



Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean
2013 SUBRAC Meeting
Agenda Item 5 – Implementing the congress mandate
How should we respond?
Financing public services

Three issues fall under this heading:

1. High debt and low growth in Caribbean countries
2. Fair taxation systems
3. Fighting privatisation (outsourcing, PPPs, precarious work)

Task 1 – High debt and low growth in Caribbean countries

To help us think through all of this we need to be sure that we have the information, understand the implications and have a clear position as trade unionists.

1. What is the debt to GDP ratio in your country? What does your government say about this? What do you think about it?
2. What does the Ministry of Finance in your country say about the country's debt to GDP ratios?
3. What's your gut reaction to the points raised in the IMF communiqué?
4. Given the national financial situation, how can or should your unions best respond? In such an economic climate is there still room for collective bargaining? What lessons have you learnt in your recent rounds of collective bargaining? What advice do you want to pass on to your colleagues?

Some useful resources

Conference programme and presentations - <http://www.imf.org/external/np/seminars/eng/2012/trinidad/www.imf.org>

<http://www.worldbank.org/>

Mark Weisbrot on the IMF and the Caribbean

<http://www.advancecenter.net/mark-weisbrot-on-the-imf-in-the-caribbean-caribnation-tv.html>

(also available on YouTube)

Mark Weisbrot on IMF and Jamaica and the Eurozone

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2012/may/18/jamaicanisation-eurozone/print>

Task 2 - Fair taxation systems

1. How does your country fund public services? Where does the money come from?
2. Are your tax systems progressive and fair? Do you pay income tax in your countries?
3. Has your union examined the points made by those supporting the Robin Hood Tax? What do you think should be the Caribbean's position on the Robin Hood Tax?
4. Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Island and some other Caribbean countries have been described as tax havens. As Caribbean trade unionists how do you respond to that?

Task 3 – Fighting privatisation (outsourcing, PPPs, precarious work)

1. In your country/territory, which public services are being targeted for privatisation?
2. What is your response? What are you doing to fight it?
3. Who are your allies? Who is promoting privatisation – government or is it a push from others?
4. How does the general public feel about privatisation? What are people's reactions to proposals for privatisation, outsourcing, introduction of PPPs?