Sub-Regional Civil Society Forum, also a part of the Summit Process. This allowed for the opportunity for young people to share and discuss ideas with civil society representatives and further contribute to the Summit Process.

## **Table of Contents**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
INTRODUCTION TO THE CARIBBEAN DIALOGUE .....	4
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DIALOGUE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE .....	4
PROCESS OF THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS .....	5
SURVEY AND PLATFORM .....	5
PARTICIPANTS .....	6
SUPPORT FROM SPEAKERS .....	6
GROUP DISCUSSIONS .....	7
PARTNERS .....	8
RECOMMENDATIONS RESULTING FROM THE DISCUSSIONS .....	8
FEEDBACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS .....	11
NEXT STEPS .....	11
ANNEX 1: NATIONAL REPORTS .....	12
<i>Antigua and Barbuda</i> .....	12
<i>Barbados</i> .....	16
<i>Belize</i> .....	19
<i>Grenada</i> .....	23
<i>Guyana</i> .....	28
<i>Jamaica</i> .....	31
<i>Saint Lucia</i> .....	34
<i>St-Vincent and the Grenadines</i> .....	38
<i>Suriname</i> .....	40
<i>Trinidad and Tobago</i> .....	43
<b>Annex 2 – Draft Declaration of the Summit of the Americas including the recommendations from the Caribbean Dialogue</b> .....	<b>46</b>

## INTRODUCTION TO THE CARIBBEAN DIALOGUE

The Dialogue is an official event of the Young Americas Forum and the Fifth Summit of the Americas Process to create participatory channels for young people from the Caribbean to be involved in civil society's contribution to the Summit. Participants consider and discuss how the theme of the 5th Summit of the Americas, "Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability" can be made relevant to young people and their needs, thus increasing the level of awareness on the importance of the development of young entrepreneurs as being a public policy priority.

In order to do so, the YABT developed a series of four Regional Dialogues, regrouping young people from the ages of 18 to 35 years old who will act as representatives of their respective countries. They will inform other participants on the status of young people in their countries and, in a collaborative effort, will propose amendments and new recommendations to the Draft Declaration of Commitment.

The first dialogue was held at the Crowne Plaza Port of Spain in Trinidad and Tobago on October 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> 2008. The information gathered in this event will be included into the Summit of the Americas Process and will be considered as the input of the young people.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DIALOGUE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Contrary to North America, the Caribbean countries have an increasing and majority population of young people. In some countries such as Saint Lucia, young people constitute approximately two-thirds of the population. As mentioned so often before, the young people of today are the primary resource and wealth of countries, as they represent the future. Unfortunately, this segment of the population is seldom involved in the decision-making process within their countries.

The Caribbean Dialogue is thus an opportunity for young people from the Caribbean to include recommendations specific to their situation into the policy and agenda development processes of the governments of the Americas. This event also constitutes an opportunity for young people from the Caribbean to network and benefit from the experiences and knowledge of their regional peers.

The Organization of the American States has reinforced its decision to include young people into its mandate through the recent creation of a youth desk at the Office of Permanent Council under its current President, His Excellency Reynaldo Cuadros, Bolivian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the OAS.

## PROCESS OF THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

The Caribbean Dialogue is directly linked to the Process of the Summit of the Americas, as the results of the event will be presented and introduced to the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG). It is in these SIRG meetings that country representatives discuss the Draft Declaration of Commitment and come to a consensus regarding the content of the document. This process is ongoing and lasts from the conclusion of one Summit to the beginning of the next.

The Declaration of Commitments is approved at the Summit and acts as a strategic plan for the Member States of the Organization of American States. Countries then work toward the realization and implementation of the recommendations adopted in the Declaration.

## SURVEY AND PLATFORM

In order to include as many young people as possible in the Process of the Summit of the Americas, YABT has developed an online survey that is accessible from the organization's website. The responses from this survey will be added to the recommendations gathered in the series of Dialogues and submitted for inclusion in the Summit Process.

According to the responses gathered from the Caribbean respondents, Agriculture, Information and Communication Technology, Construction as well as Tourism are the economical sectors where job opportunities are most viable for young people.

Most young people from the Caribbean are currently not involved in any type of free enterprise but demonstrate interest in such projects, especially in areas such as Culture, Business, Education, Information and Communication Technology and Social Services.

While acknowledging the presence of social inequalities, poverty, exclusion and marginalization in their countries, young people from the Caribbean affirm that these issues can be reduced with the implementation of basic social programs for housing and food, entrepreneurship training and access to start up capital and technical support for new businesses.

Furthermore, the respondents believe that government, private sector and non-governmental organizations can stimulate creativity and innovation in their respective countries by offering business skills training to young people. They also believe that investing in existing endeavors by providing qualified staff and human resources and increased knowledge of financial skills such as basic accounting, budgeting and investment would contribute to the development of their community and country.

These answers clearly demonstrate the wish to learn and a desire to contribute by the young people of the Caribbean. It also shows that they recognize the importance of being able to provide for themselves through positive means such as entrepreneurship.

Young people from the Caribbean also stated that they could benefit from the increased use of technology in the entrepreneurial process, particularly for market research, marketing purposes, accounting and networking.

One of the popular topics in today's world is the development of new energy sources. While everybody tries to find the best avenue, young people from the Caribbean believe that their close proximity to powerful water sources, year round exposure to the sun and the wind are important energy sources that could be developed and used to reduce the expenses related to current energy consumption.

The theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas, "Securing our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability", gives young people from the Caribbean region a sense of hope that the decision makers from the Americas are making a commitment to change, and to ensure the success of this process, they have demonstrated a desire to share their thoughts and recommendations with representatives of government and various industries.

## PARTICIPANTS

The Caribbean Dialogue benefited from an impressive level of participation from young people representing 10 Caribbean countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint-Lucia, St-Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago were represented by 43 dynamic young people.

In their respective countries, these young people, as well as many others who were unable to attend the Dialogue, work on a daily basis towards the improvement of the situation for young people through their involvement in NGOs, local YABT chapters, non-profit organizations and governmental agencies.

## SUPPORT FROM SPEAKERS

In order to encourage young people to participate in this process, several influential people were invited to address the participants. Presided by Mr. Mobafa Baker from the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, the opening session gave the participants the opportunity to meet local actors engaged with young people as well as with the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas.

Mr. Riyad Insanally, from the Trinidad and Tobago OAS Office spoke of the challenges facing the youth of the Americas including access to adequate education, health care, poverty and crime. He said it was important for there to be greater involvement of youth in development and that the hemisphere had resolved to promote favorable conditions for the participation of young people in decision-making. Ms. Ravia Harribans, from the National Secretariat of the Summit of the Americas, added that one of the "notable features" of the approach taken by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago "is the priority that has been given to dialogue and consultation and to encouraging the widest possible participation of the citizens of this hemisphere" and that young people are the future of the Americas. The Process of the Summit of the Americas was explained by Ms. Jessica Grebeldinger from the Summits of the Americas Secretariat.

Finally, the Honorable Gary Hunt, Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, concluded with the presentation of the concept and goal of the Caribbean Dialogue and encouraged young people to play a role in ensuring that the Summits of the Americas process is as inclusive and as people-centered as possible by participating more actively in its preparations.

The first session of the Caribbean Dialogue was concluded by Mr. Roy Thomasson, Chief Executive Officer of YABT, who gave an overview of the mission and programs of YABT.

The support of these speakers was greatly appreciated as it not only gave the participants very valuable information but also proved that there are people at the highest levels who value their work and opinion and are ready to invest time and resources into the future of the Americas. The Young Americas Business Trust extends its gratitude to all these individuals for their collaboration in the Caribbean Dialogue.

## GROUP DISCUSSIONS

In order to have a regional discussion which would address the situation in all the represented countries, every country representative presented a brief National Report, which depicted a portrait of the situation of young people in the country as well as the resources, organizations and governmental agencies that address young people issues.

Following these presentations, the participants were divided into four discussion groups. Each group was given a statement related to the theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas: "Securing our Citizen's Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability".

The statements were the following:

- 1. Enhancing Inter-American collaboration to increase economic stability, promote entrepreneurship, and encourage good business citizenship*
- 2. Generating employment through creativity, innovation, and economic education to increase the competitiveness of the Americas in the global economy and using technology to advance entrepreneurship and connect people*
- 3. Investing in new sources of energy for economic security and self sufficiency while promoting energy and environment consciousness among the society*
- 4. Investing in new areas that provide opportunities for sustainable, integrated development by public sector, the private sector, and young people*

The goal of the discussions was to formulate new recommendations or amendments to the Draft Declaration of Commitment, according to the point of view of young people. Following this exercise, which was moderated by YABT and OAS staff members, one representative from each group presented the group's recommendations to all the participants.

These recommendations were gathered and formatted into a single report and sent to all the participants, the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), the National Secretariat of the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat and all other interested parties.

## PARTNERS

The organization of the Caribbean Dialogue would not have been possible without the collaboration of many organizations with which we are very proud to be associated.

The identification of the participants was the most important component of the Caribbean Dialogue. For their contribution in this area, we would like to acknowledge the participation of the Permanent Missions to the OAS, National OAS Offices and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, who provided us with enthusiastic, knowledgeable and involved young people.

The Summits of the Americas Secretariat also played a critical role in the orchestration of the Caribbean Dialogue, providing us with logistical and financial support.

Finally, the National Secretariat of the Summit of the Americas played an important role, providing local support.

The Young Americas Business Trust values its relationship with these organizations and looks forward to continued collaboration to address issues concerning young people.

## RECOMMENDATIONS RESULTING FROM THE DISCUSSIONS

By focusing on the statements provided to them, the four discussion groups were able to put forth new recommendations and amendments to the Draft Declaration of Commitment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas. These suggestions are presented in the following pages, followed by the young people's perspective on two additional questions:

1. *How does the theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit relate to young people?*
2. *How can people work together to expand programs for young people and keep young people actively involved in programs and activities following the Summit?*

### New Recommendations:

- Establish comprehensive multi-sector and integrated framework to increase employment and entrepreneurial opportunities available to youth
- Use experiential learning when teaching young people how to overcome barriers to establishing successful businesses
- Assess labor and business markets regularly to identify and secure youth employment opportunities/entrepreneurial initiatives to fill market gaps
- Enhance existing community – based skills programs and facilities to create employment for young people in remote areas not currently served by existing institutions
- Realizing that opportunities for employment are not often accessible, yet young persons are desirous of contributing to the economic environment, private sector organizations should seek to create opportunities for young entrepreneurs by utilizing

their products and services in the execution of their wider organizational undertakings.

- Utilize competitions and other such avenues to expose young persons to business content as early as possible and to foster the generation of innovative business ideas among High School students.
- In light of numerous international attempts to globally standardize the framework for ensuring that youth enterprises are supported, we suggest putting regulations in place to ensure that young entrepreneurs can access business opportunities from both public and private institutions.
- In light of the considerable financial constraints associated with starting a new business, it is advised that both public and private institutions begin providing start up grants with low interest rates to eligible young persons.
- To better facilitate the social benefits associated with certain enterprises, it is advised that governments make resources for social programs more accessible to young persons.
- Bearing in mind that non-traditional areas of employment are not generally pursued because there aren't seen as financially rewarding, we advise the provision of financial incentives for young persons who are going into socially beneficial investment.
- Design and implement policies which utilize recycling as a tool to reduce the need for the use of new resources, thus reducing the volume of waste generated. We pledge to conduct the necessary research for training and education within the member states of the benefits involved in recycling.
- Integrate youth into decision-making processes of the country by democratically appointing one youth representative from a national youth organization.
- Integrate the issues regarding environmental sustainability into the school curriculum primarily at the primary school level.

#### Amendments:

- #40. We commit to taking the necessary steps to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions in each member state by an agreed percentage by 20\_\_ to ensure the eventual stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will not incur a risk of serious changes in the Earth's climate and weather systems.
- #50. We direct the OAS, through the Secretariat of Multi-Dimensional security, to continue in the preparation of a high-level meeting of experts and authorities to develop a common approach to matters related to crime and violence and also to prepare a regional strategy to promote Inter-American cooperation in dealing with criminal gangs; giving special attention to youth by promoting better lifestyle choices

to youth through positive mentorship programs suitable to the needs of individual member states.

- In # 36 we propose the following changes:  
We will increase public awareness, education (e.g. formal education system), and training (e.g. to the greater community and private sector).....
- We propose to add the following to #30:  
Creation of national non-partisan committees in order to monitor the implementation of renewable technologies by private/public sectors. These committees will have the authority to penalize companies/institutions who receive education and training through this process.
- #31: We propose that all governments expand the role of the relevant ministries to promote recycling and the benefits within.
- Incentives to private/public sector and individuals who are investing in Green technologies.
- We propose that the date in #38 be changed from 2011 to 2015  
This is justified by the expansion of the public awareness campaign and education into green technologies (ref. #36)

#### How does the theme of the 5th Summit relate to young people?

The Declaration that is agreed upon during the 5th Summit of the Americas will bring young people a sense of security for the future and give them hope to look forward. The 5th Summit of the Americas will create the foundation for youth to adequately function in an ever changing environment. Giving young people the opportunity to give their recommendations and be part of the decision-making process will increase the success rate of implementation.

#### How can people work together to expand programs for young people and keep young people actively involved in programs and activities following the Summit?

Have more young people involved in the creation of programs, policy making and evaluation with the guidance of program managers. The programs need to be geared toward youth interests to keep motivation and youth buy-in high.

## FEEDBACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

Upon completion of the Dialogue, the YABT staff met with participants to gather their feedback. The points they highlighted are presented in this section of the report and will be highly considered in the development process of the other dialogues.

- The informal setting is preferred for the discussion groups;
- Having a diner with all the participants before the Dialogue was appreciated and created a good atmosphere between the participants;
- Since it is easier to focus earlier in the day, the discussion could take place in the morning session and the ceremonies in the afternoon;
- Panel discussions between the workgroup discussions decrease the momentum;
- Statement #1 has many aspects, which leads to confusion;
- Statement #2 has a structure which allows for a good discussion;
- The presence of a moderator in each group works better;
- Find a better way to present the results of the discussion;
- Have one laptop per group;
- Ensure a better disparity in the discussion groups (origin of participants)
- The second group was larger, which allowed the group to separate into two groups and cover more ground;
- Ensure that the participants have an appropriate background in terms of social institutions and experience to allow them to contribute to the discussion;
- Allow more time for the participants to work on the national report before the Dialogue, and provide sources that could be used for the report;
- Allow an increased number of pages for the report;
- Send an example of a national report and more detailed guidelines;
- Specify the presentation time allotted for the reports;
- Share the results of the online survey with the countries;
- Promote the online survey; make sure the information reaches young people.

## NEXT STEPS

The Dialogue is an occasion for young representatives from the Caribbean to discuss their ideas and suggestions relating to the priority themes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas and its Draft Declaration of Commitment. This report, along with those from the Latin American, South American and North American Dialogues, will be presented to the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) and circulated to the relevant governmental and civil society organizations as follow-up, leading up to the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit in April 2009.

Being an important part of the Young Americas Forum process, the Dialogue also serves as a point of connection for the Caribbean youth in preparation for the Young Americas Forum, to be held April 15 and 16, 2009, prior to the V Summit of the Americas. YABT website will be used as an additional resource and as a follow-up center.

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## ANNEX 1: NATIONAL REPORTS



### Antigua and Barbuda Daryl Georges

#### Main Findings

The main findings were taken from the National Youth Policy, which was developed from the ideas and opinions of relevant stakeholders as well as the young people of Antigua and Barbuda, recently passed in Parliament (late 2007).

Antigua and Barbuda is a beautiful twin island state, where the beach is just the beginning. We are a small developing country with a total population of 84,000 with about 62% being classified as “youth”, being under the age of 35, making up a significant part of the human resources.

As in any other country, the youth of Antigua and Barbuda are faced with certain challenges. There are several pressing issues that must be addressed and this is why the National Youth Policy formation suggested using the YOUTH CENTERED approach, where the youth themselves talk about the problems/issues that they face.

Some of the challenges/issues facing the youth in Antigua and Barbuda include:

1. Health Related Issues. The main health related issues are HIV/AIDS, reproductive rights and health, obesity, drug use and abuse, violence against children and youth as well as risky behaviors, such as dangerous or drunk driving;
2. Employment and sustainable livelihood, in the form of inadequate formal preparation for the job related world, lack of school to work (internship) programs, job creation, entrepreneurship, skills training, career and life planning and cooperative endeavors;
3. With regards to crime and violence, some of the issues include juvenile offenders and the juvenile justice system, criminal rehabilitation, drug use and abuse, gang involvement, crime prevention and crimes against youth;
4. Education and training issues include drop outs and truancy, the needs of special children, illiteracy, educational opportunities for teen mothers and pregnant girls, positive student engagement, disengagement of boys from school, high retention rates and low academic achievement in a restrictive curriculum;
5. Some of the concerns regarding youth protection are incest and abuse, foster care, legislative reform, the rights of children and young people and special measures for youth with disabilities;
6. Youth participation issues include the National Youth Policy, the National Youth Council, governance mechanisms, school councils, youth involvement in the development of their communities, and opportunities for volunteerism.

#### Current National Policies and Infrastructure Relating to Young People

The government is currently in the embryonic stages of establishing a National Youth Development Strategy which will act as a guide to the implementation and monitoring of the National Youth Policy over the next 5 to 10 years. However, our dynamic Youth

Department and government has taken several steps towards establishing several youth initiatives recently.

Some noticeable policies have been enacted including the following:

1. National Youth Week – Allows youth from different backgrounds and different sectors of the community a chance to both learn from informative workshops as well as display talents and skills;
2. National Youth Awards – Gives a tangible reward to youth who have achieved success in different sectors of the community;
3. Legal reformation – Currently undergoing certain legal reformations, including Care of the Child Act 2008, which makes it easier for single parents to receive support from the other parent;
4. Reorganization of the National Youth Department – The National Youth Department has been restructured according to CYP (Caricom Youth Policy) specifications which allows it to function more efficiently and effectively;
5. Currently working on building a comprehensive database of youth organizations in the country in an attempt to best promote and expand community youth organizations.

### National Policy Recommendations

#### *Strengthening Living and Social Environments*

- Promote the strengthening of community programs to support families;
- Establish and support community based family outreach programs that provide parenting skills and counseling services for youth and their families;
- Advocate for the establishment of PTA's in all schools and a National Parent Coalition;
- Promote and build youth social environments as positive spheres of influence and engagement for young people;
- Develop special community based initiatives to support teens, young parents and families living with issues such as domestic violence, alcoholism, drugs and chronic criminal activity;
- Advocate a culture supportive of youth development.

#### *Education and Training*

- Assert the right of all youth to quality education;
- Advocate for an education system that is relevant to the needs of youth and those of potential employers by conducting a thorough review of the existing formal education system to assess its relevance to the needs of Antigua and Barbudan youth;
- Promote and foster the participation of students in the administration of their institutions by advocating for the establishment and formalization of student councils and a National Student Guild;
- Facilitate increased access to quality skills training opportunities relevant to the SME and the global marketplace and advocate for the use of local products;
- Develop and implement a program to identify and support children with special needs through the introduction of educational testing early in the education system;
- Promote the implementation of standards in support of early childhood development;

- Facilitate the education of pregnant teen girls and teen mothers;
- Develop and implement strategies to improve male performance up to the secondary level and their matriculation to the tertiary level;
- Establish schools as health promoting communities, safe zones and a hub of community empowerment.

#### *Health*

- Create a supportive policy environment that fosters health outcomes;
- Improve knowledge and influence attitudes relative to critical health practices and behaviors;
- Improve the quality of health services and increase access to such services that will provide youth-friendly health services that are accessible to all youth,

#### *Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods*

- One policy relating to employment and sustainable livelihood is to optimize chances for employment for all;
- We also aim to increase the number of employment initiatives for young people;
- We want to foster a culture of entrepreneurship and increase the number of support mechanisms for entrepreneurs.

#### *Participation and Empowerment*

- The enhancement of young people to participate in the many aspects of social life;
- Create spaces and provide opportunities to increase participation of young people, including youth with disability and marginalized youth;
- Provide, through cultural and creative arts, expression opportunities for developing self and civic pride;
- Facilitate a culture of youth positivity.

#### *Care and Protection*

- Develop resiliency factors in youth, especially youth at risk;
- Advocate for the provision of the highest quality services for those who are in need of care and protection;
- Facilitate the successful reintegration of all youths who are in special care with their family and society.

#### *Crime, Violence and Rehabilitation*

- Advocate for a policy environment that supports youth's responsibility towards the creation of a safe and peaceful society;
- Advocate for a policy environment that supports young people's due process rights;
- Engender a culture of respect and caring among our youth;
- Provide for the total rehabilitation of young people who run afoul of the law;
- Advocate for the establishment of a coordinated system of services to address youth crime and violence;
- Provide alternatives for positive youth engagement.

### *Gender Equalities and Gender Relations*

- Advocate for a supportive policy environment that promotes gender equality and fosters positive and supportive relationships between young men and women;
- Promote gender equity and the transformation of societal norms and cultural practices of masculinity and femininity;
- Advocate equal access to education opportunities;
- Promote skills and vocational training as a means of reducing female poverty and dependence;
- Foster a culture supportive of women's role in decision making at the national level;
- Foster a culture of sexual responsibility among people and to promote fidelity as a cultural value.

### *National Coordinators and Major Contributors (Main participants)*

AIDS Secretariat	Citizens Welfare Division
Association for People with Disabilities	Ministry of Health
Barbuda Council	Ministry of Social Transformation
Barbuda Youth Office	Ministry of Planning
CARICOM Youth	Ministry of Education
Commonwealth Youth	Ministry of Labour
Directorate of Gender Affairs	Boys Training School
Girl Guides	Citizens Welfare Division
GARD Centre	Department of Culture
Ministry of Youth Affairs	Directorate of Gender Affairs
Drug Education and Information Unit	Drug Education & Information Unit
Cadet Corps	Early Childhood Education
Early Childhood Education Centre	Establishment Department
Ministry of Social Transformation	Government Information Service (GIS)
Project Hope	Probation Department
POWA	Social & Economic Planning Unit
Youth Parliament	
Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Disabilities	



Barbados  
Jason Kevin Francis

### Main Findings

#### *Cost of Living and Volatility of Global Financial Markets*

One of the concerns highlighted by young people in Barbados has been the volatility of the global financial markets. In their opinion, this has increased concerns about job security and the availability of jobs in some sectors. Additionally, high food and fuel prices as well as the escalating cost of land and housing are also major concerns.

#### *Participation in Governance*

The involvement of young people in the governance process in the country has also been highlighted as a major issue. It is felt that there is not sufficient space for meaningful involvement in decision making, leadership and consultation on issues of national significance, all leading to the growth of apathy amongst our young people. Additionally, when youth have been given the chance to be involved, it is seen merely as a token of involvement as their ideas are not sufficiently acted upon.

#### *Rehabilitation and Deviant Youth*

Another area of concern has been a need for more structured rehabilitative programs and infrastructure to combat further involvement in crime and other socially dysfunctional behavior by deviant adolescent youth.

#### *Education and Employment*

It is noted that though free education has been provided from the primary to tertiary level, young people are finding it increasingly difficult to find employment in the areas commensurate with their programs of study, thereby leading to a lack of career fulfillment and frustration amongst many youth.

#### *Morals and Values*

A decrease in morals and values has also been of major concern to those youth who are actively promoting positive values throughout society. Such factors as increased access to illegal drugs, the ease of access to negative information through the pervasiveness of new ICTs and the continuous decline of the institution of the family have also spurred the decrease in previously strong societal values and threaten to destroy the social fabric of the society.

### Current National Policies and Infrastructure Relevant to Youth

The Division of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Family, Youth, Sports and the Environment has been divided into three sections: the Youth Development Program, the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme and the National Youth Service.

The Youth Development program focuses on community outreach activities and is staffed by 30 Youth Commissioners who are charged with the task of identifying issues which affect young people, creating and stimulating community youth initiatives.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme serves as an entity to assist enterprising young people in the island to turn their ideas into viable businesses. The work of the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme is supported by other governmental agencies such as the Rural and Urban Development Commission, the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited and Fund Access which aim to assist small and medium-size enterprises. Additionally such work is supported by non-governmental agencies as the Barbados Youth Business Trust, a member of the Young Americas Business Trust.

Project Mainstream seeks to replace Project Oasis, a previous initiative which targeted at risk youth. The major goal of Project Mainstream is to provide opportunities for youth to learn new skills in areas such as electrical installation, boat building and international cookery amongst a host of other courses and to increase their marketability and entrepreneurial potential.

The government also recently introduced free bus rides for all school-aged children on local transportation to ensure that all children have access to education.

It must be noted that these services are all buttressed by a well developed network of social services.

### *National Policy Recommendations*

#### *Recommendations by Youth Leaders*

- Current programs available should be made more attractive to young people and more suited to making them competitive in a global business environment;
- Reform the curriculum in traditional areas of success like education and training to respond more effectively to the needs of young people;
- Give a greater voice and space to young people by making more policies youth led and involving them in the conceptualization, operation, the monitoring and evaluation of youth policies;
- Create jobs related to the areas of study at the university.

It is felt that there is sufficient policy related to the development of young people. However, greater political power will need to be exerted in order to see these policies come to reality and to ensure the sustainable development of our country.

#### *Future government policy*

The current administration in the January 2008 election produced a Manifesto specifically catered towards young people. The promises outlined in this manifesto are generally taken as government policy and government's future intentions on the development of its youth.

#### *Family*

- The creation of a Ministry of Family whose mandate is to provide education for young people so that roles within marriages and other relationships could be better understood.

### *Education and Training*

- Revising the Secondary School Curriculum to meet the needs of modern Barbadian children and widening the curriculum to place emphasis on other important subjects;
- Teaching the subject of entrepreneurship at every educational institution and at all levels;
- The creation of a new National Youth Service Program, which will combine experiential or hands on learning and service to the nation.

### *Employment for Youth*

- The creation of legislations, institutional structures and the resources to increase the number of entrepreneurs from about 10% of the working population to 20% by 2016;

The manifesto also pledges to assist in the creation of new enterprises through training, direct subsidies and easier access to capital for investment. This is to be done through:

- Establishing a Ministry of Innovation and Economic Empowerment;
- The provision of training and mentorship for potential entrepreneurs, especially young entrepreneurs;
- Enabling entrepreneurs to access capital through the Credit Unions and other government supported institutions;
- Help entrepreneurs with market research and the marketing of their goods and services;
- Set aside 40% of all Government procurement requests for small and medium-sized enterprises;
- Sourcing investment funds and encouraging the UWI and other entrepreneurial organizations to continue research and development on solar power and other alternative sources of energy.

### *National Coordinators and Major Contributors*

This report was compiled through by soliciting of information from a number of youth groups, agencies, and point on youth affairs in Barbados.

Some of the agencies included:

The Barbados Youth Development Council

The Young Democrats, Youth Arm of the Democratic Labour Party

The Youth Advocacy Movement

Team Action Barbados

UWI Circle K

Senator for Youth Affairs- Senator Damien Griffith

Jeconiah Foundation

Ministry of Family

Political Science Students' Association Cavehill



*Belize*  
*Tylon Gladden*

*Main Findings*

Belize was the site of several Mayan city states until their decline at the end of the first millennium A.D. The British and Spanish disputed the region in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, until it formally became the colony of British Honduras in 1854. Territorial disputes between the UK and Guatemala delayed the independence of Belize until 1981.

Belize is bounded on the North by Mexico, on the West and South by Guatemala and on the East by the Caribbean Sea. The estimated population of Belize is 300,000. Tourism has become the mainstay of the economy. Current concerns include an unsustainable foreign debt, high unemployment, growing involvement in the South American drug trade, growing urban crime and increasing incidences of HIV/Aids.

Young people comprise up to 60% of Belize's total population. Many of them have a dream to get rich or die trying. Some youths, especially men, see the education process as too slow for them to accomplish their financial goals. As a result of this mind set, some of them tend to drop out of school and fall into drugs and other types of illegal trade. This creates a whole cycle of problems both in and out of the underworld. Many of them have dropped out of school and simply loiter on the streets with little or nothing to do.

Two Non-governmental Organization providing help are (BYTB) Belize Youth Business Trust, which I am a member of and (BFLA) Belize Family Life Association. The Belize Youth Business Trust is an organization that helps young people to start their own business. Once they are between the ages of 18-35, they qualify to apply. BYTB gives loans of up to \$10,000 to approved applicants; along with mentoring, training and moral support. As a young citizen of Belize; I can personally testify about the good things that BYTB is doing for the youths.

The Belize Family Life Association provides family planning as well as sexual and reproductive health care services. The BFLA is well aware of the many problems facing youth, such as AIDS, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, poverty and gangs. In an effort to improve conditions for youth and to address their problems, the BFLA established a successful teen center in the Mesopotamia area of Belize.

*Total population*

As mentioned above, the population of Belize was estimated at 266 440 inhabitants in July 2003, distributed in a more or less uniform manner between rural and urban (52 percent and 48 percent, respectively). The current population growth rate is 2.44 percent and the population is expected to double within 26 years. This rapid growth rate is higher than that of Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the census indicates a decrease in fecundity rate between the two periods. Thus, the fast growth of the population during the 1990s was a result of immigration from the neighboring countries in Central America (these migrants make up 14 percent of the population in Belize).

The growth rate of the population is not distributed uniformly. The districts of Cayo, Toledo and Stann Creek have experienced faster growth, especially in rural areas.

About 45 percent of the population lives along the coast, this has been identified as an area most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The population of the country is relatively young; 41 percent are below 15 years of age and mostly live in rural areas. Average life expectancy is estimated at 75 years of age.

The main ethnic groups are the Mestizos (48.7 percent), the Creoles (24.9 percent), the Mayas (10.6 percent), the Garífunas (6.4 percent) and the Mennonites (3.5 percent), but they are not distributed uniformly throughout the country. English is the official language even though more than 52 percent of the population speaks Spanish.

*Gross domestic product (GDP)*

The GDP of the country was BZ\$1 976.7 million (US\$988.3 million) in 2003 and is growing, as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP)

<b>GDP (million BZ\$)</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GDP at current market prices	1 464.7	1 663.5	1 734.8	1 851.9	1 976.7
Per capita GDP	6 027.5	6 925.3	7 039.1	7 323.9	7 619.3
Real growth (%)		13.5	4.2	4.04	6.7

Note: data in Belize dollars (US\$1 = BZ\$2).

During the last century and up to around 1940, the forest sector was the largest contributor to the GDP, employment and exports. However, cutting most of the timber in the forests has caused a decline in the sector to the point that now it is of least importance to the GDP (see Figure 1). In 1999, export timber contributed only 1.3 percent to the export earnings of Belize and represented only 1.6 percent of the GDP. This contribution by the forest sector does not include the contribution that it provides with its environmental services to the country and to people in general, nor does it include that of tourism, which depends largely on the forest cover.

*Poverty Incidence*

According to the last Country Poverty Assessment (CPA) carried out in 1996, 25.3 percent of households or 33 percent of the total population live below the poverty level, estimated at a minimum in yearly income of BZ\$1 287.48 for an adult. Of this number, 13.4 percent are considered indigent or very poor, with their income barely covering the basic necessities. The CPA also showed that the rural population was more marginalized than the urban one, since 42.5 percent were below the poverty level compared with 20.6 percent of urban dwellers.

At the district level, the study showed that the incidence of poverty was highest in Toledo at 47.6 percent of households; 57.6 percent of the population were below the poverty line. Of these, 40.2 percent of households and 47.2 percent of the population were considered as indigent. The district of Cayo followed with 33.5 percent of households and 41 percent of the population considered as poor, and 15.9 percent and 19.7 percent as indigent, respectively.

Table 3 shows the poverty situation by district and by sectors of the population. The study showed that those employed in agriculture and fishing were the most likely to fall into the lowest income bracket (49.4 percent). This situation proves to be very similar to the one of the Maya people (65.8 percent). Low incomes were also reported for youth (31.6 percent), households headed by women (30.5 percent) and the elderly (26.7 percent). The assessment found high poverty rates in isolated cases in villages of northern Belize such as the immigrant and refugee communities in the Cayo district, economically depressed areas in the Belize district and in some pockets in rural Orange Walk and Corozal districts (National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan, 1998–2003).

Table 3 Poverty levels in the Belizean population

District	Poverty	Indigent	Youth	Old	Males	Females
Corozal	26.7	8.7	25.6	19.4	27.3	26.0
Orange Walk	24.9	5.0	27.5	44.0	25.6	24.2
Belize	24.5	6.5	21.1	19.3	25.4	23.5
Cayo	41.0	19.7	41.1	30.6	39.8	42.1
Stann Creek	26.5	5.1	9.7	14.3	28.9	24.4
Toledo	57.6	47.2	50.0	45.5	56.3	58.9
Country	33.0	13.4	31.6	27.6	33.1	32.8

#### *Employment*

Of the total labor force in Belize, 70 percent were males and 30 percent were females, according to the 2000 census. This shows an increase of 31.5 percent of females participating in the labor force as compared with the 1991 census. The total labor force was 77 755 people, and 31 percent was in the Belize district. However, unemployment in the country stood at 11 455 (CSO, 2000).

Table 4 Labor force in Belize, 1999

District	Males	Females	Total
Corozal	8 235	2 465	10 700
Orange Walk	10 080	2 335	12 415
Belize	14 230	10 275	24 505
Cayo	9 375	4 110	13 485
Stann Creek	6 775	3 085	9 860
Toledo	4 985	1 805	6 790
TOTAL	53 680	24 075	77 755

Source: CSO, 2000.

Conclusions on the tendencies and current situation of the macro environment

The Belizean population, with its growth rate, does not appear to be a problem for the survival of the forest resource. Moreover, with adequate planning based on land use planning principles, the forest could be converted into a significant instrument for the sustainable development of the country.

The rapid growth of the immigrant population from neighboring countries such as Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, where traditional agricultural and livestock production cultures minimally favor the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the natural resource, should be carefully analyzed.

With regard to the diminishing contribution of the forest sector to the GDP, this seems to have been caused by the inherent development of the country, which was initially based on the export of timber as logs, with little value added.

Today, export markets have become more diversified with the entrance of new products on the international market. This would appear to be the right time to analyze how the forest sector can contribute more to the GDP, considering the existing amount of raw material, as well as the goods and services that forests provide.

Protected forest areas can also play an important part in the growth of the tourism sector. Decisive factors would be the quality and capacity of private sector stakeholders in the country.



Grenada  
*Akarda Ventour*

Main Findings

The tri-island state of Grenada is the most southerly of the member countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean (OECS). Grenada, the largest of the three islands (the other two being Carriacou and Petit Martinique) lies 144 km north of Trinidad and 110 km south-west of St. Vincent. It is about 34 km in length and 19 km in width at its extremes, and has a surface of 311 km<sup>2</sup>. Carriacou and Petit Martinique are 34 km<sup>2</sup> and 2 km<sup>2</sup> in area, respectively.

The Government's main objective is to promote the sustainable economic and social development of Grenada, especially in the area of youth development. This would involve increasing the rate of economic growth from recent levels, reducing unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, gang related violence and illiteracy. The quality of human resources generally would be improved by expanding access to secondary and post-secondary education as well as training.

For Grenada, a working definition of youth is that category of young men and women who have passed the age of compulsory schooling and who are becoming socially and economically independent of parents or guardians, through the acquisition of a career or searching for or finding acceptable employment. In chronological terms, it is assumed that this period normally ranges from 16 to 30.

On completion of the surveys, the findings were as follows:

Throughout Grenada, youths were eager to showcase their creativity, talent and versatility to create their own employment, for themselves and others. Initiatives like these contribute to the economic development of Grenada. As Grenada advances in the expansion of youth and entrepreneurship education movement, we are and will continue to experiment with new methodology and techniques. However, the challenges faced by many young people are numerous. Namely:

1. General and gang related crime: Young people showed concern about the numbers of young people arrested and charged for drug-related crimes. Many saw a link between unemployment and crime. Statistics from the National Drug Avoidance Secretariat revealed that a total of 41 persons aged 15 – 24 were convicted for drug-related offences. The majority (38) were young men.
2. Unemployment and underemployment
3. Poverty (*rural areas are most prevalent*)
4. Drug Abuse: this evident in schools where students are doing it cause they think its cool and their friends are doing it so why can I.
5. The inability to obtain loans to start up business because of inexperience and lack of security.
6. Teenage pregnancy
7. Limited access to secondary and tertiary education and the irrelevance of the available education.
8. The inadequate provision of technical and vocational training
9. The limited availability of life-skills and leadership training
10. Cultural penetration through the mass media

11. Anti-social lifestyles related to substance abuse (drugs)
12. Sexual promiscuity and threats to young people's health such as HIV/AIDS
13. Environmental degradation (in its early stages)
14. The lack of support for enterprise development
15. Limited outlets for sporting, artistic and recreational activities
16. Limited access to housing
17. Piecemeal response to the needs of youth
18. Marginalization from the mainstream of society

### Current National Policies and Infrastructure Relevant to Youth

Grenada's public awareness is on skills training, youth empowerment and education, although education and other outreach are needed to instill environmental values and encourage a sense of ownership, to reduce the threats of land resources and to encourage public involvement in community life and spirit.

A disaster reduction campaign had been formed as of 2006-2007 under the theme "Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School" where schools buildings are made safer, as disaster risk education is taught in schools, encouraging children to serve as agents of disaster risk education. In a broad picture if children can do it, then youths can do it. If children can do it, then adults can do it, then some elderly people can do it. "Teaching the children today is empowering the next generation to address risk more effectively tomorrow".

The Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN) is a multilateral project, supported by the OAS, the World Bank, the European Union and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). It was launched by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in 2004. Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network (CKLN) being designed to enhance the competitiveness of Caribbean countries, using information and communication technologies to the global pool of knowledge, developing human resources and facilitating the greater integrations and harnessing satellite technology to link Universities and tertiary level educational institutions throughout the region.

Enforcement of previous laws pertaining to youth developments (making adjustments to the down falls of the past administration).

Creating Youth Programs which will enable persons with skills and knowledge for the workforce e.g. part-time jobs, sale of bulk local products, training benefits.

- Prevention of Drug Users and abusers
- Enhancement of leisure and recreation activities

The Health and Family Life Education Policy recognized that all social and economic gains could be wiped out by young people falling victim to one or other epidemic. The threat of HIV/AIDS getting out of control in a society prone to sexual promiscuity has led to some action. The new Health Policy therefore strives to ensure that young men and women receive consistent exposure to learning experiences that would change their attitudes and behavior. What is needed now is real empowerment of young people, particularly young women, to make choices and develop healthy life-styles even against the wishes of their partners and peers.

The draft Juvenile Justice Policy Paper: focuses on young offenders, youth at risk and young people in need of care and protection. It recognizes that all impressionistic young people are at risk of engaging in anti-social behavior that could inadvertently be classified as criminal.

This paper is informed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and states clearly that the imprisonment of young offenders should be a last resort and used only for the shortest possible time. It advocates alternative, preventive and rehabilitative measures and makes many recommendations for enlightened intervention at every stage of the criminal justice system.

The National Coalition on the Rights of the Child plus the following welfare institutions and organizations has been listed as part of the implementation mechanisms.

### National Policy Recommendations

- National Youth Service Days: where youths organizations and individuals will be mobilized to implement community projects/activities.
- National Youth Camp: Youth Camps will be held during 2008. Each of these will target approximately 200 persons between the ages of 18-35. These camps aim to increase the socialization skills of youth as well as offer an opportunity to educate youth on various youth issues. Hikes and various other sporting activities will also be a mandatory aspect of these camps.
- Youth Month (October 2008): Young people will be engaged in a month of activities aimed at promoting positive values and attitudes. The activities will include a Church Service, Parish Activities (Sports, Debates, Culture, Quiz, and Community Development Initiatives), Panel Discussion, Award Ceremony and National Youth Rally and Positive Vibes Concert.
- Caricom Day: The Department of Youth Development in collaboration with the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors will be observing CARICOM Day 2008 with the creation of a CARICOM village. The Village will give a full CARICOM experience including information and display of each CARICOM member state. This project will take the form of a competition where each school as well as foreign communities will be invited to randomly select a CARICOM country and will be allowed a booth on the day to display that country in their own unique form. CARICOM Day was celebrated on July 5th 2008.

With the change of Government or New Administration many plans and recommendations, such as:

- Tax reductions: reducing income tax, value added tax on goods which have substitutes
- The New Economy: The Government intends to build a New Economy in Grenada. A modern economy is one, which answers to the needs of its people, including today's youth and succeeding generations. The Government also plans to take bold steps towards oil and gas exploration, new food production methods and techniques, fashion designing, cultural products for tourism, ICT services and ICT-enabled products, among others.
- Private Sector Development: The Government firmly believes that the private sector is the engine of growth. In this regard, the Government is committed to providing the enabling environment for the private sector to thrive thereby

- creating meaningful jobs for our people. In this regard, the Government is in the process of establish an Office of Private Sector Development in the Ministry of Finance to manage private sector relations and deliver on key reforms such as the new Investment Code, a Small Business Policy and faster transaction times for processing the private sector's business with Government.
- Economic Management: The Government plans to pursue disciplined fiscal policy which will ensure successful completion of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility with the International Monetary Fund. Implementation of tax reforms to modernize tax policy and administration in an effort to maximize government revenue will be provided.
  - Tourism: Government encourages the local tourism private sector to continue to participate in the development of the sector on the basis of innovation and investment in quality products for a highly competitive market.
  - Agriculture and Fisheries: Being a crucial area in the nation's economy, the government plans to achieve a number of macro economic goals, particularly with respect to employment, incomes and foreign exchange earnings. It is evident that bananas will not be a main area of focus, but emphasis will be placed on nutmegs and cocoa, as traditional crops having major marketing possibilities. Efforts will also be made to achieve some level of processing and value- added using these as raw materials.
  - Health: Maintains that good health is a basic human right. The standard of health care enjoyed by the citizens of Grenada will not only be an indicator of the quality of life, but will also be a conduit for economic growth and social development.
  - Sports: Young people in particular, can benefit from institutional strengthening for the delivery of quality sports. The period ahead will therefore see significant changes in the administration of sports in Grenada as well as in the treatment of our national players in the various sporting disciplines. The establishment of National Sports Council will play a pivotal role in securing the changes that are necessary. Grenada has considerable sporting resources and every effort will be made to package these into a viable sports tourism product.
  - Energy: The Government regards the development of our energy resources as essential for the transformation of Grenada's economic and social landscape. In this regard, my Government's first task will be to develop and articulate an energy policy covering both traditional and renewable forms of energy. The Government seeks to promptly resume negotiations with the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with a view to resolving our maritime boundaries.
  - Culture: as the new government believes that culture is the bedrock of national pride and patriotism. It is the most authentic statement of the way of life of the Grenadian people and a key distinguishing feature of the Nation in the international marketplace. Therefore, the Government will give full attention and adequate resources to the role and place of Culture on the national development agenda which includes: the development of a cultural policy; the establishment of a National Cultural Centre; the establishment of a carnival promotion agency; the development of a national music project; and the establishment of a School of Culture at the T.A. Marryshow Community College.
  - Youth Rehabilitation Program: This program will provide an opportunity for the rehabilitation of young persons who are at risk of coming those who have come into the conflict with the law.
  - Imani Program

- Grenada Youth Enterprise Initiative
- Youth Mentorship Program
- Stakeholder network

*National Coordinators and Major Contributors*

OAS Grenada  
TAMCC (T A Marryshow Community College)  
St George's University – SAS: Ms. Reccia Charles PhD  
Ministry of Youth Empowerment  
Akarda Ventour – YABT Grenada coordinator  
Department of Youth Development  
Nneka Louis Obike – YABT Grenada



## Guyana

*Shawn Benn, Dmitri Nicholson, Dwayne Mitchell*

### Main Findings

Guyana is a South American Country and member of CARICOM, covering 215,000 square kilometers. Its current population stands at about 751,000 people, 70% of whom live in on the coast, Guyana is divided into 10 administrative regions. Region 4 (Georgetown), being the most populous and region 8 (Mountains) being the least. Region 4 contains the capital city – Georgetown, which is the country's center of government and business. Guyana has a population density of less than four people per square kilometers. The country's terrain and dispersed communities often makes service delivery and infrastructure development difficult, especially in the hinterland areas, resulting in many remote populations lacking basic health care, education and technology (Guyana Poverty Reduction Strategy paper 2002). Youths between 10-29 years old are 36% of the total population. Unemployment rates for the 15-19 age groups is 36.3% and for the 20-24 age group is 16.9% - about 5 times higher than those for older age group.

About 90% of Guyanese youth between 5 and 14 years old attend primary school Only 41% of 15-19 age group attend secondary school and 10% of the 20-24 years old groups tertiary schools. The secondary school dropout rate stands at around 20% and average attendance is only two-third of the enrolled class.

Armed robbery data showed that 580 occurrences per 100 000 habitants in 2002 About 80% of perpetrators of crime are between 14 and 30 years old and children have disproportionately high rates of victimization

Of the organizations providing youth programs, only 11% of them engage in some form of entrepreneurship, and 62% of them are in 4, not reaching rural areas. Only 6% of the organizations offer life skills development as part of their services and 52% of them are located in region 4 again not reaching rural areas.

The organization that have sports activities as part of their programming represent 28% of the total organizations mapped and 60% of them are in region 4 and 10 (30% and 30% respectively) again not meeting rural areas.

### Current National Policies and Infrastructure Relevant to Youth

During the period of 2005/2007, the National training Project for Youth Empowerment In-Plant Training Project was successfully executed by the Board of Industrial Training, in six (6) of the ten (10).

Consultations were held with the Regional Democratic Councils, Neighborhood Democratic Councils, Government Ministries, Workshop Owners, Factories and Businesses to determine their participation and occupational needs.

There were six hundred and ninety – four (694) out of school youths between the ages of sixteen (16) to twenty –five (25) offered placements and only six hundred and twenty-

five took up the offer. This was due to the long delay between the interviews, orientations and placements, causing some to seek employment and migration. There were four hundred and eighty – seven (487) Trainees who completed their training under the arrangements of this Project, both the Private and Public sector agencies employed 35% of the Trainees, whilst 5%, of the remaining trainees opted for further training at the TVET & Medical Institutions respectively.

### *Goals*

The goal of this project proposal is “To contribute to the national demand for clerical, technical and semi-skilled operatives, by the training of youths to become self employed and also fill existing vacancies within the public and private sectors.”

The specific Objectives of the project are:

- To train 1750 unemployed and vulnerable youths to a semi-skilled level in skills which are vital to the development of the country.
- Provide those youths with knowledge and skills that will enable them to become self employed or gain access to further Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
- Provide industries with personnel to fill existing vacancies.

Notwithstanding government’s intervention, there remains a high level of youth unemployment and underemployment ( i.e. youths with skills who cannot find well paying and stable jobs). Youths face significant barriers when trying to obtain employment, including discrimination, nepotism and a demand for extensive experience.

Young people do not have the necessary life skills to prepare them adequately to obtain employment. Many youth, especially in remote regions, have no access to life skills training and basic education. This restricts their ability to obtain employment and/or start a sustainable income generating initiative. Programs that include life and employability skills are not adequately monitored and evaluated.

Youths interested in starting their own business or becoming entrepreneurs face significant barriers to obtain financing and follow-up support services for starting and sustaining their enterprises

Physical education has been neglected in the formal education system due to pressure associated with national exams. There are not many quality sporting facilities and recreational programs to provide positive ways for youths to spend their spare time. Sports and culture are not considered ways to teach employability, life, or entrepreneurial skills

Cultural education has been neglected in the community and nation due to absence of trained staff at all levels. Young people exhibit less national pride and patriotism resulting in high emigration rates.

### *National Policy Recommendations*

- Increase jobs for youth through entrepreneurship and skills training and network the business sector around youth
- Build hope for youth to reduce youth mortality to HIV

- Develop youth sports policies to reduce obesity among youth
- Reduce 'Trafficking In Person' which is affecting primarily youth in the country
- Increase and improve the participation of young people in the decision making process at the national level
- The government of Guyana is pursuing a US\$ 7m programs with the UNDP on 'Enhancing Public Trust security and Inclusion some 3.25MUSD will go towards youth some (2400) is target for skills and empowerment programs.

*National Coordinators and Major Contributors*

- The Ministry of Youth Sports and Culture
- The Ministry of Labor
- The Young Americas Business Trust
- Youth Challenge International – Guyana
- Guybernet
- Junior Chamber International - Guyana



Main Findings

Researches have shown that the vast majority if Jamaican youth between 17-35 years old are unemployed, unemployable, untrained or unskilled. These are youths mainly in the inner-city communities that are marginalized and/or stigmatized either because of lack of opportunities, poverty, crime and violence, lack of proper parenting, role models, proper community infrastructure, basic life skills and mentorship programs.

Whilst there is a constant desire for change, this change has been very slow and almost non-existent regardless of different governments.

These youths are not irredeemable and the time has come to be consistent with global trends and transformation. This change must happen now to disperse an imminent disaster.

Current National Policies and Infrastructure Relevant to Youth

Based upon statistics obtained from the Planning Institute of Jamaica, the Government’s Economic Indicator is that the youth cohort aged 17-35 years old who are unemployed or unemployable is of 750,000. Meanwhile, statistics from the HEART NTA, the national training institute, show that 7,970 of these young people are currently at home, on street corners, or have tried to enter the Institution but were unable because they could not pass the grade 9 equivalency test due to a lack of basic literacy/numeracy training.

Of a population of approximately 2.6 million, this is a staggering figure and hinges on self-destruction as a major contributor to young and unwanted pregnancies, crime and violence, lack of proper parenting, decadence of moral and social values, low self esteem, increase and continuance of poverty and fragmentation of positive community culture.

The YABT Jamaica Chapter has done careful analysis and has decided on a broad based holistic approach to meet the following criteria: collaboration with various Government and private sector agencies, community based organizations, parenting groups, overseas organizations, major tertiary institutions and civil society.

Because of the proliferation of CBOs, the following steps were taken:

1. Training – Leadership, Standards, Professionalism
2. Oversight – Programs, Objectives, Initiatives
3. Collaboration – Funding, Accessing possibilities
4. Globalization – Technology, Exposure, Involvement, Participation and Practice.

Programs

Basic Literacy/Numeracy Training	200 per 3 months
Remedial Classes	100 per 3 months
Interactive Literacy/Numeracy	50 per 24 months
Skills Training	150 per 6 months

CXC Classes	50 per year
Job Placement	60 per year
Small Business Training	100 per year
Empowerment Workshops	10 per year
Science Business Labs	10 per year
Leadership Training	Ongoing
Food Distribution	Ongoing
Disaster Management	Ongoing

Funding is a major need:

- Market own product under YABT brand
- Interactive Training Center
- Current Projects
- Youth Exchange Program
- Small Business Enterprises Funding
- Equipment
- Feeding Program

#### Current National Policies and Infrastructure Relevant to Youth

The Government's National Training Agency HEART NTA, which was created in the 1980's and has succeeded different administrations was designed to offer training to alleviate the growing phenomenon and so these youths are immersed specifically in skills training e.g. Hospitality, Cosmetology, Marketing, Early Childhood Education, Food and Beverage, Computer, Electrical Installation, Engineering, Auto Mechanic, Building Construction, etc.

The agency also offers in the job training, counseling in job loss, transition and retirement. However, whilst at the beginning of the program there was no requirement for subjects or passes to enter, this has changed for persons having the minimum two CXC subjects depending on the area of interest.

Presently, the new Government is embarking in a plan to have at least 10,000 unemployed youth to be employed locally and overseas. They have also offered free education up to secondary level and free health care. Through the High School system, students get job experience and The Students Loan Bureau offers students loan for tertiary level studies.

The Jamaica Business Development Center offers on the job training /internship training in music and small grants to individuals who want to operate their own small businesses.

The Jamaica Lifelong Learning Center focuses primarily on Basic Literacy/Numeracy Training and recently joined with the HEART NTA to try and fix the dilemma.

#### National Coordinators and Major Contributors

National

- The Ministry of Education
- The Ministry of Labor
- The Ministry of Information, Youth, Sports and Culture

- The Heart Trust NTA
- The Ministry of National Security and Justice
- The Jamaica Business Development Center

#### Major Contributors

- United Nations Development Program
- Canadian International Development Agency
- International Development Bank
- Organization of American States
- Jamaica Social Investment Fund
- CHASE Fund

#### Main Participants

- Western Hospital Institute
- Kingston and St. Andrew Action Forum
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited
- CBO's
- Young Americas Business Trust



*Saint Lucia*  
*Stanislaus Albert*

Main Findings

St. Lucia's population is a relatively young one- approximately 2/3 of the population is under the age of 30. It is argued that our educational system does not adequately prepare school leaver and the youth for the world of work. Specifically, they account for 70% of our population and are currently the focus of much discussions on the national development agenda of Saint Lucia.. They are leading the region in unemployment and the nation in poverty, and are engaging in serious high-risk behaviors (early and unsafe sex, risky recreation, substance abuse, gang violence) that threaten their individual health and survival. Issues confronting the youth in St. Lucia are perhaps well known to many- unemployment, poverty, sexual abuse substance abuse gang violence and crime. Statistics reveal that 44% of our youth are unemployed, 63.7% Alcohol abuse, and 14% marijuana use

**Youth Unemployment in Selected Countries in the Caribbean and the United States**

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<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>Youth Unemployment</b>	<b>Percentage of Youth Population (15-24)</b>	<b>Net Secondary School Enrollment</b>	<b>Youth Fertility (15-19)</b>
Bahamas	15.8	18.0	79	49
Barbados	21.8	15.1	87	46
Dom. Rep (2002)	23.1	19.1	41	94
Dom. Rep (2004)	31.0	19.1	38	N/A
Grenada	27.0	24.5	-	69
Jamaica	34.0	18.7	75	32
<b>St. Lucia</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>46</b>
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	36.0	20.8	-	22
Trinidad and Tobago	25.4	20.7	72	13
Latin America & the Caribbean	15.2	-	-	52
United States	10.6	14.2	85	57

<sup>1</sup> Crime Violence and Development: Trends, Cost and policy Options in the Caribbean. A joint Report (No.37820) by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Latin America and the Caribbean Region of World Bank 2007

The World Bank 2007 reported that youth unemployment in St. Lucia was the highest in the eastern Caribbean, 44%, as compared to an average of 15.2% for the entire Latin America and Caribbean region. In a study undertaken in December of 2007 the Bureau of Health Education and promotion of the Ministry of health reported that the Unemployment rate for the 15 to 25 years age group was 39% for males and 44% for females. Further data from the 2006 St. Lucia Poverty Assessment Survey suggests that,

Unemployment has contributed to several problems including illegal drug use/trafficking by unemployed youth and massive rural urban migration.

Many of the unemployed were young people between the ages of 19 and 35 and the majority had only a primary school education and few marketable skills. Lack of qualifications and age were identified as the key factors in determining employment access.

Given that the Youth constitutes at least 70% of Saint Lucia's population, it is therefore vital that youth mainstreaming is effective and supported to ensure that young people are provided with the opportunity to see themselves as future movers and leaders of the various sectors of society. They must be afforded the opportunities to develop skills and competence to be able to take their place and sustain themselves in the various sectors over time. The programs offered must be able to impact young people in a meaningful and positive way. In St. Lucia, "No where to go, nothing to do" syndrome which drives young people into risky behaviors and poverty must be remedied so that young people can become empowered and see themselves as major players and drivers in the development of the society. The most serious problem confronting young persons in St. Lucia is unemployment. This has led to increasing economic deprivation and social degradation for a majority of young people. Unemployment is even more pronounced in the rural areas because of the displacement of young farmers in the banana industry.

Large- Scale unemployment not only promotes the drug trade, but other social ills such as sexual promiscuity, unstable family life, crime and deviance where as employment brings independence, security, dignity and self worth

The main challenges faced by young people in St. Lucia include,

- High levels of unemployment,
- Lack of employable skills,
- Limited access to Information and Communication Technology and the lack of skills to make use of ICT.
- Insufficient sustainable self-employment and business startup opportunities for young men and women.
- Weak social support systems,
- Poor collaboration between youth agencies and key stakeholders, the private and public sector on youth empowerment programs.

#### Current National Policies and Infrastructure Relevant to Youth

At the moment, there are a variety of Programs and Services offered to youth in Saint Lucia, but there is a need for the appropriate linkages to be made to ensure that the needs of youth are met in a more holistic, sustainable and strategic way. The agencies

involved in that process must accept the fact that they are limited in terms of their capacity to do it all, and as such, must pull resources together to assist in developing and providing effective and quality services for the youth.

#### *Governmental National Programs/Policies*

- Youth Enterprise Development Fund
- Ministry of Tourism Student attachment Program
- National Skills Development Centre.-NSDC
- National Enrichment Learning Unit.

#### *NGOs and Private Sector*

- Chamber of Commerce (Junior Achievement).
- RBTT- Young Leaders
- St. Lucia Youth Business Trust
- St. Lucia Cadet Corps
- Kiwanis Club
- Leo Lions Club
- St. Lucia National Youth Council

#### *Government Infrastructure and Government Support*

- Up-Town Girls Center
- Boys Training Center
- Center for Adolescent Renewal and Education –CARE (Government Support)

Presently, St. Lucia is engaging Community Based Organizations, Youth Groups, the Private Sector, and Civil Society Organization in the process of establishing a Strategic plan for Youth Development. The Strategic Plan will be guided by the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) - 2006-2015 which seeks to assist member governments in establishing and maintaining the enabling conditions that will

#### *National Policy Recommendations*

The Department of Youth & Sports is the agency responsible for the development and implementation of a holistic national policy and program for youth and sports in St. Lucia, consistent with the country's regional and international obligations governing young people, human rights healthy lifestyles and a range of treaties and agreements that relate to youth development. The following recommendations will be considered by the Government of Saint Lucia.

#### *Economic Participation of Youth*

- Skills training should be provided to increase youth employment and employability.
- Entrepreneurship should be actively and aggressively promoted among youth.
- Creation of an employment agency that provides unemployed young people with information about job opportunities.
- Credit facilities should be made more readily accessible with minimum prerequisites to create an environment that nurtures entrepreneurship.

- Self employment agencies supported by government and non-governmental organizations research the feasibility of individual investment and facilitate loans for young entrepreneurs.
- An intensive apprenticeship program be created targeting youth that are not academically incline or are under achievers at the Secondary School Education.

#### *Education and Training*

- Technical and vocational training be given equal emphasis as the academic subjects in the school curriculum.
- There should be access to advanced technology in all schools as the information age necessitates a thrust in technology in our schools.
- Problem solving and life skills should be an integral part of the school curriculum and attention be given to changing the culture of the classroom.
- The Business Labs Methodology be implemented in the Secondary and tertiary education curriculum.

#### *Crime and Substance Abuse Prevention*

- Improved community relations with the Police can be seen as an urgent component of any crime prevention.
- Helping young person with innovative ideas using local or other resources to create employment
- A program of Community service is established for young offenders as a means of punishment and rehabilitation.

Emerging issues in youth development in St. Lucia present challenges that require innovative solutions to engage and sustain the full involvement of our youth at every step of the way. Young people's development issues are dynamic and the role of the media that appeal to youth such as music and entertainment and recreation sports have a fundamental role to play in designing and delivering youth development services across St. Lucia. At the same time, we recognize that young people require strong family and community Support systems. With this view we are hoping to render support to young people through the efforts of the Young Americas Business Trust chapter in St Lucia. We are hoping to introduce programs that support opportunities for young people to develop innovative and creative strategies towards the reduction of unemployment.



St-Vincent and the Grenadines  
Bethlene Ferdinand

“Vincetian Youth, Building a Legacy of Peace and Sustainable Development”, despite this being the theme for the national youth month in St. Vincent; September 30th to October 31st, there are a number of challenges that young people face.

Problems or challenges such as: unemployment, under-employment, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence (physical abuse), delinquencies (gang violence, robberies, etc.) and the most prominent: HIV/AIDS and the STI's are but we would like to focus on the ones that most affect the youth relating to the business world.

Main Findings

The most outstanding challenges that the youth has to deal with are: unemployment, underemployment, poverty, social inequalities, and their political status. These problems have encouraged young people to migrate to bigger countries where they believe they can be easily employed and discrimination and their political status will not affect them in the business environment. Although this may seem realistic to most of the population, the frequent migration of the youth is contributing slowly and steadily to the decline in the country's economy and soon may even experience a 'brain drain'.

The country has recognized this problem and as a result, advertised the idea of entrepreneurship, the NGO's namely the National Commercial Bank which is inviting young entrepreneurship to make use of the 'Micro Enterprise Loan Program'. The youth has seized this opportunity to try and establish their young businesses because it costly trying to establish themselves as young entrepreneurs, the equipment and sources needed are costly and some may need the financial aids that are offered to them.

Some young people have expressed their concern of the difference in maturity in some business places where new, creative and innovative ideas are being refused because of the sake of tradition. The mature people thinks that it is a risk to try the new ideas just incase they fail, the young people are battling this problem day to day, which is discouraging them to work to their full potential and even bring new ideas to the table.

Poverty has also been a major hiccup in the development of the youth today and as such; the Government has introduced the “Revolution in Education”, where it is mandatory that each child receive universal access to education. This revolution is believed to demonstrate an improved structure of development for the working world today. Along with the 'Revolution in Education', the Government has made an abundant increase in giving out scholarships to the tertiary institutions in a number of countries.

A problem that seems to affect the young entrepreneurs who produce local products is that most of the local population does not support local production and produce. A slogan was introduced “Buy local”, but that is as far is it goes. The entrepreneurs are to date struggling with the local population supporting them.

The people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines are devoted to youth and are determined to rectify these problems as best as possible. These challenges will never cease to exist

but they can be reduced to make the business world more comfortable to the youth and economical to the nation on a whole.

### Current National Policies and Infrastructure Relevant to Youth

The Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Youth and Sports; specifically the Youth Affairs Department is in the process of revising a draft of the Youth Policy.

The youth Policy contains various sections, one of importance is Section D:

Employment, which underlines that employment must remain the principle objective of any National Development Plan. In Section D, 2.0 Creating Opportunities; it mentions that serious exploration of linkage industries is necessary along with the efforts being undertaken to encourage local and private sector investment in manufacturing, so as to widen the employment base, thus providing the increased opportunity for the youth.

Under Section E Education, the Government feels obliged to collaborate with Non-Government Organizations (NGO's), to develop and improve programs to address the reality of illiteracy and its consequences. Along with, establishing a proper decentralized library service to complement the studies of students and encourage their general and personal development.

The Government and the NGO's feel it necessary to do all of the above mentioned in order to improve the quality of the youth so that their businesses will follow the same trend.

### National Policy Recommendations

The Youth Affairs Department intends on reviewing and tabling parliament so that they can monitor, review and advise Government on matters pertaining to youth and youth development.

### National Coordinators and Major Contributors

The Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Youth and Sports

The Youth Affairs Department

Non – Governmental Organizations

The National Youth Commission which comprises of: National Student Council, National Youth Council, National Sports Council, National Development Foundation and Service clubs.

The youth is determined to build a legacy of peace and sustainable development, but we can only do that with the help of the Government and the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.



Suriname  
*Zephania Graanoogst*

Main Findings

These are the findings of the youth in Suriname. These findings include education, entrepreneurship, economy, employment, government, communication & information. These are the concerns en aspirations of the Surinamese youth.

*Education, Economy and the Government*

- The government has to invest more in education, because knowledge makes power
- They have to build more schools, because it is not enough especially in the interior. After basic school the students have to come to town to study further and there are also not enough schools in town.
- The level of our education is to low, so we have difficulties when we study abroad, because we are not on one level with them.
- Improve the education system and increase the quality.
- Every youngster should be able to get education, because everyone should have education. Some of the children don't attend to school, because of the economic situation.
- They should be able to pay school for those who can't pay themselves (the poor people).
- The teachers should receive more money, so that the quality could improve.
- Education should be on a higher level, and it should be payable or otherwise the government has to offer scholarship to those who can't afford to pay it. Students should have students the opportunity to study abroad
- There are still to many dropouts, especially children of basic schools who don't finish school. They should give them training so they can learn a profession and build themselves up.
- It should be easier for young people to study, so they don't have to have 3 jobs to pay their study.
- Students of other districts who come here to study at the university don't have money to pay housing. Something like an education area would work. Make all kinds of finance possible so they can finish their study.
- We have to work on renewal of our education, because our education system is from the sixties and has not changed yet.
- The economic situation in the country doesn't allow the youth to develop properly and there is no support for the students.
- Everything is getting more expensive but your budget stays the same. The youth is concerned how to get around with the money they have.

*Employment and Entrepreneurship*

- We should more and more put younger people at high positions, because the youth has to learn from the older people in these positions.
- They say 'the youth is the future of tomorrow' but it seems like the old people don't want to make place for the younger people. They don't listen to the youth. If we say something they put it away, they don't use it. They have to accept what we're saying too, especially the government.

- Graduates of the university can't get a job. They solicit jobs for years. Create employment for graduates of the university. Pay them more than they are paid now. Make it easier for young people to live the day through.
- Housing: young people who have just graduated can't afford to buy land. You don't want to stay with your parents forever. They've supported you with your study and when you've graduated you can't afford to build your own house and you just can't afford certain things
- There are possibilities you just don't get. People look at names and faces to achieve a goal. Students are sitting with their diploma and they are asking their self why others can get a job and they can't.
- Suriname has to work more on entrepreneurship. Give people the chance to be an entrepreneur, because if you want to set up a business there are many obstacles. We have to get rid of all those barriers and maybe there should be a fund for entrepreneurs
- To become an entrepreneur and have your own company, Suriname should have an independent government, a stable economy, no political disorder.

### *Safety and Environment*

- Much more activities should be done for the youth so there will be less crime
- The youngsters should be kept off the street and send to school
- There should be more Sports and games for the youth with better school guidance
- They should bring discipline under the young people. They have to know that they have to study and don't hang around in the streets. Make rules to ensure that they study as much and as long as possible and give them all the space to develop.
- There is much junk on the street; the streets are getting cleaned up, but after a while junk is thrown on the streets again.
- There are more criminals these days so you are not safe at your home anymore

That's why it is good to make a comparison from how the youth from Suriname is thinking in comparison with those of the other countries in the Caribbean. Maybe we can learn from each other how to come with the best solution.

### *Current National Policies and Infrastructure Relevant to Youth*

The youth policy is being coordinated by the **Ministry of Education and Human Development**. This Ministry has a under directory and the name is under directory of youth affairs.

There are other Ministry who also help with the making of policies for the Surinamese youth. These are :

1. The ministry of Labor  
For example policies about child labor
2. The ministry of Health  
For example policies about health care
3. The ministry of Justice and Police  
For example policies about young criminals
4. The ministry of Social affairs  
For example policies about the rights of children and daycare.

The under directory of youth affairs is responsible for the **National Youth Institute**. This Institute is responsible for 3 main affairs. They are:

1. The National Youth Parliament
2. The Caricom Youth Ambassadors Program
3. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals Youth Ambassadors program.

*Ad1 The National Youth Parliament*

This Parliament has 29 members chosen by a national election. Every 2 weeks these members meet to talk about the concerns of the youth. Their main task is to advise the government about policies or youth affairs. They also do projects for the youth. This parliament has 4 commissions. These are: Education, sports, international affairs and social affairs.

*Ad2 The Caricom Youth Ambassadors Program*

There are always 2 Youth Ambassadors, a male and a female, chosen by the 29 members of the youth parliament. Their main task is to increase the Caricom awareness under the Surinamese youth. The 2 ambassadors can't do all the work by themselves. They have 15 members. There are also 4 commissions to organize the work. These are: CSME , Information and Technologies, HIV/AIDS and Regional Integration.

*Ad3 The United Nations Millennium Development Goals Youth Ambassadors Program*

These 2 ambassadors, a male and a female, are selected by an UN meeting to be the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Youth Ambassadors in Suriname. They also have 15 members and 4 commissions to organize their work.

All the youth workers receive a minimal compensation from the government. The youth work constantly develops, because the government can not do it on its own. They need the youth to make youth policies.



Trinidad and Tobago  
*Linda Ramsawak, Chenelle Spooner*

Main Findings

Trinidad and Tobago defines youth as young people between the ages of 12-29; from a population of approximately 1.3 million there are close to 400,000 youth. The Government of this country has invested in the future of our youth. To ensure a prosperous future for the young people of Trinidad and Tobago, the following issues need to be addressed:

1. Low Self Esteem
2. Abuse and Neglect inclusive of youths with disabilities and young children
3. Limited educational opportunities
4. Few Employment opportunities
5. Secondary School drop-outs
6. Substance Abuse
7. Violence in schools
8. Sexual activity at an early age
9. Teenage Pregnancy
10. Unsafe Abortions
11. Persons with disabilities, lack of resources, employment opportunities and educational services that match that of the global world
12. Domestic Violence
13. Lack of vision/direction
14. Lack of discipline
15. Breakdown in family life – with influences from US trends and Jamaican cultures
16. Shortage of cultural facilities to host major youth conferences, festivals and shows
17. Limited recreational opportunities for socializing and networking

Current National Policies and Infrastructure Relevant to Youth

Firstly, there is a program facilitated by the Ministry of Science and Technology; the On the Job Training (OJT). This program allows young person (16-35) who have completed the CXC, A-Level and or a degree an opportunity to work up to a year at any government or private organization. Also there is the Multi-Sector Skills Training (MuST) which allows persons between the ages of 18 – 50 an opportunity to have hands on experience and gain skills in the fields of construction and tourism and hospitality. The skills taught in construction include: masonry, welding, scaffolding, painting, plumbing and electrical servicing while the tourism and hospitality program prepares persons to become effective and efficient in the field.

In Tobago, there is the Tobago Youth Build Program which teaches young persons useful skills that will help them earn a living and lead more fulfilling and productive lives. The program's duration is six months and the training are in the areas of customer service, anger management, creative expression, sexual and reproduction health, literacy and numeracy.

Additionally, tertiary education is a high priority of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. For many years, they provided many scholarships to students who excelled in the A-Level and CAPE examinations. In 2007 The Government Assistance for Tuition (GATE) program was implemented. GATE allows any citizen the opportunity to pursue any degree at any university of their chose either locally or regionally.

When all the necessary skills are gained, there is the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO) which provides funding and training to start or enhance small and micro-enterprises in Trinidad and Tobago. NEDCO funding is specifically designed to assist those who have difficulty accessing funding from banks or other commercial lending agencies.

The Trinidad and Tobago Youth Policy is a facet of the country's vision 2020 plan. This is a plan to achieve a first world status by the year 2020. The implementation of the national youth policy is seen as critical in achieving this goal. The main objective of the national youth policy is to develop young people who can make informed decisions, live meaningful lives, and contribute to the sustainable development of Trinidad and Tobago, to ensure this, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago seeks to encourage greater coordination and collaboration among organizations that serve young people. They also seek to reform the youth sector in order to meet the needs of the young people more effectively, and to explore the use of this sector as a tool for the nation's development.

These programs will continue to address the unemployment and provide the necessary skills that the youth need to manage their own enterprises. "The Government of Trinidad and Tobago pledges to commitment to create the social, economic, legal and political framework to empower young people so that they would be able to make informed choices to lead meaningful enjoyable lives and contribute to the sustainable development of Trinidad and Tobago."(National Youth Policy, pg 37).

The following programs are also in place to contribute to youth issues.

1. Enterprise Assistant Fund
2. Youth Centers in communities, providing counseling, training and social opportunities for youth
3. Besides GATE, Tobagonians also can apply for Financial Assistant Fund and Traditional Scholarships from the Tobago house of Assembly. There is also a HELP Loan for students pursuing studies, locally, regionally or internationally
4. Early Childhood centers around the island
5. Tobago Literacy Unit
6. Technical Vocational Centre for Persons with disabilities
7. Community-based programs providing training in: food preparation, dance, drama, African drumming, computer literacy, stage management
8. On The Job Training and CAST to provide young persons with employment within the government and private sector
9. Support services to assist youth organizations and NGO's geared towards Youth Development E.g Tobago Youth Council
10. Availability to YTEPP, MUST, CCC training programs for youth.
11. School feeding program for primary and secondary schools
12. Free Transportation for students
13. Books grants and book rental services
14. Free dental and health care for young people sixteen (16) and under
15. Family Planning Clinic

## 16. Community-based Police Youth Clubs

### National Coordinators and Major Contributors

1. NEDCO
2. Division of Finance and Enterprise Development
3. Division of Education, Youth Affairs and sports
4. Division of Health and Social Services
5. Youth Training and Employment Partnership Program

**Annex 2 – Draft Declaration of the Summit of the Americas including the recommendations from the Caribbean Dialogue**



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG) OEA/Ser.E GRIC/DC-V/doc.1/08  
21 July 2008  
Original: English

Fifth Summit of the Americas  
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago  
April 19, 2009

**Draft Declaration of Commitment  
'Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security  
and Environmental Sustainability'**

1. Guided by a renewed spirit of regional cooperation, integration and solidarity, we, the Heads of State and Government of the democratic countries of the Americas, have gathered in Port of Spain, at the Fifth Summit of the Americas, with a firm commitment to improve the well-being of all our people by advancing collective solutions to the most pressing challenges facing our Hemisphere. We reiterate our will to strengthen national and hemispheric efforts to create conditions for greater peace, security and prosperity for all the peoples of the Americas.

2. In accordance with the principles and values of the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, we are determined to continue our fight against poverty, hunger, social exclusion, discrimination and inequality which afflict the lives and erode the hopes of so many in our Hemisphere.

3. We, therefore, renew our commitment, to all the peoples of the Americas, to improve the quality of their lives by adopting and implementing an Inter-American strategy of collaboration, with the support of the institutions of the United Nations and the Inter-American System, to complement all our nations' efforts to foster greater opportunities for decent employment, to improve health, wellness and nutrition, to increase access to quality education, to ensure adequate and sustainable energy, and to manage our environment responsibly.

4. We affirm that these issues are closely inter-dependent with our efforts to build stronger democratic institutions, promote good governance and social inclusion, uphold the rule of law, increase access to justice, protect human rights, combat violence, crime and terrorism, and achieve broader civic participation of all citizens of the Inter-American Community.

**Promoting Human Prosperity**

5. Deep and persistent inequalities continue to exist, especially in education, income levels, health and nutritional status, exposure to violence and crime, and access to basic services. In response, we will continue to develop and implement social protection programmes that are specifically

targeted to the poor and vulnerable groups in our societies, in order to ensure equal access for all men and women to basic social services such as water, housing, healthcare, food and sanitation.

6. We commit to exchange information on policies, experiences and good practices in order to support our national efforts to reduce social disparities and inequality, and halve poverty by the year 2015. We request the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to coordinate the process of reviewing and consolidating all existing social protection and poverty eradication programmes by the end of 2010, in collaboration with the Ministers responsible for Finance, Planning and Development, as well as other regional and sub-regional financial and development institutions, in order to increase efficiency, reduce duplication, identify gaps and optimise the use of resources.

7. We recognize that to eliminate poverty and hunger, create jobs, and raise the standard of living of all our people, we must achieve higher levels of continuous economic growth with equity. We also recognize the positive contribution of open trade policies in the promotion of growth, employment and development. We, therefore, commit to continue implementing sound macroeconomic policies that are characterized by appropriate and transparent fiscal and monetary measures, prudent public expenditures, higher domestic savings and high growth rates. We will also continue to promote private sector development, diversify economic activity, improve competitiveness and strengthen economic integration. We are committed to boosting investment in energy, transport and communications infrastructure to attract additional private investment and promote business development.

8. In accordance with the Decent Work in the Americas: An Agenda for the Hemisphere (2006-2015), we will continue to facilitate and encourage the creation of more decent and productive employment opportunities in the formal sector. We instruct the Ministers of Labour, within the context of the OAS Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour, in collaboration with the unions and the employers' organizations and with the support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), to develop a coordinated plan to continue to address the objectives of the Agenda by the end of 2010.

9. With the support of the ILO and in accordance with the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, we will adopt the necessary policies and regulations to facilitate and promote the movement of enterprises and workers from the informal to the formal sector. We also reaffirm that all migrants regardless of their immigration status, should be accorded the full protection of human rights and the full observance of labour laws applicable to them.

10. We reiterate our commitment to protect women and children from economic exploitation and we call on the Ministers responsible for Education, Labour and Social Development to adopt coordinated national strategies to prevent and eradicate child labour by 2020 according to the Decent Work Agenda, and develop innovative strategies to bring children back into healthy learning environments. We also reiterate our commitment to eliminate forced labour before 2010.

11. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are fundamental to economic growth, employment creation and poverty reduction. We call on the World Bank, IDB and other regional banks to accelerate their efforts to promote private sector expansion and development by doubling lending to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and tripling the numbers of enterprises accessing credit by 2012.

12. We will work towards eliminating administrative and bureaucratic barriers to the creation of new enterprises. We will, therefore, adopt the necessary reforms to simplify the processes involved in starting and closing business ventures, and commit to reducing business start-up time to a maximum of 30 days by 2012. We call on the IDB and the World Bank to support national efforts to improve the legislative frameworks and administrative procedures for achieving this target.

13. In order to foster innovation and entrepreneurship, we commit to increasing investment in research and development to a minimum of 1% of GDP by 2015 and to strengthening the linkages among universities, science institutions, the private sector, multilateral agencies and workers. We will also develop, harmonise and enforce intellectual property laws and regulations in order to safeguard works of innovation and creativity.

14. Feeding our people is now the most immediate challenge confronting our Hemisphere and, indeed, the world. We, therefore, commit to taking an active role, working in partnership with the international community, to develop and implement comprehensive policies and programmes to resolve this challenge. We reaffirm our commitment to the 2008 Rome Declaration on World Food Security, to the objectives of the World Food Summit and to the Millennium Development Goal to halve the number of undernourished people by 2015.

15. We commit to developing new national and regional approaches under AGRO Plan 2015 and instruct Ministers of Agriculture to adopt strategic actions to facilitate the implementation of this Plan based on the consensus of their 2007 Hemispheric Meeting in Guatemala.

16. We recognize that the problems of inequality of access and exclusion from basic health services persist, especially among the most vulnerable, including women, children, indigenous peoples and the poor. We, therefore, commit to providing essential social protection and universal access to quality healthcare, taking into account labour, environment, gender and social security policies, and will increase public spending on health to at least 5% of GDP by 2015 in order to address the health challenges faced by our people.

17. While the region has made strides in reducing mortality in infants and children under 5 years, neonatal mortality has not decreased at the same rate. We call on the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) to continue to assist countries in addressing this problem through the implementation of the Regional Strategic Plan of Action based on the Interagency Strategic Consensus on Reducing Neonatal Mortality and Morbidity in Latin America and the Caribbean.

18. We are convinced that the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) can be reduced by comprehensive and integrated preventive and control strategies at the individual, family, community, national and regional levels and through collaborative programmes, partnerships and policies supported by governments, the private sector, the media, NGOs and relevant regional and international partners. We, therefore, reiterate our support for the PAHO/WHO Regional Strategy on an Integrated Approach to the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases Including Diet, Physical Activity, and Health.

19. We instruct our Ministers of Health, with the support of PAHO/WHO, to establish surveillance systems by 2015 for NCDs and their risk factors, as part of our national public health surveillance systems. We encourage the establishment of National Commissions on noncommunicable diseases to plan and coordinate comprehensive prevention and control strategies.

20. We commit to improving reproductive health, mental health services, community-based health care; the introduction of cost effective prevention approaches; broader screening to permit early detection of disease; and the provision of essential medicines especially to the most needy.

21. In addition, we commit to taking the necessary actions to improve the nutritional levels of all the people in the Americas by 2015 and to the full implementation of the Regional Strategy on Nutrition and Health Development 2006-2015, coordinated by PAHO.

22. In order to address the spread of vector borne diseases, especially dengue, we commit to the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) and call on PAHO to prepare a regional contingency plan that contains the new guidelines as set forth in the IHR by the end of 2009.

23. We are committed to the goal of halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) by 2015 by providing universal access for men and women to prevention, care, treatment and support. We will implement a regional strategy to provide such access under the coordination of the WHO and PAHO. We also commit to reducing the incidence of mother-to-child transmission of HIV to less than 5% by 2015. We reiterate our commitment to strengthening and providing adequate financing to the Global Fund to Combat AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

24. We affirm that equal access to quality education, adapted to local and global realities, is a human right, a public good and a political priority. Improving early childhood care and education, primary education and teacher training are essential approaches to achieving universal primary education by 2010.

25. We reaffirm our commitment to achieving a secondary education enrollment rate of at least 75% by the year 2010 and we now call on the Ministers of Education and the OAS, with the support of the specialised regional institutions and UNESCO, to develop a gender-sensitive hemispheric strategy to reform secondary education and make it accessible to all our children, especially those from marginalised groups, by 2015. This strategy must include reform of curricula based on the principles of equity, quality, relevance and efficiency in education, take into account cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity, and encourage innovation and creativity.

26. Recognising that education is a lifelong process that promotes social inclusion and allows people to contribute more fully to their societies, we give high priority to improving the quality of, and access to, tertiary, vocational and adult education, especially for women, rural inhabitants, persons with disabilities, Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples. We, therefore, commit to increasing the tertiary participation rate to a minimum of 40 per cent by 2020, and urge countries which have already made considerable advances in this area, to exchange good practices that will support the efforts of other countries to achieve this target. We also commit to support the ongoing professional development of teachers.

27. We will continue to invest in our young people and adopt policies and programmes that will expand their economic opportunities, increase their social engagement, open avenues for leadership, allow for meaningful participation in decision-making activities, and increase the quality and coverage of social services aimed at improving their lives and promoting healthy lifestyles. We, therefore, reaffirm our commitment to the 2008 Declaration of Medellín on Youth and Democratic Values.

28. It is essential that the technological gap, both among and within the nations of the Americas, be reduced. We, therefore, renew our commitment to collaborate with regional, sub-regional and multinational agencies to advance progress in the implementation of initiatives under the Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas and the Plan of Action of Quito. We instruct our Ministers and High Level Authorities with responsibility for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to promote the use of ICTs in our education systems and our public and business sectors, and to widen access for households and communities.

29. We recognise that inter-cultural dialogue and respect for cultural diversity promote mutual understanding and convergence, which help reduce conflict, discrimination and the barriers to economic opportunity and social participation. We commit to nurturing creativity and promoting cultural industries as part of our policies for the promotion of social development, sustainable economic growth, job creation and income generation, especially for young adults.

- Establish comprehensive multi- sectoral and integrated framework to increase employment and entrepreneurial opportunities available to youths
- Use experiential learning when teaching young people how to overcome barriers to establishing successful businesses
- Assess labour and business markets regularly to ensure that youth employment/entrepreneurship initiative to fill market gaps
- Enhance existing community – based skills programs and facilities to create employment for young people in remote areas not currently served by existing institutions

### **Promoting Energy Security**

30. We will develop clean, affordable and sustainable energy systems by reducing the energy and carbon-intensity of our economies, promoting energy efficiency in all sectors, diversifying our energy by developing low-carbon and renewable sources, and encouraging the cleaner, more efficient use of fossil fuels. We commit to increase the contribution of renewable and low carbon energy sources to meet a minimum of 50 per cent of our national primary energy demands by 2050 at the latest and will introduce, as necessary, new financing and policy frameworks in order to facilitate and accelerate this process. **We commit to the creation of national non-partisan committees in order to monitor the implementation of renewable technologies by private/public sectors. These committees will have the authority to penalize companies/institutions who receive education and training through this process.**

31. We also commit to enhancing energy efficiency and conservation, especially in our transport systems and industrial sectors, among small and medium-sized enterprises and at the household level in order to promote more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. We encourage the introduction of minimum efficiency requirements and harmonized ratings systems for both domestic and industrial appliances. We will review building codes and raise the standards for energy efficiency, and develop urban planning guidelines to encourage more energy-efficient cities. **We propose that all governments expand the role of the relevant ministries to promote recycling and the benefits within and offer incentives to private/public sector and individuals who are investing in Green Technologies.**

32. We will further promote diversification of energy technologies, infrastructure, supplies and routes, and facilitate non-discriminatory third-party access to transit infrastructure to encourage the development of transparent, efficient and orderly energy markets. We commit to making all relevant planning and regulatory requirements simpler, more coherent, transparent and effective by the end of 2012.

33. Recognising the potential of new and emerging technologies for diversifying the energy matrix, we will encourage the development, manufacture and use of both current and next-generation biofuels including sugar-based, cellulosic, algal and bacterial biofuels, and will develop a set of compatible specifications by the end of 2015 in order to facilitate their trade and increased use, taking into account existing and planned standards. We will develop strategies for sustainable biomass cultivation and production, with particular regard to the need to ensure food security and, by the end of 2012 at the latest, develop a strategy for second-generation and more advanced biofuels that will ensure that they do not compete directly with other agricultural crops for land, water or fertilizer. We will also support the development and use of on and off-shore wind turbines, conventional and polymer photovoltaics, solar towers, geothermal and hydropower, hydrogen fuel cells and other new energy technologies.

34. Many renewable sources of energy are intermittent or only available in particular locations. We will, therefore, develop and invest in new energy infrastructures, support the development of cross-border, efficient low-carbon energy generation and distribution grids and other energytrading and cooperation networks. We will cooperate to improve the security, safety and stability of our critical energy infrastructure and supply networks and to ensure that all links in the energy supply chain operate to the highest standards of human health and safety, environmental protection and physical security.

35. We commit to the promotion of clean energy through research and development, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and the commercialization of new, cleaner energy solutions. Priority will be given to increasing international cooperation and sharing information in the search for solutions that can benefit all our nations.

36. We will increase public awareness, **education (e.g. formal education system) and training (e.g. to the greater community and private sector)** on energy and environmental issues and commit to ensuring, by 2012, that the people of the Americas have universal access to accurate, reliable and impartial information on energy, environmental and climate change issues.

37. Recognizing that the issues of the availability, cost and security of our energy supplies, our economic competitiveness and the sustainability of our environment are closely intertwined, we commit to the development of a coherent policy framework that takes into consideration our diverse situations, circumstances and opportunities and allows for the simultaneous strengthening and diversification of all our economies.

38. We, therefore, instruct all Ministers with responsibility for Energy, Planning, Regulation and Finance, within the framework of the OAS and the Sustainable Energy Partnership of the Americas (SEPA), with the support and guidance of the IDB and the World Bank, taking into account the diverse conditions, opportunities, legislative and regulatory frameworks in our countries, and building on existing energy cooperation and integration initiatives, to develop a strategy of cooperation among our nations, international organizations and the private sector that will increase energy efficiency, diversify energy sources, minimize environmental impact, strengthen energy independence, and secure access to safe, affordable energy supplies for all, especially the poorest. We further instruct our Ministers to develop this strategy by the end of

2015 at the latest.

- We realize that opportunities for employment are not often accessible, and young persons are desirous of contributing to the economic environment, therefore private sector organizations should seek to create support areas for young entrepreneurs by utilizing the products and services of these youth in the execution of their wider organizational undertakings.
- We further acknowledge that young persons should be exposed to business content from as early as possible, and endorse fostering the generation of innovative business ideas among High School students, through competitions and other such avenues.
- In light of numerous international attempts to globally standardize the framework for ensuring that youth enterprises are supported, we suggest putting regulations in place to ensure that young entrepreneurs can access business opportunities from both public and private institutions.
- In light of the considerable financial constraints associated with starting a new business, it is advised that both public and private institutions begin providing start up grants with low interest rates to eligible young persons.
- To better facilitate the social benefits associated with certain enterprises, it is advised that governments make resources for social programs more accessible to young persons.
- Bearing in mind that non-traditional areas of employment are not generally pursued because there aren't seen as financially rewarding, we advise the provision of financial incentives for young persons who are going into socially beneficially investment

### **Promoting Environmental Sustainability**

39. All social and economic development depends on the conservation and protection of the environment. We, therefore, reaffirm our strong commitment to sustainable development, as set out in the World Summits on Sustainable Development in Rio in 1992 and Johannesburg in 2002, the Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra of 1996, the Declaration of Santa Cruz +10 of 2006, and the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

40. We commit to take the necessary steps to **reduce** greenhouse gas **emission** in **each member states by an agreed percentage by the year 20\_\_ to ensure the eventual stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere** at a level that will not incur a risk of serious changes in the Earth's climate and weather systems.

41. We will strengthen our mechanisms for the sharing of early warning information on natural disasters, for disaster planning and preparedness, and for managing and coordinating response and relief programmes following a disaster.

42. We instruct Ministers and High Level Authorities responsible for Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the specialised national and regional disaster organizations, to develop, by 2011, a cooperation system within the Americas through which they can collaborate, share information, develop models of good practice, and ascertain which areas of human settlement and sections of essential industrial and transport infrastructure are at risk, and to then ensure that they are either protected or relocated.

43. We will introduce stronger planning and zoning measures to ensure that any future residential, commercial or industrial developments are not located in vulnerable areas, and we will facilitate better access to education, training, land, credit, and housing to ensure that poor people are not trapped in vulnerable areas by the fear of losing their livelihoods.

44. We will also work towards promoting sound environmental governance by strengthening national environmental laws and building institutional capacity to manage environmental resources in accordance with our sustainable development priorities.

45. We also support further dialogue and cooperation under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including the commitments on long-term cooperative action established in Montreal in 2005 and in the Bali Road Map of 2008, and commit to work towards a global agreement at the UNFCCC Meeting in Copenhagen in 2009.

46. We renew our support for the Inter-American Programme for Sustainable Development (IAPSD) and instruct the Ministers and all other authorities responsible for sustainable development to gather in 2010, under the auspices of the OAS, in collaboration with the PAHO and the international financial and development institutions concerned with sustainable development, and with the participation of the academic community and civil society, to assess the achievements of the Programme to date, and to propose, where appropriate, new goals for a renewed IAPSD, with a particular focus on the integrated management of both domestic and shared water resources, prevention and mitigation of disasters, forest and fisheries management, sustainable agricultural management and rural development, ecosystem and biodiversity protection, natural resources management, urban environmental management and the treatment of hazardous wastes. We will give special attention to the most vulnerable areas, including low-lying coastal regions and small island developing states.

47. We also direct the Ministers and all other authorities responsible for sustainable development, in conjunction with the World Bank and the IDB, working under the auspices of the OAS, to undertake a comprehensive review of the potential impacts of climate change for all the nations of the Americas by 2011, and to formulate national Plans of Action for the management and mitigation of these impacts, with special attention to the needs of people likely to be displaced or to lose their livelihoods. We further instruct that each of these national reviews be used to inform the development of a Regional Strategy for the Management of Climate Change Impacts, to be formulated jointly by the World Bank and the IDB by 2013.

### **Strengthening Public Security**

48. We are determined to persevere in our efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and organised crime, in full compliance with our obligations under international law, including human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. We, therefore, instruct all Ministers with responsibility for security, policing, intelligence and armed forces, within the framework of the OAS, to continue to cooperate and utilize our collective resources to prevent terrorists and criminal organizations from trespassing across borders and acquiring weapons, and to prevent

and combat terrorism and organized crime.

49. We will deny any resources to terrorists and criminals and will combine our efforts to identify, track, seize or freeze assets associated with terrorism and organised crime, in accordance with national legislation and consistent with international law.

50. We direct the OAS, through the Secretariat for Multi-Dimensional Security, to continue in the preparation of a high level meeting of experts and authorities to develop a common approach to matters related to crime and violence and also to prepare a regional strategy to promote Inter-American cooperation in dealing with criminal gangs, giving special attention to young people, **by promoting better lifestyle choices to youth through positive mentorship programs suitable to the needs of individual member states.**

- **We commit to design and implement policies which utilize recycling as a tool to reduce the need for the use of new resources, thus reducing the volume of waste generated.**
- **We pledge to conduct the necessary research for training and education within the member states of the benefits involved in recycling.**
- **We commit to integrate youth into our decision making processes of the country by democratically appointing one youth representative from a national youth organization.**
- **We pledge to integrate the issues regarding environmental sustainability into the school curriculum primarily at the primary school level.**

### **Strengthening Democratic Governance**

51. All of our aspirations and goals for the Americas depend on strong democracies, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We, therefore, renew our commitment to strengthen our democratic institutions and uphold and apply the principles and values of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

52. Committed to increasing the transparency, integrity, accountability and efficiency in the public and private sectors, we will strengthen our fight against all forms of corruption and unethical behavior. We renew our commitment to the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption and will develop and implement policies that foster a culture of integrity and transparency among citizens and public officers, and within public offices and institutions.

53. We reaffirm our commitment to the defense, protection and promotion of human rights and to the independence and strengthening of the Inter-American System of Human Rights.

54. The Social Charter of the Americas and its Plan of Action will offer our citizens more opportunities to benefit from sustainable development with equity and social inclusion. We, therefore, commit to conclude and adopt these documents before the end of 2009.

55. We also reaffirm that discrimination of any kind inhibits the full participation of all persons in society and will continue and conclude negotiations on the Inter-American Convention Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance. We will also continue to develop the

American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

56. We commit to continue mainstreaming gender into our public policies and to strengthen the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of girls and women. We will advance women's full and equal participation in political life and decision-making at all levels in their countries, and enforce laws that promote respect for their human rights, and gender equity and equality.

57. We recognize the important role of the OAS in the peaceful resolution of our differences and in support of the objectives of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. We commit to improve the capacity of the OAS in its efforts to assist in enhancing peace and the democratic, social and economic stability of our region.

**Strengthening the Summit of the Americas, Follow-Up and Implementation Effectiveness**

58. We recognize that the issues of human prosperity, energy security and environmental security are closely intertwined and that an integrated, coherent policy framework is essential to the achievement of the commitments we have made here to the people of our Hemisphere.

59. In order to strengthen Ministerial participation in the Summit Process, to improve the implementation of our decisions at this Fifth Summit, and to increase accountability to the people of the Americas, we instruct the technical secretariats of all Ministerial Meetings to inform their Ministers and High Level Authorities of the mandates of this Summit and initiate strategic actions, by the end of 2009, to facilitate the implementation of our commitments. We further commit to convening the Summit of the Americas on a regular basis and no later than every three years.

60. We instruct the General Secretariat of the OAS, in accordance with its central role in the implementation of Summit mandates, to provide a comprehensive report to the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), annually, on the actions and progress made at all Ministerial Meetings and by the institutions of the United Nations and the Inter-American System, towards achieving the specific targets set at this Summit.

61. We direct the Ministers of Finance in collaboration with the multilateral financial institutions to convene a meeting, in the first quarter of 2010, to ensure that technical cooperation resources are available to finance the different elements of the Inter-American initiatives agreed in this document.

62. We reiterate the call, made at the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, for Ministers of Finance to increase their involvement in the Summit of the Americas process and instruct them to explore ways to strengthen the strategic alliances, at the national level, among all Ministries, including those responsible for education, health, labour, social development, youth, information and communication, agriculture, energy, the environment, and crime and security.

63. We also call upon the institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group to further strengthen their commitment and to develop coordinated programmes of action to deliver the goals for the Americas set out in this Declaration.

64. We commit to encouraging the participation of civil society in the design and execution of development policies and programmes by providing technical and financial assistance to strengthen and build their capacity to participate more fully in the Inter-American System.

65. We also commit to continue exploring ways in which our governments can build, strengthen and maintain alliances with the business sector and to harness the expertise and resources which exist within this sector, in order to develop and implement effective, practical and sustainable interventions to achieve our national and hemispheric development goals.

66. We, the Heads of State and Government of the Americas, agree that this document shall be known as the 'Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain', and we hereby approve it on this the 19th day of April, in the year 2009.

▪ *How does the theme of the 5th Summit relate to young people?*

The Declaration that is agreed upon during the 5th Summit of the Americas will bring young people a sense of security for the future and give them hope to look forward. The 5th Summit of the Americas will create the foundation for youth to adequately function in an ever changing environment. Giving young people the opportunity to give their recommendations and feel part of the decision making process which will increase the success rate of implementation.

▪ *How can people work together to expand programs for young people and keep young people actively involved in programs and activities following the summit?*

Have more young people involved in the creation of programs, policy making and evaluation with the guidance of program managers. The programs need to be geared toward youth interests to keep motivation and youth buy-in high.

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