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## THE ROLE OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

*Hayden Blades*

(Economist, CARICOM Secretariat, Guyana)

I will hope that most of us have at least some sort of idea of the work that the Secretariat has done over the past years in the field of Agriculture and what I would attempt to do is just to review briefly some of the elements of work in which we are now beginning to get involved. The legal agreement establishing Caricom itself allocates two roles to the Secretariat in the area of Agriculture and these have primarily to do with the marketing of agricultural products, both regionally and extra-regionally, and the rationalization of agricultural production in the region.

In the area of marketing there are three basic areas with which we deal. The first area is the marketing of commodities on a regional basis and that aspect of our work is governed by three basic agreements. One is the Agricultural Marketing Protocol, and another is the Guaranteed Marketing Scheme and those two deal essentially with fruits and vegetables and also some livestock commodities. We also have the other, Oils and Fats Protocol, which deals primarily with the marketing of copra and copra-derived products on a regional basis. In the area of extra-regional marketing we are engaged primarily in the operation of the Lomé Convention and we have a number of working parties in the area of rum, sugar and bananas which rationalise the regional position for the ACP/EEC negotiations and also a working party which deals primarily with the functioning of the Lomé Convention. In addition, the sugar working party also deals with the International Sugar Agreement.

There are two regulations which deal with non-tariff barriers to trade. These are the Plant and Animal Quarantine Regulations and what we have attempted to do there is to have two committees which sit and try to attempt to rationalize the legislation dealing with the movement of plants and animals on a regional basis.

In the area of production, originally the agreement governing production had to deal primarily with what was called at that time the "Rationalization of Production". Subsequent to that we had the development of what is now known as the Regional Food Plan which is an attempt to look at the production of a number of specific commodities on a regional basis, with the idea of achieving as high a level of regional self-sufficiency as we can and also of stimulating intra-regional trade in some of these commodities. The commodities to which I refer are livestock commodities, fish commodities, cereals and grain legumes, animal feeds, fruits and vegetables, agricultural inputs and spices and essential oils. The work of the Secretariat in this area is primarily to do with, first of all, the preparation of what we call a preliminary design - which is a sort of generalised subsection analysis attempting to identify the potential for production in each one of these areas - and also to get political agreement to some production programme on a subsector basis. Up to now we have completed only one of these preliminary designs and that is in the area of livestock, although project identification has continued in most of the other subsectors. In addition to that we are also involved in the development of a number of institutions - the Caribbean Food

Corporation, for example, is one area in which we have been doing a fair amount of work in order to get that Corporation off the ground.

There is one sort of field project in which the Secretariat is involved and this is the CARDATS project to which reference has been made before. That project is primarily aimed at providing the Governments of the LDCs with back-up technical support in the sense of trying to devise a programme together with the LDCs Governments which will help them fill the gaps in the technical staffing problems that they at present have. That project, I think, is one of those which we can examine in some detail because it does impinge on the other programmes of a number of other institutions, e.g. CARDI, the Ministries of Agriculture and so on. There is some reasoning that one could use to say that in fact CARDATS should be a sort of field lab of CARDI in the sense that it is, in effect, an out-reach programme and, if CARDI itself is involved in that same kind of out-reach exercise, it may be that some higher level of rationalisation could be achieved if in fact CARDATS were operated to some extent as a field lab of CARDI.

Basically, the above are the areas of work in which we are primarily involved. There are some other areas, for example, in the preparation of a Regional Food and Nutrition Plan which we are coordinating together with CFNI. But I think, Mr. Chairman, that these are the prime areas of activities with which we are involved at this point in time. With reference to the question of the number of institutions operating in the region and the problems of getting staff, although the Agricultural Section of the Secretariat is supposed to have something of the order of about eight technical people, together with one Agricultural Adviser, right now I think our staff is down to something like three, and over the past couple of months what we have been seeing is the re-allocation of people from one institution to the next, with the total number basically remaining the same.