

EFFECTIVE POLICIES TO MEET THE MDG AGENDA IN THE CARIBBEAN

**Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Network
Caribbean Meeting - 2006**

Kingston, Jamaica - February 23 and 24, 2006

In 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Summit, an international process of dialogue and consensus building led to the launching of a comprehensive global agenda for development. This agenda establishes a set of objectives and targets called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expected to be achieved by 2015. Since then, the MDG take on a central importance in the context of development and constitute the frame of reference for international cooperation.

The Caribbean Meeting of the Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Network of the Regional Policy Dialogue aims at foster the discussion about *Effective Policies to Meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the region*. Given that the MDGs are a call for organized collective action and have strong implications for the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean, the IADB has been active in assisting its borrowing countries in their efforts to adapt, implement, and monitor the MDG agenda.

Background:

In December of 1999, the Regional Policy Dialogue was created as an initiative of the Inter-American Development Bank's Board of Directors to establish a space of dialogue between borrowing member countries. The Bank created seven different forums or networks that serve as the mechanism to exchange experiences and identify opportunities of horizontal cooperation between the members. Through the Regional Policy Dialogue, IADB members share experiences, learn about practices outside the region, and explore opportunities for regional cooperation in areas that are pivotal in their particular sectors.

In the Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Network meetings, Permanent Secretaries or Vice-Ministers responsible for social policy and poverty reduction have the opportunity to analyze and discuss policy challenges they face everyday in their particular countries and regions. The Poverty and Inequality Unit of the IADB is responsible for the Network's technical coordination. The Regional Technical Cooperation Division Coordinates the seven Networks of the Regional Policy Dialogue.

The Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Network has organized one subregional and seven hemispheric meetings between 2000-2005. In this opportunity, the IADB, together with the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), was pleased to host the Network's First Caribbean Sub-regional meeting.

Meeting Description:

Tapping in previous experiences of other donors and multilateral agencies also committed to the achievement of the MDGs in the Caribbean, the IADB and the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) extended an invitation to eight countries of the Caribbean to participate in the first Caribbean Sub-regional meeting of the Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Network. The Meeting had three sections.

- First, members discussed *how to adapt the MDGs' Agenda to the Caribbean context*. Several issues will be discussed in this session: Is the MDG set of indicators adequate to fulfill the challenge of poverty reduction in the Caribbean? What are the MDG priorities for the Caribbean countries? How many of these priorities are different across the region?
- Secondly, some of the *Lessons learned from the Caribbean experiences to reach the MDGs* were presented. Among the questions aimed to guide the discussions were: Which sector/programs have proven effective to reach specific MDG goals in the Caribbean? What institutional arrangements have been implemented to achieve the long term goal of reducing poverty in the Caribbean?
- The third and final session explored *What should be the path to expand the availability and use of macro data to monitor the MDG?* Given the heterogeneous characteristic of the region, the discussions assessed current stocks of macro data at the household level (surveys and Census) to monitor the MDGs in the Caribbean, the institutional characteristics that determine that some countries have better data collection and monitoring systems, the conditions required for the development of reliable systems, and the role of development partners to improve their systems to collect and analyze data for monitoring the MDGs.

Traditionally, the Network meetings are closed events targeted only to Permanent Secretaries of IADB borrowing member countries. Given the importance of the MDGs Agenda, the IADB and PIOJ decided that the first day of the Network discussions be open to a larger audience that included senior officials from the host country, civic society members, and delegates from international organizations. The observers of the meeting will benefited from the stimulating discussions that took place at the Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Network meetings.