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V I R T U A L

Re-imagining Development for
Small Island Developing States (SIDs):
Post-Pandemic Transformations

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ABSTRACTS

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Panel 1: Shutting Down Economies: Impact and Recovery

Topic: Early Warning of Financial Statement Fraud and Mismanagement Risk

Author: Alexis Bell

Frauds impacting financial statements typically go on for two years before anyone notices, and we all find out about it when it hits the news. By then, it is too late. Until now, organizations have had no effective way, from the outside, to evaluate objectively the risk of financial statement fraud and mismanagement in publicly traded companies. We wanted to know if it was possible to identify these risks by analysing only the company fundamentals (financial statements) as published by the companies to the market. We risk-scored by fraud scheme every filing period for all publicly traded companies, both in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, over the last 20 years. Then, we tested those scores against over 33,000 historical, known restatement impact years to determine the accuracy of the Šóta Signal Analytics algorithm that we had developed for the risk-scoring. We were also interested to understand how early we could detect potential risk. We conducted an in-depth case study on the Tangoe company, which showed that we could identify significant risk by scheme as early as the day of the company's initial public offering (IPO). This means that market players can now have a level playing field, where indications of uncertainty and confidence can be made available to all stakeholders.

Title: The Case for the Repositioning of OECS Economics in the Post-Covid-19 Environment

Author: Clarence Henry

The economies of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) have been significantly impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The economic impacts have been manifested through significant declines in employment, gross domestic product (GDP), GDP per-capita income, and public debt levels. Declining economic outcomes imply that the COVID-19 pandemic represents a significant, negative, global socio-economic shock which will further limit the ability of these economies to achieve sustainable economic growth and development in the long term. Therefore, the case for the repositioning of the OECS economies is premised on the notion that the economic implications of global economic shocks for these economies are long-term, given the performance of OECS economies in previous periods with global economic crises. The paper argues that the OECS economies have faced long, painful recovery periods in post global economic crises due to persistently high levels of vulnerability of an economic, social and environmental nature. In particular, it argues that the need for a detailed and focussed development agenda for OECS economies ought not to be delayed, given their current fragile state. In an effort to strengthen their capacity to withstand future global socio-economic shocks, the paper puts forward some policy considerations, including the need for building national resilience by broadening the economic base,

improving outcomes in the education sector, and adopting workable measures to improve economic and social outcomes from participation in regional economic integration arrangements.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, economic growth, economic integration, development, GDP per-capita income, OECS, vulnerability.

Title: How Do Fiscal Rules Impact Investments for Small Open Economies?

Authors: Keisha Blades and Dr. Ankie Scott-Joseph

This research study investigates the impact of fiscal rules on investments for small open economies (SOEs). A comparative analysis was conducted in five countries from various regions, including the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and the United Kingdom. The period of analysis covered the past two decades, from 2000 to 2020. We chose this particular time frame in order to cover the impact of the 2008 global financial crisis and the most recent debt restructuring programmes in these countries and to examine the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic. By means of a multimodal approach centred on panel data modelling, we showed that fiscal discipline associated with the presence of fiscal rules could result in stagnated levels of investment. Results showed that the mere existence of fiscal rules was not sufficient, but that the strength and quality of the fiscal rules implemented were important as well. Most of the countries in our study overperformed in meeting their fiscal targets owing to higher-than-expected revenues. Public debt was low and sustainable owing to favourable debt dynamics. However, these SOEs had low execution of public investment, despite holding ample fiscal buffers. Therefore, it appeared that the level of stringency associated with fiscal targets and rules could negatively impact investments. Our empirical results offer insights on strategies that could be considered when designing fiscal rules to strengthen the fiscal framework to ensure macro-economic debt sustainability without compromising overall investments.

Panel 2: Remote Teaching and Learning: Implications for Educational Outcomes

Title: Proper Ergometrics When Using Hand Held Devices or Laptop or Desktop during This New Norm of Online Learning For Students and Teachers with a Special Focus on the Skeletally Immature Child

Authors: Helen-Ann Wilkinson, Rory Dixon and Nicola Meeks-Aitken

A volunteer group developed a motivational talk for the then Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) programme to assist students in the improvement of examination results. The idea initially evolved as one group member was actively involved with invigilation with several examination bodies and observing student performance and outcomes. Dr. Rory Dixon provided tips for students. There were repeat demonstration activities with the

students, supported by a medical team with a research nurse, child psychologist and physiotherapist. There was a recorded fifty percent increase in the number of students placed in high school in the first interaction with the students in 2016. In 2017, a student from the school received a place at Champion College (Jamaica's high school attracting the highest GSAT scores) after twenty years prior. In reviewing the current COVID-19 scenario, an updated strategy for examinations and classroom learning is presented, showing the correct manipulation lessons in the use of various technologies, attending online meetings, teaching and learning in the education sector for the teacher and student. Dr. Rory Dixon will demonstrate proper ergonomics when using handheld devices/laptops/desktops during this new norm of online learning for the skeletally immature child.

Topic: Transforming the Illiteracy of the Imagination: COVID-19 Instability and Its Impact on the Traditional Face-to-face Classroom in the Caribbean Region

Author: Shareed Mohammed

Wilson Harris, a Guyanese/British fictional writer and theorist, claims that many competent individuals experience an "illiteracy of the imagination" since they tend to operate within a "uniform function" (Harris, "Literacy" 77). Harris further contends that individuals who are locked within a "uniform kind of frame" conceive that it is "unnecessary to extend themselves outside of that kind of function" ("Literacy" 78). Subsequently, their inability to break from such a rigid paradigm serves only to eclipse a conception of themselves as "agents within a world which needed to be revised fundamentally" ("Literacy" 78). Secondary school teachers in the Caribbean region may have experienced such illiteracy of the imagination at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such educators had previously operated within a "uniform function" of face-to-face teaching and may have felt a "degree of uneasiness to extend themselves outside of that kind of function" ("Literacy" 78) as they transitioned to online teaching. This research argues that a teacher must possess the capacity to harness the hidden potential of a school's human resources in order to generate a sustainable online learning environment for diverse learners during the COVID-19 crisis. This presentation is guided by Wilson Harris' notion of the illiteracy of the imagination and Graham Gibbs' view of strategic planning.

Title: Government Spending on Education: What is the Right Mix for Building Creative Thinkers?

Author: Ankie Scott-Joseph

The creative economy is a vital and growing engine of growth and employment in many countries. It spans sectors such as advertising, broadcasting, architecture, arts, crafts, design, fashion, music, publishing, theatre and technology. They are becoming a key force in innovation, helping to boost employability and economic growth. This study evaluates the difference in critical thinking across three countries (St Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados and St Vincent) for students at the same stage of the academic process (secondary school fifth formers)

and their perception of their decision-making ability in practice. The paper seeks to determine if critical thinking across the Caribbean is driven by government spending on education. There was no empirical data in the Caribbean to suggest that the secondary school curriculum was different across countries. However, there was variation in the co-curricular activities. A sample of 100 fifth form students was chosen from each country in the sample. A series of one-way ANOVAs was used to analyse the difference in critical thinking across all three groups, employing the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal. An empirical approach, Granger causality, was employed to determine the relationship between government spending and creative thinkers. The Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal indicated a marked difference in critical thinking capabilities among countries. This was attributed to the variation in government spending on co-curricular activities.

Title: School Climate and Its Influence on Youth Resilience in Selected Secondary Schools in Jamaica – Before and During COVID-19: A Mixed-method Study

Author: Michele Small Bartley

Social distancing protocols due to the COVID-19 pandemic have changed the teaching and learning practices in schools. An enabling environment and the internal capacity of adolescents support their ability to navigate changes and challenges within their socio-ecological space. This research seeks to determine if the school climate (the “quality and character of school life”) before and during COVID-19 predicts resilience. The research objective will be achieved using an explanatory mixed-method approach, employing a cluster sampling technique to select six secondary schools in Region One and students within grades 10 to 13 (n = 1600) preparing for higher education or entrance to the labour market. Anonymity will be upheld for the schools and the students. A students’ online survey will be administered to collect quantitative data; data will be analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Multiple regression will be used to determine how school climate influences resilience and self-esteem as a mediator. Pair Sample T-Test will be used to compare the scores before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Quantitative results will be validated through online group discussions using a convenient student sample. Principals will be interviewed, and a desk review of the schools’ operations will be undertaken. Pseudocodes will be used to protect students’ identities during online group discussions. QDA Miner will manage the data and the comparative analysis of the qualitative data collected. Data will be stored electronically, with exclusive access for the researcher and principal investigator. The research will provide the schools with formidable recommendations to improve the school climate in order to bolster students’ resilience, improve their self-esteem, and inform education programmes and policy formulation.

Panel 3: Entrepreneurship, HRM and VUCU: Innovative Strategies for SIDS

Title: The Impact of Strategic HRM Practices in State Enterprises: Trinidad and Tobago

Author: Cristal Beddeau

In the past year, public organizations have begun to shift from reacting to the Coronavirus pandemic to reimagining what is next. An increasing interest in the strategic management of state enterprises has accompanied vital questions into the significance of these entities to national communities, institutions, and industries made more apparent with the COVID-19 outbreak and how such organizations can prepare for the next normal. Not only have state-owned enterprises (SOEs) grown to play a significant role in the world's public sector domain as in former times, but they have also since multiplied and their societal impact has expanded. Research findings later hope to suggest that the strategic human resource management (SHRM) practices of effective public leadership, the administration of ethical principles and the increasing role of employee engagement are critical factors directly related to the performance of state enterprises. Previous work has seemingly focussed on a more prescriptive based understanding of SHRM with little empirical rigour on its practices within SOEs, particularly in small island developing states (SIDS). It is hoped that this study will address the more important shortcomings of the SHRM field and focus on its potential impact on SOEs in SIDS like Trinidad and Tobago.

Title: An Entrepreneurial Mind Approach for Strategy Development in Caribbean SIDS

Author: Karen A. Murdock

Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) is often credited to the U.S. military from the late 1990s (Schoemaker, Heaton and Teece, 2018) used to describe the "new era" of warfare following the end of the Cold War and the proliferation of non-traditional enemies. The VUCA milieu is constantly in flux resulting in dramatic and disparate environments, which challenge organizational and institutional leadership (Millar, Groth and Mahon, 2018; Rimita, Hoon and Levasseur, 2020). Small island developing states (SIDS) characterized by size, location and vulnerability to exogenous economic and natural disasters operate with varying levels of VUCA, which have affected their economic development (Briguglio, 1995). The ongoing pandemic and escalating climate crisis have only served to intensify these conditions, deepening the challenges faced by government, business and other stakeholders. This evolving crisis compel leaders operating in SIDS to deal with VUCA conditions more frequently than those in more stable situations, resulting in disjointed approaches to strategy development (Millar, Groth and Mahon, 2018, p. 6). As pointed out by Schoemaker, Heaton and Teece (2018), this piecemeal approach will prevent leaders from dealing with the wider uncertainty rather than dealing with the eminent risk.

Few would argue that a “business as usual” approach to managing the strategies for the Caribbean is insufficient given the realities of VUCA compounded by COVID-19. Organizations look to technology, innovation and entrepreneurial approaches to develop and deploy strategies to meet turbulence. Nations too, and especially SIDS, stand to benefit from adapting similar approaches in the development of strategies for effective development going forward. This paper outlines important aspects of VUCA for SIDS in the Caribbean region and proposes an entrepreneurial approach to the design of strategies to support resilient, inclusive and sustainable development.

Title: COVID Mash Up the Round Robin: Jamaican Round Robins and Survival in the time of COVID

Author: Nicole Plummer

Round Robins are a survival strategy among Jamaica’s working class that emerged from the “partner” or “susu” where individuals unite to support each other collectively. The earnings from Round Robins, similar to the partner, were used to fund various activities that encouraged socio-economic growth and development of the communities. An entrepreneurial activity, Round Robins provide opportunities for informal venture capital accumulation for individuals who are unable to access more formal bank loans for want of collaterals, among other reasons. With recipes and cooking techniques that emerged during the period of enslavement among Afro-Jamaicans, Round Robins foster group identity and a sense of belonging as individuals thrive together. Supported by various corporate entities such as J. Wray and Nephew, Round Robins were a regular feature of community life. This has now been challenged by the outbreak of COVID-19. Utilizing newspaper interviews, this paper discusses the impact of COVID-19 on this informal but significant enterprise. The implications for food and financial security are also explored.

Panel 4: SIDS and Sustainable Development

Topic: Impact of COVID-19 on Barbados and SIDS: Re-shaping Strategic Development Beyond Platitudes and Inequalities

Author: George Brathwaite

Barbados and other small island developing states (SIDS) have been detrimentally impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The injurious COVID-19 pandemic has exposed structural and systemic vulnerabilities across most, if not all, sectors of the Barbados economy. It has also exposed the persistent inequalities thwarting the Caribbean post-colonial state. Indeed, the economic forlorn, revenue loss, financial consequences, and disruption to market and workplaces have been compounded by the uncertainty in Barbados’ major industry of tourism and travel. The implications for the society have been devastating, thereby leaving livelihoods at severe risk. The visible socio-

cultural deluge is characterized by widening inequality, increasing unemployment, and greater reliance on welfare initiatives. These phenomena are exacerbated by misinformation and impatience which have challenged the government and led to social and policy ruptures of all kinds. How is it possible to overcome the tremendous socio-economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic? This inquiry uses a mix of primary and secondary data, inclusive of an online survey questionnaire and formal documentary evidence, to understand the challenges faced by Barbados and other SIDS. It performs critical analysis of the findings and draws on lessons learnt. The results reveal possible alternatives for building resilient, inclusive and sustainable development amid continued COVID-19 uncertainties. The paper provides a brief summary of the author's interpretations with conclusions, while highlighting key recommendations for a radical re-shaping of Barbados' development strategies.

Title: COVID-19 Pandemic Has Exacerbated the Vulnerability of Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean Region

Author: Hezekiah Hall

Small island developing states (SIDS) are commonly defined based on the 1.5 million population threshold that is advanced by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The ambiguity in the definition of SIDS has encouraged scholars to explore other definitions that factor their influence, power and self-image from a qualitative position. Within this framework, the vulnerabilities of SIDS have generated much traction. This has led to the assertion that SIDS are confronted by several inherent vulnerabilities, such as climate change and environmental challenges, lack of economic diversification, high poverty rates, and weak institutions. The conceptualization of SIDS and their inherent vulnerabilities have led to the focus of this paper on assessing whether the poverty rates, limited capacity of public institutions and undiversified economies of SIDS in the Caribbean have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The cases of Jamaica and Barbados are examined with regard to the impact of the pandemic on SIDS. Secondary data revealed that the crisis had affected the economies of SIDS dramatically which unfolded in their inherent vulnerabilities. However, the pandemic provides the opportunity for SIDS to build resilience by strengthening partnerships/regional collaboration, consolidating other sectors of their economies and broadening the scope for data gathering and monitoring.

Title: An Assessment of the CARE Programme in Jamaica as a Social Protection Mechanism for Resilience under the Severe Shock of COVID-19: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations

Author: Keenan Falconer

This research seeks to assess the institutional performance of the government's temporary cash transfer mechanism, the CARE Programme, which was introduced in response to the economic and social shock occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis found that the extent to which the institutional arrangements

of the programme were shock-resilient could be provisionally rated as high. This is because the CARE Programme was able to deliver cash benefits temporarily to the poorest and most vulnerable as a form of limited income support for resilience against the economic shock from the pandemic. By largely drawing on thematically analysed qualitative secondary data and the “4Es” approach developed by the Department for International Development as a frame of reference, the analysis determined that both the payment and information systems of the CARE Programme were the most efficient components of the programme, while the communication system was the most relevant. The communication system was also the most effective along with the MDA Coordination and internal auditing procedures. The payment system and MDA Coordination had the highest efficacy while the information system was found to be the most sustainable. Several enablers were also identified, including strong ministerial coordination, efficient information systems, robust communication mechanisms and internal auditing controls, and almost universal success in validation, verification and payment batching for banks. However, the potential for political clientelism, pre-existing issues with PATH’s BMIS system, identification challenges for remittance collection, and a lack of electronic verification for non-bank financial institutions were some key constraints identified. The study proposes a number of strategies to minimize these constraints.

Title: Social Protection as a Development Strategy

Author: Warren Benfield

The paper will analyse the evolution of Social Protection and its current place as key to human development and the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The pendulum has swung from universal provision of social services to targeting of benefits to poor and vulnerable individuals and back again to the universal social protection systems. While the strategies are the same, the paper contends that the approach and objectives are somewhat different, but the realization of current objectives and goals enshrined in the Agenda 2030 must be seen as complementary to what Caribbean governments, the private sector and NGO/CBO are already doing. Yet, much of what is achieved depends on the global economy, environmental and governance issues in regional countries and the resilience of the people in managing and overcoming risks.

Panel 5: Human Development Issues: Pre- and Post-pandemics

Title: Children at the Margins: Pre- and post-pandemics

Author: Aldrie Henry-Lee

Prior to the pandemic, children constituted a vulnerable social group. The pandemic has increased the economic and social challenges faced by children, especially those in small island developing states (SIDS). Children are

experiencing major disruptions during an important period of their social, physical and psychological development. The impact of the pandemic on children in Haiti and St. Vincent is examined using secondary data and primary data collected from key informants. The double burden of climate change and pandemics is also explored. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and the nation's children experience a high level of exposure to natural disasters, COVID-19, political chaos and social violence. Children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are recovering from the disruption caused by the 2021 volcanic eruption and the COVID-19 pandemic. There are children who are even more vulnerable than their counterparts. These include children with disabilities, those living and working on the streets, those living in poverty, and migrant children. Urgent action is needed to secure sustained recovery from the pandemic and natural disasters for all children. Adaptive social protection is critical to building resilience among this generation of citizens and ensure that they can positively contribute, as adults, to the development of their countries. Immediate increased access to food, inclusive education, improved protection against violence, and psycho-social support to family members are some of the proposed policy recommendations put forward in this paper.

Title: COVID-19 Anti-marital Rape Strategy for Uganda

Author: Asiimire Donath

Globally, marital rape is a very big challenge among married partners. This is especially so in developing countries, such as Uganda. It became more challenging during the period of COVID-19 lockdown. Due to lockdown stress, most of the men would frequently force their women into sex. Marital rape damages, dehumanizes and undermines women victims' psycho-physical health and that of their home. It is culturally common and often condoned and, in most cases, goes unpunished among most communities in Uganda. This paper identifies ambiguities within the cultural and legal contexts, points out the effects of marital rape and discusses how to deal with the challenge in the Ugandan context.

Title: Abortion as a Policy Matter

Author: Horace Levy

The subject of this paper is a discussion in Jamaica in 2019 on what to do about unsafe back-street abortions that were occurring in significant numbers. Reaching Parliament for the third time in 46 years as a result of a member's motion, its parliamentary Human Resources and Social Development Committee held public hearings of 27 submissions from civil society groups. Two sets, Pro-Choice and Anti-Choice, for and against a woman's right to choose if and when she will have a child, adduced arguments for repealing or keeping the abortion prohibition of

1864. They based their positions on medical science, sociology, religious beliefs and practice, philosophy, history, and the contrasting results of legalizing and criminalizing abortions in the Caribbean and internationally. The parliamentary committee's early 2020 report to Parliament supported neither position, recommending only a conscience vote. There the matter rested, no decision yet taken and none likely to be. The Jamaican state and the ruling political directorate, while officially secular, is tied to the churches through the historical role of some in ending slavery. For partisan political gain, it will probably retreat from crossing large membership fundamentalist denominations. The COVID-19 experience of the past 18 months reveals the same partisanship overriding medical science even while claiming to follow its guidance. Thus, civil society advocacy for a fresh policy and legislation on abortion will fall, in the short run, on closed ears. However, women's refusal today to accept passively narrow patriarchal determinations is on invincible ground and will, in the long run, win out.

Title: Pandemics and Gender-based Inequalities

Author: Leith Dunn

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed deeply embedded gender inequalities, despite commitments to human rights, gender equality and sustainable development (e.g. CEDAW, SDG5). Unequal gender roles and responsibilities in the household as well as gender biases in social, economic and political institutions have resulted in women (as a group) bearing the major burden of the COVID-19 pandemic which has included gender-based violence. Data on the resulting fallout provides an opportunity to focus more on valuing unpaid care work and expanding social protection to provide families with access to affordable caregiving for dependent children and family members (elderly, sick and those with disabilities). Policy solutions include expanding resources for gender mainstreaming in social and economic development policies and programmes to close the gender gaps. This presentation uses data from secondary sources to demonstrate pre-existing gender inequalities and the differential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women as a group, especially those who are poor, work in the informal sector, live in rural areas and have a disability. The main message is to promote gender-sensitive development.

Title: Will Universal Health Coverage Initiatives in the Caribbean Foster or Frustrate Better Health for the Poor?

Author: Dr Stanley Lalta

Achieving universal health coverage (UHC) (Target 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals espoused by all Caribbean countries) requires actions to increase barrier-free access to needs-related essential quality health services at an affordable cost for all. So far, evidence from Caribbean countries suggest that despite good

intentions in enhancing delivery of health services and in new or revised health financing mechanisms, improved uptake and access to care by the poor is still elusive. This paper reviews UHC programmes in the Caribbean (English- and Dutch-speaking countries) to examine the extent to which “equity in access to and payment for health care” is targeted and achieved, especially from the viewpoint of the poor. Based on this comparative analysis, suggestions will be made on measures which may be considered to enhance opportunities for fostering improved health of the poor so that the healthcare system under UHC does not replicate other social inequities encountered by this group.

Panel 6: Tourism and Migration Issues During and Post-pandemic

Title: Undesirables: COVID-19, Human Rights and Border Regimes in the Caribbean

Author: Natalie Dietrich Jones

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Caribbean governments, like their counterparts around the world, instituted border measures which created a highly restrictive (im)mobility regime. The measures limited entry to their citizens, in some instances, for extended periods. Governments’ actions elicited criticisms and raised questions regarding these citizens’ human rights. This paper argues that the widespread closure of ports of entry are extreme in a region that is dependent on openness. However, they are not novel, but rather are emblematic of a culture of exclusion of the “undesirable”. Based on a historico-socio-legal review, the paper first provides historical examples of restrictive border measures implemented by states against unwanted migrants. It then outlines the contemporary legislative framework of these states as evidence of the embedded nature of the restrictive migration regime. Finally, the paper juxtaposes the historical and legal, with border practices across the region in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This section of the paper explores in what ways measures applied to manage (and promote) migration in countries across the region have jeopardized the human rights of its citizens. It seeks to answer three questions: (1) Which categories of citizen (non-)migrants are preferred to others? (2) How have COVID-19 border measures excluded citizen migrants? (3) How have COVID-19 measures breached the human rights of citizen migrants? Ultimately, the paper argues that the undesirable remains an acceptable category that symbolically and legally justifies exclusion of (select) unwanted citizen migrant categories in Caribbean states.

Topic: Digitalization: A Post-pandemic Strategic Approach for the Caribbean Hotel Sector

Authors: Phalesta Toussaint and Cristina Jönsson

Tourism is a major component of economic activity in Caribbean tourism economies and is vital for the sustainability of these economies. The hotel sector, which is a subsector of the tourism industry, employs the majority of the workforce in the Caribbean region. About 58.3% of the Jamaican workforce is employed in the accommodation sector. The Cayman Islands’ accommodation sector employs 61.7% of the workforce, while Bermuda’s accommodation sector employs 52.8%. Other Caribbean countries that employed workers in the accommodation sector are Belize (44.6%) and Grenada (35.5%) (ILO, 2020). Yet, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought the tourism industry to a standstill, particularly in the tourism-dependent countries in the Caribbean, as they have been the worst affected globally. The hotel sector is facing financial losses due to

international quarantine measures, such as loss of tourist flow, which in turn has resulted in the lay-off of hotel employees. Digitalization in the hotel sector has been given much attention during the pandemic. This research focusses on the development of technological infrastructure and the propensity of Caribbean tourist destinations to adopt digitalization in their hotel sectors. An analysis of the data collected gives the opportunity to highlight main priorities and develop strategies for the augmentation of digitalization and the sustainability of the Caribbean hotel sector post-COVID-19.

Panel 7: Food Security and Sustained Economic Development

Title: Soft Law, Hard Consequences for Caribbean International Financial Centres: Historical Institutionalism and the Global Anti-money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism Regime

Author: Alicia Nicholls

Global anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) rules were adopted in the early 1990s with the publication of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) 40 recommendations, later expanded to include the nine recommendations on CFT. However, these global AML/CFT standards, which describe themselves as “soft law”, act essentially as hard law for those Caribbean international financial centres (IFCs) which have been forced to adopt these “one size fits all” standards at the pain of blacklisting, sanctions, reputational risk or other coercive actions by global powers. The adoption of these standards has also produced unintended consequences, which have implications for Caribbean IFCs’ sustainable development. This paper uses historical institutionalism as a theoretical lens to explain the emergence and dominance of the “global” AML/CFT regime which was shaped not by multilateralism but by plurilateral efforts dominated by the United States of America and European Union countries’ internal imperatives. It will also show how this approach to global AML/CFT rule-making has led to unintended consequences for Caribbean IFCs which have adopted these rules.

Title: Poverty, Gender and Food Security among Agricultural Workers in Barbados

Authors: Corin Bailey, Latoya Lazarus and Jonathan Lashley

One of the most immediate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the import-dependent small island developing states (SIDS) of the Caribbean was the difficulty in accessing food. This lack of access was due to either a lack of domestic supply caused by the suspension of international trade at the outset of the pandemic or the loss of income-generating activities due to “lockdowns”. The lack of physical availability and access to food compounded the economic food insecurity of those living in poverty in rural areas, whose limited economic means and difficulties in physical access pre-dated the pandemic and were further eroded by limited national economic

activity. Stability of the food supply, stability of the means to access this supply and stability of utilization are all required for food security. Hence, for the rural poor, the experience of food insecurity was exacerbated by the pandemic, not created by it. Men and women employed in agriculture experience and navigate the above components of food security in different ways. With this in mind, the paper explores, from an asset-based approach, the factors affecting food security, and the ways in which male and female agricultural workers in Barbados respond to these factors. Emphasis is placed on those factors causing instability in the various dimensions of food security. Data was drawn from a series of in-depth interviews with agricultural workers, conducted as part of a wider project for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 2020 on the linkages among poverty, agriculture, food security and the environment.

Topic: Do Remittances Condition the Relationship between Trade and Government Consumption?

Author: Kevin Williams

This paper used a panel model and 99 developing economies over the 1980–2018 period to investigate the effect that remittances had on the relationship between trade and government consumption. It showed that remittances mediated the relationship between trade and government consumption. It documented that in high remittance recipient countries, trade negatively affected government consumption. In low remittance recipient countries, by contrast, it was found that trade positively affected government consumption. The results suggested that remittances could reduce the fiscal cost on government budget associated with adverse trade shocks. Two policy responses for remittance recipient countries were proposed.

Title: Food Fight! The Science Question in the Transformation of Food Systems and Why the Decolonization of Science Matters

Author: Patricia Northover

The 2021 United Nations Food Summit is locked into a food fight. Despite its aim of acting as a catalyst for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and as a driver for “transforming the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food,” over 300 global civil society organizations have boycotted the Summit, protesting against its corporate capture and a narrowing of the agenda for radical change. They argue that it represents a top-down approach that excludes many food system actors and substitutes an impoverished view of “whose food system knowledge matters”. Thus, at a time when our industrialized food systems have failed people and the planet, and in the context of a COVID-19 pandemic that has led to over 800 million chronically undernourished persons, the “ Science Question” in Food Systems has taken centre stage. In the confrontation, the United Nations Food Summit’s Scientific Group has been accused of acting as “the effective arbiters of what counts as science for the Food Systems Summit.” However, what counts as Science? Can these standard bearers for “science” (backed by corporate food regimes) stand as the gatekeepers for our food system? This paper will

address the “impossibility conditions” of positivist narratives of science and highlight the *racial exclusionary history and racist double consciousness that underpins the dominant “science” orientation*. The paper argues that we must not only think about how we eat, but also about the epistemological regimes being weaponized for sustainability through “science.” At a minimum, this paper calls for the deepening of the decolonization of science if we are to really transform food systems in crises.

Panel 8: Public Health Issues: Pre- and Post-COVID-19

Topic: Demographics, Science and Ignorance – Implications for Pro-choice COVID-19 Vaccination Agendas in the Anglophone Caribbean

Author: Godfrey St. Bernard

Lingering concerns about the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have spawned waves of controversy surrounding the idea of mandatory vaccination on a global scale. Anglophone Caribbean jurisdictions have not been immunized to prevent resistance from mandatory vaccination, this being marked by protests denouncing mandatory vaccination in several Caribbean jurisdictions. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Prime Minister sustained injuries resulted from impulsive action precipitated by such social movements. Clearly, these movements reflect differences in the economic interests of ruling elites and those living on the margins in their respective efforts to counteract the ills associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Mandatory vaccination has been touted principally among members of ruling elites as the universal panacea to restore some measure of quasi-normalcy. Yet, notions of thresholds that render herd immunity as a desirable outcome provide opportunities for proponents of mandatory vaccination to reset their targets. A cautious re-examination of the dialectic that emerges suggests that it may be unnecessary when one considers period and cohort effects associated with national demographics and their consequences, the process of scientific discovery and revolution, and the power of ignorance as the basis for knowledge. Drawing on demographic indicators and the facts that are revealed on the basis of such indicators, the paper provides cogent arguments suggesting that pro-choice vaccination agendas could prevail to produce win-win results for stakeholders on both sides of the mandatory vaccination debate. These inputs are also supported by philosophical tenets that underlie the nature, process and limits of science as an enlightenment enterprise. Whether in the context of ruling elites, working class beings, marginalized groups or any other group of actors, ignorance is rife and thrives among all groups for the same stimuli. Such stimuli include embracing beliefs without knowledge which intrinsically is contingent, pleading an absence of knowledge and demonstrating an interest in obtaining evidence as a basis to construct or contest knowledge, and unintentionally or intentionally drawing upon belief as equivalent to knowledge that is articulated, sometimes with surreptitious consequences. On national levels, vaccination agendas target members of a population classified as susceptible. Susceptible populations consist of “vaxers and anti-vaxers”, the latter being disaggregated into a number of sub-categories. Upon a systematic reflection of the role of demographics, science

and ignorance in favourably redressing the balance with regard to the ratio of vaxers to anti-vaxers, the futility of the emergent dialectic becomes apparent. Ultimately, the paper invokes a progressive ethos that ought to prevail in the interest of humankind and result in win-win outcomes for competing groups with differential interests in a reinvigorated economy.

Topic: Mental Distress and Key Coping Strategies Used during COVID-19 Lockdown: The Caribbean Experience based on Google Trends Searches

Authors: Richard Ramsawak, Preeya Mohan and Gerard Hutchinson

The COVID-19 pandemic has led countries to implement Shelter-in-Place Orders (SIPOs) to limit population movement and community spread. This study investigates whether SIPOs produced differential changes in mental health symptoms using internet search queries for Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The case of COVID-19 in small island territories is particularly important given their vulnerabilities to external shocks, limited capacity to prepare for and respond to a health crisis, and susceptibility to non-communicable and mental health diseases. This paper utilized Google trends to compare pre- and post-pandemic search frequencies in order to measure the population distress associated with SIPOs in the Caribbean and to identify the types of coping strategies that people sought information about using difference-in-differences estimation and regression discontinuity. The results suggest that the implementation of SIPOs was associated with an increase in searches for anxiety, fear, depression and suicide, which may suggest negative mental health effects. Additionally, searches for outdoor recreation and jobs and vacancies were on a decline, reflecting the impact of SIPOs on restricting movement and economic activity. In terms of coping strategies, searches for learning, news, exercise and prayer, religion, and meditation increased, together with addiction and marijuana. Collectively, these results can be indicative of the types of programmes that health administrators and policymakers can implement to support local communities in the scenarios of an extended lockdown, particularly among island communities. Perhaps as a warning to health officials is the increasing prevalence of searches related to addictions and marijuana, which can be a signal of the negative side effects of prolonged lockdowns among an already relatively isolated populace.

Title: Impact of COVID-19 on Jamaica Funerary Activities

Author: Thelma White

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc not only on the living but has also affected the dead. The funerary activities of Jamaicans have been reeling from the effects of the pandemic since its onset. Jamaicans are accustomed to attending wakes and funerals in large numbers, but government policies have placed severe restrictions on large gatherings because of the pandemic. This has reduced the attendance numbers to such an extent that it has altered traditional wakes and funeral rites. Over the past two decades, there have been many new trends in the Jamaican funerary activities, but these have been restricted/ravished by COVID-19. One significant development is the appearance of wake bands, also known as funeral bands or duppy bands. This is a group of itinerant persons

who go around to wakes to perform with their bands for a fee. The band provides entertainment for wake attendees as well as a distraction for the bereaved family. The funeral parlours too have embraced many new trends which they have offered in their funeral packages to bereaved families, including access to the services of wake bands. However, all of these have been overshadowed by the pandemic. This presentation, which is part of a larger study, examines these new trends assesses the impact of COVID-19 on funerary activities in Jamaica on a whole.

Panel 9: Entrepreneurship and Innovative Administrative Strategies for SIDS

Title: CTRL+ALT+DEL: COVID-19 and Strategic Renewal of Island-based Firms

Author: Guido Rojer

This paper examines the impact of COVID-19 on the performance of Island-based Firms (IBFs) and presents the crisis as an opportunity for strategic renewal. IBFs often deal with matters of isolation and scaling limitations due to the small size of their domestic market, which are conditions that may argue the case for International Expansion (IE). This study made use of the data drawn from annual reports of the 44 firms listed on the stock exchanges of The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Performance was measured using Net Income of firms and control variables (Firm Size and Leverage). As its primary contribution, our study finds a positive influence of IE on firms' performance in 2020. In practice, the study makes explicit the business case for IE of IBFs as a strategic renewal opportunity.

Title: Administrative Sovereignty and Policy Responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic in Ghana and Jamaica

Authors: Philip Duku Osei, Anthony Tampaana and Bright Nyarko

The literature of policy studies had traditionally grappled with the concept of state capacities and autonomy, but in recent developments, the rise of transnational administration has brought to high relief the concept of administrative sovereignty. Administrative sovereignty is said to reflect the possession of state capabilities in planning and executing policies and programmes for the benefit of ~~the~~their citizens clearly and transparently without the interference of other forces, especially forces external to the nation state. The administrative capabilities alluded to in the literature include technical, technological, extractive, delivery, coordination, analytical, and management (Berwick and Christia, 2018; Hanson and Sigman, 2021). It is important to note that in typical developing countries, there are limits to the capacities of states, especially in the context of a pandemic such as COVID-19 that has claimed the lives of millions of people globally. This paper attempts an analysis of administrative sovereignty in the policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana and Jamaica.

Panel 11: The UN 2030 Agenda and Persons with Disabilities – Acceleration in the Decade of Action

Title: The UN 2030 Agenda: Acceleration in the Decade of Action

Author: Senator Floyd Morris

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused catastrophic effects on countries across the world. Developing countries, with their struggling populations of vulnerable groups, have felt the devastating consequences of this uncontrollable disaster. Nine years away from the effective date for the UN 2030 Agenda, the pandemic has caused indispensable disruptions to the development trajectory of countries, and this has implications for marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed some pre-eminent structural deficiencies where persons with disabilities are concerned. In areas such as healthcare, education, employment, access to information and access to justice, persons with disabilities have been at a significant disadvantage during the pandemic. In this presentation, an assessment is conducted of the Caribbean in terms of its capacity to meet the 2030 development agenda from the panorama of persons with disabilities in the post-COVID-19 environment. A case study is conducted of three Caribbean countries in their current position for persons with disabilities. Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados are the three countries of focus. The primordial question to be answered is to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the march towards the 2030 agenda in the context of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean. Some recommendations are made for corrective action.

Keywords: persons with disabilities, COVID-19 pandemic, CRPD, SDGs, the Caribbean.

Title: Creating Legislation to Build an Accessible Environment for Persons with Disabilities in the Caribbean

Author: Gwladys Feler

In many countries, legal and policy frameworks often provide insufficient protection or inadequately address the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development. In some cases, laws may perpetuate discrimination against or otherwise harm the interests of persons with disabilities. This presentation guides how to initiate legislation to build an accessible environment for persons with disabilities. From the perspective of the recently concluded “Special Ministerial Conference on Specific Legislation for Persons with Disabilities” held by the Centre for Disability Studies, The University of the West Indies, this researcher seeks to highlight some salient features of a model legislation that must include provisions for accessibility for persons with disabilities. Accessibility is an “ex ante” duty, and those who provide a service to the public must ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to facilities as others.

Title: Making Education More Accessible for Persons with Disabilities in the Caribbean – A Youth’s Perspective

Author: Jason Ricketts

Education is one of the major avenues through which an individual is able to uplift him or herself from poverty. While opportunities are plenty for many, others are severely disadvantaged. One such group is persons with disabilities. While the last two decades have seen major advancements of the educational system in the Caribbean, there is still a lot of work that is needed to be done. Each disability group has its own set of challenges and as such requires a different interventional method. If left unchecked, the system would have done these individuals a great disservice, and the region would fail to honour the very same treaty they are signatories to which is the conventions on the rights of persons with disabilities geared towards protecting their rights and dignity. Coupled with that, access to education which is one of the targets under the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015 will not be achieved by the designated year of 2030. This paper will briefly highlight ways to make education accessible for persons with disabilities in the Caribbean and provide recommendations on how to improve the sector.

Keywords: persons with disabilities, education, CRPD, SDG, the Caribbean.

Title: Political Participation and Public Life for Persons with Disabilities

Author: Kerry-Ann Ifill

The purpose of this discourse is to examine critically the role of persons with disabilities in both the political and public life of the Caribbean territories. There is a sphere of endeavour from which persons with disabilities have historically been barred within the Caribbean society. The realization of the empowerment of the “disabled” demands that the nexus of power be redefined to afford a broader scope for the representation of our community. Societies’ perception of the involvement in the places that make decisions must be adjusted to include persons with disabilities. Only when their full and effective involvement in every aspect of life is achieved will the face of the Caribbean society be changed. The critical topics to be illuminated through this presentation to establish methods of redress will be expounded in the following key areas:

- Methods to improve independent and equal access to the right to vote for persons with disabilities
- Strategies to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities to seek and be elected to public office
- The improvement in the interactions of persons in public life and politics with the community

The concluding recommendations will assist in the realization of the further empowerment and independence of persons living with disabilities to form a part of the public landscape of our countries.

Keywords: political and public life, disabilities, empowerment.

**Title: A Look on how to make the Labour Market in the Caribbean More Inclusive for Persons with Disabilities
– A Youth’s Perspective**

Author: Shavane Daley

The current labour market in the Caribbean is reflective of the stark differences in employment of persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities. According to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, “[s]tates Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities” (2006, p. 19). It is no secret that persons with disabilities face several barriers to employment. In the Caribbean, youths with disabilities are increasingly becoming high educational achievers but have been excluded from professional jobs in the labour market because they do not fit the “blue print” for employment. This presentation is a discussion on creating a more inclusive labour market in the Caribbean. There are more than a million people in the Caribbean living with some form of disability and an estimated 250,000 who experience significant disabilities (ECLAC, 2017). Of this population, the exact percentage of persons with disabilities being employed is unknown, but it is a fact that they are often denied jobs that they qualify for on the basis of their disability. This essential call to ensuring an inclusive labour market for youth with disabilities is by starting with a discussion on human resource policies, accessible work environment and equal pay same work within the region. The discussion will look at ensuring that legislation in Caribbean countries regarding employment of persons with disabilities is enforced. It cannot be underscored enough that the way forward depends on the current youth generation acting now in ensuring that steps are taken so that after training of persons with disabilities to meet the labour market expectations they are employed.

Keywords: youths with disabilities, employment, legislation, the Caribbean

Panel 12: COVID-19, Crime Prevention and Justice for All

Title: Towards Reducing Re-offending in Post-pandemic Jamaica – Re-imagining the Ministry of National Security’s Five-pillar Strategy

Author: Dacia Leslie

Well over 3759 adults and 205 children are in the care of the correctional system, many of whom will re-enter the community ill-prepared. About 1 out of 2 of these newly released adults will be either re-arrested or returned to prison, with many leaving behind children unsupervised. It remains unknown how many of these ex-inmates obtained legitimate and productive employment upon release or even the effects of correctional custody on the life outcomes of children in need of supervision. In the absence of this critical monitoring data, stakeholders continue to move full steam ahead to achieve a secure, cohesive and just Jamaican society by 2030. Drawing on secondary data analysis, the paper interrogates the progress made towards fully realizing Pillar 5 of Jamaica’s

Crime Prevention and Citizen Security Strategy (2017) and offers insights into sustainable solutions to reducing re-offending and, particularly, youth recidivism in post-pandemic Jamaica. Action to meet Vision 2030, Goal 2 is not advancing at the speed or scale required. However, hope remains that urgent pre-emptive actions will be taken to strengthen relevant monitoring and evaluation systems.

Topic: A Crisis within a Crisis: Pandemics, Violence and Deviant Behaviour – COVID-19 Violence Slavery Replications Decimating “Liverty”, Caribbean Education and Employment

Authors: Helen-Ann Wilkinson, O’Neil Grant, Christopher Malcolm and Garth Anderson

It will take considerable “imagination” for Small Developing States to transition to become equitable societies where citizens have equal voice and a fair platform to thrive. Sadly, intervention from the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) became a winning bolster in facilitating adjustments in the procedures of writing examinations by the Caribbean Examinations Council for Caribbean Students in 2021? This “change” was despite concerns about the CXC Examination process since automated marking in 2014 by Caribbean examiners? On the employment frontier, the Jamaica Civil Service Association has been voicing protest regarding fixed contract arrangements which are currently demolishing employee permanence. The practice of “fixed contracts” is not recommended by the International Labour Organization as it exposes already vulnerable employees to targeted discrimination, and victimization, especially based on female gender, age and disability. These two examples are testaments of an alleged arrogant unwillingness by Caribbean authorities in their interactions with their constituents? This is particularly alarming as COVID-19 has provided time for serious calculated reflection. Is the Caribbean bursting into flames reminiscent of slave revolts to the planters, drivers, overseers and seeking freedom from current whips and chains? Diagnosis and a treatment plan are offered for “Reimagined” Caribbean education and employment.

Title: Media Representation of the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Gun Violence in Jamaica

Author: Shermaine Hassock

This paper examines media representation of the effects of COVID-19 on gun violence in Jamaica. The country’s homicide rates peaked at 60/100,000 in 2017 and recently averaged 49/100,000 in 2020 with an alarming 83% being gun-related in 2019. Conversely, Jamaica has the highest debt-to-GDP ratio in the Caribbean, 105.58% for 2020. Since post-independence, Jamaica and its Caribbean counterparts have grappled with the crisis of high crime rates, in particular, gun-related homicides, which is highly publicized by the media. The media plays a dual role in the context of gun violence by setting the tone for societal perception while reflecting what is occurring in society. Pre-pandemic calls for global peace and an end to poverty by 2030 ~~has~~ been limited by Jamaica’s inability to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), more specifically, Goal ~~no.~~ 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions. This investigation will be done using secondary data in the form of content analysis of newspaper articles, news clippings, YouTube videos as well as media reports. This study is expected to unveil the

extent to which the media impacts resilient societies and their legitimacy and authority, if potential crises are not robustly managed.

Keywords: gun violence, pandemic, media

Title: A Situational Analysis of the Participation of Child Witnesses in the Justice Sector – Opportunities Emerging from the Pandemic Response

Author: Tania Chambers

Through legislation, programmes, policies and services, Jamaica's justice system has attempted to improve the conditions that support children's participation in the justice sector, including through the protection, facilitation and engagement of child witnesses. While these developments have resulted in advances in legislation and programmes over time, the overall framework for the engagement of child participants in the justice sector has remained grounded in a welfare model, with key gaps in the fulfilment of child witnesses' participation and protection rights. Legislative and policy objectives and opportunities for securing child rights have remained largely unfulfilled, while other justice reform processes took precedence. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought significant adjustments to court processes, including the use of technology to support virtual hearings and remote participation in selected proceedings. While these changes were designed for infection control, they carry the potential for a far more long-term and broad-based impact on the court's capacity, through the use of technology, to facilitate the participation of children and other vulnerable witnesses, while securing their right to protection. This paper seeks to explore these dynamics, analysing the key legislative, policy and programmatic issues that have inhibited and enabled change.

Panel 13: Social Disruptions and Transformations

Title: Facilitators and Hindrances to the Home Care of Older Persons with Disabilities in Trinidad

Author: Bephyer Parey

Care needs rise as age increases. To meet care demands, home care is encouraged. This paper examines facilitators and hindrances regarding the home care of older persons with disabilities in Trinidad. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected via a questionnaire from a large sample of Trinidadians. Based on 868 responses, not all Trinidadians were willing and available to care for older relatives with disabilities. An even smaller proportion of Trinidadians reported having the skills to provide care. Various kinds of support (such as caregiver assistance, workplace accommodations and skills training) were identified. Integrated results suggest the importance of evaluating existing government programmes, developing community activities to meet care demands, and providing caregiver interventions for various ethnic groups and targeted support to older carers.

Title: Triaging Options and the Administration of Welfare Services: Responding to Non-state Actors' Insights in Trinidad and Tobago

Authors: Hafeeza Hosein Shah and Godfrey St. Bernard

The Public Assistance Grant (PAG) is an unconditional cash transfer grant that has prevailed as a welfare intervention for over 70 years in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T). As major stakeholders in the management of poverty, Non-state Actors (NSAs) provide critical insights that inform national agendas to achieve greater efficiency in the administration of welfare services. The aim of this paper is to understand differences between the practices administered under the aegis of the PAG and those that reflect everyday experiences of the poor in need of welfare services. Elite interviewees representing five categories of NSAs were purposefully selected and subjected to in-depth interviews. Institutional Ethnography (IE) provided a methodological platform that yielded five poor sub-population groups based on interviewees' insights. The five groups were instrumental not only in terms of prospects for reducing welfare burden across time, but also in terms of establishing prospects for greater efficiency in the delivery of welfare services based on opportunities for building self-reliance, facilitating greater equity, promoting social justice and improving quality of life at all levels. In post-pandemic periods, there are likely to be noteworthy increases in marginalized populations in need of welfare services. The insights emerging out of this paper have utility for serving such populations more efficiently while being mindful of fiscal challenges facing the state.

Title: Pandemic to Prosperity – Socio-economic Situations, Interventions and Solutions for Small Island Developing States

Authors: Leigh-Ann Waldropt-Bonair and Maxine Hunte

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face a unique set of obstacles to achieving sustainable development. Moreover, within the Caribbean, the ever-present threat of natural disasters, coupled with tourism or commodity-based economies, have heightened the region's vulnerability to socio-economic and environmental shocks. Accordingly, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many CARCIOM countries have witnessed a reversal of several hard-won steps towards the achievement of Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs). Hence, this paper will review the main socio-economic situations of Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, it will explore the strategies adopted by these states to counteract the worst impacts of the pandemic and propose options for post-pandemic recovery. This paper will contribute to the existing knowledge on the areas under review, produce relevant and valuable information for policymakers and practitioners in the fields of social and sustainable development, and offer useful recommendations for effective interventions and future actions.

Title: Parallel Pandemics: Racial eruptions within the COVID-19 Climate and Opportunities for Social Transformations

Author: Vania Patrick-Drakes

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked social and economic havoc on a global and regional scale for almost the past two years. Running parallel to this pandemic have been a plethora of significant “racial eruptions” – racial incidents that lead to a public debate about race and colour. Though nothing novel, these racial eruptions, especially within the current climate of seeming precariousness, can be seen as a symptom of a deeper societal infection which, if left unchecked, can, like COVID-19, have direct implications for the public health, economy and community well-being of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This paper outlines the rationale for the study of contemporary racial eruptions in SIDS as well as how factors such as cultural and social capital can intersect with race to influence people’s social and economic realities, especially in island states like Barbados where political and economic power arguably lies predominantly in the hands of separate racial groups. This paper also outlines the plans to explore discourses, perceptions and lived experiences surrounding race and race relations among Barbadian youth. The knowledge gained from this research should provide insight into post-pandemic opportunities for actionable change and social transformations.

Panel 14: Targeting the Most Vulnerable Pre- and Post-pandemic

Title: Jamaican Children in Need of Supervision: Human Rights Considerations in a Pandemic Context

Author: Althea McBean

Children in Need of Supervision or those deemed “uncontrollable” have been incarcerated in the Jamaican justice system for many years. Correctional facilities interrupt the development of children. Many of these children have experienced trauma in childhood, impairing their development and resulting in deviant, maladaptive behaviours. There is little psychological intervention or educational instruction in facilities. Secure confinement has negative psychological impact on youth, as seen in other countries. Jamaica’s high crime rate means children are being exposed to severe trauma, including violence against their parents, family members or neighbours. This negatively impacts children’s development. Children are also being beaten severely and frequently, with a reported 15% increase in beatings and a 40% increase in verbal abuse taking place under the confinement and increased frustrations of the pandemic in Jamaica (Caribbean Policy Research Institute/UNICEF 2020). The Child Protection and Family Services Agency has reported that cases of children reported with behavioural problems have surpassed those of child abuse recently. Many children have been out of school during the pandemic. The Caribbean Policy Research Institute estimates that 25% of basic school aged children have not been engaged in school activities during the pandemic. This is due to various reasons; classes have been online and the most vulnerable, socially and economically disadvantaged children have been out of school because they lack facilities,

devices or internet connectivity. A total of over 600,000 children have been adversely affected in terms of their education. Children have rights under the Constitution. The State has also ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which grants rights to survival, protection, development and participation. These rights were unequally distributed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and since the pandemic, the children at risk are even more in jeopardy. This has implications for safety, security and the nation's social and economic development.

Title: Gendered Impacts of COVID-19 in Barbados

Authors: Daniele Bobb and Leigh-Ann Worrell

The effects of the global pandemic have severely impacted every aspect of Barbadian lives and livelihoods. This paper intends to bring attention to the gendered dimensions of the impact of COVID-19, with particular attention to three broad categories: economic impact and social implications; gender-based violence (GBV); and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The document is rooted in the experiences and concerns of non-governmental and quasi-governmental organizations, and connects them to larger state rhetoric in relation to women's unpaid care work and varied vulnerable groups. The paper presents and analyses media portrayals of the state strategies employed to curtail the spread of COVID-19, the gendered assumptions on which some of these strategies are founded, and the impact of both COVID-19 and the imposed strategies on women and vulnerable groups in Barbados.

Title: No One Gets Left Behind: Exploring the Nexus of Youth Employment, Rural Development and National Development in the Caribbean in a Post-pandemic Era

Authors: Jeanine Bernard, Stephen Richards and Roy Mc Cree

In the post-pandemic era, global governments will be faced with tough decisions concerning their country's development. One of these challenges will be reducing extreme poverty among the most vulnerable. In the small island developing states of the Caribbean, governments will face this burden against a backdrop of dependent development, high debt, and environmental vulnerabilities. Through a critical assessment of existing literature, this conceptual paper will argue that a post-pandemic economic recovery strategy must prioritize rural development. In revisiting the work of Arthur Lewis, we argue that rural demographics have since changed, giving rise to an educated rural youth populace who hold the key to unlocking solutions to sustainable development in the green and blue economies. We argue that if governments can strategically deploy this untapped resource, rural development can create an avenue for sustainable national development. Finally, we explore how a historical dependence on "developed countries" for our ideologies on development has handicapped the true potential and contribution of rural development to overall national development in the small island developing states of the Caribbean.

Title: COVID-19 Effects on the Vulnerable Population and the Strategy Employed for Resilience in Trinidad and Tobago

Author: Samantha Armorgan

Strengthening the social protection system of a country could not only sustain the livelihoods and welfare of the population, but employed as a strategy, it could possibly build the resilience of a population in the long term. The economic impacts of COVID-19 on Trinidad and Tobago still remain uncertain, as data for evidence-based policies is currently being accumulated through various research institutes. However, the pandemic's human effects are not limited. The event of the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the global population equally, without discrimination, regardless of ethnicity and socio-economic class. Most at risk of losing severely due to the pandemic are women, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, the poor, the marginalized, and the socially displaced. In this instance, the vulnerable population is considered to be even more vulnerable than in pre-pandemic times. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Trinidad and Tobago made great efforts towards strengthening its social protection system to ensure that stressors and shocks would not have lasting and adverse consequences. At this time, amid this pandemic, the reiteration of this strategy of resilience is deemed to be fundamental and its seamless mobilization, just as significant.

Plenary 4: SIDS, Climate Change, ICTs and Sustainable Development

Title: ICTs and the COVID-19 Response in the Caribbean

Author: Arlene Bailey

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have been an integral part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. ICTs have been utilized in existing or enhanced forms, based on availability and uptake, in areas including agriculture, communication, creative industries, data and analytics, education, environment, governance, health, national security, tourism, and social and economic support. In this paper, the role of ICTs and their adaptation to support the COVID-19 response in the Caribbean are considered in the context of access, inclusion, equity, and national ICT plans and country strategies. The effects of the new and existing roles of ICTs are explored, through an examination of mechanisms to support potential pathways for sustainable development, and the implications of lessons learnt during the pandemic for the continued role of ICTs in the development of the Caribbean region.

Plenary 6: “Political Turbulence and COVID-19”

Title: A Pandemic of Epic Proportions: Political Development World Order and Caribbean Implications

Author: Don Marshall

Climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and the takeover of Afghanistan make for a precipitous and disastrous period ahead. The threats to world stability, supply chains, food, water, shipping and oil prices are likely to persist which, when chronicled by future historians, may well reflect history in reverse. For all that has been achieved by the internet of things, digitization and China's global lending, 21st century inter-imperial relations have worsened to the point of maximal optimal vulnerability. This is as the fortunes of capital markets are tethered to risk-based algorithms reliant on optimism and confidence of stock markets. However, the interacting and converging crises of our time point to a failure of global leadership and capitulation of global governance institutions to market forces and corporate philanthropic agendas. The extent of the power vacuum is yet to be appreciated, except by those who are under the heel of USA-led withdrawal of troops, those at the mercy of armed conflicts in parts of East Africa, central Asia and Eastern Europe that have slipped from major news reels, and those countries deprived of vaccines and protective personal equipment in this pandemic. The Afghan disaster says much more about the world order than is reported in our parts. Based on responses by CARICOM member countries to the impact of some of these crises, a moribund, naive and insiderist nationalism is in command.

Title: Prorogation, Motions of No Confidence and Political Survival in the Commonwealth Caribbean: The Effect of Transplanting Westminster Constitutional Conventions

Author: Hamid Ghany

This paper addresses the use of the prorogation of Parliament as a means of avoiding adverse political circumstances in the Commonwealth Caribbean by Prime Ministers and Presidents to ensure political survival in the following cases:

1. 1989 – Prime Minister Herbert Blaize in Grenada.
2. 2002 – Prime Minister Patrick Manning in Trinidad and Tobago.
3. 2012 – Prime Minister Tilman Thomas in Grenada.
4. 2014 – President Donald Ramotar in Guyana.

The Miller case in the United Kingdom in September 2019 which overturned the decision of Prime Minister Boris Johnson to advise the Queen to prorogue Parliament is not applicable in the Commonwealth Caribbean, and the

paper will show why. Apart from these decisions to prorogue Parliament, there are also situations whereby motions of no confidence have either been deliberately not tabled for debate in Parliament by the Speaker (St. Kitts and Nevis, 2012) or failed to satisfy the constitutionally-required criteria for removal of the Prime Minister from office (Barbados, 1994). The only successful motion of no confidence in the region was in Guyana in 2018. The constitutional dissimilarities between the Westminster-Whitehall model in the Commonwealth Caribbean and the Westminster model in the United Kingdom will be examined.

Title: Protest Movements and COVID-19 in the Commonwealth Caribbean

Author: Indira Rampersad

According to the Trinidad-based Public Health Agency, there have been more than 1.29 million reported cases of COVID-19 and approximately 16,000 deaths in the Caribbean. So far, more than 10.7 million persons have been vaccinated in the region. Yet, since early August 2021, several anti-vaccine protest movements have erupted in the region, specifically in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana, Antigua and Barbados. These movements belie the perception that the region lacks the potential for civil unrest. This presentation seeks to examine the political, ideological, religious, social and economic factors which have prompted these protest movements in the Anglo-Caribbean. It also aims to determine the extent to which these factors compare and contrast with similar anti-vaccine movements in the international arena.