
Students should be able to: outline the factors that promote regional integration;

1. **Limited Human and Physical Resources:** This encourages the pooling of resources as well as the sharing/trading of resources for the development of the region.
 - The political climate of most countries in the region is also similar.
 - Most countries depend on tourism and/or agriculture for economic growth. In terms of agriculture, many countries have failed to utilise technological innovations which would allow mass production at a faster pace and cheaper rate than developed countries. Because of this, a large variety of food products is imported from countries outside the region. Caribbean countries understand the problems that they all encounter and this encourages cooperation in dealing with the issues faced.
2. **Population Size:** The populations of the different countries are relatively small and often it is difficult to influence internal organisations on decisions whether social, political or economic. Therefore, it is necessary to have a large regional body that negotiates on behalf of all countries.
3. **Similar History and Cultural Heritage:** Most persons in the Caribbean have ancestors from Africa, Europe or Asia. These different groups brought with them their beliefs, values, traditions and customs which today are evident in the countries of the region. Because of this similarity, the sharing of goals and values becomes easier. Communication is also easier because English is the language used by most member states of the Caribbean region.
4. **Close Proximity:** Some countries in the Caribbean region are relatively close to each other; people and goods are transported to various countries by sea and air in a relatively short time.
5. **Similar Social, Political and Economic Problems**
 - Similar social problems include unemployment, teenage pregnancy and crime and violence.
6. **Common International Problems – (Most countries in the region):**
 - have difficulty accessing loans from multinational lending agencies.
 - have difficulty accessing international markets to trade goods and services
 - face exploitation by international business organisations
 - face pressure from multilateral corporations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). A united approach is therefore necessary when dealing with international

problems.

7. **Economic Shocks:** The economies of the Caribbean are relatively small. The countries are therefore vulnerable to economic shocks because they do not have reserves of commodities during periods of difficulty. This has resulted in many Caribbean countries favouring integration as it is hoped that during periods of economic shocks the impact will be lessened. Examples of economic shocks include:

rapid increase in the cost of importing products, decrease in the value of products to be exported, and increase in the price of oil.

8. **Natural Disasters:** The countries in the region share the experiences of natural disasters such as hurricanes. This has led to countries being more willing to work towards disaster preparedness and dealing with the after-effects of these events.