



Caribbean

# NEWSLINK

Newsletter of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean

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## Tripartite constituents sign Decent Work Country Programme for Guyana



On Friday 15 December 2017, Guyana became the first Caribbean country to officially sign on to the second phase of its Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP). The programme, which ran its first phase from 2012 to 2015, is propelled by the joint efforts of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Ministry of Social Protection of Guyana.

Prime Minister of Guyana, the Honourable Moses Nagamootoo; Minister within the Ministry of Social Protection with responsibility for Labour, Honourable Keith Scott; General Secretary of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana (FITUG), Dawan Nagasar; Executive Director of the Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry (CAGI), Samuel Goolsarran; General Secretary of the Guyana Trades Union Congress (GTUC), Lincoln Lewis; and Director of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Caribbean Office, Claudia Coenjaerts signed the DWCP during a launch event at the Guyana Marriott Hotel in Georgetown.

Delivering the keynote address at the launch, Prime Minister of Guyana, the Honourable Moses Nagamootoo urged those present “to focus on the national agenda, where we want to

take our society, how we want to improve the lives of our people and how we can make Guyana a country where there is sustainable livelihood based on the availability of decent work, based on the availability of an environment where working people are considered to be an important part of our social development and not just wage workers.”

Prime Minister Nagamootoo acknowledged the social partners present for their collaborative efforts in tabling the DWCP whose implementation is to be overseen by a tripartite committee led by the Ministry of Social Protection. He said, “There is much more

*Tripartite constituents during the signing ceremony, left to right: Dawan Nagasar, General Secretary, FITUG; Samuel Goolsarran, Executive Director, CAGI; Lincoln Lewis, General Secretary, GTUC; the Hon. Keith Scott, Minister within the Ministry of Social Protection with the responsibility for Labour; and Prime Minister of Guyana, the Hon. Moses Nagamootoo*

*Photo insert: Claudia Coenjaerts, Director, ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean signs the DWCP*

## SOCIAL DIALOGUE

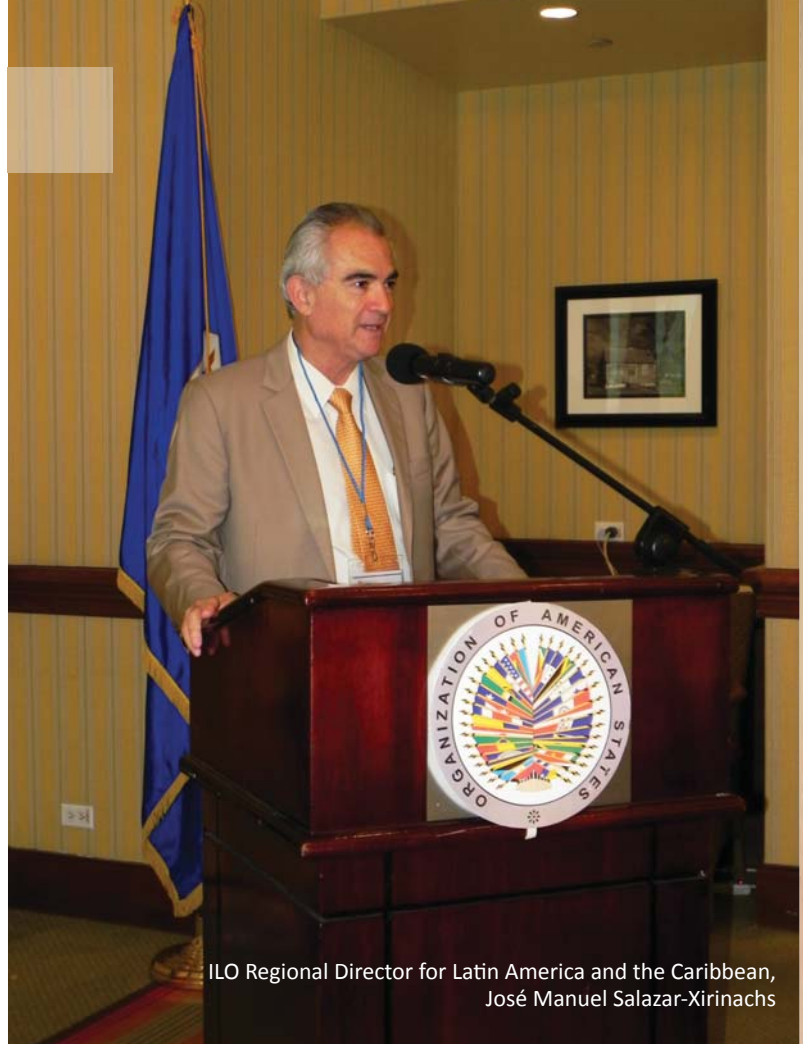
work to be done in Guyana to improve our job creation, to improve the investment climate, to be able to build perfect partnership.”

Minister within the Ministry of Social Protection, with responsibility for Labour, Honourable Keith Scott noted the 2017- 2021 programme is an updated version of the first Decent Work Country Programme launched in 2012. He was confident that the new DWCP addresses the flaws of the previous version. “I must submit that by itself the Programme can achieve nothing but it will require the inputs and willing cooperation of all Stakeholders to make it operational and functional. This programme was crafted in the spirit of tripartism and it will require the same spirit and philosophy to make it work.”

ILO Caribbean Director, Claudia Coenjaerts explained the relevance of the DWCP, “Jobs are key to both social and economic prosperity, and not just any jobs but decent jobs. We realize that good jobs which get people out of poverty don’t just flow out of an investment or economic diversification strategy. More than ever, world of work issues permeate every other aspect of policy-making. Ministries of labour have a key role in actively engaging in national planning and bringing in the social partners.”

The DWCP focuses on improving working conditions, nurturing a sustainable environment for enterprises and fostering cooperation among employers, workers and the government. The ILO Director noted that Guyana has already made some progress as illustrated by the World Bank’s ease of doing business ranking which shifted from 137th in 2015 to 126th in 2017. She pointed to Guyana’s national competitiveness strategy which highlights international investment as being critical to the expansion of the economy. These instruments must however also be effective in reducing poverty and inequality.

Over the past year the ILO worked closely with the Ministry of Business and CAGI on an in-depth review to determine how to create an enabling business environment which promotes sustainable enterprises. This study titled ‘Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises in Guyana’, was presented at the same event.



ILO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean,  
José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs

## Many are being left behind in the labour markets of Latin America and the Caribbean

At the XX Interamerican Conference of Ministers of Labour (IACML) convened in Bridgetown, Barbados from 7-8 December 2017, the Regional Director of the International Labour Organization (ILO), José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, warned that the labour markets of Latin America and the Caribbean “are lagging behind in the 21st Century”, and made an urgent call to deal with existing labour gaps and discriminations, while speaking at the inter-American meeting in the Barbadian capital.

The IACML, which takes place every two years, was officially opened by the Secretary General of the OAS, Luis Almagro, the Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development of Barbados, Esther Byer-Suckoo, who also chaired this inter-American conference, and the Regional Director of the ILO.

“This has not been a good era for labour markets of the region”, Salazar warned delegates as he referred to the two-year period between the last IACML meeting hosted in Mexico and the one in Barbados. “It has been a period of accumulated deterioration in the majority of labour and



Delegates at the Conference

social indicators of the region, which has not ceased to deepen.”

While the situation is not homogenous, there are countries in the region with indicators of diverse economic behaviours and with differences in employment indicators, “generally speaking, the picture painted by current employment statistics in the region is not reassuring.”

The ILO Regional Director reminded that in the midst of a period of slow-down including economic contraction, the region began the year 2017 with a high unemployment rate of 8.1 per cent on average, which means that 25 million persons are seeking jobs without necessarily finding any, and he warned that “this rate will be even higher at the end of 2017.”

In the context of the analysis presented in his discourse to the delegates of the IACML, Salazar reminded that 135 million persons, almost half of the workforce, are employed in informal conditions, and that the youth unemployment rate has increased even more than adult unemployment, and towards the end of 2017, “one in every five youths of working age is seeking employment yet cannot find work.”

Additionally, he said “the labour markets continue to be heavily segregated” and highlighted existing gender inequalities since “women continue to be worse off than men in all indicators”, and likewise indigenous communities are victims of social exclusion “associated with a disadvantageous productive inclusion in the labour market.”

Salazar said it is urgent to take up “the key challenge” of bridging the gaps in the labour market, “not only to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth but for the social cohesion and social pacts of the region from now to 2030.”

In his address, he summarized a few challenges: the large productivity gaps in comparison with other regions;

deep-rooted inequality; access to education and high quality vocational training; access to basic and social infrastructure; and gaps with regard to the respect and application of labour laws.

In addition, the region faces a future in which the world of work is becoming robotized, automated, virtualized, decarbonized, outsourced and disintermediated”, while simultaneously confronting an accelerated process of ageing, changes in business models and in recruitment practices.

In order to forge a better future of work the countries should apply productive development policies “to induce more sustained growth patterns that are inclusive and sustainable”.

Education and vocational training, compliance with international labour standards and solid social dialogue processes are key in confronting labour inequality.

The XX IACML brought together representatives of Ministries of countries from across the Americas, as well as delegates from Employers’ and Workers’ organizations. It concluded with the adoption of a Declaration and Plan of Action.

The Conference is considered as a crucial forum for political discussion and decision-making on priorities and actions to be taken in labour matters at the hemispheric level. It began more than 50 years ago and has become the oldest sectoral conference of the Organization of American States (OAS).

During the XX IACML the ILO Regional Director had the opportunity to hold meetings with Ministers of Labour of Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Saint Lucia and host Barbados, as well as representatives of CEATAL which brings together representatives of Employers’ organizations and COSATE which unites Workers’ organizations. The Trade Union Technical Advisory Council (COSATE) and the Business Technical Advisory Committee on Labour Matters (CEATAL) are two consultative bodies of the IACML.

## ILO engages with the OECS on Labour and Social Policies for Decent Work

The International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour of Saint Lucia hosted a Caribbean Regional Training Course on Labour and Social Policies for Decent Work from 27 – 30 November, 2017.

Facilitated by ILO DWT Specialists and the Research Department at ILO Geneva, the four-day workshop exposed participants to insights into a range of topics including: Social Dialogue and Tripartism; International Labour Standards; Minimum wages; Integrated employment policies for decent work; Social protection floors; Decent Work Agenda in Disaster Recovery situations and the application of decent work in the OECS.

This is a standard ILO course mandated by the Governing Body. Given the common characteristics of the OECS and the effort to foster more cross-country networking, the OECS countries were selected.

The training aims to enhance the capacity of constituents to contribute to the development of labour and social policies to integrate the Decent Work Agenda at the national, regional and international level.

Minister of Labour of Saint Lucia, the Honourable Stephenson King delivered the keynote address, saying “The Decent Work Agenda is an all-embracing one and at the heart of it must be dialogue between all the economic and social partners. In that vein, the concept of tripartism comes to the fore. It has been tried before in some of our countries with limited success, but we must re-invent it with new vigour and approaches if it is to make a major contribution to the development of policies that contribute to decent work,” said Minister King.

The Honourable Minister acknowledged that financing of interventions is a challenge in the Caribbean as small-island developing states (SIDS) have particular fiscal challenges. He also pointed out that disaster recovery is making this even more difficult. However



*Minister of Labour of Saint Lucia, the Hon. Stephenson King*

social and livelihood policies are essential and must be budgeted even more so in light of building resilience.

Director of the ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean, Claudia Coenjaerts also addressed participants at the opening. She underscored the importance of social dialogue as a key to more integrated socio-economic-environmental policies and programmes. She noted that many of the countries are struggling with social dialogue, which has an effect on finding solutions that drive positive outcomes for the workforce, the economy and society as a whole.

As building resilience is receiving more attention in the region, participants received a half-day training session on green jobs by the Deputy Director, Dagmar Walter. The session examined the concepts of “Green Jobs” and “Transition to Environmental Sustainability”, through examples and practical application through group work focussed on the implementation of the countries’ Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and what that would mean in terms of Green jobs and Transition.

During the course of discussions and group work, participants demonstrated an appetite to learn and explore the topic further in view of more concrete action in the countries. They also recognised that shortcomings in social dialogue were hampering implementation of labour and social policies in many of the countries represented. The training course has brought the ILO closer to the OECS constituents and lays the foundation for Decent Work Programme implementation in the new biennium 2018-19.

## Reducing work deficit in the informal economy in Guyana

The International Labour Organization in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Protection (MOSP) of Guyana hosted a two-day Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) for the informal economy. The seminar took place from 4-5 October, 2017 at the Herdmanston Lodge, Georgetown, Guyana. Trainers were exposed to practical methods of conducting sensitization programmes in the informal economy with a focus on the agriculture, construction and services sectors.

OSH Consultant with the Ministry of Social Protection, Gweneth King explained that the ILO has been working with developing countries to assist in transitioning from the informal economy to a formal one. "It has been found that in developing countries, the informal economy provides considerable employment which in many instances is linked to poor conditions of work, and therefore workers lack protection and are exposed to poor conditions and working environments. This workshop marks the beginning of a process to build our capacity so that we will be able to effectively sensitize workers in the sectors," King said.

Ariel Pino, ILO Specialist in Social Protection & OSH based at the Caribbean Office in Port of Spain, Trinidad, was the main facilitator for the workshop. The ILO approached the Government of Guyana in 2016 to address issues related to the informal economy. With the expansion of the Labour Department into the informal economy, Pino underscored that this initiative will benefit persons operating in that sector.

"We know that we can contribute to that and reduce the decent work deficits that the informal sector has. I am not saying the formal sector enjoys plenty of the decent work benefits, but those who are in the informal sector are clearly more affected by deficits of the work," Pino said.

Industrial Relations Consultant with the MOSP, Francis Caryl revealed that the agriculture, construction and services sectors have given rise to informality which often led to gaps in social protection, labour management relations and safety. He explained, "Because they are informal, they are not getting the kind of scrutiny that is deserved and the unfairness continues on a very large scale." Notwithstanding, he expressed the view that the government, with support from the ILO, has set its sights on reducing such cases, and eliminating them completely in due course.

Among the participants were representatives from the Ministry of Social Protection, Guyana Trades Union Congress, School of Agriculture, National Insurance Scheme, The Pesticide and Toxic Chemicals Control Board. Further sensitization sessions were conducted in various communities in the months which followed the ToT.



Ariel Pino, ILO

## 241 million people in the region have no social protection at all

Universal social protection is essential for realizing the human right to social security for all, advancing social justice and promoting inclusive growth, and accelerating progress towards achieving the globally agreed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Launched on 4 December, 2017 at an event in Mexico, the World Social Protection Report 2017–2019 provides a global overview on recent trends in social protection systems, including social protection floors. Based on new data, it offers a broad range of

global, regional and country data on social protection coverage, benefits and public expenditures on social protection.

This flagship ILO report follows a life-cycle approach, starting with social protection for children, followed by schemes for women and men in working age, including protection in case of maternity, unemployment, employment injury and disability, and those for older persons, including pensions. It also assesses progress towards universal coverage in health. It calls for greater attention to the extension



of coverage, adequate financing and strengthening national social protection systems, with a particular focus on achieving the SDGs.

According to the report, 38.6 per cent of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean, roughly 241 million people, have absolutely no social protection, while the remaining 61.2 per cent often access very low levels of effective protection.

During the presentation of the World Social Protection Report 2017-2019 it was noted that in these circumstances, the challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve the SDGs are still great, especially those related to the fight against poverty and extreme poverty.

The report provides significant data from selected Caribbean countries which regularly collect and report on the areas under review.

### Regional outlook

In order to achieve the SDGs in 2030, countries of Latin America and the Caribbean must continue to strive for progress on social protection through a range of measures.

The ILO recommends reducing subsidies and expanding fiscal space as sources of financing to extend expenditure and social protection coverage, articulating optimal solutions through social dialogue. Likewise, cutting government expenditure in the social sector is avoidable, including during periods of economic policy adjustment.

For a copy of the report, please visit:

[www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS\\_604882](http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_604882)

## Setting the scene for Decent Work in the Rural Economy of Suriname

The ILO tripartite workshop on decent work in the rural economy was held from 11 to 14 December 2017 in Berg en Dal, Suriname, to share knowledge and build capacity of tripartite constituents and relevant stakeholders on the promotion of decent work in the rural economy with a focus on sustainable rural livelihoods and access to health and other services.



A number of Policy priorities and recommendations for the promotion of decent work in rural Suriname were agreed upon by the participants including economic diversification, attention to the issues relating to Indigenous people, notably within the framework of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), specific measures for the promotion of MSME in rural areas and measures to enhance health and education access for people living in rural and remote areas including through community-based training of local teachers, long-distance education and training through the use of Internet and Communications Technology (ICT) and using local languages at entry level.

As a follow up to the workshop, national constituents committed to actively design and implement a National Action Plan (NAP) on decent work in the rural economy. This will be done under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and in close consultation with other government departments, and other relevant stakeholders and interest groups. The NAP will be based on effective social dialogue, preferably through revitalization of existing social dialogue mechanisms, in order to promote decent work and productive employment in Suriname including in the rural economy.

The workshop was facilitated by colleagues from the ILO Sectoral Policies Department in Geneva including Director - Alette van Leur, SECTOR Specialists Mariangels Fortuny and Christiane Wiskow along with colleagues from the Decent Work Team and Caribbean Office including Director, Claudia Coenjaerts, Employment and Sectoral Policies Department Labour Market Specialist, Diego Rei and Programme Officer, Ingerlyn Caines-Francis.

## Towards concrete solutions for youth employment in the Caribbean

The Organization of American States (OAS) Executive Office of Integral Development, in collaboration with the ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean, hosted a one-day Forum entitled: Towards Concrete Solutions for Addressing Youth Employment in the Caribbean, on 6 December, 2017.

The Forum was structured around two major themes:

Panel 1: The Future of Work. Speakers reviewed the major global trends affecting labour markets, their implications for youth employment in

Youth Employment which aims to be a space for improved policy discourse on Youth Employment. (see more on Youth Employment at page 10).

Following formal presentations and vibrant exchanges with panelists, there were two roundtable discussions. Each group, with the help of a facilitator, identified and agreed on concrete initiatives that could be implemented region wide in the short-term and at low-cost.

These initiatives are being channeled into a work programme to be monitored and tracked via a core Working Group which includes the ILO and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), in addition to the OAS. A Final Report summarizing the discussions and detailing next steps has been produced.

The Forum was designed to build on and complement the Caribbean Future of Work Forum organized by the ILO Office for the Caribbean and the Decent Work Team, held in Jamaica in February 2017. The discussion focused on three key themes, central to the ILO's overall work: a) Decent Jobs for All; b) Governance of Work; c) Organization of work and production. Many of the conclusions, while they address the broader employment challenge in the Caribbean, are nevertheless highly relevant for youth.

Increasing youth employment has been an important issue on the global agenda for some time, and over the years, with support from the international community, many programmes have been implemented to address this challenge. Notwithstanding these efforts, global trends point to increasing youth unemployment rates, and much more remains to be done to address the issue of youth unemployment, decent work for youth currently working, as well as the estimated 40 million youth entering the labour market annually.

According to the World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO) 2016: Trends for Youth, the ILO estimates that there were over 71 million youth worldwide in 2016 who were unemployed and 156 million of working youth living in poverty.



From L to R: Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development of Barbados, Senator Dr. the Hon. Esther Byer-Suckoo; ILO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs; and Director of the ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean, Claudia Coenjaerts.

This event took place in Barbados, immediately preceding the XX Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour (IACML) in order to seize the opportunity of having ministers and senior government officials present. The Forum sought to identify a brief actionable agenda to increase youth employment in the region, which can be implemented across the Caribbean in a short timeframe, through public and private sector collaboration, together with international support.

Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development of Barbados, the Honourable Esther Byer-Suckoo opened the Forum signalling to participants her firm commitment to turning the tide of youth unemployment and underemployment. ILO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs and Director of the ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean, Claudia Coenjaerts both delivered insightful presentations. Forum participants included CARICOM Ministers of Labour and Ministers of Education, as well as Caribbean private sector representatives, training institutions and other national, regional and international stakeholders focused on youth employment.

the Caribbean, and what needs to be done to prepare Caribbean youth so that the region can be globally competitive.

Panel 2: Connecting Education to Employment. This panel focused on one of the most important issues being advocated as the path to successfully preparing youth to enter the workforce, or for self-employment. The panel briefly reviewed the critical connection between education and employment as a key factor in revamping the education system in the Caribbean. A number of successful initiatives were showcased which emphasized school-to-work transition and employment matching programmes which could be replicated or customized across a number of countries in the region.

In his presentation on the future of work in Latin America and the Caribbean, José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs stressed, "The future does not just happen to us: it is created by us". He used the opportunity to underscore the importance of social dialogue and its institutions as well as the role of political and strategic visions of the parties to social dialogue. Meanwhile Claudia Coenjaerts presented on ILO tools and successful experiences such as School-to-Work Transition surveys; work-based learning; skills anticipation methods; dual apprenticeships; internships; and a policy network on



## EESE Assessment Report and Action Plan launched in Guyana

How easy is it to do business in Guyana? Do you think Government policies and laws affect your business? What are some of the investment opportunities available in Guyana? What are the barriers to doing business in Guyana?

These are just a few of the probing questions which are amply answered in the Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises (ESEE) assessment launched by the ILO on Friday 15 December at the Guyana Marriott Hotel.

Prime Minister Moses Nagamootoo and Minister within the Ministry of Social Protection with responsibility for Labour, Keith Scott both addressed the high-level tripartite event along with Claudia Coenjaerts, Director of the ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean.

The ESEE assessment is an important diagnostic informing the Guyana Decent Work Country Programme, which outlines priorities aimed at addressing Employment and Labour issues in Guyana in line with the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda. These priorities

include: 1) Employment Creation through Sustainable Enterprises, 2) Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 3) Social Protection and 4) Social Dialogue.

According to the World Bank, Guyana's ease of doing business ranking shifted from 137th in 2015 to 126th in 2017. At the same time, the national competitiveness strategy highlights international investment as being critical. Over the past year the ILO worked closely with the Ministry of Business and the Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry CAGI on an in-depth review to determine how to create an enabling business environment which promotes sustainable enterprises.

Claudia Coenjaerts, Director, ILO Caribbean Office noted, "We are proud of this work and it has been a truly collaborative effort between ILO headquarters, the office for the Caribbean and our partners in Guyana. The ESEE report and action plan presented today should be seen as a complement to the efforts already being made by other stakeholders in assessing the political, environmental,

social and economic aspects of a conducive environment for doing business. Its information is important both for local and foreign business and we are convinced that by realizing the action plan significant progress will be made."

Delivering the keynote address at the launch, Prime Minister of Guyana, the Honourable Moses Nagamootoo lamented that the absence of database systems which provide useful information to potential investors, is a hindrance for job creation. The Prime Minister recommended, "It must be part and parcel of our governance to have open data so that Guyanese and foreign investors would know what resources are available in the land."

Prime Minister Nagamootoo also recognized the ILO's support in bridging the data gap and he acknowledged the social partners present for their collaborative efforts in helping to build a perfect partnership.

During the ESEE process in Guyana, 17 pillars were identified for the



## SCORE Project validated for roll-out in Suriname

creation of a conducive environment and the report analyses how Guyana performs with respect to each pillar, assessing strengths and weaknesses. A national perceptions survey focusing on 9 of the 17 pillars enriched the findings. Constituents agreed to place emphasis on three priorities: Legal and regulatory framework; Education, Training and Lifelong learning; and Social Dialogue.

Subsequently, an action plan has also been developed to guide the implementation of specific measures. The action plan calls for the development of concrete and visible changes designed to provide continuous information on issues such as access to finance, how to manage and start a business and it asks for a simpler registration process. On the legal and regulatory framework, the plan, inter-alia, calls for strengthening the implementation and compliance with the Small Business Act through improved compliance and the introduction of modern property rights legislation. On social dialogue, the plan seeks to ensure bipartite social dialogue as well as tripartism on broader national economic and social issues among other areas.

The EESE report benefited from inputs from tripartite participants through two national workshops held in April and October 2017, respectively, and from interviews with stakeholders held in April of the same year. The assessment was carried out under the technical supervision of Farid Hegazy and Maria Sabrina De Gobbi from the Enterprises Unit of the ILO Headquarters in Geneva. In-country technical support and facilitation of the process were provided by Kelvin Sergeant, Enterprise Specialist, and Vanessa Phala, Senior Specialist for Employers' Activities, both from the ILO Port of Spain Office.

The ILO in collaboration with the Suriname Trade and Industry Association (STIA) rolled out a pilot programme of the "Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) productivity tool in Suriname which began in June 2017. The pilot programme included both the training of trainers and enterprises (TOT/E) and emphasis was placed on the short version of the SCORE where participants were introduced to all five modules. Since June, under the supervision of the SCORE Global Master Trainer, Jayantha de Silva, four trainers were left to work closely with four companies comparing the baseline situation with a view to bringing about improvements in the companies, consistent with the SCORE methodology.

An evaluation of the five-month project conducted in December 2017 gave preliminary indications of success. Vereniging Surinaams Bedrijfsleven (VSB) Director, Steven Mac Andrew acknowledged the success of the programme and indicated that through the introduction of SCORE, the participants- mainly managers - who have been trained would now be able to independently implement the acquired knowledge or transfer them to others within their company. The companies which took part in the SCORE Pilot project were: N.V. Consolidated Industries Corporation, Handelsmij L. Willemsberg N.V., Suriprint N.V. and Suriname Alcoholic Beverages N.V.

These participating companies observed that most of the obstacles hindering productivity in Suriname appear to be organizational in nature. They found that by making minimal adjustments to the workspace, such as arranging, cleaning, sorting and standardizing, which do not have to be cost-intensive, it is possible to make significant progress in productivity. The final result is a positive turnaround in the attitude among staff that ultimately benefits the company and the country. Companies were also able to integrate the programme into other efficiency measures such as kaizen 5S and other audits linked to ISO certifications which they conduct annually.

### Future SCORE roll-out in Suriname & the Caribbean

The ILO Mission team led by Kelvin Sergeant, Enterprise and Job Creation Specialist and the Global Master Trainer, Jayantha de Silva, met with the Suriname Trade and Industry Association (STIA/VSB) and explored the possibility of a full SCORE programme in Suriname and the Caribbean. In terms of SCORE in Suriname, the Director of STIA/VSB indicated his wish to implement a second round of SCORE. Approximately 10 to 15 enterprises have signalled to VSB their interest in participating in a next phase.

The Competitiveness Unit of Suriname (CUS) is exploring the possibility of sourcing funds from potential donors such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The meeting explored the possibility of conducting a training of trainers (TOT) seminar and two trainings of enterprises in Suriname. The Office is exploring the feasibility of launching SCORE in several Caribbean countries.



## Suriname Planning Bureau welcomes macroeconomic modelling for evidence-based policy design

The Suriname United Nations Country Team (UNCT), under the guidance of the ILO and in collaboration with the Planning Office of Suriname (SPS), organized a four-day seminar from 2 - 5 October 2017 on Macroeconomic Modelling for Evidence-based Policy Design and monitoring in Suriname.



The ultimate goal of the workshop was to define the way forward and develop a work plan for the update of the MS excel-based macro-economic model - SURYA - currently used by the Bureau of Planning in Suriname for projections of key economic indicators. The latter has been the object of revision over the last ten years but is still perceived as not fully complete. In particular, three areas and corresponding modules are considered to be crucial for the purpose of detailing the country's macroeconomic goals and objectives and translating them into concrete deliverables while monitoring the progress that is being made: projections on poverty, labour market and environment.

In addition to the staff of the SPS, representatives from the Central Bank of Suriname, the National Statistical Office (Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek - ABS) and the Ministry of Finance as well as international modelling experts participated in the workshop. Sessions dealt with a number of areas including national classification for economic activities and output, methodologies to estimate employment and wage development at industrial level and macro modelling employment and poverty.

The Caribbean Virtual Policy Network on Youth Education and Employment (VPNYEE) is a new initiative spearheaded by the United Nations system and co-convened by the CARICOM Secretariat, the Caribbean Employers' Confederation, UNESCO and the ILO. Its primary goal is to help countries and stakeholders identify and understand the public policy interventions which effectively support youth education and employment.

The VPNYEE actively aims to put youth employment at the centre of the national policy discourse of well-informed and evidence-based practices. The network activities will be rolled out in three phases:

1. A solid and extended knowledge base on youth education and employment interventions has been built and made available to the public;
2. Monitoring and evaluation clinics will be held to support country-led programmes and interventions in designing their own monitoring and evaluation systems;
3. Gradually as resources become available, youth education and employment programmes based on state-of-the-art evidence will be designed.

Instrumental to the first phase was the launch of a new information sharing tool hosted by the web-based UNESCO SDG 4 -8 TEAMSNET platform. This instrument contains policy and programme documents as well as the latest research. The Platform was activated on 15 December, 2017 however stakeholders are encouraged to share pertinent content to enrich this resource.

Also on 15 December, 2017 the first VPNYEE webinar was held bringing together enthusiastic participants in cyberspace. The theme was "Designing effective programmes to promote youth entrepreneurship". In the spirit of the VPNYEE, emphasis was placed on key design and implementation features as well as discussing experiences and lessons learned from relevant stakeholders. Presentations were followed by a question and answer segment in which participants seized the opportunity to bring fresh perspectives to the subject matter.

This knowledge-sharing platform is meant to grow over time with inputs from stakeholders and the first webinar marked the beginning of a journey aimed at improving youth education and employment performance throughout the Caribbean.



## 2017: unemployment rose for the 3rd straight year in Latin America and the Caribbean

Unemployment in Latin America and the Caribbean increased for the third consecutive year and affected more than 26 million persons in 2017, according to an ILO report released on 18 December in which, despite the worrisome reality, it is noted that there are some positive signs in the labour market and a more positive evolution of the indicators is expected next year.

“The labour market in the region appears to be going through a change of cycle after a period of generalized deterioration of labour and social indicators, but improvements will depend on achieving greater economic growth”, warned the ILO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs.

The annual Labour Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean 2017 report, presented at the Regional Office headquarters in Lima, highlighted the fact that there was a mixed performance of the main variables linked to the world of work. The average performance rate of Latin America and the Caribbean rose from 7.9 per cent in 2016 to 8.4 per cent at the end of 2017, an increase of 0.5 percentage points. The total number of persons seeking employment without finding work rose by two million persons, to 26.4 million.

The ILO report underscored, however, that the average was strongly influenced by the situation in Brazil, where almost 40 per cent of the region’s work force is located and where the rate of unemployment stood at around 13.1 per cent in the third trimester of 2017.

One of the other factors is that while there was a slight recovery in economic growth after a period of deceleration and contraction, this was not strong enough to change the tendency of a labour market that “has a delayed effect when there is recovery”.

Instead in 2018, when according to the recent forecasts the average economic growth of the region will hover around 2 per cent, “it is hoped that the economic upturn would be more visible in the labour markets” and that the rate of unemployment would decrease for the first time in three years, to 8.1 per cent.

In the sub-regional analysis, the report highlights that unemployment in the Caribbean decreased from 7.8 per cent to 7.4 per cent. In 2017 unemployment increased in nine of the 19 countries with data from the third trimester, this also is a positive evolution compared with 2016 when the increase was noted in 13 countries.

“The main change in this Labour Overview is that, generally speaking, there is a glimpse of the end of the widespread deterioration of the labour markets registered over the last two years and the start of an acceleration in the expected growth in 2018 which should materialize, and trigger a new phase of improvement”, said Salazar. Nonetheless, he reminded that unemployment is merely the most visible part of the functioning of the labour markets. “There are other dimensions of employment which

must be taken into account in the countries of the region, such as persistent gender inequality, the lack of employment for youth and issues associated with the quality of employment which contribute to perpetuating informality”, he underscored.

A special theme included in this Labour Overview is the “Evolution of wages in Latin America and the Caribbean 2005-2015”. The report warns that the future prospects depend on maintaining a more stable international economic environment.

Nevertheless Salazar stressed that “although 1.2 per cent or 2 per cent growth is better than the recent rates, this “new normal” includes some bad news, because these levels of growth are insufficient to speedily reduce poverty, and to satisfy and finance the demands of the middle classes and to have really transformative impacts on the social and labour market indicators.”

For this “the countries of the region must grow to 5 or 6 per cent and this will only be achieved by addressing productivity gaps, introducing productive development and diversification, as well as improved education and vocational training, and infrastructure.”

“Only in this way can we advance more sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth with more and better jobs”, said the Regional Director of the ILO.

For more information visit: [www.ilo.org/caribbean/newsroom/WCMS\\_614135](http://www.ilo.org/caribbean/newsroom/WCMS_614135)

## Labour Force Data for Key Labour Force Indicators



The ILO in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Protection and the National Bureau of Statistics of Guyana conducted training related to the Theory and Computation of Labour Force Data for the production of Key Labour Force Indicators. The workshop took place at the Herdmanston Lodge, Georgetown, Guyana from 23 – 27 October 2017. Participants from the National Insurance Scheme also attended the training.

The training was facilitated by ILO Employment and Labour Market Specialist, Diego Rei and Senior Statistician for the Americas region, David Glejberman. The ILO previously assisted with the design and testing of the Guyana Labour Force Survey developed through the financial and technical assistance of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Assistance included guidance on the questionnaire and a training session on informality indicators (held in January 2017 jointly with Surinamese stakeholders).

The training activity followed a two-tiered approach. It combined elements concerning both the computation from micro data and the interpretation of indicators. The focus was on indicators belonging to the Caribbean Labour Market Information System (CLMIS) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Among the indicators considered were: the labour force participation rate; employment to population ratio; informal employment rate; time related underemployment; the unemployment rate; the proportion of the population covered by Social Protection; the proportion of women in managerial positions and the proportion of youth aged 15-24 not in education, work or training; and the labour related income.

It is expected that the quality of labour market data will be improved and as a result, analysis and application of the data will allow for better evidence-based decision-making.

## ILO and UWI delve into research on the Future of Work



Lawrence Jeff Johnson, Deputy Director, ILO RESEARCH, Geneva



Participants at the Research Consultation



Claudia Coenjaerts, Director, ILO DWT/O, Port of Spain, right, listening intently to the presentation



Veteran journalist Steve Cummings questions the panellists



Dagmar Walter, Deputy Director, ILO DWT/O, presents

“The future of work is here and now. Across the globe, nations are exploring and implementing new ways of working in evolving environments to anticipate emerging and future needs. The ILO needs to understand the ongoing changes in the world of work in order to take appropriate action where needed while advancing our mandate for social justice”, says Claudia Coenjaerts, Director of the ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean.

The ILO DWT together with the ILO Research Department in Geneva, in partnership with the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) at the University of West Indies, hosted a regional research consultation on the Future of Work at the Institute of Critical Thinking, UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago on 4 December 2017.

Researchers, development partners and other stakeholders from across the region are putting their heads together to determine what is known and what needs to be known about the future of work in the Caribbean region. Participants in this “think tank” presented their individual assessments of the current available knowledge on selected key themes which included: Future of Work and demographic patterns, Future of Work and innovation, Future of Work and non-standard forms of employment.

According to Lawrence Jeff Johnson, Deputy Director- Research at ILO Geneva Headquarters, “Trinidad and Tobago, and the Caribbean in its entirety, they have a message to send to the rest of the world. We’re trying to ensure whatever research we’re doing is not just looking at Future of Work from a G20 perspective but from the perspective of small island nations, nations that have different kinds of industries”. He added, “In order to ensure that we build a future that we all want, we have to work together and there is no magic bullet to this but we can construct a future that serves workers, employers, society and more importantly the children, as they are the next generations”.

Discussants also ventured to propose research orientations in the region for the near future - with the ultimate goal of determining research gaps in order to address them in the most suitable way. Development partners such as the the European Union (EU) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) presented their reflections which summarized ongoing relevant research initiatives as well as possibilities for partnerships.

This research consultation is part of a wider process through which the ILO and its Members are implementing a Future of Work Initiative that will culminate at the centennial International Labour Conference in 2019. The rationale behind the Future of Work Initiative is to reflect on the transformational changes taking place in the world of work, to understand the processes of change and to respond effectively so as to advance the shared commitment to decent work for all as reflected in the global 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and ILO’s mandate of social justice.

This consultation on the Future of Work in the Caribbean will further inform on a related and relevant research agenda. A report on the findings will contribute towards the ILO global Initiative, including a constituent meeting to be convened by the ILO in 2018. Further research initiatives will be targeted to ILO constituents (government, employers and workers) in the Caribbean. This also responds to the Conclusions of the 10<sup>th</sup> ILO Meeting of Caribbean Ministers of Labour held in Jamaica in February 2017, to mainstream decent work in national development plans; linking research with policy making. The final report is available at: [www.ilo.org/caribbean/events-and-meetings/WCMS\\_592341](http://www.ilo.org/caribbean/events-and-meetings/WCMS_592341)

## Barbados joins RI- Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour



L to R: José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ILO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean; Luis Almagro, Secretary General, OAS; and Senator Dr. the Hon Esther Byer-Suckoo, Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development of Barbados.

Barbados is the ninth CARICOM country to join the Regional Initiative- Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour. Honourable Esther Byer-Suckoo, Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development symbolically handed over the signed agreement to José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ILO Regional Director of the Americas and Caribbean in the margins of the Organization of American States (OAS) XX Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour hosted in Bridgetown, Barbados from 7-8 December, 2017.

On 2 December, 2017, Ms. Yolande J. Howard, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development formalized the adhesion of Barbados to the Regional Initiative. This now brings the total number of participating countries in the region to 28, all aligned in pursuit of a common objective: to accelerate the rate of reduction of child labour in the region and by 2025, to eliminate all forms of child labour.

The adhesion of Barbados reflects the commitment and importance attributed by Caribbean countries to the

tripartite collaboration and partnership among governments, employers' and workers' organisations, as the region works towards achieving Target 8.7 of the 2030 Agenda.

For its part, the Ministry of Labour of Barbados has designated Ms. Tricia Browne, Administrative Officer I (Ag.) to serve as its representative to the Regional Initiative, and she now joins colleagues from 27 other countries, four representatives of workers' organisations and four representatives of employers' organisations in the region-wide Focal Points Network, which is ably supported and coordinated by the Technical Secretariat of the Regional Initiative within the ILO.

### Child Labour in Barbados

Barbados has ratified the commitments set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Moreover, it has ratified ILO Conventions 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment and 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

As part of the country's efforts to combat the issue, Barbados has established the National Committee for Monitoring the Rights of the Child, which seeks to generate recommendations on policies that favour the rights of children and sensitizes communities on the matter. Among the challenges is the creation of lists of light and dangerous work for minors.

### Countries of the region which have joined the Regional Initiative

Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Brasil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

### "Child Labour" through the eyes of our Children

On 14 August, 2017 the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (MoLSED) launched its Art Competition under the theme "Spot Child Labour, Stop Child Labour". The Competition was designed to give the children of Trinidad and Tobago an opportunity to address a social issue, which involves and affects them. and targeted children ages 8-16 years. This initiative was part of a wider public education campaign to sensitize the public on the issue of child labour.

According to the ILO, child labour is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to their physical and mental development.

The winners of the competition were announced on 24 November, 2017. Eleven year old Ellaina Morris of St. Augustine Secondary School placed first in the 8-12 year age group, followed by nine year old Nia Marie Ryan of Pinehaven Seventh Day Adventist School. In third place was eight year old Tehya Archibald of St. Gabriel's Girls R.C. School and in fourth place was eleven year old Farah

John of Waterloo Presbyterian Primary School. In the 13-16 age group, 15 year old Jernice Downes of St. Augustine Secondary emerged the winner while 13 year old Kraig Ramnath of Shiva Boys Hindu College took home the second prize. Diego Rei, Employment and Labour Market Specialist, ILO DWT (*in photo, center*) was among the panel of judges who selected the winners.



## Caribbean countries make bold commitments at Global Conference on Child Labour and Youth Employment

The IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 14-17 November 2017. The conference brought together more than 3,800 delegates in the main objective of accelerating the pace towards the elimination of child labour, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Global Conference addressed different topics related to child labour, forced labour and youth employment helping to identify different scenarios and conditions, in addition to the elimination of child labour by 2025, leading to the elimination of forced labour by 2030 in line with target 8.7; and within this context to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for young people, in line with SDG targets 8.5 and 8.6.

The “Buenos Aires Declaration” was adopted by the Conference and is available at [www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_597667](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_597667). Through this declaration, representatives from Governments, Employers’ and Workers’ organizations, together with international, regional and civil society organizations reiterated their commitment to the eradication of child labour and forced labour, specifically calling for accelerated efforts to end child labour in all its forms by 2025, to generate the conditions for full and productive employment and decent work for young people, and to eradicate forced labour by 2030. Amongst other commitments, the aforementioned will be pursued through evidence-based policy making and, as a result, the call to strengthen national capacities to regularly collect and disseminate disaggregated data was also included.

The Caribbean region was represented by delegates from The Bahamas, Grenada, Guyana and Jamaica. Social partners subscribed to a number of voluntary pledges to carry out the following specific actions for the achievement of the objectives of the Buenos Aires Declaration:

- Within the framework of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) they committed to promote 2021 as the International Year of the fight Against Child Labour and Protection of Adolescent Workers;
- The Trade Union Confederation of Workers of the Americas committed for the period 2017-2021 to carry out a continental campaign for decent work and the eradication of child labour, in line with goal 8.7 of the SDGs, simultaneously in the countries of the Americas, aimed at union leaders at all levels of the Organization: Centrals, Confederations, Federations and Trade Unions, including a commitment, signed by each of the leaders, for the eradication of child labour and to develop a union training programme and to implement the Child Labour Predictor Model to carry out diagnoses and define territorial strategies for the eradication of child labour;
- The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) committed for the period 2017 - 2021 to continue to fight for the eradication of forced labour and child labour by organizing 20 million workers to reach out to the most vulnerable, including informal and domestic



Caribbean Delegates at the Conference

workers, through creative organizing strategies and new alliances. The ITUC also pledged to take on the challenge of eradicating child and forced labour by working with global union federations to further develop transnational collective bargaining and campaigning for binding treaties in the UN and the ILO, for universal ratification of the forced and child labour conventions as well as the conventions on discriminations, freedom of association and collective bargaining by 2019 and 50 ratifications of the Forced Labour Protocol by the end of 2018 in particular;

- The International Organization of Employers (IOE) pledged for the period 2017-2021 to redouble efforts to continue playing an active role in combatting forced labour, child labour and advocating for global access to quality education for children around the world at national, regional, and international levels. The IOE committed to continue influencing policy debates, offering guidance and opportunities to develop information and exchanging good practices to employer organizations;
- The Regional initiative - Latin America and the Caribbean free of Child Labour member countries pledged for 2017-2021 to allow all of its members to have a risk map for Child Labour and related policies to advance in the achievement of SDG goal 8.7.
- Additionally, Senator the Honourable Dion A. Foulkes, Minister of Labour pledged that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas in consultation with the National Tripartite Council and other social partners would take action to adopt a National Child Labour Policy to monitor, prevent, and report any cases of child labour.

Since the conference in November 2017, Barbados became the ninth CARICOM member to join the initiative in December 2017 which has brought the number of member countries to 28 in total (See article on Regional Initiative, Page 14).



## Saint Kitts and Nevis host inaugural National Labour Conference

The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Ecclesiastical Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis in collaboration with the ILO hosted its first ever National Conference on Labour on 14 November 2017 at the Saint Kitts Marriott Resort with a view to improving labour relations, employment and related issues in the context of sustained and sustainable economic development.

The inaugural conference brought together stakeholders from both islands representing various sectors and a number of agencies, including the recently installed Tripartite Committee made up of representatives from the Government, Workers' and Employers' organizations. In September 2017 the Tripartite Committee was formally established with the aim of nurturing a culture of innovation, enhancing productivity across diverse sectors and promoting better work ethics while maintaining peace and harmony in industrial relations.

A range of fundamental topics were addressed during the intense one-day conference including: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Labour and Employment Landscape in Saint Kitts and Nevis; and several policy areas for promoting Decent Work. Following presentations by Saint Kitts and Nevis Trades and Labour Union, St. Kitts and Nevis Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Department of Labour and a number of ILO Sector Specialists there were group discussions on priority issues and challenges facing the twin island nation. Participants shared their experiences and perspectives in an effort to identify solutions and best practices for moving forward.

The ILO Specialists exposed participants to a range of international tools and instruments that have been applied throughout the Caribbean. Rainer Pritzer, Senior Specialist for Social Dialogue and Labour Administration explored the need for strong labour administration in the future of

work. Shingo Miyake, Labour Law and International Labour Standards Specialist, addressed the protection of rights and principles at work. Diego Rei, Employment and Labour Market Specialist broached the vital need to transition from informality to greater formality.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour, Ron Dublin-Collins signaled that the conference outcomes would help to shape national policy planning. "Today's session is of strategic value in that it provides the opportunity for us to interact and brainstorm, to address the various challenges that we face in this area and to ensure that we have the resolve [to implement] changes ... to empower [people] so that the development of our nation can be realized through labour administration," he said.

Claudia Coenjaerts, Director of the ILO's Caribbean office, commended the Ministry of Labour for taking the initiative to organize the conference and expressed the ILO's commitment to continued support on an annual basis. "Dedicating a conference to the theme of labour and employment shows leadership and an understanding of the key role of the Decent Work Agenda for overall policy discourse," she stated. The Decent Work Agenda, introduced by the ILO in 1999, is built on four pillars: employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue.

Coenjaerts further encouraged participants to "be a voice of positive change and opportunity" and to apply the "new knowledge and perspectives that will emerge from the interactions."

It is expected that further discussions will continue in an effort to craft and establish a labour code for the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Photo, L to R: ILO Director Claudia Coenjaerts with Senior Minister and Minister of Labour the Hon. Vance Amory





## ILO focuses on structuring the informal economy

The International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Protection (MOSP) of Guyana hosted a regional knowledge-sharing workshop on 9 -10 October at Tower Suites, Georgetown. This event brought together selected stakeholders from Guyana and across the region to share experiences, best practices and promote solutions for the formalization of the informal economy, with a focus on the labour administration's contribution.

This two-day workshop was part of a series of activities in Guyana to facilitate the transitioning of workers and economic units from the largely informal to the formal economy by respecting their fundamental rights and ensuring greater opportunities for income security, livelihoods and entrepreneurship.

ILO Senior Specialist, Social Dialogue and Labour Administration, Rainer Pritzer commented that the informal economy has absorbed a substantial part of the work force in all Caribbean countries, but is often left out from labour administration services and generally displays large Decent Work deficits. He explained that Labour Commissioners from Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Suriname were invited to this workshop thereby enriching discussions among members regarding their experiences and knowledge on the subject matter. The delegation from Dominica was not able to attend as a consequence of the damages caused by hurricane Irma.

Among the outcomes of the workshop was the development of a draft strategy by the Labour Department in Guyana for positioning itself on the informal economy.

Permanent Secretary of MOSP, Lorene Baird observed that the workshop was crucial and came at a critical time when many persons involved in the informal economy in the Caribbean

were able to benefit from the discussions in Guyana. She lamented, "In many cases, persons in the informal sector do not benefit from social security schemes, health and safety programmes and maternity benefits and have limited or no protection by labour legislation," Baird disclosed that the Social Protection Ministry is working hand in hand with other arms of Government to improve those areas for persons in Guyana, "We should be cognizant also that inclusive development is not possible unless rights and opportunities are extended to workers in the informal economy."

The two-day multi-country workshop marked the culmination of a long process of awareness-raising in Guyana for Labour Administration and Government institutions followed by a pilot phase from May to July 2017 in which labour inspectors had first contacts with actors in the informal economy.

Pritzer explained, "The Department of Labour created a formal questionnaire that labour inspectors used in their field visits, targeting especially the informal economy. Based on the feedback from almost 200 inspection visits, discussions were held, and a report compiling the findings was presented in September. The findings revealed a high occurrence of informality in the retail sector; restaurant and services sectors; a 2/3 dominance of female employees in the informal sector; and a range of concrete deficits in relation to the Decent Work Agenda.

Empowered through the series of workshops and exchanges with colleagues from the region, the Department of Labour in Guyana will prepare a tailored strategy to address the challenges in the informal economy while the visiting high-ranked labour officers from the other countries committed to advocate internally to raise awareness within their Ministries on the issue of informality and the need for transitioning to greater formality.

## ILO and CEC launch Women in Business and Management Report for the Caribbean

Women have become engines for economic growth within countries, across regions and around the world. Achieving gender diversity is increasingly seen as necessary for competitive business performance with evidence showing that gender diversity contributes to the bottom line. However, globally women remain under-represented in business and management. Very few women attain top management positions or serve as chairpersons or members of company boards and barriers to women's entrepreneurship still exist.

There has been significant progress but the results are mixed and challenges persist. Women remain an underutilized, dynamic pool of talent even though women have caught up to, and in some regions even overtaken, men in terms of the percentage of overall tertiary graduates.

By leveraging companies and national employers' organizations globally, ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) sought to better understand the realities, challenges and opportunities facing women in business and management by embarking on a global research project. The project aims to collect detailed and authoritative data and provide a more granular viewpoint of gender diversity by including not only large companies but also small and medium-sized enterprises.

Since embarking on this global project, four reports - one global and three at regional level- have been produced. In particular, a regional report for Latin America and the Caribbean was launched in Lima on 23 May 2017. At this launch, participants from the Caribbean region requested that the ILO conduct a more detailed study for the region in order to obtain a deeper understanding of women in business and management and to provide national employers' organizations and companies with tangible information. The ILO partnered with the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC) to launch a Caribbean Women in Business and Management Report. Thirteen National Employers' Organizations participated in the study: Antigua and Barbuda Employers' Federation; Bahamas Bahamas Chamber of Commerce and Employers' Confederation; Barbados Employers' Confederation; Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Dominica Employers' Federation; Employers' Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago; Grenada Employers' Federation; Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry; Jamaica Employers' Federation; St Lucia Employers' Federation; St Kitts-Nevis Chamber of Industry and Commerce; St Vincent Employers' Federation; Suriname Trade and Industry Association.

A minimum of 50 responses per organization were collected based on the survey instrument developed by the ILO and administered by SACODA Serv Ltd of 675 persons across thirteen Caribbean territories for approximately three months from 16 August to 30 October 2017. The draft report was presented at the regional workshop held in Saint Lucia on 17 October 2017. The final report will be launched in 2018 and the ILO and the CEC will continue to seek opportunities to further support the implementation of some of the proposed recommendations.

## ILO conducts workshops focused on Business Continuity and Disaster Management in CARICOM Member Countries

The ILO in collaboration with the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC), with funding from the European Union (EU) convened a series of training workshops on Business Continuity and Disaster Management for members of Employers' Organizations in Saint Lucia, Barbados, Suriname, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Belize and Trinidad and Tobago during the period October to December 2017. These workshops are part of the programme of activities under the European Union (EU) funded Project: Challenges to CARIFORUM Labour, Private Sector and Employers' to Fulfil Their EPA Obligations: Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC) and the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) Component of the Support to Facilitate Participation of CARIFORUM Civil Society in Regional Development and Integration Process.



The workshops facilitated by the ILO (*Vanessa Phala, ILO Senior Specialist, Employers' Activities, in photo*) and Mr Robert Teelucksingh were aimed at creating a learning platform and sharing information which would enable members to improve their disaster preparedness and foster collaboration with the various National Disaster Offices and/or National Emergency Management Agencies. While most of the participating enterprises had a business continuity plan in place, many were not updated or comprehensive.

Participants were exposed to a range of topics including: the impact of natural disasters and regional initiatives; disaster planning, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery; how to develop and implement a business continuity plan; the role of the National Disaster Office; and the role of the Employers' Organization in facilitating assistance to members. The workshops were well received by members as timely and an opportunity to plan and engage the relevant authorities responsible for disaster risk and management. Some issues relating to the conduct of employers during a natural disaster and shutdown procedures were clarified including the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders.

At the training workshop held in Saint Lucia on 18 October 2017, the Saint Lucia Employers' Federation resolved to establish a Disaster Preparedness Committee and partner with the National Emergency Management Organization in an effort to communicate to its members the importance of disaster preparedness. The Employers' Federation further agreed to advocate for legislation that ensures employers pay employees when a national shutdown is issued by the Government.

Members of Suriname Trade and Industry Association at the training workshop held on 7 November 2017 agreed to organise additional workshops with the National Disaster Office and the Red Cross to stimulate further action and collaboration.

At the training workshop held on 14 November 2017 in Saint Kitts and Nevis, members of the Chamber discussed the draft National Plan emanating from the stakeholder engagements following Hurricane Maria which included issues such as physical planning, improvements and standards; suppliers and labour issues amongst others. Members agreed to use the outcome of the training workshop and lessons learned to make further contributions to the draft National Plan.

In Belize, the workshop held on 21 November 2017 further explored the issue of national shut down. Representatives from the Ministry of Labour also assisted with clarifying the legislative provisions relating to payment of wages during national shutdown as a result of a natural disaster.

During the training workshop held in Trinidad and Tobago on 11 December 2017, members of the Employers' Consultative Association further discussed the management of human resources during and after a natural disaster and received a detailed update on initiatives implemented by the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management to assist businesses and the community during and after a natural disaster.

Over the three-month period following the training workshops, the ILO continued supporting members of the Employers' Organizations in these countries to ensure that they have updated business continuity plans and are better prepared and more resilient.



## ILO launches Skills for Green Jobs Study for Guyana

The ILO in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Protection of Guyana launched a comprehensive study report titled 'Skills for Green Jobs Study- Guyana'.

The Hon. Moses Nagamootoo, Prime Minister, attended the launch at the Guyana Marriott Hotel in Georgetown. In addressing the gathering on 15 December 2017, he explained, "The national budget is key to maintaining stability in the work environment and shows that the State can become an important instrument in maintaining an environment where there is not only availability of opportunities for work, but which also can articulate plans for programmes that would bring in new areas of work culture for example, greening the economy - an innovation that hasn't actually been fully implemented because it has never been properly financed - so that you could have opportunities in non-traditional areas of employment."

The 'Skills for Green Jobs Study-Guyana' highlights policies, programmes and emerging opportunities in the green economy as Guyana sets its eyes on transitioning into a green economy. The creation of more jobs, better jobs and green jobs is a target for Guyana as laid out in its Green State Development Strategy.

It is estimated that by 2030, some 600 million young people globally will be looking for jobs. Prime Minister Nagamootoo noted, "Traditional jobs may not be sufficient avenues for them. We have to create jobs in new sectors, green jobs, the jobs that accord with the resources of the State. We are rich in forests, we are blessed with sunshine. If we go solar, or use renewable energy we have to train young people to work in the new environment of renewable energy, in agro-processing, in agriculture etc."

This study was launched in the context of the Guyana Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) which reflects consensus among Government, Workers' and Employers' organizations regarding Decent Work objectives and results to be pursued over the 2017-21 period. It also recognises the need to build a strong link between the DWCP and the Guyana Green State Development Strategy currently in the making.

Deputy Director of the ILO DWT and Caribbean Office, Dagmar Walter explained, "One of the corner stones of such a successful transition is the development of adequate skills in the workforce. Right skills for green jobs are the prerequisite to make the transition to a greener economy happen. Today, skills gaps are already recognized as a major bottleneck in a number of sectors, such as renewable energy, energy and resource efficiency, renovation of buildings, construction, environmental services and manufacturing."

Indeed, the adoption and dissemination of clean technologies requires skills in technology application, adaptation and maintenance. Skills are also crucial for economies and businesses, workers and entrepreneurs, as well as for livelihoods to rapidly adapt to changes as a consequence of environmental policies or climate change. The bottom line is that skills are a critical factor for productivity, employment growth and development.

The Study gives a comprehensive overview of the emerging jobs in the green economy and the skills required by workers and entrepreneurs to take advantage of the new opportunities. For a copy of the study visit: [www.ilo.org/caribbean/information-resources/publications/WCMS\\_614127](http://www.ilo.org/caribbean/information-resources/publications/WCMS_614127)



## Training TVET Managers in Guyana

Managers of Technical, Vocational and Educational Training (TVET) institutions of Guyana were the beneficiaries of training from 11 to 13 October 2017. Further to a request from the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Guyana, the ILO provided training, technical expertise and advice in strengthening TVET in Guyana on quality assurance, management and supervision of technical and vocational education institutions.

Similar training was conducted in 2010, however due to the retirement of many principals and administrators, there was a clear need to train the new crop of managers and refresh the skills of those already in positions of responsibility. The objective of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of principals and administrators of vocational training institutions on quality assurance in the management and supervision of technical education and training institutions, and curriculum development in Technical and Vocational Education.

Director of the Council for TVET, Mr Sydney Walters, welcomed 30 participants to the meeting and urged them to put to good use the knowledge gained during the workshop. He thanked the principals, administrators, and managers for investing in self-development and expressed the Council's gratitude to the ILO Caribbean Office for providing the technical expertise in this area.

Participants were exposed to presentations on quality skills development in efficiency, effectiveness, flexibility, competitiveness, and responsive to the labour market. This was followed by an exercise on instructor professional needs self-assessment. Other areas of discussions included accreditation, programme evaluation, community involvement and inclusive education.

The three-day training workshop concentrated on competency-based curricula, instruction and assessment including: competency-based curriculum development and its characteristics; collecting and assessing community and school-related data, establishing curriculum content using DACUM process; job/occupation analysis and duties; teaching and learning resources, problem situation and management, lesson planning and preparation, writing and sequencing terminal performance objectives, developing learning packages, and implementing and managing delivery of competency-based training. The workshop concluded with presentations on internal quality, fiscal management, and core employability skills.

The discussions on quality assurance re-affirmed the responsibilities of the principals and administrators in achieving quality in their programmes. Participants also understood the implication of poorly managed training institutions, low staff morale, and a curriculum that is not responsive to the labour changes.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Domestic Workers' Cooperative registered in Guyana

Following on the heels of their ratification of ILO Convention No. 189 - the ILO Domestic Workers' Convention – the Cooperative Republic of Guyana witnessed history in the making in October 2017, when the first Domestic Workers' Cooperative was registered by the Department of Cooperatives.



Given the historical importance of the cooperative movement to development in Guyana, the registration of this cooperative is expected to contribute to the empowerment of Red Thread members and bring social and economic benefits such as joint ownership, access to finance, legal advice and marketing opportunities. In the long run, a service cooperative is expected to give domestic workers greater control over their working conditions and a formal vehicle to address their interests, including advocacy for the proper implementation of C-189, the ILO Domestic Workers' Convention. Guyana was the first Caribbean country to ratify the Convention, followed by Jamaica in 2016.

The ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean began working with the Red Thread's group of domestic workers to form a cooperative in May 2017. Since then, an interim management Committee was set up and the Committee was trained in cooperative management and governance; assisted to form a business plan and interim budget; and in formulating rules for the cooperative.

Support for the cooperative was provided throughout the year by Paula Robinson, ILO Senior Specialist, Workers' Activities and Kelvin Sergeant, ILO Specialist in Sustainable Enterprise Development and Job Creation, both from the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean. Perlina Gifth, Chief Cooperative Officer, Department of Labour, Ministry of Social Protection also provided support to the organization, including tips on how to register successfully with the department.

## Model contracts empower Domestic Workers in Trinidad and Tobago

Althea Coombs-Rivas, Vice President of the National Union of Domestic Workers and a domestic worker for more than 20 years, had been taken advantage of by employers for years. However that scenario has finally changed thanks to the introduction of model contracts for domestic workers, a valuable tool in defending their labour and basic human rights.

Coombs-Rivas recalled one instance of going to work for one woman and then being made to work for a number of families in the home. "It's not like she will raise the salary for the extra work. You have to do the extra work without a complaint either. You just can't say anything. And that is not fair," she said. She was threatened with termination and was told that she could leave if she wanted to. Like many domestic workers, she is the family breadwinner and felt forced to accept the miserly payment because of limited alternatives for earning an income. In her view, the contract provide greater protection for domestic workers.

On 14 October 2017, the ILO hosted a Tripartite workshop to validate the Domestic Workers' Model Contract. With financial support from the ILO Cooperative Unit in Geneva and the Caribbean Office, this event was held at the Bureau of Standards in Macoya, Trinidad. The model contracts were developed by Attorney and industrial relations practitioner Vanessa Thomas-Williams with technical support from ILO Specialist for Sustainable Enterprise and Job Creation, Kelvin Sergeant.

The purpose of the workshop was to present and train domestic workers on the draft model contracts designed to assist the thousands of workers who have no protection or recognition under the law. Ida Le Blanc, President of the National Union of Domestic Workers addressed the opening of the workshop and agreed that the contracts could bring some measure of protection to the 30,000 domestic workers in Trinidad and Tobago. She also called for the ratification of the ILO's Domestic Workers' Convention – C189- by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

The model contracts would be used by the cooperative to facilitate an arrangement to provide services to clients, whether homeowners or companies. "The intention would be to ensure that there is adequate protection for domestic workers in Trinidad and Tobago," opined Vanessa Thomas-Williams. She also explained that the new contracts offered the co-operative a unique opportunity to operate as a recruitment agency acting on behalf of domestic workers.



#### STAFF MOVEMENT

## ILO Senior Workers' Specialist Paula Robinson, retires

Paula Robinson, Senior Specialist- Workers' Activities, retired on 31 October 2017 after serving at the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean since June 2003.

Robinson was the first female Specialist on Workers' activities in the region and certainly left her legacy through the initiatives which she spearheaded. Among her many achievements, Robinson was the driving force behind the establishment of national level cooperatives of domestic workers across the region as well as the Caribbean Domestic Workers' Network. She also worked extensively on the bipartite project involving the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) and the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC) supported by the European Union which sought to facilitate the participation of CARIFORUM civil society in the regional development and integration process. She was loved for her tireless support to trade unions over the years.

With a keen eye for detail and a flair for writing, Robinson made a stellar contribution to the Caribbean Newslink as part of the Editorial Committee. She will most be remembered for her perfectionist nature, her passion for speaking out on issues dear to her heart and her determination to get things done in spite of the challenges that came her way. Off the job, Robinson enjoyed exploring the culinary arts and was always a willing and hospitable hostess.

Representatives of Workers' organizations from across the region paid tribute to Robinson via messages which were shared at a retirement function hosted in her honour on 27 October, 2017. Michael Annisette, President General of the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union (SWWTU) also attended and brought greetings on behalf of the Caribbean Congress of Labour. ILO colleagues expressed their sentiments with spontaneous tributes and heartfelt wishes for a happy retirement and safe return to her homeland, Jamaica.

#### BREAKFAST MEETING FOCUS ON ILO'S YEAR IN REVIEW

## Looking forward to Future of Work and future of training

The ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean hosted a breakfast meeting at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Port of Spain, Trinidad on 5 December, 2017. In a gesture of gratitude, the ILO DWT hosted a broad range of stakeholders in celebration of a year of partnerships.

Guests included the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste-Primus, Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, senior Government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, development partners, UN agency heads, Trade Union comrades, representatives of Employers' organizations, advocates of the Decent Work Agenda and friends of the Media.

On this occasion, guests were treated to presentations on the future of work and the future of vocational training depicting how the ILO is preparing with the Caribbean for the future of work.

In anticipation of the Future of Work Centenary Initiative, the ILO is working closely with constituents across the region to prepare for the future of work as well as the future of training. In this context, the ILO Decent Work team (DWT) and Caribbean Office supported the National Training Agency (NTA) of Trinidad and Tobago in conducting a research study focused on the core skills required from the perspective of employers. While the report is not yet finalised for public consumption, the research has been done and an executive summary was presented at the event in an intimate forum to give stakeholders a taste of the current skillsets available in country as well as a reflection from employers as to what they look for when recruiting.

Another important presentation at the breakfast meeting was a study conducted in the region which was launched previously at a meeting of the ILO/CINTERFOR technical committee in August in Costa Rica. The document entitled, "The future of professional training in Latin America and the Caribbean: Diagnostic and general guidelines for its strengthening" addresses a range of topics that are of interest to our stakeholders. These include: policies of productive development and technological changes; support for social dialogue; boosting apprenticeships or "quality learning" that uses companies as a learning space and much more.

# INTERNAL INNOVATIONS

## Full IRIS operational in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin America and Caribbean region became the first region to fully implement the ILO's administrative electronic management system- the Integrated Resource Information System better known as IRIS. It is a common database which connects all ILO offices globally.

Twelve members of staff from the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean participated in intensive training from 25 September to 20 October 2017 at the Regional Office in Lima, Peru, as part of this critical transformation. The training equipped participants to manoeuvre the system and to share information with colleagues not exposed to the same depth of training, as well as to help each other to become adept in all of its functions. Ultimately, mastery of the functions in IRIS will allow the office to more effectively streamline its own processes for better use of the ILO's resources.

Dagmar Walter, Deputy Director, recognized, "It was a real challenge for the office to implement IRIS at the end of the biennium but it was managed in an exemplary way by the four IRIS focal points, Jennifer Jones-Morales, Ingerlyn Caines-Francis, Jacqui Morris and Karen Seegobin, who planned and prepared ahead of time, helping the office to get through together with the temporary staff put in place." She commended the Regional Office for sending three colleagues who were great support for one week respectively following the go-live on 30 October 2017.

IRIS was first implemented in ILO Headquarters and has been progressively rolled out in phases. By 2016, all regional offices and select

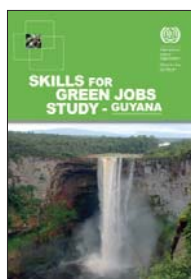
country offices were on IRIS. Most other offices were also partially using IRIS for HR and some technical cooperation functions. However, the Latin America and Caribbean region, along with Russia and Turkey were chosen to be the first region where IRIS would be fully rolled out in all field offices.

Though the principles of strategic management and good planning remain the same, the technology allows for improved workflows. The office-wide standardization of business practices has influenced interactions between the ILO, constituents and partners in terms of administrative and financial procedures related to the delivery of technical assistance.

The ILO prides itself on accountability and transparency. Programme Officer Ingerlyn Caines-Francis explained, "IRIS enables the Team to deliver better, faster and more transparently. We can account for and report on our achievements and use of resources with greater accuracy and coherence. The impact on constituents is significant."

Since its deployment, IRIS has facilitated more dynamic collaboration between offices as data is updated in real time and users can easily access support on the processing of transactions, through various channels. In the past, there was a delay in the relay of information between the old financial system and IRIS used by HQ. Also, information regarding projects and contracts are documented in the system for reference, cutting down on the amount of paper used. The processes used in the past to generate contracts and other types of agreements are simplified and now require less paperwork. In real terms, IRIS is also helping the ILO to create a greener workplace.

## INFORMATION RESOURCES

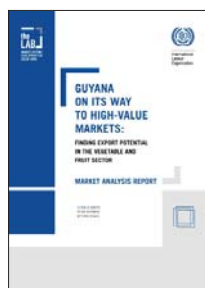


### Skills for Green Jobs Study – Guyana

In Guyana, skills for green jobs in key sectors have been prioritized due to the environmental and climate change impacts they have. Moreover, Guyana is investing in

skills for new green occupations, in priority areas including renewable energy, nature and eco-tourism and ecosystems services. Although a strong foundation is being laid and positive actions being demonstrated, more work is needed to fully align skills requirements and policy. This report examines key findings.

ISBN: 978-92-2-131477-6 (print)  
978-92-2-131478-3 (web pdf)



### Guyana on its way to high-value markets: Finding export potential in the vegetable and fruit sector - Market Analysis Report

This report adopts a market systems approach to analysis by

focussing on bottlenecks and constraints in the supporting functions and rules to target high growth, high potential value chains. By addressing constraints in these supporting functions and rules impact can be a) more sustainable by addressing structural issues that prevent the private sector from thriving; and b) more wide spread by creating the conditions for other private sector actors to benefit and grow.

ISBN: 978-92-2-131479-0



### The enabling environment for sustainable enterprises in Guyana

Strong and efficient markets need strong and effective institutions. Promoting sustainable enterprises is also about ensuring that human, financial and natural resources are combined

equitably and efficiently in order to achieve innovation and enhanced productivity. Seventeen pillars were identified for such a conducive environment. This report analyses how Guyana performs with respect to each pillar, assessing strengths and weaknesses. A national perceptions survey focusing on 9 of the 17 pillars enriched the findings. The report hopes to stimulate debate and provide an evidence base for policy reforms towards a conducive environment for sustainable enterprises in Guyana. The report has been used to identify priorities for dialogue, advocacy and public policy work of the social partners. A subsequent action plan will guide the implementation of specific measures.

ISBN 978-92-2-131459-2

## INTERNATIONAL OBSERVANCES

- International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust - 27 January
- International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation - 06 February
- World Day for Social Justice - 20 February
- Zero Discrimination Day - 1 March
- International Women's Day - 8 March
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - 21 March
- World Water Day - 22 March
- International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery - 25 March

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