



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited  
11 July 2002

Original: English

**For action**

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### United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Board

**Second regular session 2002**

16-20 September 2002

Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

### **Country programme recommendation\*\***

### **Multi-country programme for the Eastern Caribbean\*\*\***

### **Addendum**

#### *Summary*

The present addendum to the country note submitted to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2002 contains the final country programme recommendation for Board approval.

The Executive Director *recommends* that the Executive Board approve the country programme of the Eastern Caribbean (covering Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos) for the period 2003 to 2007 in the amount of \$7,500,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$4,000,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions.

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\* E/ICEF/2002/11.

\*\* The original country note provided only indicative figures for estimated programme cooperation. The figures provided in the present addendum are final and take into account unspent balances of programme cooperation at the end of 2001. They will be contained in the summary of recommendations for regular resources and other resources programmes for 2002 (E/ICEF/2002/P/L.36).

\*\*\* Document submission was delayed pending receipt of final data.

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## **The situation of children and women**

1. The analysis of the situation of children and women in the Eastern Caribbean remains essentially the same as described in the country note submitted to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2002 (E/ICEF/2002/P/L.9). The most significant recent developments include a slowdown in the critical tourism sector in almost all countries due to the decrease of stopover tourist arrivals, continuing difficulties for agricultural exports despite favourable rulings by the World Trade Organization on regional products, and continued pressure on the offshore financial sectors which have tightened regulations or committed to do so in successful efforts to be removed from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development blacklist of tax havens.

## **Programme cooperation, 1998-2002**

2. The 1998-2002 programme was designed to contribute to the fulfilment of children's rights by supporting government policies and programmes and community actions to put children at the centre of governmental and societal agendas.

3. The social investment, planning, monitoring and evaluation programme helped countries with the collection, analysis and dissemination of child-centred data to inform effective policy decisions and legislative reform. Multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS) were carried out in Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, the two largest countries. In Suriname, the results of the study are being used in the elaboration of the national plan of action for children and the national poverty eradication programme. The two countries are in the final phases of developing national information mechanisms for monitoring the situation of children.

4. The education for child development and participation programme helped to create awareness of the importance of early childhood education in all the countries. In the context of the 1997 Caribbean Community (CARICOM) regional strategy on early childhood education, care and development, elaborated with the support of UNICEF, the programme helped countries to develop policy frameworks for early childhood development (ECD) and to date, two countries have adopted national ECD policies. The programme helped to establish an ECD coordination mechanism in every country, and established linkages between ministries of education (responsible for pre-schools) and ministries of community development (responsible for day care and community-based activities) for an integrated approach to early childhood education. This approach was successfully tested in Suriname with the child-minders pilot project in rural areas, although sustainability at community level is still an issue because some child-minders are presently volunteers but would like some form of compensation. UNICEF also supported the creation in 2000 of the Caribbean Association for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development, and is supporting the creation of national associations in all countries. Capacity-building activities (training of personnel for early childhood centres) were also carried out at national level in all countries.

5. In the framework of the CARICOM regional health and family life education (HFLE) strategy, the health and community life programme supported the development of national policies to teach life skills in primary and secondary

schools, focusing on such themes as peaceful dispute resolution, living in multi-ethnic societies and protection from HIV/AIDS. To date, two countries have fully adopted HFLE policies and others are doing so. Common strategies are curriculum adaptation and teacher training. The programme has helped to establish coordination mechanisms (an intersectoral HFLE committee and focal point) in all countries, but not all these committees function well, owing to low capacities and the heavy workloads of government partners. Many effective partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) and religious institutions have been established to reach and empower out-of-school adolescents and young people with knowledge and skills necessary for protecting themselves from HIV.

6. Within the child rights promotion programme, legal reform to comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child has had mixed success. Many countries have enacted new laws or revised existing legislation pertaining to children (e.g., in the area of child protection) and a comprehensive review of existing legislation has started, in collaboration with the Supreme Court of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). However, advocacy and public education to raise awareness of and protect children's rights need to be intensified. A number of studies, surveys and communication materials have been produced to support public education, debate and advocacy for policy reform. The programme has helped countries to fulfil their reporting obligations under the Convention, and all but one have submitted their initial reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Committee's observations on most countries' reports hail government efforts and commitments to children's rights in the areas of survival and development, but note that more needs to be done in terms of protection and participation. Many countries have established national child rights committees comprising broad representation from government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), but most of these committees are still very weak and do not fully embrace their role.

7. Suriname was the priority country for the multi-country programme given its comparatively poor indicators. A full package of basic social services (including immunization and malaria control) was delivered by the Suriname component of the Amazon subregional programme, which is administered within the multi-country programme. The programme addressed the rights of the Amerindians and other marginalized communities in four interior districts. It helped to strengthen the capacities of local district teams in planning, delivering and monitoring programme activities. Limited funding and the lack of a UNICEF programme presence in the country have been major obstacles.

8. The bulk of the programme's financial resources came from regular resources and only \$2.9 million were raised of the \$15 million in other resources approved by the Executive Board. This had implications for realizing certain objectives and scaling up others, particularly for the Amazon programme in Suriname, which has targeted \$10 million in other resources.

## Lessons learned from past cooperation

9. The lessons learned as described in the country note remain valid.

## Recommended programme cooperation, 2003-2007

### Recommended programme cooperation, 2003-2007

(In thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
Early childhood development <sup>a</sup>	1 900	300	2 200
Adolescents and life skills	2 200	2 000	4 200
Social investment for child protection	2 000	1 400	3 400
Cross-sectoral costs	1 400	300	1 700
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 500</b>	<b>4 000</b>	<b>11 500</b>

<sup>a</sup> The Amazon subregional programme, submitted separately to the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2002/P/L.29), includes an additional \$1 million (\$200,000 per year) for the ECD programme, to be used exclusively in Suriname. Total resources managed by the multi-country programme would be \$12.5 million.

### Multi-country programme preparation process

10. The development of the strategy for the multi-country programme was an intensive process involving consultations at country, subregional and regional levels with a vast number of partners (Governments, NGOs, CSOs, United Nations agencies, donors and youth). In most countries, the ministry of planning or the ministry of social development organized and coordinated national participation in the various consultations. The programme's development was enriched by the development of three United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in the area covered by the multi-country programme (for Barbados and members of the OECS, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago). The final strategy was endorsed by each of the countries, as were the strategies and activities of each programme.

### Multi-country programme goals and objectives

11. The overall goal of the programme is to strengthen and support the commitments and capacities of Governments, civil society, communities and families to promote, protect and fulfil children's and adolescents' rights, meet children's basic needs, and expand opportunities for them to reach their full potential, while ensuring gender responsiveness. The programme will build on and support societies' and Governments' commitments, through CARICOM or OECS, to human rights and development. The strategic role of UNICEF will be to identify and support opportunities and to use its experience and capacities for networking and mobilization to promote the fulfilment of children's rights.

12. The specific objectives of the programme are to: (a) ensure that all children are born healthy, and that those aged 0-8 years have access to an integrated range of childhood services, including proper care and education, to enable them to reach

their full potential; (b) create and strengthen sustainable opportunities for adolescents and young people fully to develop their individual capacities, in safe and enabling environments which empower them to participate in issues affecting their own lives; (c) help place children's rights at the centre of public policy and decision-making, both at national and community levels, by creating broad-based political and societal actions to promote and protect children's rights, and by strengthening Governments' social planning efforts; and (d) help to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS among new-borns, adolescents and youth, and to support communities and families of children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

### **Relation to national, subregional and international priorities**

13. The programme is in line with individual Governments' policies and commitments to children, as reflected in various national development exercises, e.g., Suriname's national plan of action for children and the poverty reduction strategies being finalized in Suriname and other countries. It is also closely linked to relevant subregional, regional and international agreements including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of Domestic Violence (*Belem do Para*), the Millennium Development Goals and the Kingston Consensus on Children and Social Policy in the Americas. The programme's objectives are also linked to the commitments made by States in response to recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child that they strengthen policies and mechanisms to protect children's rights.

14. At the regional level, during the last five years CARICOM has adopted, sometimes with the assistance of UNICEF, important regional policy frameworks in the areas of HFLE, ECD, HIV/AIDS and juvenile justice. As all of the programme countries are party to these strategies, they will also guide the formulation of national policies and strategic plans for UNICEF intervention. National policies have been approved in the areas of HFLE or ECD in some countries, and draft policies are being reviewed in a number of others.

15. The programme supports the priorities of the three UNDAFs being finalized in the programme countries. Consistent UNDAF themes are poverty reduction and HIV/AIDS in the overall framework of human-rights based approach and the Millennium Development Goals. The programme matches closely three of the five organizational priorities outlined in the UNICEF's medium term strategic plan (integrated early childhood development, HIV/AIDS, child protection), and is in line with the priority relating to gender-sensitive education with a focus on marginalized children.

16. Given resource limits, the multi-country programme had to be selective. Its themes focus on the most critical causes of violations of children's rights as identified in the situation analysis, especially in the area of child protection. They also take into account the successful but still growing interventions of the current programme, available resources, and where UNICEF has been identified as having a comparative advantage.

### **Multi-country programme strategies**

17. The strategies presented in the country note remain valid. The programme will have three programmes, on ECD, adolescents and life skills, and social investment

for child protection, with HIV/AIDS and gender as cross-cutting interventions within an overall life-cycle approach. As highlighted in the country note, emergency preparedness and management are integrated in the subregional disaster management coordination mechanism.

18. The ECD programme addresses the relatively low priority accorded to ECD by Governments and families. Demand for early childhood care and education has grown since the 1970s as more mothers entered the labour force. Most services are privately operated centres or home-based facilities for children under five years. Governments provide few services and often have weak capacities to carry out regulatory functions. The programme supports the CARICOM ECD Plan of Action, endorsed by CARICOM in 1997 with support from UNICEF. The specific objectives are to ensure that: (a) every child has access to comprehensive early childhood services; (b) every early childhood centre meets minimum standards for child care and early childhood education; (c) all parents receive adequate parenting education; (d) every Government provides institutional leadership in ECD; (e) every country has a policy for ECD, a regulatory framework for service standards, an early childhood investment and development plan and an early childhood monitoring and evaluation system; (f) mother-to-child transmission of HIV has declined; and (g) there is improved care for children affected or infected by HIV. The programme has two projects, plus one project to be implemented only in Suriname.

19. UNICEF efforts will join other ECD programmes in the region supported by, inter alia, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Caribbean Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the European Union, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Department for International Development (United Kingdom). UNESCO, for example, is helping to connect national educational management information systems to support information-sharing. IDB will provide grants for regional sectoral technical cooperation in order to increase public awareness of and national commitments to improving children's mental and physical development.

20. The integrated childhood development services project will help to improve and integrate ECD services by: (a) fostering conducive policy and programmatic environments; (b) advocating for universal access to basic services; (c) enhancing the role of parents and communities in quality child care, including for those affected by or infected with HIV/AIDS; and (d) ensuring universal birth registration. Advocacy, capacity-building and social mobilization for government policies for IECD will be the key strategies. The project will also support the development of national capacities for birth registration in the two countries where it remains a problem. Private and public providers of early childhood care services will be strengthened through work with Governments, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), NGOs and other partners, especially in increasing attention to the early stages of growth and development. The project will focus on early detection of and relevant services for children who are not meeting developmental milestones; training of health personnel in breastfeeding promotion and alternate infant feeding options to support informed decision-making by mothers, especially adolescents and HIV-positive women; and community systems for the care and support for children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Although regional immunization coverage is high, UNICEF will support continued monitoring through national data systems. The Caribbean Epidemiology Centre will help to monitor immunization status and advocate for investments to ensure sustainability.

21. The early childhood education project will focus on promoting early stimulation, the development of policies on early childhood, setting standards for early childhood services, culturally appropriate national curriculum development, capacity-building for teachers and caregivers, parenting education (including for fathers) and building public awareness. Key lines of action will include technical support to support policy development, child-centred legislation and establishment of standards within a regulatory framework consistent with the Caribbean ECD Plan of Action. The project will support the newly established subregional Caribbean Association for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development to enhance interregional exchanges of experience. Important messages about ECD will be transmitted to the public and parents through sensitization of journalists (including in electronic media), writers, students and youth organizations. Special attention will be paid to the needs of teenage parents through links with the adolescents and life skills programme. The programme will also support national capacities required for the early detection of disabilities and support for these children who need special attention.

22. The Amazon project, to be implemented only in Suriname, is part of the Amazon subregional programme submitted separately to the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2002/P/L.29). The Suriname MICS in 2000 revealed important disparities in access to most basic social services between the Amazon region and the rest of the country. To help reduce the disparities, the project will focus on four districts and 50 settlements of the Amazon region, working closely with a dozen NGOs and decentralized government services. The project will help to ensure birth registration of all children in the region; support the improvement of parenting skills; promote exclusive breastfeeding; monitor and strengthen health and nutrition services to all young children in the four districts by training village health promoters and other health personnel; and support immunization activities. It will also support the establishment of ECD community centres, especially through the training of child-care workers.

23. The multi-country programme will use regular resources for advocacy, public education, policy development, curriculum reform and teacher training. Other resources will be used primarily for the Amazon project in Suriname, to support the scaling up of public education and teacher training activities and for selective institutional strengthening.

24. **Adolescents and life skills.** Building upon achievements from the previous programme cycle, the programme will help to mainstream issues affecting adolescents and young people into national policies, and will support life-skills training for adolescents to promote healthy lifestyles, participation and leadership. The expected key results include: cabinet-approved national HFLE and youth policies in six countries; HFLE installed in the core curriculum of all pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in the programme countries; increased access of adolescents to reproductive health information and services through a greater number of "youth-friendly" clinics; all school children and at least 30 per cent of out-of-school children empowered with the information and life skills required to make positive lifestyle choices, including being able to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies; expanded national capacities for peer counselling on HIV/AIDS; increased capacities of organizations to meet the needs of their adolescent constituents; and expanded



opportunities for adolescent involvement in resolving issues of particular relevance to them.

25. The HFLE project will strengthen and expand the present HFLE programme, including responding to the 2000 Pan-Caribbean Partnership strategy on HIV/AIDS. The project will maintain its base in existing, school-based HFLE programmes, at the same time expanding links with community-based and national organizations and exploring non-traditional means to reach adolescents. It will support the development of national HFLE policies in countries that do not yet have them. In supporting the incorporation of HFLE in the core primary and secondary curricula, the project will develop age-suitable HIV/AIDS components. Training activities will be continued and expanded. A regional HFLE resource centre and a regional cadre of HFLE master trainers will be established to support HFLE in-service training in programme countries. Parent-teacher associations (PTAs) will be trained and supported to sensitise parents on the importance of HFLE for adolescents. The national coordination bodies will be supported with skills and materials to support HFLE in schools and within the community. Adolescents outside of the school system will be reached through new partnerships with CBOs, including religious organizations. HFLE elements will be proposed following assessments of the health information and skill-building elements in the programmes of youth groups, clubs and organizations. CBOs and youth groups will benefit from facilitators to be trained in counselling and peer education, and pilot community-based interventions to reach adolescents will be assisted. Special emphasis will be placed on increasing the involvement of fathers in family life. Partnerships will continue with United Nations agencies, including PAHO and the United Nations Drug Control Programme, which have supported the HFLE programme to date, as well as such subregional partners as CARICOM and the University of the West Indies. National partners will include the ministries of education and youth and sports, regional and national youth clubs, youth-focused NGOs, PTAs, churches and faith groups.

26. The adolescent and youth empowerment project will support greater adolescent participation in youth-oriented organizations and processes; support the formulation and adoption of "youth-friendly" legislation and policies, including "youth-friendly" reproductive health services; and sensitize the public on the importance of adolescent participation. Special emphasis will be given to HIV/AIDS prevention, based on gender-appropriate interventions. Opportunities for youth participation and skills-building will include regional and national consultations on youth participation; the training of young leaders in peer education and leadership for behavioural change; gender analysis and planning in activities to protect young people from HIV/AIDS; and participating in reviews of regional and national youth policies. The participation of national, regional, community and school-based youth institutions in programme development and delivery will be encouraged. There is a clear link to the HFLE project, but such other initiatives as recreational activities which allow for healthy social interaction will also be supported. The project will also support regional and national media in publicizing positive behaviour by disseminating key messages through television, radio, newspapers, leaflets, drama and interactive teaching methods. The project will pilot models of "youth-friendly" services for physical and emotional health, working with such partners as PAHO and national representatives.

27. **Social investment for child protection.** The programme aims to: place children's rights at the centre of national public policies and community decisions;

cultivate broad societal will for protecting children's rights; and strengthen government social planning and monitoring efforts. Building on past accomplishments, the programme's specific objectives are to ensure that: (a) at least five countries are producing relevant social data for evidenced-based social policy formulation; (b) child protection legislation that conforms to the Convention on the Rights of the Child is established in at least four countries; (c) social services are reformed in line with this type of legislation in at least four countries; (d) at least six countries produce timely and enhanced reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child; and (e) the public shows increased awareness and understanding of children's rights.

28. The social investment for children project will focus on correcting insufficiencies in social data and on creating model legislative and social policy frameworks for protecting children. By improving databases for social statistics, the programme will be able to assess the quality and quantity of investments made by Governments and partners. The project will help to identify key indicators, adapt user-friendly data management tools and support data collection through technical assistance to ministerial planning departments and OECS for subregional networking in social indicators. Because many of the programme's elements cover areas for which there are little or no information, UNICEF will support studies and surveys that generate data and promote the fundamental understanding needed for good planning. Studies will focus on social inclusion and equity for the poor and those not reached by basic social services, with a special focus on indigenous populations; children with disabilities; children and families affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS; those excluded because of gender; and children in need of special protection. When the results are used to help develop public policy, the participation of children, youths, and civil society groups will be fostered. The project will also emphasize education of the public and policy makers, to create the demand for social policy reform, especially for children needing special protection, using the findings of research and studies and materials highlighting the concerns of children. National media will be heavily utilized and existing alliances will be strengthened and others sought with such respected groups and persons as religious leaders, whose advocacy can influence others.

29. The legal and social protection of children project intends to: (a) support monitoring of compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child in all programme countries; (b) in four countries, support adoption of model legislation to protect vulnerable children which is in compliance with the Convention; (c) increase awareness of the rights of children and the responsibilities of caregivers; and (d) support four countries in the national reform of protective services for children. The critical strategy is technical assistance to support the development of legal and regulatory frameworks, given that existing policy reform efforts have stalled primarily because of a lack of technical expertise to turn into law the changes accepted by social partners. Numerous partners will collaborate in investigating the adequacy of present laws and proposed reforms in such areas as family law, juvenile justice and child protection. The project will build on the existing partnerships with the OECS Children, Family and Domestic Law Reform Project, the OECS Supreme Court, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the British Commonwealth Office, CIDA and the NGO NCH Action for Children. Barbados, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago are continuing related legal reform and will be

included in all discussions and processes. In addition to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, a basic reference will be the regional convention on domestic violence, *Belem do Para*.

30. Strengthening national capacities for effective enforcement of the law will be critical, as will increasing awareness and imparting knowledge and skills to such professional groups as judges, magistrates and social workers. These activities will be supported by strengthened capacities to deliver improved children's protective services, including home interventions, fostering and adoption. This direct approach will ensure that the immediate needs of children in need of care and protection are effectively met. Key partners in this effort within the British Overseas Territories and Suriname will be NCH Action for Children and the British Commonwealth Office.

31. UNICEF will continue to support improved mechanisms for advancing policies and reporting on compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Key leaders and institutions helping to protect children's rights will systematically integrate mutual concerns into coordinated programming from a human rights perspective. These structures, which take different forms in various countries but are often child rights committees, will also assist in timely reporting on the Convention and the promotion of children's active participation in society as part of their contribution to the national and global movements for children.

32. Cross-sectoral costs will cover programme implementation costs that are not attributable to individual programmes but are clearly linked to programme delivery, including support staff costs and other operational functions

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

33. Each country will be encouraged to develop appropriate, relevant, time-bound and measurable goals for self-monitoring and planning. The overall success of the multi-country programme will be measured by rates of enrolment in early childhood facilities, life skills among schoolchildren, youth participation and the percentage of established child protection monitoring indicators with improved rates. Other indicators include the number and extent of policy and legislative changes being adopted by the programme countries, and the number of children and adolescents who are fully cognisant of their rights. These indicators will be collected for each country under the overall leadership of the counterpart ministry for UNICEF cooperation (usually the ministry of planning) and the national child rights committee.

34. The multi-country programme will include an integrated monitoring and evaluation plan and logical frameworks for all programmes and projects. Evaluations planned during the programme cycle include assessments of the impact of the HFLE programme on youth knowledge, attitudes and practices, and of the improvement of children's registration rates, health and ECD status in the Amazon region of Suriname. Regular programme visits to countries by programme staff and internal programme meetings will be key monitoring mechanisms. Progress toward the programme's objectives will be reviewed annually and at the 2005 mid-term review.

## **Collaboration with partners**

35. Successful achievement of programmatic objectives, i.e., making children's rights everyone's business, will require broad-based cooperation and alliances with numerous organizations and institutions in the various countries. At national level, under the leadership of the focal point ministry in each country, UNICEF will ensure adequate coordination between all ministries, NGOs and CSOs involved in programme implementation.

36. The United Nations system offers good opportunities for collaboration through the three UNDAFs being finalized for the zone covered by the programme. Theme groups and tools for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals will foster cooperation. In addition to the United Nations partners noted throughout the text, the multi-country programme will work closely with other bilateral and multilateral partners, using existing donor coordination mechanisms at subregional and national levels.

37. Cooperation with NGOs and CSOs will be expanded and strengthened, particularly in the areas of public education on children's rights, parenting education, the development of capacities of communities and families, ECD and child protection in general. The private sector will also be an important partner in some programme areas, including ECD and youth empowerment.

## **Programme management**

38. The focal point ministry in each country (normally the ministry of finance, planning or social development) will coordinate national activities, including the elaboration of annual plans of action, annual reviews and collaboration with NGOs and CSOs. Responsibilities for programme management rest with the ministries responsible for each of the UNICEF-assisted programmes. A ministerial coordinator will work with the UNICEF Programme Officer in planning, managing and monitoring programmes and projects.

39. A multi-country steering committee composed of the national focal points and UNICEF programme staff will manage overall implementation. The committee will meet yearly to review progress and identify necessary adjustments, opportunities and constraints, and ways to address them.

40. Within UNICEF, the Programme Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating programme implementation, supported by other officers based in Barbados. A small team will also operate in Suriname because of that country's distinct needs and special characteristics, and will work closely with the team in Barbados.