

**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES  
ST. AUGUSTINE  
SIR ARTHUR LEWIS INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL  
& ECONOMIC STUDIES  
SALISES**

**PAPER**

*Migration of Skilled Personnel in the CSME: The  
Case of Trinidad & Tobago*

**CONFERENCE**

**Crises, Chaos and Change: Caribbean  
Development Challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**TOPIC**

**The Role of Migration in Development and  
Underdevelopment**

**Author: Dr. Raghunath Mahabir**

*Migration of Skilled Personnel in the CSME: A Case Study of Trinidad  
and Tobago*

**Abstract**

In the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas which establishes the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), there are several provisions dealing with movement. None, however, are more critical in a genuine Single Market and Economy than the provisions relating to the free movement of persons. Article 45 of this Treaty declares that Member States commit themselves to the goal of free movement of their nationals within the Community. This free movement of skills/labour essentially entails the right of a CARICOM national to seek work or engage in gainful employment in all CARICOM member states, without the need to obtain a work permit in the Member State in which he/she desires to work. In Trinidad & Tobago, the process of facilitating the free movement of persons began in 2002 with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the main-line Ministry. In this paper the author proposes to conduct an assessment of the process so far in Trinidad and Tobago and to answer some questions as to the type of skilled personnel coming in, the areas of activity they are involved in, their contribution to the CSME and whether they send remittances back to their home country.

## INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean Community is experiencing important developments in migratory flows. These movements occur essentially within the 15 member nations of the Caribbean Community especially with the establishment of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy in January of 2006<sup>1</sup>. For a region plagued with a plethora of development issues arising out of its unique and yet collective experiences of colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, and the vulnerabilities faced due to rising unemployment levels, enhanced poverty and frail susceptible developing economies of scale, migratory flows can mean sustainable development<sup>2</sup> to some and yet, increased underdevelopment to others.

By a rough estimate, in 2005, two out of every five migrants on the globe – some 78 million out of 191 million migrants – were residing in a developing country; most of these migrants are likely to have come from other developing countries.<sup>3</sup> With this trend set to continue throughout the coming decades, the management of migration has necessarily become one of the critical challenges for States in this new millennium. The migratory flows occurring in a Caribbean context is still marked by the inadequacy of institutional capacities of some CARICOM members to address the problems individually and collectively, thus enabling the issue of ‘open borders’ among CSME

---

<sup>1</sup> The CARICOM Single Market and Economy is an integrated development strategy envisioned at the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community which took place in July 1989 in Grande Anse, Grenada. The Single Market and Economy will be implemented through a number of phases, the first being the CARICOM Single Market (CSM) implemented on January 1, 2006 with six members and as of July 3, 2006, its membership went up to 12.

[http://www.jis.gov.jm/special\\_sections/CARICOMNew/CSME2.html](http://www.jis.gov.jm/special_sections/CARICOMNew/CSME2.html)

<sup>2</sup> The term ‘sustainable development’ is used here in line with the definition of the word according to Wikidepdia, ‘the field of sustainable development can be conceptually broken into four constituents parts: environmental, social sustainability, political sustainability and economic sustainability.

<sup>3</sup> Dilip Ratha and William Shaw, ‘South-South Migration and Remittances’, Development Prospects Groups World Bank, January 19, 2007.

members to mean more than just the removal of restrictions on the free movement of peoples.

Another contemporary aspect of migration in the Caribbean and Latin America is the growing number of women who have also started to migrate in search for greater employment/economic opportunities.<sup>4</sup> As of 2005, 49 per cent of all international migrants were women or girls, and the proportion of females among international migrants had reached 51 per cent in more developed regions.<sup>5</sup> Migrant women play a large part in the economic development of both their country of destination and their country of origin through financial contributions from remittances, the improvement of their own skills or their contribution to the improvement of the education and skills of the next generation.

The root causes of migration are numerous and complex.<sup>6</sup> The push-pull framework gives insight into the different forces at work to explain migration. In Latin America and the Caribbean, poor socio-economic conditions, such as low wages, high levels of unemployment, rural underdevelopment, poverty and lack of opportunity fuel out-migration.<sup>7</sup> These factors are usually brought about by a mismatch between the rapid population growth and the available resources, low level of requisite technology to

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, '2004 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development; Women and International Migration', Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations New York, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Migration is multi-dimensional in definition and encompasses both voluntary and forced movements of peoples. There are many theories of migration which correlates with the respective factors behind the migratory process. Today the globalisation thesis as the root cause of migration is generally adhered to by most scholars within the field of research.

<sup>7</sup> Ratha, 2007, p. 14

exploit the available natural resources and capacity to create employment and jobs at the countries of origin.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, there are various political and social factors that may also induce migration. Among these, are poor governance, nepotism and corruption, human rights violations, political instability, environmental factors, conflict and civil strife, the real or perceived opportunity for a better life, high income, greater security, better quality of education and health care at the destinations may also influence the decision to migrate. The dimension of lower costs of migration, improved communication, greater information availability and the need to join relatives, families and friends are among the factors, which may collectively amplify the underlying push-pull factors.

Migration in the context of Trinidad & Tobago developed in the same light as the other Caribbean societies, that is, until the start of the 'East Indian/Asian Indentureship Schemes'. With the exception of British Guyana, the other countries of the West Indies were not privy to such a mass scale of Asian migrants from the 1840s to 1920s. The period 1950 to 1990 witnessed migratory flows of skilled professionals from Trinidad to the developed regions of Europe and the U.S. There were mass-emigration of teachers and nurses during this period. The 'oil boom' years of the 1960s and 70s saw an unprecedented movement of regional migration in the form of immigration into Trinidad by nationals of the other CARICOM countries. While some of these migrants were temporary workers, the majority had moved with the purpose of making Trinidad their new place of abode. The 1990s and post 9/11 years has seen migration patterns taper-off as far as labour migration. This can be equated to a multi-dimensional aspect with the

---

<sup>8</sup> For development reference for Latin America and the Caribbean also see <http://quesdb.usaid.gov/lac/overview.html>

first part inferring that local development and growth had stimulated a vibrant economy capable of sustaining a steadily progressing human resource base. Secondly, the benefits offered to professionals – namely teachers and nurses provided a pull-factor for the retention of their services to the local job market and thirdly, the external markets of Europe and the U.S. were enforcing stringent regulations on the mass in-flow of migrant professionals in order to stimulate their own labour force.

### **Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME) & Migration**

One of the integral objectives of the CSME is the provision for the free movement of skilled workers within its membership. Within the CSME, the following persons are allowed the right of free movement:

- University Graduates
- Media Workers
- Sport Persons
- Artistes and Musicians
- Managerial and Supervisory Staff of Businesses

Migration within the Caribbean Community is not a new phenomena as ‘freedmen’ from the smaller islands of Barbados, Antigua and Grenada were known to migrate to the larger territories such as Trinidad and Jamaica (as early as the late 1830s) in search of higher wages, greater opportunities to acquire land and seek alternatives to plantation life. In its essential essence migration can be a tool for development and development can affect migratory patterns. Migration serves to develop the country of destination when

the migrant worker fills the much needed vacancy and engenders a law-abiding status by actively paying taxes and other social health-surcharge. To a large extent the assimilation of migrants into the culture and society of the adopted country of destination renders the progressive impact of migration as an efficient form of development.

The development of the country of origin also takes place as a result of outward migration. The effects of migration on development depend on who leaves, where they go, and how the sending countries adjust to their leaving.<sup>9</sup> By leaving, the migrant offsets the demands placed on their home government for the provision of already exhausted social services and much needed health care. This is often the case when there is mainly an exodus of unskilled labour force to another country or region. The country of origin also benefits from remittances which are sent by the migrant to their families back home. For their part, developing countries benefit from an estimated \$167 billion a year sent home by migrant workers.<sup>10</sup>

The Caribbean, as one of the least developed regions in the world relies largely on the remittance monies sent home by migrants towards their GDP. With the planned enhancements in the free movement of peoples within the membership of the CSME, the remittance figure for the region is set to increase by as much as 10 per cent.<sup>11</sup>

With development trends set to continue, regional migration is expected to reflect the movement of migrants from Less Economically Developed Countries to More Economically Developed Countries<sup>12</sup> within the Caribbean Community. The members of

---

<sup>9</sup> Louka Katseli & Theodora Xenogiani, 'Migration: a Negative or a Positive Driver for Development?', OECD Development Centre, Policy Insights No. 29, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Annette Hartenstein, 'International Migration and Development', Americans for UNESCO, October 11 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Also refer to Table 2.

<sup>12</sup> The terms Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDC) and More Economically Developed Countries (MEDC) are utilized to classify countries based on their levels of development according to the

the Caribbean Community experience varying economic growth rates (refer to Table 1). According to the World Bank Economic Growth indicator for 2005, Trinidad is leading the Caribbean in terms of its economic growth rate and thus easily attracts migration from other Caricom countries.

**Table 1 Economic Growth Indicators in GDP and GNI (2005)**

Country	External Debt (% of GNI)	GDP (Current US \$, Billions)	GNI per Capita (Current US \$)
Antigua & Barbuda	..	0.9	10920
Bahamas	..	5.5	15800
Barbados	26.2	3	..
Belize	91.3	1.1	3500
Dominica	88.8	0.3	3790
Grenada	122.7	0.5	3920
Guyana	177.2	0.8	1010
Haiti	33.9	4.2	450
Jamaica	76.1	9.7	3400
Montserrat	..	..	..
St. Kitts & Nevis	90.8	0.5	8210
St. Lucia	61.2	0.8	4800
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	67.5	0.4	3590
Suriname	..	1.3	2540
Trinidad & Tobago	24.9	14.8	10440

**Source: World Bank, (Economic Growth Indicators 2005)**

### **Labour Migration (Skilled & Unskilled)**

Migration is one of the defining features of the modern Caribbean since colonization, slavery, and indentureship.<sup>13</sup> In the last fifty years the Caribbean has shifted from being a net importer of unskilled labour to become a net exporter of skilled labour. From as early

---

Human Development Index adopted by the United Nations to classify countries based on their respective levels of development.

<sup>13</sup> Keith Nurse, 'Diaspora, Migration and Development in the Caribbean', Focal Policy Paper, FPP-04-6



as Columbus' rediscovery of the West Indies in 1492, labour migration has been a dominant feature of the emerging Spanish society. Various labour migration schemes were implemented for the 400 plus years of colonial society as hordes of unskilled labourers were brought in from Europe, Asia, and Africa. As one historian noted, over 20 million slaves were taken from Africa's coast –although most did not survive the journey from Africa to the Caribbean called the 'middle passage'. The Caribbean can therefore be considered a region of migrants, built upon the foundation that labour migration acted as the catalyst for Caribbean development and survival.

The 1960s and 70s constituted a change in migratory pattern in the Caribbean. The migration of teachers and nurses, lured by special incentives in the United States and United Kingdom, has affected both health care and the education systems of the countries.<sup>14</sup> These emigration patterns have diminished significantly among Trinidadian nurses who are now required to sign contracts agreeing to 'stay' within the system for a fixed period of time. Also the establishment of a professional teaching service has served as an incentive to retain these necessary professionals in their country of origin.

---

<sup>14</sup> In the Caribbean migration of skilled teacher and nurses came predominately from Trinidad, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Also see Tom McArdle, 'An Introduction to Growth and Competitiveness Issues in the Caribbean,' *Firm and Worker Training in the Caribbean*, p 22.

**Table 2 Successful Applications as per Country up to 29 November 2006 – Skill Certificate issued by Trinidad & Tobago**

Country	No. of Applications 2001-2006 (November)
Antigua & Barbuda	15
Bahamas*	1
Barbados	93
Belize	2
Dominica	35
Grenada	32
Guyana	185
Haiti*	1
Jamaica	276
Montserrat	6
St. Kitts & Nevis	9
St. Lucia	74
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	38
Suriname	22
Trinidad & Tobago	325

**Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trinidad & Tobago, 2007.**

**\* The Bahamas and Haiti are not participating members of the CSME**

Recent globalization trends have been characterized by the greater integration of global markets for goods, services and capital across borders while their impact on the cross border movement of people and labour remains much more restricted, regulated by immigration laws and policies that uphold the principle of state sovereignty.<sup>15</sup> The migration of skilled labour is also a concern with Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and Barbados most prone to this phenomenon.

Based on ILO statistics (2003) received on the Caribbean, Barbados and Trinidad appear more like emerging market economies featuring both high labour force growth

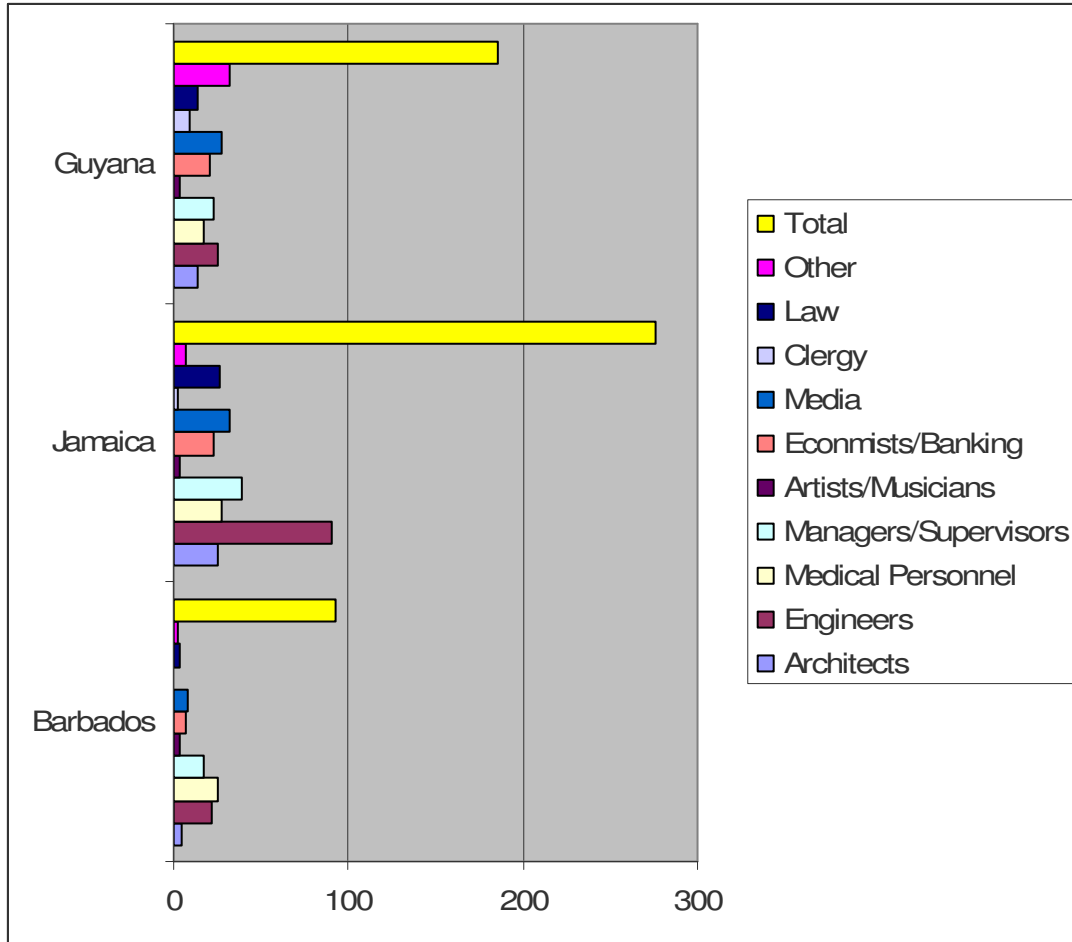
<sup>15</sup> See WCSSDG (2004), *a fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*. World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and International Labour Office, Geneva, February 2004. <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/wcssdg/docs/report.pdf>

along with high employment growth and declining unemployment. In Barbados, employment growth exceeds labour market growth, while Trinidad labour force growth is close to employment growth. According to the CSME Article 45, 46 in the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, the free movement of professionals, managers/supervisors, musicians/vocalists and graduates remain important aspects of the regional integration process. As seen in Table 2, Trinidad and Tobago has issued a total of 789 skilled certificates to other Caribbean nationals. Of these nationals Jamaican nationals have been in the lead with 276 of them having skilled certificates from Trinidad and Tobago, followed by Guyana with 185 and Barbados with 93. Although there are presently no figures to indicate how many of them of in fact remain in Trinidad and Tobago after acquiring the Certificate, anecdotal evidence again suggest that the majority of them, as long as they find employment in Trinidad and Tobago remain for a while.

Based on research by this writer, in interviews with 15 Guyanese nationals, 10 of whom had their families still living in Guyana, it was learnt that all 15 of them send back money to Guyana ranging from \$1,000 Trinidad and Tobago to \$10,000 a month. In an interview with 3 Jamaicans, 2 of them were sending remittances back home with an average of \$7,00TT each on a monthly basis.

**Figure 1**

**Bar Chart illustrating the acquisition of Skill Certificates in Trinidad and Tobago based on Professional Areas (Barbados, Guyana & Jamaica) 2001-2006 November**



**Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trinidad & Tobago, 2007.**

### **Remittances and Development**

The growth of the Caribbean Diasporas in Europe and the United States has made a substantial contribution to a more favourable balance of payments position in several labour exporting territories in the Caribbean.<sup>16</sup> The largest recipients of remittances in

<sup>16</sup> Remittance refers to the monies sent to the country of origin from the country of destination by migrant workers. Also see Keith Nurse (2006) for the importance of remittances to the Caribbean region.

the Caribbean Community were Jamaica, Haiti and Guyana, while it is estimated that over US \$2.4 billion in remittances were sent to the Caribbean in 2002 (See Table 3).

In developing countries remittances are an important part of the countries' GDP, with both economists and governments recognising the importance of emigration and the corresponding remittances on the growth and development of their country. Mexican President Vincente Fox, called Mexican migrants in the U.S. "heroes" for the remittances they send home which he says, are vital to Mexico's development.<sup>17</sup> In under-developing countries such as Haiti, foreign economic aid and remittances accounts for over 70 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product.

Increasing attention is being paid to the role remittances play in reducing poverty through the provision of an additional family income, financing of community projects and local development efforts, and as a source of foreign direct investment. Remittances also have a positive effect on macro-economic growth when they are used to finance health and education.<sup>18</sup> Research has indicated that beyond their positive effect on consumption and their potential long-term development effects, remittances are relatively unaffected by crises and violent conflict and they appear to be more equally spread among developing countries than other capital flows.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> President Fox expanded programs under which federal, state, and local governments match remittances that are invested to create jobs under so-called 3-for-1 programs – each \$1 of remittances invested in government-approved projects receive an additional \$1 match from federal, state and local governments.

<sup>18</sup> World Bank 2004, p. 185

<sup>19</sup> Ratha 2003, p. 164

**Table 3: Remittances to the Caribbean from the US and Europe, 2002 (US \$ - millions)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Remittances in Millions</b>
Barbados	84
Guyana	119
Haiti	931
Jamaica	1288
Trinidad & Tobago	59
Total	2481

**Source: MIF/IDB 2003.**

### **Human Resource and Brain-Drain in Trinidad & Tobago**

One of the main problems identified as inhibiting growth in the region is both uneven access to education and low quality of educational outcomes.<sup>20</sup> In recognition of this aspect of improving the human resource base, the Government of Trinidad & Tobago embarked on an ‘education-for-all’ policy (2003/2005) that saw free primary and secondary school education for its population with the plan of implementing free tertiary education by the year 2006. The government also sought to improve the capacity of the local population to receive professional education by the introduction and enhancement of vocational, technical and academic schools and institutions designed to cater for a functional cosmopolitan society. The University of Trinidad and Tobago was launched in the year 2004 with the set goal of improving the engineering and technology human resource base of energy-rich nation.

---

<sup>20</sup> ILO, ‘An Introduction to Growth and Competitiveness Issues in the Caribbean’ Firm and Worker Training in the Caribbean, p. 23.

The successes of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in the education sector are as follows:

- The establishment and rapid development of the University of Trinidad and Tobago. With the advent of UTT and the introduction of GATE<sup>21</sup> financing programme, enrolment in tertiary education has increased by forty percent.
- The launch of the pre-school education programme, the initiation of a programme of home-work centres and the introduction of a system of local school boards cementing the links between the schools and the community.
- The Textbook Rental Programme, the School Transportation Programme and the School Feeding Programme were all expanded. The number of books provided increased from four hundred and fifty thousand in fiscal year 2004 to 1.2 million in fiscal year 2005 and included primary and secondary schools. The provision of breakfast meals increased from 25,000 to 37,208 and lunches from 92,000 to 94,736.
- Under the GATE programme, 24,117 applications were processed at a total value of \$138Mn. This represented more than twice the number of applications processed by the Dollar for Dollar Programme in fiscal 2004.

---

<sup>21</sup> GATE - Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses

**Table 4 Public Sector Expenditure on Education**

Country	% of GDP	Literacy Rate Adult (% of people 15 & above, 1990)
Antigua & Barbuda	3.8 (2004)	..
Bahamas	..	94.4
Barbados	7.3 (2004)	99.4
Belize	5.1 (2004)	..
Dominica	5.0 (1998)	..
Grenada	5.2 (2003)	..
Guyana	5.5 (2004)	97.2
Haiti	..	85.0
Jamaica	4.9 (2004)	79.9 (1999)
St. Kitts & Nevis	4.4 (2004)	..
St. Lucia	5.0 (2004)	..
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	11.1 (2004)	..
Suriname	..	89.6 (2004)
Trinidad & Tobago	4.3 (2002)	..

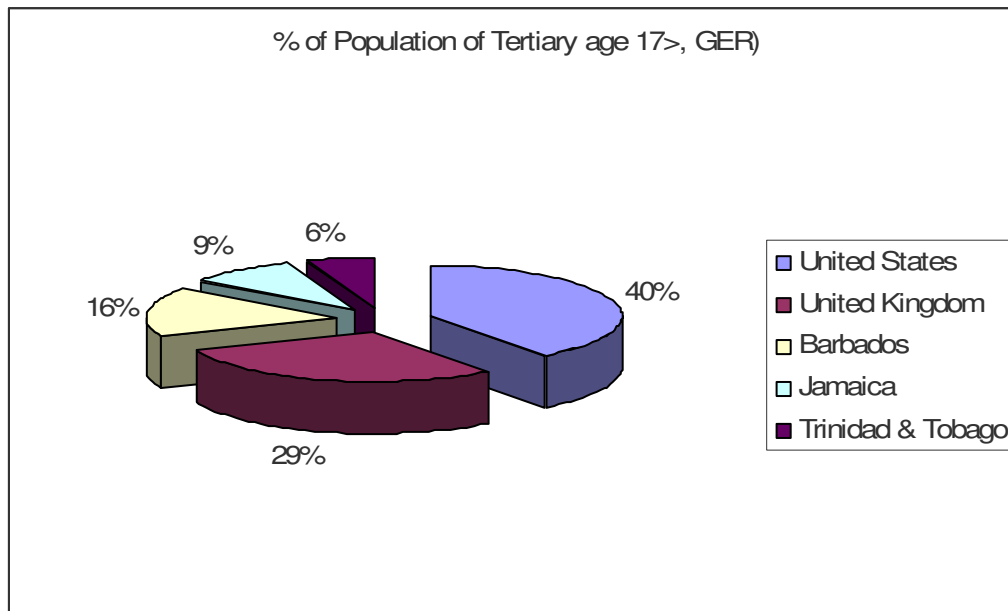
**Source: UNESCO****Table 5 Tertiary Enrolment Rates (Gross)**

Country	% of Population of Tertiary age 17>, GER)
United States	82 (2004)
United Kingdom	60 (2004)
Barbados	33 (1999)
Jamaica	19 (2002)
Trinidad & Tobago	12 (2004)

**Source: UNESCO**



**Pie Chart 1 Comparative Analyses of Tertiary Enrolment Rates in selected Countries**



**Source: UNESCO 2002**

### **The Brain Drain**

The brain drain in Trinidad and Tobago is also being offset by migration in Trinidad and Tobago by nationals of Cuba, Nigeria, the Philippines and of course other members of the CSME. At present, under the Caricom Skills National Act, CSME works can be found in the areas of engineering, management, banking, law, the clergy, economists, artists, musicians, medical personnel and architects.

### **Free Movement of Skill Community Nationals,**

#### **Proposals for the Expansion of the Categories**

**(As adopted from various Head of Government Meetings)**

At the Seventeenth Inter-sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government held in Port of Spain in February 2006, Trinidad and Tobago proposed that immediate

free movement should be granted to artisans, domestics and hospitality workers. The Conference, inter alia,

“Agreed that consideration be given to the inclusion of the following new categories of skilled CARICOM nationals, namely, artisans, hospitality workers, domestics, nurses who are not university graduates, and teachers; and requested that the rationale for the inclusion of proposed new categories include information on labour shortages and in this regard, re-emphasised the need for consultations with Employers’ Confederations and other relevant stakeholders;

### **The Functioning of the Free Movement of Skills Regime**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago was of the view that the language used by the Secretariat to make certain claims in the section of the Working Document on this for the 17<sup>th</sup> Inter-sessional Meeting of the Heads of Government Conference was inappropriate. For example, the Secretariat identified a number of “matters which impeded ... free movement” and these were as follows:

- “Trinidad and Tobago is still to implement the decision of the Conference of Heads of Government taken in July 2005, in Saint Lucia, that CARICOM Nationals entering with a Skills Certificate issued by another Member State should be allowed to work immediately pending verification by the receiving country”;
- “The absence of National Accreditation Bodies in some Member States has meant that the verification process is taking longer than anticipated”;

- “The Free Movement Committee in Member States is intended to be an advisory body to the Competent Authority making decisions on granting Skills Certificates. It is not intended that this decision be taken by Immigration Departments or Accreditation Bodies.”

The Twenty-sixth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government (July 2005) “agreed that CARICOM nationals who are entering under the Free Movement Régime with a Skills Certificate issued by a Member State other than the receiving Member State, should be allowed to work immediately, while their qualifications are verified by the receiving Member State.” The use of the word “should” means that the recommendation of the Conference was hortatory and did not impose any legal obligation on Member States.

Additionally, the holders of Skills Certificates issued by other jurisdictions, upon presentation of their Certificates at a port of entry, are granted a six-month stay in Trinidad and Tobago during which time they are expected to regularise their stay, that is, submit their documents for verification. The overwhelming majority of applicants for Trinidad and Tobago Skills Certificates do not hold Skills Certificates from their home countries, and in those instances where they do, the holders do not submit their documents for verification immediately after arrival in Trinidad and Tobago. Amending the Immigration (Caribbean Community Skilled Nationals) Act of 1996 to bring into domestic law this recommendation of the Conference would give legal cover for six months to Certificate holders – who are likely to be working in the private and public sectors in Trinidad and Tobago. It must be borne in mind that a number of the

CARICOM nationals employed in Trinidad and Tobago work in sensitive areas (for example the medical field) and that an unintended consequence of the recommendation of the Conference may be public health risks. Members of the public may receive treatment from persons whose qualifications have not been verified by the competent authority in Trinidad and Tobago.

According to the information obtained by the Head of the Trinidad and Tobago Delegation to the Eighth Meeting of Officials on the Free Movement of Skills and the Facilitation of Travel (March 23-24, 2006: Georgetown, Guyana), Barbados, like Trinidad and Tobago, had not incorporated into its domestic legislation the recommendation of the Conference that the holder of a Skills Certificate issued by another jurisdiction should be allowed to work pending verification of the qualifications. It is however, noteworthy that this has not had a noticeable impact on the number of skilled Community nationals attempting to enter the job markets in these two jurisdictions, since the two countries together account for almost 60% of the total Certificates issued. It is abundantly clear that Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago are the destinations of choice for skilled CARICOM nationals. Trinidad and Tobago also accepts applications for Skills Certificates at all its Overseas Missions and is not aware that any other CARICOM Member State does likewise.

It must also be borne in mind that this recommendation aims at facilitating the movement of nationals out of any Member State that has issued a large number of Skills Certificates to its own nationals. Trinidad and Tobago has issued approximately 20% of its total Certificates to nationals of this country, and the overwhelming majority of applicants for

Trinidad and Tobago Skills Certificates do not possess Skills Certificates from their home countries. In this regard, at the Eighth Meeting of Officials, it was noted that Guyana is the only Member State that has issued almost all its Skills Certificates to its own nationals – 683 out of 689 over the period 2001-2006. Of the remaining six Skills Certificates issued by the Government of Guyana, four were issued to nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, and one each to nationals of Barbados and St. Kitts and Nevis respectively. The above-mentioned recommendation of the Conference can be construed as a way of facilitating the movement of Guyanese nationals out of Guyana and into other Member States in the Single Market especially Trinidad and Tobago.

Moreover, during the Eighth Meeting of Officials two Member States informed that during their respective verification processes they had uncovered fraudulent documents submitted by nationals of Guyana, who were also the holders of Skills Certificates issued by the Government of Guyana. Since Trinidad and Tobago is a magnet for nationals of Guyana and other CARICOM Member States, there is a need to exercise some degree of caution in this matter, because Immigration officials in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados have encountered large numbers of fraudulent documents among Guyanese passengers at ports of entry. According to the data compiled by the Immigration Division (Ministry of National Security), for the period 2004 and 2005 approximately 80% of those persons detained at ports of entry into Trinidad and Tobago for fraudulent documents were Guyanese.

Additionally, it is to be noted that on June 23, 2006, the *Stabroek News* reported that the United States' (US) Embassy in Guyana had stipulated in a statement that visa applicants would be required to submit birth certificates and marriage certificates issued after July 2005 on account of the high incidence of fraud in Guyana. The US Embassy further revealed that it was concerned about the fraudulent documents because it constituted a national security issue for the US. Such concerns were the reason why the Head of the Trinidad and Tobago Delegation to the Seventh Meeting of Officials on the Free Movement of Skills and the Facilitation of Travel (September 23-24, 2005) insisted on this country's right to verify the qualifications of the holders of Skills Certificates issued by other Member States, and the right to authenticate the signatures of the Ministers and Authorities responsible for the issuing of letters attesting to the experience of artistes, musicians, media-workers and sports-persons.

The non-establishment of national accreditation bodies in all Member States that participate in the free movement régime could result in serious breaches of the régime, which if they were to be featured in the media could trigger a public outcry against free movement and by extension the Single Market. The proliferation of university degree programmes available via the internet present further challenges for Member States, especially those without functioning national accreditation bodies. When coupled with the delay in the development of security databases in the Region and the networking of such databases, the Trinidad and Tobago job market could become infiltrated by CARICOM Nationals who are involved in criminal activity.

Indeed, Trinidad and Tobago has already had the experience with a national of Grenada whose application for a Skills Certificate from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was denied due to the fact that he had attended an unaccredited institution. This person eventually received a Skills Certificate from the Government of Grenada (a country that does not possess a national accreditation body) and re-entered Trinidad and Tobago with his Skill Certificate from Grenada. He was granted the customary six-month stay but having already been turned down for a Trinidad and Tobago Skills Certificate, he did not submit a new application. He instead sought employment on the local job market. His activities were brought to the attention of the Ministry of National Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when INTERPOL began making enquiries about him as a result of his fraudulent activities in Canada.

The Eighteenth Meeting of the Community Council of Ministers (May 19, 2006: Georgetown, Guyana) approved the three-year budget (in the amount of US\$1,245,789 with a total of five persons on staff) prepared by the CARICOM Secretariat for the Regional Accreditation Body. It is not likely that Trinidad and Tobago will derive significant benefits from the creation of the Regional Accreditation Body because it already has one of the more established national accreditation bodies in the Region, with a staff complement and budget that surpasses those proposed for the regional entity.

One of the outstanding issues relating to the free movement of the Article 46 Categories is the lack of the development of standards for the occupations in the non-university graduate categories namely, artistes, musicians, media-workers and sports-persons. This contributes to delays in the assessment of such applications in Trinidad and Tobago

because the Committee often responsible for making recommendations to the Minister of Foreign Affairs requests the submission of additional information to assist it in its deliberations.

The serious shortcomings in the free movement régime – namely, the need to establish national accreditation bodies, Free Movement Committees and labour market information systems in all Member States, as well as the lack of capacity in the technical/vocational sector in the OECS sub-region and of the development of standards for the current four non-graduate categories – are usually treated by the Secretariat in a superficial manner. The Secretariat usually requests that the Conference of Heads urge Member States to initiate action to rectify the shortcomings. A more constructive approach would be for the Secretariat to formulate a series of programmes which aim at establishing proper systems in Member States in the afore-mentioned areas, in particular the OECS countries. To date, the Secretariat has arranged a number of attachments at the Immigration Division but these efforts have not been quite consistent. Failure to embark on a rigorous programme to address these shortcomings would affect the integrity of the Skills Certificate issuing process, perhaps making it susceptible to corrupt elements.

### **Expansion of the categories**

With respect to the expansion of the categories, a number of concerns were highlighted by Member States at the Eighth Meeting of Officials on the Free Movement of Skills and the Facilitation of Travel which are integrally related to the administration of the expanded régime. The proposed expansion of the categories elicited a lot of comments from Member States, notwithstanding the fact that the majority of Member States had



not, up to that point in time, conducted national consultations either on the proposal developed by the Task Force of Regional Stakeholders in March 2005, or on categories mentioned in the recommendation of the Conference from the Seventeenth Inter-sessional Meeting,

The 2005 proposal of the Task Force and the recommendations of the Conference at the Seventeenth Inter-sessional are outlined hereunder:

**Proposal of the Task Force**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Skills Levels</u>
2006	Associate Degrees and equivalents and related technical and vocational qualifications
2007	CXC ‘O’ Levels and equivalents and related technical and vocational qualifications
2008	All CARICOM nationals

- Immediate free movement should be granted to artisans, domestics and hospitality workers.

The Trinidad and Tobago Delegation reported to the Eighth Meeting of Officials that the request to accord consideration to include the new categories of skilled CARICOM nationals cited above emanated from a presentation made by the Trinidad and Tobago delegation (Head of the CSME Unit) to the Plenary of the Seventeenth Inter-sessional, but that it had not been agreed upon either in plenary or in the caucus. The Trinidad and

Tobago delegation also advised that the recommendations of its national consultations on the 2005 proposal of the Task Force were as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Skills Levels</u>
2006	Associate Degrees and equivalents and other related technical and vocational categories: other to incorporate categories of skilled workers such as Laboratory Technicians, Teachers, Nurses, Pharmacists and similarly skilled persons
2008	All CARICOM nationals (including CXC 'O' Level and equivalents and other related technical and vocational categories)
-	Artisans should be allowed to move freely in the first instance.

Barbados informed that it supported both the 2005 proposal of the Task Force and the recommendations of the Seventeenth Inter-sessional, and among the OECS countries, only Dominica (the country whose Prime Minister is the Lead Head for the Expansion of the Article 46 Categories) and Saint Lucia supported both proposals without amendments. Jamaica requested that pharmacists and graduates of the Caribbean Maritime Institute (which is headquartered in that country) be added to the list to be considered, and representatives of the OECS countries were generally vocal about their lack of capacity in the technical-vocational sector – both in terms of the unavailability of

technical/vocational institutions as well as the non-existence of national entities to treat with the certification of competencies.

Delegates from the OECS countries voiced fears of “significant inward flows” of persons with technical/vocational qualifications from other Member States with more established technical/vocational sectors, and expressed concern that the occupations mentioned in the recommendation emanating from the Seventeenth Inter-sessional Meeting of the Conference represented a departure from the approach employing a progressive decline in educational qualifications, to one in which certain job categories were discriminatorily selected. For example, the Delegate from Grenada questioned why domestics were being given consideration before the holders of Associate Degrees in general and “A” Level graduates.

Member States that had not yet held national consultations on the expansion of the categories indicated that they would attempt to conclude their respective consultations and report on same to the Secretariat by April 28, since it was hoped that the Council on Human and Social Development (COHSOD) would discuss this matter at its Fourteenth Meeting scheduled for April 27-28, 2006 St. Kitts and Nevis from. Delegates from those Member States also said that the Secretariat’s interpretation of the job category “artisan” was narrow in scope and too focused on the construction sector. In this regard, the Secretariat was charged with transmitting to Member States the definition of the job category “artisan” in an effort to assist them in the conduct of national consultations.

The Twenty-First meeting of the COTED, 12-13 May, 2006, noted that consultations on the expansion of eligible categories, in particular, the proposals of the Task force and the categories identified by the Conference during the Seventeenth Inter-sessional were either outstanding or on-going. The COTED agreed that where necessary, Member States should complete the process of national consultation and advise the Secretariat in order to allow for the timely submission of the outcome to the Lead Head of Government with responsibility for the CSME for subsequent decision of the Conference in July, 2006.

In July 2006 Heads of Government agreed that the categories of Caricom nationals entitled to move freely within the Community be expanded to include nurses and teachers except in Antigua and Barbuda. They deferred decisions on artisans, domestics and hospitality workers pending elaboration of procedures for certification and accreditation.

### **Conclusion**

At the recently concluded *Eighteenth Inter-sessional Meeting of the Conferences of Head of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)* 12-14<sup>th</sup> February 2007, Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines the conference adopted a paper entitled “*Towards a Single Economy and a Single Development Vision*”, as the framework for further elaboration of the single economy, with the understanding that refinements will have to be done with particular reference to the poverty alleviation dimension in time for final sign off at the regular Meeting of the Conference in July 2007. It was agreed that the Single Vision would be used as the basis for a comprehensive development plan.

With respect to free movement, the Conference approved proposals for streamlining arrangements that will facilitate the free movements of artisans in the regional labour market. The system approved by the Heads of Government will allow for artisans to obtain credentials through the award of Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ) based on occupational standards set by industry. It is expected that the CVQ will be in place by July 2007.

The Conference also agreed that the free movement of domestic and hospitality workers can be facilitated in a similar manner to the free movement of artisans and shall be considered after the CVQ Model is launched.

The Conference accepted the proposal of the Regional Task Force of Stakeholders, which included labour, business and civil society as developed in March 2006, with respect to the implementation of full free movement of CARICOM Nationals by the end of 2009 according to an agreed schedule. Undoubtedly Trinidad and Tobago can expect to see continuous flows from other Caricom countries in coming years.

## Bibliography

- Hartenstein, Annette, “International Migration and Development”, *Americans for UNESCO*, October 11, 2006.
- Katseli, Louka T. and Xenogiani, Theodora “Migration: a Negative or a Positive Driver for Development?” *OECD Development Centre, Policy Insights* No. 29, September, 2006.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Free Movement of Skill Community Nationals: Proposals for the Expansion of the Categories”, Head of Government Meetings, Trinidad and Tobago
- Nurse, Keith, “Diaspora, Migration and Development in the Caribbean”, *Focal Policy Paper*, April, 2006
- Ratha, Dilip and Shaw, William, “South-South Migration and Remittances”, *Development Prospects Groups World Bank*, January 19, 2007.
- United Nations, “2004 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development; Women and International Migration”, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations New York, 2006.
- United Nations, “2004 World Survey on the Role of Women in development; Women and International Migration”, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations New York, 2006.
- WCSDG (2004), “*A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*”, World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and International Labour Office, Geneva, February 2004

## Internet Sources

- Tom McArdle, “An Introduction to Growth and Competitiveness Issues in the Caribbean,” Firm and Worker Training in the Caribbean - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/publ/mcardle/pdf/chapt1.pdf> (21/02/06 12:31pm)
- CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) [www.csmett.com](http://www.csmett.com) (21/02/06 12:31pm)
- CARICOM (Jamaica Information Systems) [www.jis.gov.jm/special\\_sections/caricomnew/CSME1.html](http://www.jis.gov.jm/special_sections/caricomnew/CSME1.html) (21/02/06 12:31pm)

Ministry of Trade, Trinidad and Tobago

[www.tradeind.gov.tt/projects%20and%20programs/CSME.htm](http://www.tradeind.gov.tt/projects%20and%20programs/CSME.htm) (21/02/06 12:31pm)

CARICOM [www.caricom.org/jsp/single\\_market/single\\_market\\_index.jsp?menu=csme](http://www.caricom.org/jsp/single_market/single_market_index.jsp?menu=csme)

(21/02/06 12:31pm)

Central Statistical Office <http://www.cso.gov.tt/>

Ministry of National Security <http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.tt/>