



Workshop Report

The Joint Caribbean EU Strategy Reflections and Analysis

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&
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Management (ECDPM)

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Background and Context of Joint Caribbean EU Strategy

In an effort to rethink the scope of the Caribbean-EU Partnership, on 17 May 2010, Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean and the European Union met in Madrid, Spain on the occasion of the IV CARIFORUM-EU Summit. Both regions endorsed the proposal for the formulation, adoption and implementation of a Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy (JCEUS) to take advantage of opportunities and to cooperate on key challenges and shared priorities in their respective regions, including the promotion of regional integration and cooperation for sustainable development, the development of effective responses to climate change and natural disasters, the reconstruction of Haiti, crime and security and joint action in bi-regional, multilateral and global fora.

As part of the process of promoting dialogue and consultation towards the elaboration and finalisation of the JCEUS, the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and the Institute for International Relations (IIR) at the University of the West Indies hosted a seminar titled “**The Joint CARIFORUM EU Strategy: Reflections and Analysis.**” The joint workshop was convened in the context of a MOU signed by the ECDPM and IIR in October 2009, which has the objective of stimulating strategic reflection and analysis on the future of Caribbean-EU relations and on Caribbean regional integration.

The broad aim of the workshop was to obtain critical input from Caribbean academics, civil society and practitioners on the JCEUS. More specifically, the objectives were to: analyse the emerging global reconfigurations of power, changes in the EU and the Caribbean and their implications for Caribbean-EU relations and the JCEUS; analyse the priority areas identified in the JCEUS and explore other areas of common interest for the Caribbean-EU partnership; examine the potential value added of the JCEUS in relation to other existing frameworks of cooperation; consider relevant process related lessons from the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and propose a way forward for effective implementation of a Caribbean EU-Strategy.

The seminar brought together some twenty participants from a wide range of competence and experience, including academia, the private sector, civil society and practitioners in Caribbean EU relations (including former diplomats and negotiators).

Workshop Summary and Analysis

Continuing Relevance of the EU Caribbean relationship in a changing global political economy

The BRICs relations with the Caribbean have intensified, in particular, Brazil, India and China. Venezuela and Cuba are also important actors. The policy stance of non – interference by China is potentially attractive to the Caribbean because the latter wishes to preserve policy space. Despite this increasing presence, the EU continues to be a significant player in the Caribbean. In addition to the EU’s role as an important trading power, and source of funding, both in terms of sustainable and long term development support, and humanitarian assistance, the EU is important because it is an exemplar of and supports regional integration and promotes values such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. The EU’s presence in the region has significant geo political significance because it continues to serve as a counter weight to US power in the region. The EU also gives the Caribbean some degree of flexibility especially with respect to reducing the latter’s dependence on the US. By contrast, the BRICs group is not a cohesive force that projects power overseas, in conflict situations for example; they have not yet developed long-term coherent development programmes and China, for example, pursues economic and investment relations with insufficient concern for human rights and other values including corporate social responsibility. Additionally, export and investments in the Caribbean from the emerging players are still relatively low.

Interest Analysis: On what basis can the Caribbean and the EU pursue a Joint Strategy?

The Caribbean and Europe share common interests that may provide a basis for collaboration. In addition to the historical relationship, there are current and emerging opportunities on which the relationship may be pursued as follows:

1. The geographic location of the OCTs and DOMs in the Caribbean

By virtue of their status, the OCTs are constitutionally linked to EU Member States. The OCTs' proximity, relationship, and areas of common interest with the Caribbean provide an opportunity for EU collaboration with the wider Caribbean. Among the areas which the EU has interest in the OCTs include security, migration and environmental protection. EU cooperation with the OCTs is envisaged in the areas of climate change and bio diversity protection, which are key areas of interest to the rest of the Caribbean and have been identified in the Joint Strategy.

2. Membership of island states in the EU

The accession of Malta and Cyprus, which are small island states means that there are States within the EU that share the unique characteristics of most Caribbean States. This raises the level of awareness and appreciation of issues of concern, and challenges faced by the Caribbean, such as sea and marine related matters and the impact of climate change.

3. High Impact development cooperation opportunities

The impact of investments in smaller states could be potentially greater than in larger states. The smallness of Caribbean States presents an opportunity for EU member States to make investments with a potentially high development impact. This may be an attractive opportunity for smaller wealthy EU member states as well as the emerging ones that are attempting to carve a space for themselves on the world stage, for example, Slovenia that has showed interest in the Caribbean on earlier occasions.

Substantive areas of the Strategy

The five thematic areas of the Strategy were endorsed and recommendations were made for prioritizing the main areas and/or focussing on particular sub areas in the Strategy:

1. Regional integration

In the draft Strategy, cooperation on regional integration is for (a) promoting sustainable development through support for the CSME, private sector investment, multi stakeholder participation in regional and sub regional processes; promotion of technology and innovation; infrastructural development, support to industry; supporting institutional consolidation at regional and sub-regional levels; promotion of environmentally respectful technologies and economic processes and supporting bio-diversity and (b) promoting human and social development through education, training and science and technology, energy diversification and security, disaster risk reduction; food security and health and wellness; the promotion of youth involvement in national development; the promotion of social cohesion, gender equality and culture to foster equitable growth and poverty alleviation.

The meeting identified regional integration as the highest area of priority for EU Caribbean collaboration. The rationale for this is because strengthening of regional institutions is fundamental for all other areas of cooperation to be effectively implemented. Europe is the preferred partner with whom to cooperate on regional integration because of Europe's track record in the area.

2. Reconstruction and Institutional Support to Haiti

Cooperation on the reconstruction and sustainable development of Haiti is to be based on the Haiti's national development objectives¹ through a long-term programme of cooperation, in partnership with the international community.

The meeting identified the following areas as priorities for support to Haiti.

- (i) Agricultural development and food security should be prioritized areas with a focus on addressing challenges being faced by small farmers, including sustainable farming practices
- (ii) Haiti's debt to France should be addressed in the context of a joint strategy with Europe

3. Climate Change and Natural Disasters, with special reference to capacity building adaptation, mitigation and post disaster reconstruction.

Cooperation in this area has the objective of achieving a comprehensive and fair outcome under the UNFCCC and the conclusion of an ambitious international climate agreement.

The meeting identified disaster management, humanitarian and emergency assistance as areas in which greater cooperation can be sought with the EU to enhance capability of the Caribbean in dealing with these issues.

4. Crime and Security, including the trafficking of illegal drugs and arms

Caribbean - EU cooperation in this area aims to dismantle criminal networks, whether regional or transnational by strengthening cooperation in areas such as policing, the judiciary, and intelligence sharing.

The main area of priority identified in this thematic area is Caribbean cooperation with Latin America, because the latter is the supplier of drugs that pass through the Caribbean en route to Europe and North America.

5. Joint Action in bi-regional and multilateral fora and on global issues

The Caribbean and the EU will support each other in multilateral institutions of which they are both members and they will take account of the interests and concerns of the other party in international groupings or organizations to which only one partner belongs.

The meeting identified climate change as a priority area for joint action in international fora but it should be in collaboration with South America, in particular UNASUR countries, which house the Amazon rain forest.

In addition to endorsing the five thematic areas, the meeting identified additional areas for collaboration, viz reversing increasing fragmentation and inequalities in the Caribbean region and facilitating technology transfer.

6. Fragmentation

Fragmentation is perpetuated by several factors including, increasing tension among Caribbean peoples and discrimination of certain sections of Caribbean society in other Caribbean countries; lack of trust among countries and among Caribbean populations which exacerbates the implementation deficit, language and cultural differences which hinders the integration process; inadequate regional focus by donors and limited resources for undertaking regional projects/responses. A Caribbean EU Joint Strategy with Europe should aim to reverse this trend.

¹ Haiti's Action Plan for National Reconstruction and Development consists of four pillars: territorial rebuilding, economic rebuilding, social rebuilding and institutional rebuilding.

7. Inequality

Development challenges are more acute in the Caribbean now than ever. The Caribbean faces several existential threats including, rising levels of inequalities among Caribbean populations. The Strategy should therefore better address the high levels of poverty, inequalities and marginalization, which the Caribbean faces.

8. Technology transfer

Caribbean EU collaboration in the area of technology transfer should be pursued particularly in areas to that could help mitigate the effects of climate change and deal with environmental challenges.

Challenges for effective implementation of a Joint Caribbean EU Strategy

There are existing challenges that if not addressed could hinder the success of the Strategy. The meeting identified the following challenges:

1. There are existing spaces e.g. in the EPA that cover similar thematic areas as the Strategy. This poses the risk of duplication of efforts.
2. The Caribbean's engagement with non - traditional partners may divert attention towards other regions, which may result in decreased attention to a Joint Strategy with Europe.
3. The Caribbean faces an implementation deficit, which stems from challenges with its regional integration project. Challenges faced with implementation will affect effective execution of a Joint Strategy.
4. The lack of appropriate political backing of the highest political levels in the EU and the Caribbean will hinder the successful execution of the Joint Strategy.
5. Human and financial resource constraints may potentially affect the successful implementation of the Strategy.

What is the way forward? Concrete Actions for a successful Joint Strategy

1. An assessment of existing structures and processes should be carried out to define complementarity and added value of existing frameworks such as Cotonou, the EPA and regional and Hemispheric frameworks to ascertain where the Strategy can complement or where synergies may be created.
2. Develop a coherent regional strategy/vision in response to a changing global political economy. This strategy should be based on a cost benefit analysis and prioritizing areas for engagement with traditional and non - traditional players in the context of changing global configurations of power.
3. Improve the implementation capacity of the Caribbean to assist with the execution of the Joint Strategy.
 - (i) Regional integration must be promoted by strengthening institutional structures to address the implementation deficit that currently exists in the CARICOM.
 - (ii) Maintain realistic ambitions for the Strategy to allow for greater focus and ease of implementation.
4. *Appropriate political backing and public support and understanding must be sought for the success of the Strategy by doing the following:*
 - (i) Create a group of diverse civil society actors in the Caribbean to facilitate regular dialogue with policy makers before official events. This will foster citizenship participation and ownership and encourage a bottom up approach in the formulation and execution of the Strategy.
 - (ii) Institutionalise communication channels on the Strategy at all levels of society to encourage debate, build awareness on how to contribute to, use and benefit from the Strategy. The media may be utilized to create awareness among the private sector, civil society and the general public.
 - (iii) The strategy needs be discussed at the highest political level in both the Caribbean and the EU to ensure that the Strategy has strong political backing.
 - (iv) Opposition parliamentarians should be brought on board to ensure continuity in implementation in the event there is a change in government. One way this can be done is assign opposition MPs to a particular area of the strategy.

5. *Mobilise existing and new financial instruments both at the national and regional levels in the Caribbean to provide resources for the implementation of the Strategy*

What Research Agenda for the Joint Strategy?

1. *Analysis relating to the effects of emerging global configurations of power*
 - (i) Changing interest configurations and diversification of partners to 'new' partners (Latin America, BRICs and Canada) and the implications for Caribbean EU relations and the Joint Strategy
 - (ii) Cost - benefit analysis for prioritizing areas for engagement with traditional and emerging players
2. *Analysis related to Caribbean regional integration and cooperation and the Joint Strategy*
 - (i) Deepening integration process: Putting in place community governance architecture (national sovereignty versus supranational authority, sharing and delegating responsibilities, roles and mandates regional bodies, regional parliaments and effective representation of regional civil society)
 - (ii) Bottom-up approaches to regional integration and the Joint Strategy – role and participation of civil society in the regional integration process and the Joint Strategy.
 - (iii) An examination of substantive areas of cooperation in regional and hemispheric structures and processes to assess the degree to which synergies can be created with the Joint Strategy.
 - (iv) A cost - benefit analysis of regional integration to inform the direction of regional integration and to gain the support of the population on the process.
 - (v) Lessons from global and regional (OECS) 'models' of regional integration

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