

Title: Inclusive and Resilient Growth in the Caribbean.

Summary

Resilience and growth are inextricably linked. To progress as a region, the Caribbean must unite socially, politically and economically to develop and strengthen its people, institutions and economies. Creating innovative learning environments that provide opportunities for change agents to harness the Caribbean's resources and create products can do this.

The first bottleneck hindering Caribbean growth is a lack of social justice, which is disenfranchising some groups in ways that reduce productivity. Large fractions of society are not engaged in meaningful activities because they either do not make use of available opportunities or they are not provided with opportunities. This under-productivity result in increased crime and social deviance that hinders growth development resources are spent redressing these ills. Another bottleneck affecting Caribbean growth is the lack of political unity within the region. Leaders of Caribbean nations tend to look out for the interest of their island instead of the region. However, each island's economic, social and political influence is not strong enough to singularly impact the global economy significantly. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is a step in the right direction, but its growth and work are both comparatively slow. Another bottleneck restricting Caribbean growth a linear approach to development. Our growth potential is stunted because we continue to follow traditional methods of development. Culturally the Caribbean is rich, but this asset is not being

sufficiently tapped. We need to diversify and unlock the value in our youth, by encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity and the pursuit of careers in these areas.

In order to strengthen the Caribbean's resilience to external shocks, specifically climate change, the Caribbean should implement the Kyoto protocol¹ treaty that they signed, to use solar, wind turbine and other alternative sources of energy in order to reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, in terms of strengthening macro-economic stability, our governments can adjust our fiscal policies and try to minimize inflation through investments and reduction of imports, specifically, in the area of food. Moreover, we should aim to increase economic flexibility regionally via diversification of the economy, so that if one aspect of our economy is attacked or collapses we will be able to rely on other sectors for support.

Resilience is a skill that is inculcated and nurtured from birth. It is the resilience in people that can engender resilience in economic systems. Structures and systems do not change themselves it is people who change them. Therefore, in order to improve resilience and economic prospects for the future, what my generation needs to do over the next 10 years is to promote regionalism and innovation. Regionalism provides the patriotic commitment to improve our region because of a better understanding of our collective needs and formulation of mutual goals. Innovation allows the necessary collaboration, multi-disciplinary and directional approaches to solution finding to occur as a result of new technologies and platforms for communication that facilitate idea sharing, horizontal connectedness and inclusivity. Finally, through innovation and regionalism fosters culture change that initiates economic growth, but we the people have to be the change agents, we have to be predictive,

¹ See more on the Kyoto protocol drafted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Control here: http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php

as we prepare for a future with cultural and economic problems that we have not yet experienced.