

Regional Integration

The former British colonies in the Caribbean have made attempts at integration as shown in such groupings as the:

- ✓ Leeward Islands and Windward Islands (initiated in the 19th century),
- ✓ West Indies Federation,
- ✓ West Indies associated States,
- ✓ Caribbean Free Trade association (CARIFTA),
- ✓ Caribbean Community (CARICOM),
- ✓ Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS),
- ✓ Association of Caribbean States (ACS),
- ✓ CARICOM Single Market and Economy

- all emerging in the 20th century.

The English-speaking member states of CARICOM are former colonies, and, with the exception of Montserrat, have all attained Independence, while three have gained republican status (see Section 5). In addition, the people of the Caribbean have been striving through several NGOs to forge a Caribbean identity. Within recent times, non-English-speaking members of the Caribbean have sought to integrate with English-speaking members of the region through membership in CARICOM.

The disparity in physical and human resources has resulted in Caribbean countries achieving different stages of development. This situation highlighted the need for cooperation among Caribbean states to encourage the individual development of member states and the overall development of the region.

Caribbean Regional Integration has to do with a number of countries in the Caribbean region coming together as a single unit, cooperating with each other functionally, economically and politically. Regional integration is the way forward if countries in the region intend to achieve advancement, development and progress.

- ✓ Regional integration aims to produce benefits to the region as well as to each country that is a part of this integration process.
- ✓ All countries in the Caribbean region are developing countries and most are referred to as small island developing states (SIDS).
- ✓ Countries in the Caribbean region are at different stages of development; some are referred to as less developed countries (LDCs) and others as more developed countries (MDCs)
- ✓ A country's stage of development is dependent on its physical resources, how they are utilized, and the available human resources.
- ✓ In order for integration to be possible, cooperation by all countries involved in the process is necessary

REASONS FOR INTEGRATION

1. The resources of countries in the region are limited. It is hoped that the pooling of resources will see more efficient use of resources and less duplication of effort and expenditure.
2. Countries in the region have a similar history and culture.
3. Integration will allow them to have a more powerful voice and trading stance on the global stage.
4. It will assist countries in the development of their human resources