THE REGIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION STRATEGY (RFNS) - ITS PROGRAMMES AND IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

K, Jordan

(Economist, CARICOM Secretariat, Guyana)

Introduction

The Need for the RFNS

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat was mandated by the Standing Committee of Ministers responsible for health, education and agriculture to prepare a Regional Food and Nutrition Strategy (RFNS) for the CARICOM countries. The Heads of regional agencies at a meeting in October 1979 agreed that such a strategy was necessary and an Inter-sectoral Committee comprised of personnel from various regional organisations in the areas of food and agriculture, health, education and communication, was set up with the responsibility for the formulation of the strategy.

The RFNS was considered necessary in the light of certain economic, health and nutrition, education, communication and other problems that exist within the Region. These problems include:

- declining food and agricultural production in the Region with consequent high levels of food imports;

- low income levels with highly skewed income distribution patterns, giving rise to food distribution problems;

- high rates of unemployment in CARICOM Member States;

- balance of payments difficulties;

- declining terms of trade and a drop in real export earnings; and

- high incidences of under-nutrition and malnutrition.

All these problems derive from the extreme dependence that obtains in the CARICOM Region, and manifest themselves in a severe food and nutrition situation.

This situation is compounded by problems at the educational level. The education system has not satisfactorily functioned to generate sufficient interest in agriculture and other food related areas. Also, very often the nutrition problem derives from a lack of understanding concerning nutritional requirements. This latter requires effective nutrition education to ensure its alleviation.

Other problems have to do with the lack of community involvement, rural underdevelopment and internal migration to the cities, underdeveloped human resources capacity and poor institutional management. These problems can be called *people problems*, the solution of which is crucial to the success of the strategy.

Giving the range and inter-relationships between all the problems alluded to, a multipronged attack on the problems is necessary and hence the inclusion of food and agriculture, health, education and communication programme areas as components of the RFNS.

The RFNS cannot aspire to solve all the problems in the Region. It is recognised that other strategies, programmes and projects have been developed and will have to be developed to alleviate other problems of the Region. As such, the RFNS has to be properly placed within the context of an overall development strategy for the Region and must cohere with all other strategies undertaken in keeping within the development process.

The RFNS takes as its springboard the definition of development put forward by the Group of Caribbean Experts:

> *"an effort by the people themselves to take maximum advantage of their resources and opportunities not only to secure higher living standards but also to achieve a new status in the world based upon a development of their sense of identity, self-reliance and self-respect."*[1]

Given this definition, the development effort is the means through which they can achieve the objectives of:

(i)   improved living standards;

(ii)   higher levels of employment;

(iii)   a political environment which guarantees personal freedom and therefore provides for the full involvement of the people in policy formulation and implementation; and

(iv)   the development of a national and Caribbean identity from which the psychological capacity required for self-reliance and self-sustaining development could be derived.

Such a statement of the overall objectives and crucial elements of a development strategy for the Caribbean highlights the fact that the strategy must both be growth-oriented as well as capable of adequately satisfying the basic needs of the population. Previous experience in the Caribbean clearly demonstrates that too great an imbalance between these two orientations eventually frustrates the achievement of self-reliance and self-sustenance, and leads to a rapid slow-down of the pace of development in the Region.

To achieve these orientations together, it becomes clear that a careful planning effort must be pursued, encompassing not only an overall plan and strategy, but also detailed sector-by-sector planning to ensure that the overall plan retains internal consistency. Once this is accepted, the critical importance of the food and agricultural sector makes it one of the highest priority sectors for such planning efforts, beginning with the development of an appropriate strategy and leading through to the specification of programmes and implementing mechanisms. The RFNS represents an attempt at developing precisely such a planning system.

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[1] "The Caribbean Community in the 1980s" - Report by a Group of Caribbean Experts.

Objectives of the RFNS Strategy

Against the problem scenario as outlined in the previous section and in line with the overall development strategy, the major goals of the RFNS are to:

(i)   improve the general health of the peoples of the Region;

(ii)   increase economic self-sufficiency and self-reliance;

(iii)   reduce the incidence of malnutrition in the population especially in children under two years of age, expectant mothers and the poor;

(iv)   reduce the dependence on imported food.

Other objectives of the strategy in support of the main goals relate to popular participation and communication, and human resource mobilisation and development.

Several programme areas have been developed to meet the objectives of the RFNS. These are outlined in the following section of this Report.

The Elements of the Strategy

Given the problem relating to food and nutrition in the Region and the objectives of this Strategy, the major elements of the Strategy are as follows:

(i)   food and agricultural production in all sectors including import substitutes, import replacements and exports;

(ii)   nutritional health relating both to inadequate levels of food intake and the low nutritional status of certain critical sections of the population and the associated nutritional diseases;

(iii)   environmental health related to the incidence of gastro-enteritis and other diarrhoeal diseases that cause or exacerbate undernutrition;

(iv)   human resources development in areas such as management and technical training as well as nutrition and health training;

(v)   community participation at both the planning and implementation levels of the Strategy;

(vi)   mechanism needed to execute, coordinate, monitor and review the activities which constitute the Strategy.

The RFNS, while it seeks to bring about certain *outputs* essential to the success of the Strategy, has to continually monitor certain factors outside the frame of the RFNS and seek to influence them in such a way that the objectives of the Strategy can be achieved, e.g. the terms of trade for extra-regional export commodities.

The major elements of the Strategy are detailed in terms of the nine startegy programmes in the next section of this report.

The summary of the RFNS is shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1. Summary Analysis of the Regional Food and Nutrition Strategy

Item	Production	Marketing	Consumption	Absorption
Major Problems	Low output High imports	High food losses Poor marketing organization and distribition systems	Inadequate quantities Lack of nutrition information 'Risk-group' food distribution	Poor environmental health status
Strategy	Substitute imported sources of protein and energy Import critical food items, especially cereals Increase food exports Increase all food outputs, especially nutritionally significant commodities Develop and train manpower People participation Improve decision making and coordination	Reduce post-harvest losses through preservation, storage and processing Improve marketing infrastructure especially distribution and prices Improve systems of regional trade Manpower development and training Improve decision-making and co-ordination People participation	Special programmes for mothers and children as 'at risk' groups Income support programmes for low income groups Information and education on use of local foods Nutrition education Develop strategic food reserves Manpower development and training Improve decision-making and co-dination People participation	Improve environmental health services Reduce nutrition-related diseases - - Manpower development and training Improve decision-making and co-ordination People participation
Programme	1;6;7;8;9	1;3;6;7;8;9	0;2;3;4;6;7;8;9	5;6;7;8;9

Chart 1 (continued)

Target	Food import/export ratio of 0.8 by 1990. Real domestic food output growth rate 2% per year. 30% increase in graduates from secondary and tertiary institutions in fields related to food	Reduce post-harvest losses to 10% by 1990	80% local sources of energy by 1990. 60% local sources of protein by 1990. 65 gms. protein/ 2600 kcal. energy per capita. 25% increase in trained home economists and agriculturists	Reduce mortality in infants under 2 yrs. by 40%. Eradicate typhoid and gastro-enteritis death rate reduced by 80%
Executing Agency	National Ministries of Agriculture	Marketing Boards Trade Ministries	Trade Ministries	Ministry of Health / Ministry of Education
	Caribbean Food Corporation (CFC)	Private Sector	Ministry of Health	-
	Agricultural Development Bank (ADB)	CFC	Ministry of Education / Disaster Preparedness Committees	-
	National Ministries of Education	Ministries of Education	-	-
	Caribbean Rural Development Advisory Training Service (CARDATS) Private Sector	Disaster Preparedness Committees	Consumer Protection Ministries	-
Supporting Agency	CARICOM Secretariat (CCS)	CCS	CCS	CCS
	Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)	CDB	-	CAREC
	University of the West Indies (UWI)	UWI	UWI	UWI
	Caribbean Agricultural and Research and Development Institute (CARDI)	CARDI	-	-
	Media	Media	Media	Media
	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)	OECS	OECS	OECS
	Women's Bureaux	Women's Bureaux	Women's Bureaux	Women's Bureaux
	Non-governmental agencies (NGOs)	NGOs	NGOs	NGOs
	Food and Nutrition Councils (FNC)	FNCs	FNCs	FNCs
	Ministry of Finance/Planning	Ministry of Finance/ Planning	Ministry of Finance/ Planning	Ministry of Finance/ Planning
	International agencies	International agencies	-	-
	Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI)	CFNI	CFNI	CFNI
	Other Government agencies	Other Government agencies	Other Government agencies	Other Government agencies
			International organizations	International organizations

The Programmes of the Strategy

Nine programmes were developed under the RFNS. These programmes are described below.

Programme 1: Increased Production and Availability of Food in the Region

This programme aims at increasing the production and availability of food. The increased availability of food at regional, national and household levels is crucial to the correcting of nutritional imbalances which obtain in the Region. Increased quantities of food of the right type must be available at the appropriate time and place, at a reasonable price and in an acceptable form. The increased availability of food must be obtained through increased regional production of food. This increased food production will also contribute to improving rural incomes, employment creation, and to savings on foreign exchange expenditure on food imports.

This programme also recognises that there will be need to import certain food commodities and agricultural inputs not produced in the Region. Extra-regional exports of agricultural commodities will thus be important because of their foreign exchange earning capacity which will pay for these imports. Since the agricultural sector is the major sector in most Caribbean economies, its successful development can provide much needed foreign exchange surpluses for investment in other sectors of the economy.

Programme 2: Increased Consumption on Nutritionally-Important Foods
Especially by 'At Risk' Groups

This programme aims at increasing the consumption of nutritionally-important foods by *at risk* groups, so that by 1990 the average daily per capita intake of calories and proteins by these groups will have increased to the recommended daily allowance in all CARICOM countries. This programme is also aimed at ensuring that basic food needs of all sectors of the population are met. Large sections of the population of the Region do not receive sufficient food. A major reason for this situation is that most of the Region's food supplies is obtained through an international marketing system. Because of market imperfections, all segments of the population have not been able to procure sufficient quantities of nutritionally-important food. Low Income groups are particularly hard hit in this regard, because of an in sufficiency of income to buy food.

The *at risk* groups identified for *priority attention* include children under two years of age, pre-school children, school children, and expectant and lactating mothers. This programme recommends the establishment of mechanisms, including an improved marketing system for supplying these groups while encouraging increased home production of domestic foods.

In addition, it seeks to encourage pricing policies which will keep real food prices relatively stable.

Programme 3: Increased Food Reserves as Part of Disaster Preparedness Plan

This programme seeks to ensure that food reserves for normal consumption are supplemented by stocks for consumption in times of natural disasters, as part of a disaster preparedness plan.

It is designed to address the problems related to the inability of the marketing system to have sufficient food available at times of disaster.

It is envisaged that there will be food storage at startegic locations at times of disaster. An appropriate administrative machinery will be developed in respect of the reserves. It is also envisaged that a regional group will be established to monitor the international prices of staple foods on a nutritional basis, for use in the procurement of these foods.

This programme also seeks to establish a proper system of distribution which will ensure rapid and adequate distribution of food at times of disaster.

Programme 4: *Maternal and Child Health Programme*

This programme seeks to enhance the nutritional status of mothers and children. Mothers and children, who together comprise about two-thirds of the Caribbean population, constitute a group especially vulnerable to malnutrition.

Because of the size of this group and the inter-relatedness between the nutritional problems of mothers and children, this group has been identified for special attention.

This programme will address issues through the development of policy relating to maternal and child health. It involves a revaluation of the existing maternal and child health strategy and provides for the supervision of mothers and children throughout pregnancy, childbirth and childhood.

Programme 5: *Control of Nutrition-related Diseases*

This is another health-related programme which is directed at reducing the incidence of nutrition-related diseases, including those arising out of environmental conditions. More specifically, the diseases referred to may be categorised as follows:

(i) nutrition-related communicable diseases, e.g. measles and whooping cough;

(ii) nutrition-related non-communicable diseases, e.g. anaemia, hypertension and diabetes;

(iii) those relating to the environment, e.g. gastroenteritis.

This programme seeks to achieve its objectives through three programme components which are:

(a) immunisation services for all children within the programme for communicable disease control;

(b) preparation and execution of definitive programmes for the control and treatment of obesity, anaemia, diabetes, hypertension and dental diseases. These programmes would, in the short-term, aim at improving the dietary management of these diseases and epidemiological investigation of the causes of the diseases; and

(c) execution of the regional environmental strategy which makes provision for a continuous supply of water, for approved facilities for disposal of liquid and solid waste, a policy of fluoridation of water supplies and for dealing with pollution.

Training programmes for all environmental health workers would be prepared and implemented under this programme.

Programme 6: More Relevant and Effective Education at School and Adult Levels

This programme was planned against a background of alienation from agriculture in the Region, a preference for imported foods as well as a lack of awareness of the relatinship between the environment, health and food and nutrition. It therefore seeks to reorient the existing educational systems in line with the objectives of the RFNS. The systems should provide for continuing education at adult levels.

Some of the major problems which this programme must confront include the lack of adequately qualified and trained personnel, inadequate curricula and teaching materials, and a dearth of practical work in education curricula.

Under this programme, such issues as curriculum development and reform, textbook and materials production, the training of administrators and teacher trainers, and adult education will be addressed. Teaching techniques will have to be adjusted in such a way that students at all levels are exposed to practical activity in areas related to the strategy.

Other important activities to be undertaken by this programme include the expansion of school supervision in technical areas, regional co-ordination of curriculum development activity, the establishment of national councils for adult education and the promotion of work-study at secondary and tertiary institutions.

Programme 7: Increased and More Effective Educational and
Technical Support for All Sectors of the Strategy

Under this programme, training for a wide variety of personnel who will offer technical support to the Strategy will be provided. It is intended to produce the skills needed in support of the Strategy. It will also sensitise the general population concerning the Strategy so that it can derive maximum benefit from project activities.

The programme seeks to increase the number of teachers at all levels in formal and non-formal programmes, with specialisations in the technical areas related to the Strategy. These teachers will enlighten approaches to the production and utilisation of indigenous foods, leading to improved nutritional status and a better quality of life in the Region.

Revision of teacher school curricula in line with the Strategy and an expansion of the number of teachers are expected under this programme. It is hoped to develop an appreciation of the problems and potential of the Region as well as an awareness of the nutritional value of indigenous foods.

Programme 8: Stimulating Active Public Support for and Participation in
Programme of the Regional Food and Nutrition Strategy

With respect to development initiatives in general, and those of food and nutrition in particular, it has been found that there is a lack of community involvement. This popular nonchalance is due in part to the paucity of information flow between planners and beneficiaries. The problems of efficient planning and execution, therefore, become all the more difficult.

Against this background, it is felt that the narrowing of the communication gap at all levels with the aim of ensuring people involvement in the formulation and execution of programmes and projects is vital, if the objectives of the Strategy are to be achieved.

This programme will serve to modify and refine continuously the programmes of the Strategy; to determine the priorities of Strategy and design; and to mount and support appropriate communication projects while at the same time, mobilising key actors in the development and implementation of projects dictated by the priorities of the Strategy.

Skills and technology will be deployed to bridge the existing communication gaps, to set up machinery which will seek to explain development programmes and to communicate people's responses to governments and development planners, their aims and objectives and to serve as a link between the beneficiaries and planners, promoting at all times, community participation in the evaluation of the RFNS.

It is designed to ensure the mobilisation and generation of commitment to the Strategy by the people of the Region.

A range of communication exercises including mass dissemination via the media, national consultations, seminars, and workshops is expected to be undertaken under the auspices of this programme.

Programme 9: Strategy Implementation and Coordination

This programme addresses the problems of inefficiency in the decision-making, coordination and implementation process.

The approach of this programme will be to modify the existing system to improve the decision-making, implementation and co-ordination with respect to the Strategy, its programmes and projects; to develop a management information system to facilitate efficient decision-making and continued monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy; and to provide a mechanism by which people will be involved in the planning and decision-making process.

A description of the organisational structure and a discussion of the planning and implementation process will be treated in two subsequent sections of this report.

Organisational Structure for Strategy Implementation

It is evident that the efficient implementation of the Regional Food and Nutrition Strategy will depend, to a large measure, on the effective management of all available resources. There are at present, however, no executive powers within the regional decison-making framework. All such powers reside with the national executive agencies. As such, the regional system must make provision for coordinated decision-making among the national executive agencies, monitoring the implementation of the decisions made and ensuring coordination of the activities of the national, regional and international agencies.

This section indicates the organisational structure and responsibilities which are necessary for the implementation of the Strategy.

The organisational structure envisaged will have the following elements:

(a)   institutional arrangements for carrying out the formulation, imple-
       mentation, monitoring, evaluation and reformulation of the Strategy;
       and

(b)   an efficient management information system.

The organisational structure being proposed is presented in Chart 2.
The structure shows the major decision-making, monitoring and evaluating
committees, the national and regional executing agencies, the supporting agencies
and the inter-relationships between these entities. The solid arrows indicate
the reporting relationships between the agencies and the broken arrows the
relationship of the private sector, executing entities, and the supporting
agencies.

The decision-making committees in the structure are the Standing
Committees/Conference of Ministers, Committees of Regional-Sector Planners/
Officials, the Heads of Regional Agencies Committee (HRA), Board of Directors/
Policy Committees of the regional organisations, the Ministerial Governing
Bodies of the regional organisations.

The monitoring and evaluation committees are the National Food and
Nutrition Councils (NFNC) and Inter-sectoral Committee (ISC).

The primary executing agencies are the national ministries and the
private sector entities, with the regional organisations executing activities
in support of the primary executing agencies.

The supporting agencies, essentially, will provide assistance to the
executing agencies in the implementation of the activities and include the
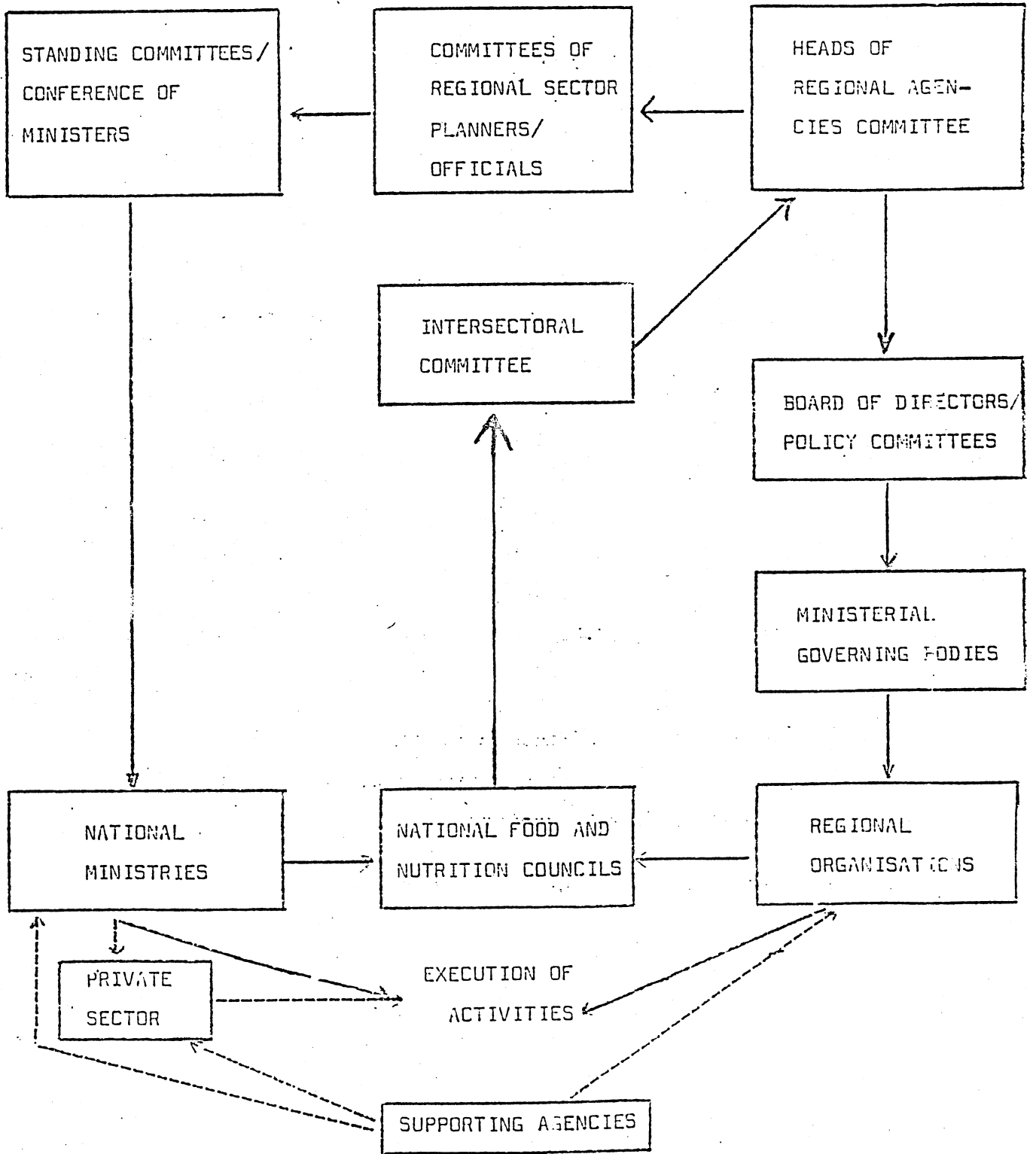donor agencies, voluntary and professional organisations.

The composition and organisational responsibilities of these agencies
are outlined below.

Heads of Regional Agencies

This is a committee comprising the Heads of Agencies which are involved
in activities related to food and nutrition in CARICOM countries. It is pro-
posed that the following agencies be included:

(a)   the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat;

(b)   the Caribbean Food Corporation (CFC);

(c)   the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB);

(d)   the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI);

(e)   the Organisation of East Caribbean States (OECS);

(f)   the University of the West Indies (UWI);

(g)   the University of Guyana (UG);

(h)   the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)

(i)   Christian Action for Economic Development in the Caribbean (CADEC)

(j)   the Caribbean Agricultural and Rural Development Advisory and
       Training Service (CARDATS);

CHART 2

ORGANISATIONAL CHART

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┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│ STANDING COMMITTEES/│ ◄─── │ COMMITTEES OF       │ ◄─── │ HEADS OF            │
│ CONFERENCE OF       │      │ REGIONAL SECTOR     │      │ REGIONAL AGEN-      │
│ MINISTERS           │      │ PLANNERS/           │      │ CIES COMMITTEE      │
│                     │      │ OFFICIALS           │      │                     │
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INTERSECTORAL COMMITTEE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS/ POLICY COMMITTEES

MINISTERIAL GOVERNING BODIES

NATIONAL MINISTRIES

NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION COUNCILS

REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

PRIVATE SECTOR

EXECUTION OF ACTIVITIES

SUPPORTING AGENCIES

(k)   the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC);

(l)   the Caribbean News Agency (CANA);

(m)   the Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU);

(n)   the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC);

(o)   the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC);

(p)   the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL).

The Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community will be Chairman of this Committee. The HRA Committee will also have an executive officer who will be the Secretary of the HRA and designated as the Strategy Coordinator.

The HRAs will have the following responsibilities:

(a)   review the Regional Food and Nutrition Strategy when it is submitted by the ISC;

(b)   submit the adopted Strategy to the Council of Ministers;

(c)   redesign the Strategy and programmes as it deems necessary;

(d)   report progress of the Strategy to the CARICOM Council of Ministers;

(e)   report progress of the Strategy programmes and submit three-year, roll-over implementation plans to the Standing Committees of Ministers;

(f)   coordinate external resources for regional activities. These resources flows should, as far as possible, be in consonance with bilateral flows;

(g)   agree to the composition of the ISC;

(h)   delegate duties and responsibilities to the ISC.

The Inter-Sectoral Committee

This Committee will be composed of the Strategy Coordinator as Chairman, four programme coordinators in the areas of food, health, education and communication and one representative each from CFNI, CAIC, CCL, UWI, CANA, OECS, CFC, CARDI and CBU.

Since the CARICOM Secretariat is the regional agency responsible for planning and programming within the regional system, it is proposed that the Programme Coordinators in the areas of food, health, education and communication should be the Chiefs of Agriculture, health, education and communication sections respectively, at the CARICOM Secretariat. The Strategy Coordinator will be responsible for the strategy implementation and coordination.

The Programme Coordinators and the Strategy Coordinator will monitor and evaluate the nine strategy programmes as well as prepare drafts of the implementation plans. They will, therefore, be responsible for the collection and analysis of information and the preliminary preparation of ISC documentation.

The representatives will attend ISC meetings and provide inputs in the finalisation of the documents that the ISC will be responsible for preparing. In addition, they will provide an important linkage between the ISC and key regional agencies.

The responsibilities of the ISC will be:

(a)   monitoring and evaluating the Strategy and its constituent programmes;

(b)   redesigning of the Strategy and/or its programmes when necessary;

(c)   reporting on the progress of the Strategy and the programmes to the HRAs; and

(d)   submitting to the HRAs, the three-year, roll-over implementation plans.

Board of Directors/Policy Committees

The regional agencies have Board of Directors or Policy Committees to whom the management of these organisations report and who are responsible for ensuring that the policies of these organisations, as represented by their work programmes, are implemented within the approved budgetary provisions. The membership of these Boards and Committees are mainly representatives from national and other regional organisations.

The responsibilities of these Boards and Committees will be:

(a)   to examine the activities allocated to their representative organisations, as agreed to by the HRA;

(b)   to integrate the allocated activities into the work programmes and budgets of their organisations;

(c)   to promote policies for their organisations that are in consonance with the objectives of the Strategy.

Ministerial Governing Bodies

Many of the regional organisations have ministerial governing bodies which are the supreme decision-making bodies. They are generally responsible for setting the policies of these organisations as well as approving their work programmes and budgets. These bodies are composed of Ministers of Government from the relevant ministry.

In instances where regional organisations do not have ministerial governing bodies, these organisations normally report to the relevant Standing Committee/Conference of Ministers.

The Standing Committees/Conference of Ministers

These Committees will be sectoral and will relate to the four areas of agriculture, health, education and information. It should be noted that those institutions which are already established are the Standing Committees of Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Education and the Conference of Ministers responsible for health. It is proposed that there be established a Standing Committee of Ministers responsible for information. These Committees will comprise Ministers of CARICOM Member States in the areas for which they are responsible. For example, the Standing Committee of Ministers responsible for Agriculture will be made up of Ministers of Agriculture in all Member States.

The responsibilities of these committees will be:

(a)   to review the progress of the relevant strategy programmes;

(b)   to examine and agree on the three-year, roll-over implementation plans for the respective strategy programmes;

(c)   to integrate the national aspects of the implementation plans into the work programmes of their respective ministries.

Committees of Regional Sector Planners/Officials

The Committees of Regional Sector Officials are Committees which act as technical advisory bodies to the Standing Committees of Ministers. There will, therefore, be four committees of Regional Sector officials in the areas of agriculture, health, education and information. The members of these committees shall be national officials appointed by Member States with observers from regional and international organisations.

The responsibilities of these committees will be as follows:

(a)   to review the progress of the relevant strategy programmes;

(b)   to examine and recommend to the relevant Ministerial Committee the three-year, roll-over implementation plans for the strategy programme;

(c)   to promote the implementation of those activities from the implementation plans which have been allocated to national agencies.

National Food and Nutrition Councils

Each CARICOM Member State will set up a Food and Nutrition Council. Membership should consist of representatives from national ministries and other relevant national institutions and agencies which conduct activities in the area of food and nutrition. These would include the private sector and voluntary organisations.

The responsibilities of these Councils in each Member State will be:

(a)   to coordinate the implementation of national activities;

(b)   to monitor and evaluate national activities;

(c)   to present evaluation reports to the ISC.

Regional Organisations

Regional organisations include all those agencies which are involved in food and nutrition activities, e.g. CARICOM, CDB, CFC, CFNI, UWI, CARDI and CARDATS. Their responsibilities include:

(a)   implementing those activities allocated to the regional organisations;

(b)   supporting the implementation of national activities where necessary; and

(c)   collaborating with donor agencies in the mobilisation of the required resources.

National Ministries

National ministries, in this context, means all the ministries of individual CARICOM Member States which may be involved in some way or other in the implementation of the Strategy. These ministries would, therefore, include ministries such as the Ministry of Works and the Ministry of Housing which may be requested by the National Food and Nutrition Councils to assist in implement-

ing specific activities. Essentially, the responsibilities of these ministries will be:

(a)   to mobilise resources from national, bilateral, multilateral and regional sources;

(b)   to implement those activities which have been allocated to national agencies;

(c)   to collaborate with the National Food and Nutrition Councils in the monitoring and evaluation of the activities.

Voluntary and Professional Organisations

Most of these organisations operate at national levels and are associated with the national ministries and regional organisations in their relationships to the Strategy.

Regional professional organisations include, among others, the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society, the Caribbean Medical Association (CMA), the Caribbean Women's Association (CARIWA), the Caribbean Union of Teachers (CUT), the Caribbean Association of Nutritionists and Dieticians (CANDI) and the Caribbean Association of Home Economics (CAHE). In many instances, national organisations are affiliated to these regional organisations. The voluntary organisations include, for example, Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Jaycees, the Salvation Army and the Red Cross Society.

These organisations will assist national ministries, the National Food and Nutrition Councils and regional organisations in:

(a)   providing technical and professional expertise for specific projects;

(b)   providing administrative and managerial expertise to implement programmes in which they may have special interests;

(c)   disseminating information and promoting development of activities relevant to the Strategy.

Donor Agencies

These are international agencies and bilateral organisations which will provide assistance to the national and regional agencies in the implementation of the Strategy by providing technical assistance and funding.

The succeeding section will indicate the precise manner in which the organisational structure will operate in relation to the implementation process and coordination mechanism.

Planning, Implementing and Coordinating the Strategy

This section presents the mechanism proposed for planning and implementing the Strategy. It also pinpoints some areas of difficulty which arises and considers some of the ways by which these constraints may be removed. Finally, it outlines the coordination process necessary for the successful implementation of the Strategy.

The planning process is based on the assumptions that:

(i)   the strategy activities will be determined on the basis of national priorities and needs;

(ii)   the national initiatives agreed to for implementation will be integrated into a regional strategy in such a way that the total regional output will be greater than the sum of the individual national outputs;

(iii)   the activities of regional and international organisations will be supportive of national initiatives.

The planning process proposed for the Strategy consists of, essentially, three basic stages which are set out below:

(a)   *The Global Development Strategy* - The Strategy will only address some of the sectors of the total economy. As such, it must be developed within the ambit of the global development strategy adumbrated for the total economy. The objectives of the Strategy must be very closely related to those of the global development strategy and must contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Development Strategy.

As such, the goals of the Strategy must be determined on the basis of an analysis of the Development Strategy as well as the state of the economy. Arising out of this analysis the objectives of the Strategy as a whole will be determined, as well as its relationship to and interaction with other strategies that will need to be devised in other sectors to meet the goals of the Development Strategy.

(b)   *Determining the State of the Relevant Sectors* - Each country will have to determine the nature and content of its national initiatives in the sectors of agriculture, health, education and information. These initiatives will be determined after appropriate surveys have been conducted and the current position with regard to the relevant sector has been ascertained. The surveys will also:

(i)   compile an inventory of ongoing and proposed national projects and programmes;

(ii)   estimate the levels of current outputs of the sectors; and

(iii)   identify the major constraints existing in the sector.

(c)   *Developing the Programmes of the Strategy* - The analyses of the state of the sectors will help to determine desirable objectives for the sector. This determination of sector objectives will also have to be related to those objectives set for the global economy.

The analyses will also suggest the necessary programmes which will have to be undertaken to achieve the sector objectives. The programme objectives will be determined by identifying those objectives that will need to be achieved if the identified sector constraints are to be removed and the targets set for the sector met within a specified time frame.

The output and input activities of the programme are elaborated next by examining what outputs need to be realised within what time-frame to achieve the programme objectives and then determining what input activities are required to meet these outputs.

Up to this point the analyses would essentially have been conducted with a national focus. The analyses at the regional level which follow are intended to discern the type of regional strategy which should be pursued in order to provide a wider scope for the national analyses, for example, by providing regional marketing arrangements which create a larger market thereby increasing the possibilities for increased production.

The analyses at the regional level lead to the identification of specific activities which will be undertaken within the regional framework in order to support the implementation of the programmes, to bring about cost-effectiveness in the implementation process and to create linkages between individual national activities in such a way that the total output of the programmes would be greater than the sum of the outputs of the individual national activities.

The final stage in the development of the programmes is the allocation of responsibility for the execution of the input activities of the programmes. The primary responsibility for the implementation of the activities will be with the relevant national ministry. However, other national, regional and international agencies may be responsible for executing specific activities of the programmes. The national ministry will nevertheless be responsible for monitoring the work of these supporting organisations. This activity allocation will be undertaken on the basis of agreed responsibility charts.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation system will have to be put in place to continuously assess the execution of the input activities and the achievement of programme outputs, as well as to provide information which will guide decisions on future activities being undertaken. The monitoring and evaluation system will therefore provide periodic assessments of the state of the sector, will update the programmes and the Strategy, and will also assist in determining the action programme that will be implemented within the next specified time period. The monitoring and evaluation system is described in the next section within the context of the implementation procedures.

The Implementation Process

The implementation process consists of a series of activities which must be undertaken in a predetermined sequence, and which are critical to the efficient execution of the Strategy. This sequence of activities is outlined in Chart 3.

The first two stages in the mechanism will be the responsibility of the Inter-Sectoral Committee and the National Food and Nutrition Councils working in close collaboration with the national ministries and the regional organisations. These two stages will involve the appointment of a programming mission which will visit all the Member countries on an annual basis in order to:

Chart 3: Implementation Activities

Stage	Institution	Action
First	Inter-Sectoral Committee/National Food and Nutrition Councils	Activity determination and allocation
Second	Inter-Sectoral Committee/National Food and Nutrition Councils	Elaboration of the Implementation Plan
Third	Heads of Regional Agencies	Agree to the Implementation Plan and allocation of activities for regional agencies
Fourth	Regional Sector Planners/Officials	Endorsement of the Implementation Plan on a programme basis
Fifth	Board of Directors/Policy Committees of Regional Agencies	Agree on work programme and budgets of regional organisations
Sixth	Standing Committee/Conference of Ministers	Endorsement of Implementation Plan on a programme basis
Seventh	Ministerial Governing Bodies of regional bodies	Endorsement of work programmes and budget of regional organisations
Eighth	National/regional Executing Agencies	Implementation of the activities in the Implementation Plan
Ninth	Inter-Sectoral Committee/National Food and Nutrition Councils	Annual evaluation of the Strategy — its programmes, activities and projects at national and regional levels

(a) review the state of the sectors and the activities undertaken during the last period;

(b) determine the activities to be undertaken during the next period;

(c) allocate responsibilities for those activities to the various national and regional agencies utilising the organisational responsibility charts;

(d) elaborate the Implementation Plan. These implementation plans will consist of the activities to be undertaken over the next three years in each of the strategy programmes, prioritised on an annual basis, together with the activity allocations.

After these annual implementation plans have been developed on a national basis, the Inter-Sectoral Committee will then analyse them and draw up a comprehensive regional plan.

Stages III through VII show how the Implementation Plan progresses through the decision-making process. Firstly, the Implementation Plan is submitted by the Inter-Sectoral Committee to the Heads of Regional Agencies for their consideration and approval.

The Implementation Plan will then be broken down on an individual programme basis. Each programme component of the Plan will be submitted to

the relevant regional committee of officials - health, agriculture, education and information - who will examine it and make their recommendations.

The Board of Directors/Policy Committees of the various regional organisations will next examine the Implementation Plan and the activities allocated to their respective institutions. These activities will be presented to boards/committees as part of the annual work programme and budget of the institutions. It will be the responsibility of the individual members of the Heads of Regional Agencies Committee to ensure that the activities allocated to their institutions are included in the work programme and budget of their institutions. The Board of Directors/Policy Committees will then recommend the approved work programmes and budgets of the regional organisations to the respective Ministerial Governing Bodies of the institutions.

The sixth stage in the mechanism occurs when the Standing Committee of Ministers (agriculture, health, education and information) meet to approve the Implementation Plan and allocation of activities for the programmes for which they have responsibility. This approval by the Ministerial Committees must be followed by the inforporation of the approved activities, to be executed by national agencies, into the work programme and budgets of these agencies.

The Ministerial Governing Bodies of the regional agencies will then meet to approve the annual work programmes and budgets of the regional agencies. This will be done against the background of the previous ministerial decisions on the Implementation Plan and activity allocations, so as to ensure that the work programmes of the regional agencies are in consonance with the activities, priorities and objectives of the Strategy.

The approval stage having been completed, all the national and regional agencies will now have approved work programmes and budgets for the execution of those activities allocated to them and will accordingly proceed with the execution of these activities.

During the process of execution by the national and regional agencies, the National Food and Nutrition Councils will monitor and evaluate all the activities undertaken within the country. The monitoring and evaluation function will lay the basis for the annual evaluation of the Strategy, its programmes and activities, and the National Plans, thereby setting the scene for the next annual programming exercise. It will also assist in coordinating the agencies involved in the execution of activities within the country.

The Problems

The stages of the implementation process throw into focus several areas of difficulty which will need to be examined critically if the Strategy is to function effectively. The most important of these are as follows:

(a)   most of the activities take place at the national level where overall responsibilities and executive powers lie. It is important, therefore, that the national objectives, priorities and policies be closely allied to those of the Strategy;

(b)   there are a number of committees which must meet and function in a predetermined sequence. It will be necessary for these committees

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to meet at designated times since a delay in the meeting of a committee could hinder the progress of Strategy implementation. Furthermore, the committees do not have executive powers and will have to depend on their individual members, who exercise executive authority in their several organisations, to implement the decisions of the committees;

(c)   a strategy of this type calls for a large quantum of resources, particularly finance and trained manpower. These resources will have to be obtained by a reallocation of resources currently available to national and regional agencies in line with the objectives and priorities of the Strategy; a more efficient utilisation of available resources and some additional resource flows. The Strategy Coordinator will have a key role to play in this very difficult area of reallocation, increased efficiency in use and additionality or resources;

(d)   the National Food and Nutrition Councils will have a critical role to play in terms of monitoring, evaluation and coordination at the national level. Many of the Councils are not currently very vibrant bodies. One of the first tasks in implementing the Strategy would therefore have to be the reactivation of these Councils.:

(e)   In order for the Strategy to realise its stated objectives, there must be continuous and significant political support for the Strategy programmes and projects. It will be necessary to adjust programme inputs and outputs to prevailing political and social changes. At the same time, it must be ensured that there is a continuity of personnel, and that the implementation of any one project does not divert resources from another project that is an integral part of a strategy programme;

(f)   the implementation process assumes public knowledge of, and commitment of the Regional Food and Nutrition Strategy. A public relations and communications programme is therefore vital to the successful implementation of the Strategy.

The Co-ordinating Process

The organisational structure, the planning and implementing processes proposed for the Strategy have been developed, with a view to achieving maximum coordination of the various actors involved in the execution of the Strategy, and also as a basis for addressing the problems alluded to above. The coordinating process is therefore intended to function at a number of levels.

A key element in the coordinating process will be the Management Information System which will provide for a reverse flow of relevant information from the level of the agencies executing activities in the field to the level of the decision-makers and back. This information flow is intended to facilitate efficient decision-making and execution.

Another element in the coordinating process will be that the membership of various committees will comprise persons who will be sitting on a number of

these committees. This will give added strength to the information flow within the organisational structure and further aid decision-making.

In addition, the members of these committees hold senior executive positions in their various organisations and will therefore be able to promote the execution of those activities allocated to their respective organisations.

The sequential decision-making stages described in the implementation process ensures that the decision-making bodies are provided with a maximum of information on which they can make their judgements.

Notwithstanding the structures and processes proposed for the Strategy a key determinant of its success will be the commitment it generates at the political and people levels within and outside the Caribbean.