



## Promoting prosperity for all



### **Think Piece #3** **Quality Public Services - the fuel for the Caribbean's journey to sustainable development**

**Presentations on CARICOM's Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**  
**Thursday July 27, 2017**  
**2:30 pm to 4:45 pm**

Twenty countries make up the Caribbean Community: 15 are full members and the other 5 are associate members.<sup>1</sup>

From the early days of the West Indies Federation, to CARIFTA and now CARICOM< Caribbean leaders and people instantly knew that in order to survive they had to work together as a group, as a bloc.

Every year (without fail), as July approaches, the commentators give their views about CARICOM. Many are vicious in their criticism, all are hopeful for better results. As a grouping of small, vulnerable, island and low-lying states, we all want integration. We can't face the large countries and blocks alone. In fact, for many in the developed world, they are amazed at how Caribbean countries have survived and developed. We are described as "the playgrounds" of the rich and famous, tax havens, sun, sea and sand, island paradises. The post-colonial and post-independence periods saw great strides in development. **Is it sustainable?**

This year's Heads of Government meeting, held in Grenada marked a significant anniversary – the birth of the CSME. <sup>2</sup>

#### **The Caribbean Community to which we aspire over the next five years: The Vision.**

"A Caribbean Community that is integrated, inclusive and resilient; driven by knowledge, excellence, innovation and productivity; a Community where every citizen is secure and has the opportunity to realize his or her potential with guaranteed human rights and social justice; and contributes to, and shares in, its economic, social and cultural prosperity. A Community which can be a united force in the global arena."

<http://caricom.org/communications/view/strategic-plan-for-the-caribbean-community-2015-2019-repositioning-caricom>

The [Strategic Plan](#) outlines the Strategic repositioning of the Community.

See also <http://caricom.org/about-caricom/what-we-do>

<sup>1</sup> <http://caricom.org/about-caricom/who-we-are/our-governance/members-and-associate-members/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.csmeonline.org/>

## The **Strategic Priorities** to 2019

To address the Community's development objectives over the five-year period, the Plan identifies the following Integrated Strategic Priorities:

1. Building Economic Resilience
2. Building Social Resilience
3. Building Environmental Resilience
4. Building Technological Resilience
5. Strengthening the CARICOM Identity and Spirit of Community
6. Strengthening Governance of the Caribbean Community
7. Coordinated Foreign Policy, and
8. Research, Development and Innovation

“CARICAD participated fully in the Strategic Planning Process through deliberations of thematic clusters around which the Plan is based namely Economy (ECN), Environment (ENV), Governance (GOV), Social (SOC) and Technology (TEC).

In addition to the major assignments envisaged on the direct request of Member States, the proposed Work Plan of the Institution draws heavily on the Community Strategic and Operational Plans. The Institution proposes to work closely with the CARICOM Secretariat and Member States in order to mobilize resources to implement those aspects of the Community Strategic Plan for which it is assigned responsibility.”

### **What is the role for public services sector and public services unions?**

#### **Exploring the linkages**

The Strategic Plan, the Charter for Caribbean Public Services, the SDGs, the SAMOA Pathway are all linked. They do not stand as separate and distinct platforms.

**Do the departments, agencies and various institutions recognise the linkages?  
Are they making the connections?**

**What is the role for public services sector unions in these plans and strategies?**

**Why should public services sector unions be involved in these areas?**

#### **Caribbean trade unions and integration**

This is the 47<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the CPSA. CARICOM, earlier this month, held its 38<sup>th</sup> Heads of Government meeting. The Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) was established in 1960 <sup>3</sup>. YES. Caribbean trade unions believe in the power of integration. It is in fact the very essence of the trade union movement – unity is strength!

Having made sterling contributions in the formative years of the Caribbean integration movement, the call has been made and the door is open for even more concerted and focused efforts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And there is a specific role for trade unions in the public services sector.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.caribbeancongressoflabour.com/about-caribbean-congress-of-labour/>

## **The SDGs, their relevance to the Caribbean and the role of Caribbean public services unions**

In Chapter 20 of the 2013 to 2017 PoA, the PSI stated its objectives and plans to play its part in achieving sustainable societies.

One of the main outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference was the agreement by UN member States to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will build upon the Millennium Development Goals and converge with the 2030 development agenda, which also includes [Financing for Development](#) and [Climate Change](#).

The [SDGs](#) were adopted in New York on 25-27 September 2015 at a special session of the UN General Assembly, while indicators continue to be negotiated throughout 2016.

### **The PSI position**

PSI remains very critical when it comes to the supporting framework (the means to implement and effectively monitor) for the SDGs. Throughout the SDG and FfD3 negotiations, PSI has held the opinion that this agenda could end up being a vehicle for privatisation and maintaining the status quo.<sup>4</sup>

Unconditional criteria are needed to ensure that private sector intervention is in line with the public interest, especially where public resources are used to support the private sector. However, the 2030 Agenda does provide a strong alternative narrative to neo-liberal policies that drive a race to the bottom and exploitative trade agreements that benefit multinationals over the public interest.

It is up to the trade union movement and progressive organisations around the world to keep the pressure on governments to fulfil their commitments in terms of implementing policies to achieve economic, social and ecological sustainability. Earlier this month, PSI participated in the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York City. PSI contributed to the 2016 and 2017 reports. This year's [2030 Spotlight Report](#) takes a close look at privatization in all its various forms. PSI will continue to contribute to the work of the [Reflection Group](#) on the SDGs that produces the Spotlight Reports. And we are also working on specific examinations of the situation in the Caribbean.

All of the organisations that are part of this project underwrite the need for strong public governance, investment in public goods and public services – and have been PSI's main partners throughout the SDG negotiations and FfD work. PSI also took part in a several meetings with CSO groups and UN DESA during the General Assembly in September 2016.

### **SDG Reflection Group <https://www.reflectiongroup.org/en/node/131>**

In light of the need for independent CSO monitoring and advocacy in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, a new 2030 watch initiative, based on the experiences and analyses of the Civil Society Reflection Group on Global development Perspectives, was proposed to enhance concerted action in the 2030 process. The new initiative concentrates on inequalities, sustainable production and consumption, means of implementation and systemic issues, the resolution of which are necessary (though not sufficient) conditions for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

It not only focuses on policy incoherence, but also analyses and assesses the extent to which policies are framed by the ambitious principles of the Agenda, particularly the human rights framework, and the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. In addition, it articulates and

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<sup>4</sup> See Reaction to AAAA <http://www.world-psi.org/en/reaction-agreed-addis-ababa-action-agenda-financing-development-psi>

advocates for missing principles and policies and the provision of “maximum available resources” in accordance with the [Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#).

The United Nations has a central role to play in implementing the 2030 Agenda. This requires adequate and predictable financial contributions from public sources. The Reflection group analyses the funding patterns and their implications, especially with regard to the growing influence of the corporate sector and corporate philanthropy. The initiative is also analysing the “multi-stakeholder partnerships” that are being promoted as mechanisms for implementation of the 2030 Agenda despite their imminent risk of further weakening or bypassing public institutions and privileging corporate actors.

### **Caribbean perspectives**

It is important that as a sub-region we contribute to PSI’s information and advocacy on the SDGs and related issues. No one can speak on behalf of the sub-region unless we are able to provide the evidence and information on the situation in the Caribbean.

Information that we must be able to gather and provide to PSI include:

- Examples of SDG implementation in the wider Caribbean
- Linkages to PPPs and privatisation in all its forms
- Linkages to the Climate change issues
- Caribbean priorities for the SDGs
- Interventions of trade unions – monitoring processes, clauses in collective agreements, policy positions, involvement in social dialogue, successes, lessons learnt

### **Some questions**

- What are the intervention points for public services unions in the implementation of CARICOM’s Strategic Plan?
- What needs to be done? What capacity building do the public services unions need?
- Who should be driving the process in the unions?
- In relation to the SDGs, what can affiliates practically do to learn more about the SDG process in their countries and across the Caribbean?
- Can you identify some of the key contacts in your ministries and departments who are responsible for SDG implementation? Can you make the connections?
- What are some other key intervention points and mechanisms for public services unions in the implementation of CARICOM’s Strategic Plan as well as SDG implementation

### **Other related documents and web sites**

- PSI page on 2030 Agenda: <http://www.world-psi.org/en/issue/post-2015-development-agenda>
- UN page on 2030 Agenda: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>
- HLPF : <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/>
- Report on FFD side event on PPPs: <https://csoforffd.org/2016/04/20/presentation-sandra-vermuyten-psi-on-20-april-in-unece-side-event/>
- Where do we go from now, joint CSO position: <https://csoforffd.org/2016/04/27/wrap-up-on-the-un-ffd-forum-where-do-we-go-now/>
- CSO response to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) on Financing for Development: <https://csoforffd.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/cso-response-to-ffd-addis-ababa-action-agenda-16-july-2015.pdf>
- Enhancing productivity and growth in the Caribbean, CDB - [http://issuu.com/caribank/docs/study\\_enhancing\\_productivityandgrow?e=21431045/49334141](http://issuu.com/caribank/docs/study_enhancing_productivityandgrow?e=21431045/49334141)

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