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LC/CAR/R.85
30 December 2005
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Agricultural Transformation

and

Gender Considerations

in

Caribbean Economies

Acknowledgement

The Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean wishes to acknowledge

the assistance of Ms Rufina Paul, Consultant,

in the preparation of this report.

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Acronyms

AoA	- Agreement on Agriculture
CARDI	- Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development institute
CARICOM	- The Caribbean Community ¹
CARIFORUM	- CARICOM plus Haiti and the Dominican Republic
CDB	- Caribbean Development Bank
CET	- Common External Tariff
CSME	- Caribbean (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy
DES	- Dietary Energy Supply
ECLAC	- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EU	- European Union
FAO	- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSA	- Farming Systems Approach
GATT	- General Agreement on Tariff and Trade
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product
IDB	- Inter-American Development Bank
IICA	- Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture
IPR	- Intellectual Property Right
OECS	- Organization of Eastern Caribbean States ²
S&DT	- Special and Differential Treatment
SPFS	- Special Programme for Food Security
UNIFEM	- United Nations Fund for Women
UR	- Uruguay Round
USA	- United States
WTO	- World Trade Organization

¹ comprising Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

² comprising Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands (both British colonies) are associated member States of the OECS.

Preface

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the gender and social disparities existing in the agricultural and rural sector in Caribbean economies. In this context, agricultural transformation as occasioned by the dismantling of preferential trading arrangements is analysed to identify the most relevant gender discriminatory measures in the current agricultural development policy and programmes. The analysis seeks to provide the basis for enhancing understanding among policy makers, planners and rural development practitioners of the gender and social dimension involved in the formulation of agricultural policy and more specifically in relation to the new policy and institutional arrangements for agriculture in the region. The paper also provides insights regarding what changes should take place to create an enabling environment for more gender-based approaches to policy-making and strategic planning in agricultural development and trade in the Caribbean.

The methodology centred on the review of secondary sources that provide references on the new challenges, opportunities and constraints faced by the agricultural sector, in particular small farmers, in the context of globalization and agriculture transformation. Much of the literature for this assignment was obtained from FAO Headquarters in Rome and the FAO Subregional Office in Barbados, as well as the OECS Secretariat in St. Lucia. In the process of the review exercise, due consideration was given to changes in agricultural production patterns, resources allocation and rural livelihoods. Efforts to examine the most relevant policy measures and mechanisms in-place in support to agricultural development in the region were constrained, in the main, by the absence of gender disaggregated data. Documentation as regards the situation of women and men in relation to agricultural labour, rural income and food security situation in regions were limited. The use of the internet served to bridge the communication gap between countries and institutions.

The preliminary draft of the paper was presented and discussed at the FAO/ECLAC/UNIFEM regional workshop on mainstreaming gender analysis in agriculture and trade policies, for Caribbean countries, in November 2003. The second draft of the paper was informed by comments from the workshop and additional information acquired through field visits to Barbados, St. Kitts and St. Vincent in March 2004. The three day visits to each of these three countries entailed a review/appreciation of the resource, constraints and institutional capacities for gender mainstreaming within the agricultural sector at the national level. This included visits to some of the major agricultural projects and interviews with farmers (where feasible) in respect of their perspective of the current situation of the agricultural sector and the viability of their farm enterprises. As well, meetings were held with relevant/available officials within the respective ministries of agriculture to discern the gender consideration as regards agricultural policy and planning at the country level.

The internet was invaluable to the task of sourcing supplementary information to satisfy the aim of the paper; in respect of the identification of concrete policy measures and actions to formulate and develop more gender/social-responsive agricultural development policies. The final revision, though thwart with resource and communication constraints, was ultimately completed in compliance with the structure and approach proposed in the terms of references for this FAO/ECLAC assignment.

The author is very grateful for this opportunity to contribute to the furtherance of gender mainstreaming in the agricultural sector in the Caribbean, through the preparation of this paper. A challenging but appreciative experience!

Rufina Paul (BSc. M.A.)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The challenges posed by the movement towards globalization and trade liberalization have impacted most forcefully on the agricultural sector in the majority of Caribbean economies. The previous exclusion of agriculture from international trade negotiations and the heavily protected nature of the markets for agricultural products have, over the years, encouraged high levels of inefficiency and the flourishing of highly uncompetitive agricultural production systems. Thus, in order to guarantee the sustainability of Caribbean economies, the low-input, low productivity and high cost agricultural sector within the region must be transformed into a technologically appropriate and trade-efficient sector, with due recognition and consideration of the rights and responsibilities of individuals at all levels.

In this regard, trade liberalization imperatives have brought a new reality to Caribbean agriculture and countries in the region have all embarked on the implementation of economic diversification policy measures. As the economic case for trade liberalization focuses on the lowering of trade barriers and the emergence of free trade within a global market place; there is a strong call for the reallocation of the factors of production to achieve comparative advantage and international competitiveness within agriculture. Enhanced factor productivity is indispensable to the process removing comparative disadvantage within agricultural production and marketing systems in the Caribbean.

The trade-driven market failures within the Caribbean have been due in large measure to the countries' lack of preparedness to undertake the reforms necessary for improved agricultural production and marketing efficiencies. While the current process of trade liberalization poses a threat to the viability of the traditional agricultural sub sector in the Caribbean, it also presents opportunities for the development of new and emerging commodities and markets. Faced with internal social problems of equity and un/under-employment, coupled with externalities such as market access and stability, the agricultural sector in the Caribbean has undergone significant changes with respect to structure and content.

In the face of these daunting economic and social challenges, the Caribbean region recognizes the need for a policy environment that supports the development and implementation of strategies geared towards poverty reduction and "growth with equity". With the majority of Caribbean households dependent on rural and agricultural systems for livelihood, the impact of

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