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Regional Cooperation in the area of Border Integration: A Caribbean perspective

Economic and Technical Cooperation

*XXIV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean. Regional
Cooperation in the area of Border Integration
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F O R E W O R D

At its XXXVIII regular session, held in October 2012, the Latin American Council, as the main political body of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, decided that the XXIV meeting of International Cooperation Directors, scheduled for 2013, should continue to focus on confronting the development challenges faced by Latin America and the Caribbean through continued recourse to the opportunities provided for by regional cooperation. By Decision N° 538, the Council took note with appreciation that the XXIV International Cooperation Directors Meeting would be held in San Salvador.

The subject matter proposed by the Government of El Salvador was that of border areas in the context of regional integration goals. The issue is undoubtedly one of the highest significance for the region as a whole as it focuses on meeting the goals set by the Latin American and Caribbean Community of States (CELAC), most of which require, in one way or another, tackling the role to be played by border areas in the grand design of a united and integrated Latin America and Caribbean.

It also implied that the opportunity was there to make a contribution to an assessment of where such efforts as those that the region has endeavored to make, whether bilateral, plurilateral or subregional, stand; of what might be the experience gained; and which may be the critical paths that need to be followed to ensure success for such a strategic undertaking.

The SELA Permanent Secretariat recognizes the significant complexity, diversity and sensitivity from a social, economic and political standpoint border area issues usually have. In this context, its contribution focuses on bringing together critical actors of the regional cooperation process and on making available the experience and perspective of analysts and observers, in an effort to enrich the dialogue such important policy area deserves.

The Secretariat is particularly conscious of the need to include a Caribbean perspective on the issue at hand and thereby to expand the analysis benefitting from one of the most enriching feature of our region: the creative interaction of cultures and geographic singularities between and within Latin America and the Caribbean. In such an overall context, the Permanent Secretariat wishes to thank Dr. Raymond Mark Kirton for his contributions as consultant and his dedication to the drafting of the present report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with its mandate, the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) will convene the XXIV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean in San Salvador, El Salvador, on 30 and 31 May 2013. The theme of this meeting is "Regional Cooperation in the Area of Border Integration". It seeks to create a regional space for dialogue on border integration and assess:

1. the initiatives proposed by Latin American and Caribbean states to advance border integration; the role of national authorities and regional cooperation mechanisms in strengthening border integration;
2. the best practices and positive experiences of Latin American and Caribbean countries in the field of border integration;
3. the collaborative efforts pursued amongst Latin American and Caribbean countries and bilateral and multilateral development agencies, as well as further opportunities for international and South-South cooperation.

In light of the re-emerging significance of borders particularly within the context of Latin America and the Caribbean, this study was commissioned by SELA to examine the existing policies, programmes and mechanisms in the Latin American and Caribbean region which allow for border integration.

Consequently, this study first takes a look at the existing literature on border integration and finds that, by virtue of the dynamic socioeconomic and cultural processes occurring in border areas, it is no longer relevant to view borders solely in linear terms as fixed intersovereign boundaries, but they must be considered as constantly evolving areas of exchange and interdependence.

The study primarily seeks to assess the current situation of border integration amongst the states of CARICOM which share land borders with Latin American states and discuss maritime issues amongst CARICOM island-states. It will therefore examine the status of border integration of Belize with Guatemala and Mexico; of Haiti with the Dominican Republic; of Guyana with Venezuela, Brazil and Suriname; and of Suriname with Brazil. In this respect, it establishes that border and maritime cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean have advanced in a number of areas including, amongst others, infrastructure, trade, security, tourism, environmental conservation and resource management. It also notes several areas in which there is room for improvement in integration and highlights challenges such as slow access to funding, policy diversity and the challenges provoked by regional inequalities.

The study subsequently proposes recommendations for new strategies, mechanisms and public policy approaches which may serve to strengthen border integration, enhance the quality of life of border communities and further consolidate regional integration processes. It therefore advocates a multi-level, public-private partnership and 'bottom-up' approach which encourages the collaboration of a wide cross-section of stakeholders including governments and national authorities, non-governmental organisations, border communities and subregional, regional and international organisations. It emphasises the formalisation of border integration through bi- or trilateral commissions, and reiterates the need for sustained investment in human resource and institutional capacity-building and infrastructure. The study acknowledges the role of border integration in overcoming traditional cultural stereotypes and conflicts and the need for solidarity and confidence-building measures to this end. It concludes by

highlighting the need to build national capacities through endogenous strategies in order to allow states to take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by border integration, and reiterating the important role of border integration in promoting national and regional development and competitiveness.

I. INTRODUCTION

The global intensification of 'new' regionalism since the 1990s demonstrates a worldwide recognition of the immense value of regional integration processes in the promotion of regional and national competitiveness and development in its broadest sense (Devlin and Estevadeordal 2001). Accordingly, border integration is becoming increasingly important in this current global context as a subset of overall regional cross-border cooperation. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) demonstrate commitment to regional cooperation through a proliferation of regional groups such as The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), The Common Market of The South (MERCOSUR), The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), The Central American Integration System (SICA), The Amazonian Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) and most recently The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) among other collaborative arrangements. This study examines the current situation of border integration amongst CARICOM member states sharing land borders with Latin American states, and amongst CARICOM island-states sharing maritime space. It will first seek to review the literature on the issue, assess the progress made in Belize-Guatemala, Belize-Mexico, Haiti-Dominican Republic, Guyana-Venezuela, Guyana-Brazil, Guyana-Suriname and Suriname-Brazil border integration processes, discuss maritime issues amongst CARICOM island-nations and offer a range of recommendations for strengthening border integration in the LAC region.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The concept of border and its evolution

Borders and boundaries have been described as conceptualized in several ways and this section examines the literature in relation to the evolution of the concept, its significance in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean and factors impacting border integration. As far back as the late nineteenth century, analysts of political geography such as Ratzel (1897) viewed the state as a living organism with the border or boundary being the skin of the living state and, like the epidermis of animals and plants it served to provide defence and allowed exchanges to occur. Latin American geopolitical writers, such as Everardo Backheuser (1952) later developed the concept of the 'living frontier' which posited that frontiers or borders are not static in nature, but are seen more like flexible diaphragms which move in response to the relative pressure exerted by the nations on each side of the border.

This view has also been advanced (Asiwaju 1996) that from a transnational viewpoint, there are inalienable linkages and interactions between neighbouring, border regions of adjacent sovereign states. He argues that while the development of one's own side of the border is the usual approach of governments in Latin America, since the Second World War in the more developed areas of the world, especially Western Europe, the national development of a border region demands the perception and the acknowledgement of the entire area irrespective of the intersovereignty boundary running through it.

There are several factors which compel this consideration including:

- a) the need for a peaceful and orderly exploration, exploitation and presentation of indivisible transborder natural resources (land, water, liquid and solid materials, flora fauna)
- b) the management of the associated transborder human activities and
- c) a proper utilization of the cultural advantages provided by the ubiquitous presence of transborder populations whose history may predate the border by centuries and whose socioeconomic interactions rooted in primordialities have continued to transcend the territorial boundaries.

In recent times, the issue of border and transborder cultural, political and social activity has undergone a significant transition. Indeed, it can be said that shrinking borders have offered increased access to new ideas, new cultural products and has facilitated greater understanding among peoples. Further, as Wilson and Donnan (1998) have observed "international borders are becoming so porous that they no longer fulfil their historical role as barriers to the movement of goods, ideas and people, and as markers of the extent and power of the state.' The view has also been advanced that while border lines have remained largely intact their functionality has changed dramatically over the last two decades. Where boundaries acted as barriers to all forms of movement in the past, they have become increasingly permeable to movement in the contemporary world. Additionally, the traditional concept of the border as a rigid line denoting the separation between specific territories under the sovereignty of each state has been subject to significant review. The intensification of trade linkages, the mobility of people as a result of ease of travel and the progressive similarity of culture and communications are also rapidly facilitating the reworking of the old concept of the border, substituting it with international cooperation. Additionally, borders are also seen as 'transition zones" or areas in which the characters and influences of two or more different regions come together (Strihan 2004).

The recent literature has also added new dimensions to the discourse on the concept of border integration. Oliveros (2002) acknowledges the complexity with respect to the definition of the term 'border' given that it is perceived differently by persons with different backgrounds and his study makes reference to the notions of 'linearity' and 'zonality' in interpreting the term. Linearity is primarily concerned with knowing the exact limits of the jurisdiction over which a state exercises its sovereignty, and is therefore a fixed understanding of borders (Oliveros 2002). The notion of zonality, however, entails a more fluid and intangible interpretation of borders, which captures the dynamism of socioeconomic and cultural activities occurring on either side of the jurisdictional divide shared by two or more states. These dynamics catalyse cross-border flows of goods, people and ways of life which insinuates interdependence and stimulate the development of a common cultural space.

Oliveros (2002) goes further in his conceptualisation of borders by distinguishing between active and non-active borders. The zonal perception of borders acknowledges the sociocultural and economic interrelations between communities and thus alludes to active borders, which move and change. Non-active borders occur within the context of linearity, and refer to uninhabited and undeveloped spaces which therefore often do not contribute to national socioeconomic development. The study therefore posits that a border is a complex phenomenon referring to "a space for shared action" in which dynamic social, economic and cultural relationships lead to its constant evolution in space and time. This implies that a definition of border can therefore only be estimated at best.

Border integration therefore refers to the active intensification of these border relationships made possible through treaties and bi- or multilateral agreements, in order to further develop border territories. It entails sharing resources, opportunities and costs in order to improve the lives of border communities and their contribution to overall national development, as well as solidify and advance overall integration between or amongst the implicated nations (Oliveros 2002). Conde Martínez 2001, as cited in Rhi-Sausi and Coletti (2009: 183) argues that the goal of Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) is to "...develop relations between neighbouring territorial authorities...as naturally as if there were no frontier". Indeed, in the realm of trade, cross-border cooperation may develop naturally between states if products originating in one state is easier sold and more profitable in the other.

Interestingly, within the context of globalisation, the concept of borders is being redefined and several scholars have acknowledged the existence of 'borderless' communities or societies (Diener and Hagen 2009; Kirton 2004). Whereas historically, borders were defined in strictly in linear terms as a boundary line, borders now represent a dynamic and constantly-altering zone of cultural complexities, socioeconomic interaction and a vital gateway for integration (Hernandez et al). Once considered a barrier to the movement of persons and merchandise, borders have become permeable allowing for this movement (Kirton 2004). Additionally, borders have been defined traditionally, particularly in LAC where national sovereignty has been seen as a critical characteristic in security terms as a frontier for war requiring military protection, whereas in contemporary times, they have evolved into areas which by virtue of complex cultural encounters, lead to the dispelling of stereotypes and therefore the maintenance of peace (Sausi and Coletti 2009).

2. The Importance of Border Integration within the context of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

The current global context constitutes an intensification of 'new' regionalism processes. Within this setting, the concept of regionalism has expanded and now encompasses multilateral cooperation on a wide range of non-traditional or trade issues such as security, and environmental protection (Wheeler 2002). 'New' regional arrangements now also bring together nations of varying degrees of development and include non-state actors (Söderbaum and Shaw 2003). This proliferation of new regionalism processes reiterates the importance of regional integration in general and therefore the role of border integration within wider regionalism processes. Border integration is generally advocated for the betterment of border communities, their contribution to national development and the strengthening of regional integration. It is therefore a significantly positive move forward that Latin America and the Caribbean are committed to regional integration for the purpose of regional and local development and competitiveness.

While it is argued that border integration (BI) is a concept created by and for the United States and the European Union, and is therefore not applicable to LAC, BI is widely recognised as a crucial engine of regional integration and economic growth (AEBR 2010; SELA 2011 b). Border integration therefore holds immense value within the context of LAC for various reasons. Fundamentally, LAC forms part of the Global South consisting primarily of developing states, rendering regional development strategies particularly beneficial to the states of this region, by allowing them to pool resources and cooperate in several critical areas in order to build capacity, improve efficiency and competitiveness.

Border integration has the potential to offset local and regional developmental asymmetries. This is particularly crucial in Latin America, a region that has long been

considered the most unequal in the world (UN News Centre 2010). Furthermore, LAC has historically adopted centrally-planned development models, which have tended to neglect border areas failing to incorporate them into the national economy. This has brought challenges to these areas, which have remained largely peripheral, to be more exacerbated than in areas that are further inland. Oliveros (2002) therefore argues that it is necessary to attain "inward" integration of border territories, by linking them to national economic activity, in order to mollify imbalances. Consequently, border integration can improve overall national and regional development by enhancing the economic viability of these territories and intensifying their roles as regional integration hubs. This process however must be strongly accompanied and facilitated by structured public policy mechanisms which involve all stakeholders.

Additionally, border integration can also enhance the standard of living of these communities, by increasing their opportunities through access to education, employment, healthcare, environmental protection and infrastructure such as electricity, roads, water. This suggests that it can contribute not only to economic, but also to broader socio-cultural development of the border territory. Further, border integration tends to contribute to the decentralisation of development and thus, the spread of prosperity to these rural, mostly impoverished and indigenous communities, therefore empowering and improving the quality of life of often marginalised, peripheral populations.

Furthermore, border integration promotes the strengthening of overall regional integration. Latin American states belong to various regional arrangements such as UNASUR or SICA which aim to increase economic cooperation and improve production efficiency. Attempting to improve competitiveness in the production of goods, infrastructural development and transport, these regional mechanisms strengthen cooperation and overall commitment to regional integration. Border integration, as a segment of the entire regional integration movement, is a fundamental way to foster solidarity between states sharing borders and encourage cooperation in specific areas to spill over into other areas, further solidifying the bilateral or multilateral relations. In this way, border areas play a crucial role in promoting regional integration which in turn furthers cross border cooperation (CBC) and contributes to development of border areas. However, border integration in LAC raises the important question of the harmonisation of a combination of cultural and indigenous identities which may coexist at borders. Care must be taken, so as not to disrupt cultural balances and to dispel stereotypes and foster peace and tolerance (AEBR 2010), and it is also important for carefully formulated and implemented public policy mechanisms to facilitate these processes.

Border integration can also play a fundamental role in increasing LAC's contribution to the global economy. By working towards modernising and diversifying products and services offered by border communities, and improving regional competitiveness, border integration enhances the capacity of the region to supply goods and services internationally and participate more meaningfully in the global economy. In his analysis of the Andean region Oliveros (2002) asserts that border areas can act as gateways to trade with other regions. In this context, it is critical to develop physical infrastructure such as roads to facilitate transport and communication necessary to foster this international thrust. Oliveros (2002) notes however, the need to maximise local content, by employing local labour for infrastructural projects and incorporating local goods into trade networks. In this regards, we note that Guyana and Suriname can facilitate the 'gateway' approach, which would allow for the 'stretching' of the boundaries of CARICOM and the possibility for mutually beneficial trade and commercial engagement.

3. Factors influencing effective border integration

A number of issues affect the effective attainment of border integration. Administrative, institutional and legal capacities for instance, are key elements of the foundation upon which border integration lies. Adequate and comprehensive legal frameworks are necessary to set the guidelines, policies and rules which govern border cooperation. Institutional development and administrative and human resource capacity-building are required to manage the process of integration (AEBR 2010). Training is therefore needed to equip border officials with the knowledge necessary to carry out integration projects.

Physical infrastructure and transportation are crucial requirements of border integration. SELA (2011 a) asserts that a lack of physical infrastructure in LAC deters socioeconomic development and competitiveness. Water, roads and electricity for example, facilitate border development, by providing basic amenities to border communities and allowing for transportation. Transport in itself allows for the free movement and exchange of goods, services and people, which in turn promotes reciprocal trade between border communities on either side of the border. Immigration and other security mechanisms and measures must be put in place to monitor these cross-border flows. Interestingly, the process of border integration itself brings with it further infrastructural development, demonstrating the interdependent relationship between the process of border integration and development of the border area.

In addition, collaboration amongst a cross-section of stakeholders is crucial to effective border integration. Private-public partnerships and inclusion of stakeholders from individuals, farmers, small and medium enterprises to multinational corporations and the central government in border integration processes from conceptualisation to execution render projects more credible and crucially, take into account the experiences of the communities residing in the border area, ensuring that projects are suited to their needs and their specific sociocultural and economic context.

III. THE STATUS OF BORDER INTEGRATION IN THE LAC REGION

This section now assesses progress made in bilateral border integration amongst CARICOM member states and Latin American states which share land borders, and amongst CARICOM island-states sharing maritime space. It will therefore highlight border integration between Belize and Guatemala, Belize and Mexico, Haiti and Dominican Republic, Guyana and Venezuela, Guyana and Brazil, Guyana and Suriname and Suriname and Brazil, and address issues of integrated maritime territory management amongst CARICOM island states.

IV. BELIZE-GUATEMALA BORDER INTEGRATION

Historically, the relationship between Belize and Guatemala has been overshadowed by a longstanding territorial dispute. Notwithstanding this tension, there has been progress in cross-border cooperation initiatives. This section aims to examine the situation of border integration between Belize and Guatemala by discussing some areas of contention and cooperation. It seeks to demonstrate that although Belize-Guatemala relations have been overwhelmed by conflict over territory, progress in several other domains is promising, and more of such projects are needed to continue fostering confidence in and developing the border zone. It is also appropriate to observe that both states are members of CELAC and SICA, which have as priority areas, the enhancement of integration and physical interconnectivity among its member states

1. Traditional and contemporary areas of contention

Traditional Belize-Guatemala relations have been characterised by contention revolving primarily around a territorial dispute. After tensions rose considerably in 2000, a buffer zone deemed the "Adjacency Zone" (AZ) was established after intervention by the Organization of American States (OAS). In 2005, governments of both countries reaffirmed the need for confidence-building action (OAS 2010). In 2008, after referendums were proposed and agreed to by the Belizean and Guatemalan populations, the decision was made to take the matter to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). As stated on the Belizean news channel Web site News5, referendums are to be held in October 2013.

Another contentious issue concerns the degradation of forests along the 266km Belize-Guatemala border, an issue which is exacerbated by the unresolved land dispute. Perez et al (2009) claim that this conflict has provoked illegal activities in the border area which jeopardize the environment. Alejandro Coca in the article "Tracking forests loss on the Guatemala-Belize border" published by the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), on 6 August 2012, also highlights that population growth, oil exploration, wildlife poaching and logging also contribute to loss of natural habitats in border forests. Destruction of forests in the Adjacency Zone has also had severe implications for the indigenous peoples which reside therein. Indeed, the ramifications of border forest destruction for the indigenous people are drastic, given that the environmental integrity of the land upon which they depend for survival is being threatened (Perez et al 2009).

2. Areas of cooperation

Notwithstanding the aforementioned contentions, Belize-Guatemala border cooperation has advanced in a number of areas.

Importantly, efforts are being made to maintain peace and foster camaraderie in the border area or Adjacency Zone. The Office of the OAS in the Belize-Guatemala Adjacency Zone (OAS/AZ Office) highlights the indispensable role it plays in the maintenance of peace and promotion of conflict resolution in the AZ by encouraging Belize-Guatemala interagency cooperation. This is done by monitoring incidents and taking action to avert escalation, ensuring the smooth realisation of confidence-building measures and organising peace-building and solidarity-enhancing projects in the AZ. The OAS/AZ Office facilitates collaboration between the Guatemalan Army and the Belize Defence Force (BDF), creates reports on security incidents and disseminates information concerning these and progress made in confidence building efforts to border communities.

Notably, there has been cooperation in tourism development. The Bi-national Tourism Working Group Belize-Guatemala Border Zone consists of thirty-three (33) public and private sector representatives and members of local border organisations in Belize and Guatemala. According to Debbie Alfaro, in her article in the Belize Invest dated February 14, 2013, it serves as a forum for dialogue and collaboration amongst public and private sector stakeholders involved in providing tourism services in the border area. It aims to facilitate the coordination of activities towards the development of a competitive Sustainable Tourism (ST) industry based on the cultural heritage of the border area, and manage the sector's contribution to development of the border zone. It is ironic however that cooperation in sustainable tourism exists while contention persists concerning destruction of border forests. Collaboration in Sustainable Tourism must therefore be carried out as part of a comprehensive plan for the border zone which seeks to prevent environmental damage.

In addition, there has been progress in establishing physical infrastructure. As reported by the website of Cisco Construction Ltd., the contractors for the construction of a highway from Belize's Southern Highway to the Belize-Guatemala border, this highway is expected to connect Belize to the Pan-American Highway. It is also noted, according to the government of Belize, that this highway project is expected to facilitate cross-country transport amongst Belizean towns, enhance trade with Central American states and create a second formal border crossing with Guatemala.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also playing an important role to support the development of the Belize-Guatemala Adjacency Zone. For example, Help for Progress is an NGO concerned with rural development which has embarked upon various initiatives seeking to foster cooperation and peace in the Belize-Guatemala border area deemed the "Adjacency Zone". Established in 2003 Help for Progress asserts that it has created the Red de Amigos de la Zona de Cooperación (REDAZCO) or the Friends of the Cooperation Zone Network, which in its recognition of the need for confidence-building in the border area, has as its main objective the promotion of discussion and coordination in the areas of cocoa production and beekeeping, preservation of Mayan cultural heritage, gender equality, management of the environment and its resources, human development and sports. Several cacao farmers and beekeepers have benefited from this programme, peace and solidarity have been strengthened in the area and cross-border cooperation has been formalised through REDAZCO. The efforts of NGOs such as this one in the border areas, alleviates some of the burden from the central government in addressing the issues of border communities.

In sum, border cooperation efforts between Belize and Guatemala have intensified in recent times with the call for confidence-building measures. While the progress made in areas such as tourism, infrastructural development and peace-building are promising, much remains to be done in terms of cooperation in environmental conservation and human development of indigenous and overall border populations. Nevertheless, despite the significant potential for cooperation in these areas, it is evident that this situation is characterised by conflicting interests and therefore calls for consultation and collaboration amongst a wide cross-section of stakeholders. More projects to enhance cooperation are necessary to improve solidarity, and build a mutually-beneficial relationship between border communities on either side of the borderline. It is therefore important that public policy arrangements which foster collaborative engagement between Belize and Guatemala in relation to border integration be urgently established and that all appropriate stakeholders be involved in the process.

V. BELIZE-MEXICO BORDER INTEGRATION

"The border between Mexico and Belize is clearly an example of good neighborliness as well as a place of opportunity and development." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico/Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE). This statement seems to accurately capture the history of border integration between Mexico and Belize. Indeed, this bilateral relationship governing the 250 km shared border and the communities along it, has been characterised by relatively cordial relations, and border integration has advanced in several areas (SRE a). Furthermore, at the Seventh (7th) Meeting of the Mexico-Belize Binational Commission, which was held in August of 2012, government and diplomatic representatives from both states reiterated their dedication to the development of their respective border communities (SRE b). As such, a discussion of the areas of progress in the Mexico-Belize border integration process is imminent.

1. Areas of border cooperation

Numerous points of interest deserve attention when considering border integration between Mexico and Belize. Notably, the two countries are both members of SICA and CELAC and have made substantial headway in developing mechanisms which facilitate the cross-border movement of persons and goods. Establishing infrastructure which allow for these flows helps to foster economic relations between the two nations. One such project has been the opening of the second official border-crossing point at Chetumal in Mexico (SRE b). Former Mexican President Felipe Calderon recognised the mutual benefit of this border-crossing and at its inauguration, asserted that it would create economic opportunities for Mexicans as well as Belizeans, particularly border communities and contribute to the region's economic development.

The construction of a bridge and highway are also expected to improve trade and migration, bringing opportunities to border communities. Indeed, Mexico has offered to complete the segment of highway for which Belize was responsible (*The San Pedro Sun* 2012). This gesture as well as the new border facility demonstrates the extent of cooperation and amity present between the two states, which can only serve to facilitate further border integration. At the 7th Meeting of the Binational Commission, discussions were conducted regarding making continued improvements to transport between the two states.

As noted at the Meeting, progress has also been made in provision of basic amenities to border communities on both sides. Research is being carried out to discern the availability of water in the Rio Hondo Basin and to monitor its quality. An improvement in the electricity supply was also applauded (SRE b).

In terms of environmental cooperation, there have been pledges to establish a binational early warning system for the Rio Hondo River to detect and mitigate flooding (SRE b). Mexico and Belize also work hand in hand to promote environmental conservation of the Rio Hondo and its surroundings, according to a statement at the sixth Bi-national Commission's Technical Meeting held in October 2010.

Security is another area of Belize-Mexico border integration that has received considerable attention. Belize acknowledged that security problems plague both states and are therefore a joint responsibility (*The Guardian* 2012). A common challenge for example is the difficulty to safeguard certain inaccessible segments of the border. Additionally, Belize functions as a transference point for illicit drugs travelling from Latin America to the United States and it has limited financial capacity for addressing drug trafficking (CTV 3). Consequently, improvements in communication technology and scrupulous monitoring of border checkpoints will assist in regulating this penetrable border. Further several sources, (*Caribbean News Now*, *Ambergris Caye Forum* and *the Guardian*, dated 18 July 2011, 12 May 2011 and 10 June 2010, respectively) note that Mexico aims to continue lending expertise in the training of the Belizean police force and this is seen as a shared commitment to enhancing border security and public safety.

There is continued collaboration in the domain of security especially in the fight against transnational organized crime, particularly narco-trafficking (CTV 3; SRE b). In this respect, the Committee to Combat Drug Trafficking and the High Level Group on Border Security (GANSEF) play vital roles. With respect to further crime fighting, the need for a regional approach and cooperation with the Central American Integration System (SICA) and supporting the Central American Security Strategy with an emphasis on shared regional responsibility and respect for national sovereignty (SRE b) must also be seen as priority issues for both states.

Having examined the progress made in border integration between Mexico and Belize, one can conclude that the two states share a relatively friendly alliance. Progress has been noted in the areas of trade and economic development, security, transportation, environmental conservation and the cross-border movement of people and goods. Given the nations' mutual interest in addressing transnational crime, it is expected that close collaboration in these areas will persist through the development of common public policy arrangements to be carried out through binational technical cooperation programmes.

VI. HAITI-DOMINICAN REPUBLIC BORDER INTEGRATION

The border area surrounding the 360 km boundary which divides the Caribbean island of Hispaniola into Haiti and the Dominican Republic has been characterised by contention, on the one hand, and cooperation and interdependence on the other. The 2010 earthquake which ravaged Haiti improved relations with the Dominican Republic, which was the first country to provide assistance. Nevertheless, as rebuilding efforts have simmered, the Dominican Republic has begun to retighten border controls to prevent uncontrolled immigration flows.

However, despite stark differences in economic development Haitian-Dominican border communities are economically interdependent, share some common environmental and health challenges and are developing a similar border culture, which demonstrates significant potential for cross-border cooperation. As such, a review of the areas of contention and cooperation concerning Haiti-Dominican Republic border integration shows that notwithstanding some promising areas of border development, continued efforts are required in order to more genuinely overcome deep-rooted historical tensions (Wucker 2000) and that these efforts must be led through commitments by both governments.

1. Areas of Contention

In recent times Haiti and the Dominican Republic have participated in new regional integration initiatives such as CELAC which aims to foster greater collaboration among its member- states. However, ethnic tensions persist and play a crucial role in explaining Haiti-Dominican Republic relations in general, and border integration, in particular. Historically, racial differences have led to conflict and tension particularly at the border (Murray 2010). Economic inequality between the two states has further exacerbated these tensions.

2. Areas of Cooperation

Despite traditional tensions, the cross-border movement of goods and persons between Haiti and the Dominican Republic has increased significantly. Twice a week the border opens allowing for cross-border commerce. This has allowed trade in the border area to flourish considerably.

Interestingly though, economic relations also represent an area of contention due to a growing trade deficit for Haiti, wage differences, and perception of displacement of local production by Dominican imports. However, border trade is perceived as indispensable, demonstrating that this trade partnership is still mutually-beneficial, even if disparately so. The freer flow of persons and produce has also provoked illegal activity in the border area. However, increased border restrictions on both sides have caused both Haitian and Dominican business to experience negative consequences (Sentinel, 2012).

Border development has been promising in the area of food security. The work of Progressio, an independent international organisation which seeks to promote development, is particularly noteworthy here. As stated on the organisation's website, Progressio works with local communities in the Haitian-Dominican border area to encourage their active participation in fostering food security. By providing financial assistance, training, equipment, seedlings and other necessary materials, farmers in border areas have benefited significantly. Progressio also facilitates dialogue and takes into consideration the most vulnerable groups located at the borders which are usually Haitian migrants. This 'bottom-up' development project empowers border communities to take their development into their own hands and make their way out of poverty.

Environmental sustainability of the Haiti-Dominican Republic border area represents a significant area of cross-border cooperation. The two states experience similar environmental challenges such as flooding and landslips primarily caused by deforestation, which have been particularly detrimental in Haiti. Haiti and the Dominican Republic therefore established a programme to create a Green Border or Frontera Verde. Consequently, several organisations support and participate in the reforestation of the border area. One Christian NGO, Plant with Purpose, has organised a Trans Border Project which *inter alia* seeks to reforest the border area and develop communities sustainably. The Dominican government has also contributed to reforestation efforts in several of its border towns through the Quisqueya Verde reforestation program. The UNDP has also contributed, having reforested more than 300 hectares of land, created several hundred jobs and centres dedicated to growing seedlings, (UNDP , 2012).

The involvement of these organisations has intensified binational cooperation not only in border reforestation, but also in sustainable resource management. There is much room for cooperation in this area regarding the Pedernales River and the Haiti/DR Disaster Mitigation Project launched by the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) in collaboration with Taiwan, seeks to employ innovative technology to mitigate the effects of natural disasters (Caribbean News Now 2013).

Additionally, technical cooperation in agricultural sanitary regulations has improved. On account of an agreement between the Dominican Ministry of Agriculture and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), controls have been increased in the border area to reduce the spread of diseases and pests which can destroy crops and livestock on both sides of the border. This project deepens cooperation between the Haitian and Dominican Ministries and improves agricultural health (IICA bulletin 2012).

The investigation into the Haiti- Dominican Republic border integration clearly reveals that progress has been made in the areas of environmental management, trade and agriculture. Even though border relations are characterised by deep economic interdependence, and tends to surpass racial tensions (Shwartz 2010), there is a need to continue to address economic inequalities and deep-seated ethnic tensions by encouraging more of the focused development projects, led by the governments of both states in collaboration with and the participation of NGOs and international organisations. Progress has also been made in public health, education and tourism and efforts in these areas must also be continued and strengthened so as to benefit the border communities in both states.

VII. GUYANA-VENEZUELA BORDER INTEGRATION

Bilateral relations between Guyana and Venezuela have traditionally been influenced by a bilateral territorial controversy yet to be officially resolved. In contemporary times, the two states have focused their relations on enhanced cooperation and have participated together in ACTO, UNASUR, PetroCaribe and CELAC, which promote transborder collaboration. Consequently, very little bilateral cooperation exists in the Essequibo region claimed by both states. Nevertheless, it has been noted that both countries have agreed to cordially resolve land and maritime border disputes and consolidate friendly bilateral relations. Additionally, Guyana is increasingly viewed as a strategic portal to the Caribbean (van Genderen-Naar 2011). Accordingly, in contemporary times tensions have subsided and with the establishment of the High-Level Binational Commission (COBAN) in 1998, there has been evidence of progress made in cross-border cooperation. This section therefore aims to examine areas of bilateral cooperation between Guyana and Venezuela.

1. Areas of Bilateral cooperation

The two countries' proclaimed commitment to regional integration mechanisms to which they are both parties, such as UNASUR, CLACS and PetroCaribe, has intensified bilateral relations. These new regional initiatives have offered additional windows of opportunity for collaboration between the two states, in the areas of energy, food and agriculture, trade and social development, among others. PetroCaribe for instance has provided a mutually-beneficial agreement between Guyana and Venezuela. In January 2007 representatives of Guyana and Venezuela signed the Contract of Sale for the provision of petroleum and petroleum products to Guyana, and saw Guyana purchasing 5,200 barrels of petroleum per day from May 2007 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guyana).

With reference to agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture of Guyana received an advance of 50% of the US\$ 859,600 funding for the project of Improving the Cold Chain for Non-Traditional and Dairy Sectors during the ALBA Summit in Venezuela on 24 June 2009. The general objective of the project is to improve the lives of the poor rural communities, especially small-scale producers to increase productivity, develop market strategies and business plans.

The two countries have also deepened trade relations. A Guyana-Venezuela rice trade agreement was signed on 21 October 2009. The payment for the rice exported to Venezuela is on a basis of the barter of rice for petroleum products supplied under the PetroCaribe Agreement whereby the rice exported would be paid for through deductions by the Government of Guyana from cash payments for petroleum products exported to Guyana (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guyana). In an agreement signed in 2011, Venezuela agreed to double its exports of oil to Guyana, while Guyana agreed to increase its exports of rice to Venezuela. In this way, Guyanese rice millers and farmers have secured a preferential market for their rice which has revitalised Guyana's rice industry, as noted in a *Guyana Chronicle* article on 12 March 2013.

Another promising area of cross-border cooperation concerns the fight against crime. The two countries confirmed the need to cooperate in the fight against crime, especially at the vulnerable border points and have acknowledged their national limitations to do so. The common challenge in curbing illegal activity is no doubt linked to the difficulty in monitoring such a long border and great expanse of river, especially with the limited resources of these developing nations. As such, Venezuela and Guyana have agreed to deepen cooperation between their law enforcement agencies to stem drug and small arms trafficking (*Kaieteur News* 2011a). More specifically, Venezuela has offered to share

expertise and technology gained in this field with Guyana (Ishmael 2013). The two countries have also agreed that a new and more comprehensive legal framework, and the establishment of a Mixed Committee on Drugs are necessary to facilitate crime prevention and this has demonstrated a shared commitment to border security and cooperation.

Cultural cooperation between the neighbouring states has also intensified. The Venezuelan Institute for Culture and Cooperation (IVPP) for example, fuses culture and education. It is noted that Guyanese nationals are taught the Spanish language and various forms of artistic expressions and this can be expanded to the border region where English can be taught to Venezuelan nationals while citizens of Guyana can be taught Spanish through structured collaborative programmes.

Infrastructure is also benefitting from bilateral relations. The construction of a gas pipeline from Venezuela, through Guyana to Suriname, a road linking Venezuela and Guyana and cooperation in power generation are projects which are expected to improve trade and person to person contact between the two states (Ishmael 2013). These potential development programmes can have significant benefit for the border regions and facilitate economic development and the enhancement of border integration.

The establishment of a shelter for homeless citizens (The Hugo Chavez Centre for Rehabilitation and Reintegration) which opened in May 2013 in Guyana, primarily funded by the ALBA–Caribe Fund, is expected to contribute to social development in Guyana. Venezuelan assistance of US\$ 2.0 million for its construction and the agreement to collaborate for the rehabilitation of drug addicts from all parts of Guyana are significant indications of the changing shape and tenor of the relations between the two states which can have a positive impact on the border regions and facilitate increased collaboration between the border communities.

In sum, while formal border integration processes remain limited between Guyana and Venezuela, bilateral cooperation in a number of areas are noteworthy. There is potential for bilateral cooperation in integrated water and marine resource management, environmental conservation, health and education (OAS 2005; Ishmael 2013 which can positively impact the border communities, enhance their quality of life and provide new opportunities for employment, trade and commercial activities. Cooperation in all areas must be accompanied by public policy which are clear and unambiguous and have the necessary 'buy-in' from all the stakeholders.

VIII. GUYANA-BRAZIL BORDER INTEGRATION

Guyana and Brazil have generally had cordial relations and border integration in the area surrounding the 750 mile border has made substantial headway in numerous areas. Indeed, the two countries became signatories to the treaty for Amazonian cooperation in 1978, and are members of UNASUR and CELAC, with all these organizations seeking to facilitate increased levels of border integration. This section assesses the progress made in Guyana-Brazil border integration and identifies key areas for further enhancement.

1. Areas of Cross-Border Cooperation

The Guyana-Brazil Frontier Committee was established in September 2009 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Frontier Committee aims to strengthen integration of the communities located along the Guyana-Brazil border by improving trade through the movement of goods and persons and fostering cooperation

in areas such as education, infrastructural development, health and cross-border movement of persons. The creation of this formal binational border committee is a vital first step toward the efficient management and execution of border integration processes (MOFA, Guyana 2011).

A clear demonstration of the shared commitment to border integrated was observed in 1994 when Guyana and Brazil established a Mixed Border Commission with the primary objective of inspecting and rebuilding or repairing where necessary the markers along the Guyana-Brazil boundary line. The Commission convenes an annual Conference and carries out one field exercise each year.

Infrastructural integration is perhaps the most advanced area of Guyana-Brazil border cooperation. In 2003, Guyana and Brazil concluded an International Road Transport Agreement (IRTA) for the Movement of Passengers and Cargo. On 14 September 2009, Guyana and Brazil signed an Agreement for the Establishment of a Special Border and Transport Regime for the locations of Lethem (Guyana) and Bon Fim (Brazil). The Agreement outlines the policies that will govern the consumption of subsistence goods and the provision of commercial transportation services within the identified locale. In 2009, the Takutu River Bridge was completed, the inauguration of which saw the signing of the MOU and launching of the Frontier Committee. The bridge links the towns of Bon Fim and Roraima in Brazil to Lethem and the capital city Georgetown in Guyana. It also connects Northern Brazil to the Atlantic Coast.

Additionally, the MOU established a Working Group on Infrastructure which will consider the upgrading of a road from Linden to Lethem, a modern deep-water port and hydro-electric projects, according to a Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guyana Press Release dated 12 December 2012. These infrastructural projects are crucial as they are expected to significantly enhance mutual trade, particularly the movement of goods from Roraima to Guyana's Atlantic Coast, and potentially allow for future provision of energy to Brazil by Guyana. This will reduce transport time to Brazilian Atlantic ports. The Working Group is scheduled to submit a report after its deliberation in June 2013.

With specific reference to the proposed road between Lethem, Guyana's border town with Brazil, and Linden, four hundred and fifty (450) kilometres away can also have significant impact on the border integration process between the two countries. While the existing road can be termed 'a fair weather road', since it becomes virtually impassable during the wet season, the upgrading of this road is seen as a project of high importance and value to both countries. For Brazil, it will provide the opportunity for an alternative route for its exports from the industrial zone of Manaus and the agro-industrial sector in Roraima, as well as to upgrade the collaboration in security, trade and commercial activities with Guyana. For Guyana, it has been posited that increased direct foreign investment from Brazil, increased access to the hinterland and the possible move away from its present condition of a 'coastal' economy to one which utilises more of its physical space for economic purposes. For both Guyana and Brazil, the upgraded roadway will enhance security, economic and social integration among the border communities, stimulate sustainable development, improve the physical infrastructure and potentially empower border communities to improve the quality of life in the border region.

Cooperation in the hydrological and electricity fields is significant. Cooperation in the Hydro Sector entails carrying out hydrological inventories of the Potaro and Mazaruni hydrological basins and the diversions within and between these basins, constructing hydroelectric plants at Kurupung and Turtubra in the Essequibo and constructing transmission lines to transport electricity to Georgetown and Boa Vista, interconnecting

the system of Guyana to the Brazilian power system (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guyana). Arco Norte is a project of structural significance for the transmission of electricity and data, with the purpose of establishing an "energy arc" between the Brazilian cities of Boa Vistas and Amapa, passing through the neighbouring territories of Guyana, Suriname and French Guyana. This is to be carried out with the assistance of the IDB.

Binational cooperation in the field of health has also improved. With the existence of a Bi-National Advisory Commission on Health on the Border, which reports to the Frontier Committee, the enhancement of health services is being addressed. At the second Meeting of the Frontier Committee in 2011, the Bi-National Advisory Committee organised a work programme which would permit the execution of initiatives in areas such as information exchanges and training of medical workers in both countries.

Education is another vital aspect of border integration. The launch of a Frontier Schools Project which will provide training in Portuguese and English languages for Guyanese and Brazilian students was initiated. This Project entails the exchange of teachers, with six Brazilian teachers being placed in Guyanese schools in Georgetown, Lethem, Annai and Aishalton over a year-long period, and three Guyanese teachers stationed in schools in Bon Fim. This is significant in order to reduce the language barrier, enhance mutual understanding of each country's culture, improve person to person contact, and therefore facilitate further border integration processes and solidarity-building.

Brazil and Guyana have also strengthened border security cooperation as part of the overarching border integration process. Over the years, Brazil, having a particular interest in the stability of Guyana and wider South American stability, has provided training for vast numbers of Guyanese soldiers, (*Stabroek News*, 24 December 2002). The Guyana and Brazil military representatives also agreed to the creation of a Bilateral Defence Working Group and three sub-groups to treat with matters relating to the Army, Navy and Air Force, increased cooperation for training and education at Brazilian Military institutions and joint military operations in the border areas (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guyana). This vindicates a shared vision for enhanced border security through collaborative military engagement which can redound to the benefit of the peoples of the border communities as well as to the security of both states.

Moreover, the Joint Commission on Police Cooperation and Drugs was created on 18 April 2002 with the objective of establishing formal relations between the security forces of Guyana and Brazil and to provide the framework for collaboration between these entities. It addresses issues such as drugs, arms and human trafficking, joint monitoring of the Guyana-Brazil border, the repatriation of stolen motor vehicles, as well as potential judicial cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guyana Press Release, 12 December 2012).

The Guyana-Brazil Group on Consular Cooperation was primarily created to address the issues which arise from increased cross border movement and include trade and investment, illegal border crossings, movement of people, health, mining and the environment, small scale miners (*garimpeiro*) activities in Guyana, extradition and judicial cooperation in penal matters, illegal border activities, work permits and consular services in the frontier districts, among others.

Several binational agricultural projects are gaining momentum. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guyana, the Guyana-Brazil Project for the Production of Corn in the Savannahs of Guyana was formulated with the objective of enhancing Guyana's technological capacity to produce corn in the interior savannahs. The project involves

the training of Guyanese technicians by Brazilian experts as well as the supply of improved corn varieties for cultivation in Guyana's savannahs. The Guyana-Brazil Project for Upland Rice Production in the Savannahs of Guyana also enables a transfer of modern techniques in upland rice production to Guyanese technicians.

Additionally, the Guyana-Brazil Project for the Development of the Aquaculture Sector in Guyana entails the training of Guyanese technicians in the breeding of the Tambaqui, Pirarucu, and Tilapia fish species. The two countries are also engaged in a Project for Enhancing the Monitoring Capacity of the Guyana Forestry Commission, under which Guyanese technicians are trained in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) or Remote Sensing (RS) to promote sustainable forestry management. The Guyana-Brazil Project for the Geological/Geodiversity Mapping of the Guyana-Brazil Border supports training of Guyanese technicians in the modern techniques for geological mapping and the development of Geological and Geodiversity maps of the Guyana-Brazil border. Brazil has also offered to provide training to Guyanese border communities in the commercialisation and production of fruits and flowers in pursuance of income generation for these towns. In addition to the projects described above, there is an ongoing Technical Cooperation Project for the Production of Soybean in the Intermediate Savannahs of Guyana.

The Guyana-Brazil Partial Scope Agreement was signed in June, 2001 with the intention of increasing bilateral trade flows between Guyana and Brazil through the granting of tariff preferences, cooperation on trade matters and increased participation of the private sector. Accordingly, the Guyana-Brazil Private Sector Integration Project was officially launched in July 2011. It is a partnership amongst the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Development Organisation (SEBRAE) and the major private sector organisation in Guyana, the Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association. The Project aims to foster bilateral trade with the goals of job creation and revenue generation from increases in production and export sales, (Kaieteur News 25 July 2011). More specifically, it seeks to identify and develop specific services and products in Roraima and Amazonia in Brazil and in Guyana, which demonstrate the greatest potential for market development and export sales within both countries' markets and in the region.

There is also agreement to engage in field and market intelligence studies with specific consideration of aquaculture and agribusiness, transport, logistics, and cultural tourism in order to enhance Guyana - Brazil border integration. A business institute established in Roraima, Brazil, will serve as a crucial centre for training Guyanese businessmen, especially those from the border communities in Guyana, in the Portuguese language and the particularities of conducting business in Brazil. Interestingly, it was noted at the launch of the Private Sector Integration Project that the Takutu Bridge, which now connects Guyana and Brazil, had not improved trade dramatically as previously projected, and that in order to change this, the two countries have to achieve a trade balance. To this end, Brazil was therefore encouraged to increase purchases of Guyanese goods and services, and the previously examined projects are expected to improve the production capacity of Guyanese border communities' (Kaieteur News 2011b).

Additional areas of bilateral cooperation include projects on Geographic Information System/Remote Sensing, Phytosanitary Certification, information-sharing among National Environmental Agencies in order to build technical capacity and development of the Lapidary Industry in Guyana with particular focus on semi-precious stones such as agate, jasper, amethyst, black pearls, and rose quartz.

Border integration between Brazil and Guyana has therefore advanced meaningfully and formally in a number of areas. There is also untapped potential for land and water management cooperation. However, though crucial to facilitating trade, improved infrastructure in itself has not drastically enhanced trade between the two countries. It is therefore necessary for Guyana to build its productive capacity in order to increase its exports and harmonise its trade imbalance with Brazil. Only then can continued border integration efforts be more mutually-beneficial.

IX. GUYANA-SURINAME BORDER INTEGRATION

Guyana-Suriname bilateral relations have historically been characterised by land, maritime and river controversies. Though some of these issues have yet to be resolved, significant bilateral cooperation exists between the two countries in several areas. It is important to observe that Guyana and Suriname actively participate in several multilateral institutions which, as part of their mandate, highlight the need for border integration. Both states are members of CARICOM, UNASUR, ACTO and CELAC. In the case of CARICOM, Suriname joined the regional grouping in 1995, while Guyana and Suriname became signatories to the Treaty for Amazonian Cooperation in 1978, and joined CELAC at the same time in 2011.

1. Areas of bilateral cooperation

In the first place, the resuscitation of meetings of the Guyana-Suriname Border Commissions aimed at resolving outstanding issues related to the Guyana-Suriname border has indicated a significant move forward in the dialogue process.

In February 2012, Guyana and Suriname agreed to join forces with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to discuss financing modalities and a feasibility study for a proposed bridge across the Corentyne River. At the level of the heads of state and government, there has been emphasis placed on the importance of the construction of the bridge in enhancing trade and economic relations as well as cultural exchanges between the two countries. In addition, a formal ferry service between the two countries has been in operation since 1998. However, it has been noted that there is much room for improvement to this transportation service (*Kaiaeteur News* February 21, 2013) and unofficial entry and exit points exist in both states, facilitated by the use of small boats with passengers who are normally undocumented in a process known as 'backtracking'. This informal movement of nationals of both states has however increased the levels of border cooperation and integration in the areas of culture, trade and it is not unusual for families to be located both in the border towns of Corentyne on the Guyana border and in Nickerie, on the Suriname border.

The two countries have deepened integration in terms of integrated natural resource management. In February 2013, Guyana and Suriname convened a high level meeting to discuss cooperation in the natural resource sector (*The Daily Herald* 25 February 2013). Both countries acknowledged the significant potential to strengthen cooperation in information sharing and joint educational and training programmes, in the areas of small scale mining, exploration and exploitation of oil and gas, wildlife development, forestry and land management.

Security cooperation between Suriname and Guyana, especially in relation to public safety and border security has been considered important components of border integration for both countries. The illicit trade in mineral resources, particularly gold smuggling emanating from the border in Guyana continues to receive significant attention. Further, the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) collaborates with senior officials

of the Suriname Customs and Excise Department to stem smuggling activities and several initiatives have been implemented. The Ministries of Home Affairs of Guyana and Justice and Police of Suriname continue to pursue cooperation mechanisms in an effort to address common issues related to crime and security including piracy or robbery at sea, drug trafficking and illicit trafficking in fire arms, trafficking in persons, smuggling of goods and the illegal movement of vehicles (Backtrack operations) between Guyana and Suriname. Additionally, in August 2012, Suriname and Guyana agreed to establish a technical committee to analyse the security issues revolving around regularising the informal border river crossing or 'backtrack' route between the two countries in order to determine its feasibility (*Antigua Observer* 21 August 2012).

Furthermore, Guyana and Suriname are working more closely in several other areas. The Foreign Ministers of both countries meet every six months to review bilateral programmes of cooperation. They have agreed to deepen integration in a spectrum of areas including infrastructure, agriculture, fisheries, security, climate change and harmonisation of positions in regional fora, specifically the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean Nations (CELAC), especially with a focus on border development and integration. In agriculture, Guyana and Suriname met in May 2012 agreed that cooperation initiatives would be pursued in the cultivation of upland/highland rice and in the fisheries sector which would involve the border regions of both states in a collaborative development programme.

The Guyana-Suriname cross-border relationship therefore has potential to be strengthened in a number of areas. More projects in other areas such as tourism, environmental conservation and confidence-building are required to strengthen cooperation in the border area. The involvement of all stakeholders - the public and private sectors, NGOs, the international community and the border communities themselves- must be emphasised so that a meaningful, coordinated programme can be devised and operationalised for mutual benefit.

X. SURINAME-BRAZIL BORDER INTEGRATION

As in the case of Guyana and its bordering neighbours, Suriname has had a long relationship with Brazil at the multilateral level in South America. Suriname along with Brazil and six other South American states, signed the Treaty for Amazonian Cooperation in 1978 and both states are members of UNASUR and CELAC, which are strong proponents of border integration. This section examines important areas of Suriname-Brazil cooperation.

1. Areas of Cooperation

The view has been advanced that infrastructural integration, especially in the border region has been a critical issue for both Brazil and Suriname in recent times. In 2010, discussions began to assess the feasibility for the construction of a trans-Atlantic highway, since Suriname and Brazil are seen as the only two South America countries not directly linked by reliable surface communication. The highway is expected to encourage significant economic activity in many mineral-rich areas, and migration to the southern parts of Suriname. However, one potential constraint is that the highway is expected to pass through pristine rainforests, potentially threatening wildlife and natural habitats (van de Ven 2010) and prudent environmental impact assessments will have to be carried out.

The two countries have also intensified cooperation in agriculture. Suriname and Brazil signed three agricultural agreements in 2012 to execute various agrarian projects, improve food security and foster knowledge sharing especially in the border areas

(Drepaul 2012). Crop analysis is being undertaken in Suriname to first assess the best crops to be cultivated in the border areas, before technical assistance is provided by Brazil. This will improve the quality of agricultural production in Suriname (*Stabroek News*, 7 May 2012) and enhance the border collaboration between the two states.

In recent times, Brazil and Suriname have also deepened energy cooperation. Suriname is expected to increase its energy output by 50% and the two states, through a Memorandum of Understanding will conduct a feasibility study to examine the hydroelectric potential of Suriname. Brazilian enterprises also assist Suriname in the area of oil exploration and gold production and technical experts from both countries regularly collaborate in these areas (Senado Federal, 21 October 2011).

Another area which has facilitated the enhancement of border cooperation between Brazil and Suriname has been the strengthening of military cooperation to enhance border security and integration. According to *Diálogo*, the Forum of the Americas (2012) the defence infrastructure of Suriname is to be revitalised and a bilateral working group to deal with coordination of defence initiatives will be created. The involvement of Brazilian experts in education and training for Surinamese soldiers in border operations, the proposed establishment of an airstrip on the border and Suriname's participation in the Amazon Monitoring System (SIVAM) in Brazil have all been considered as mechanisms for the improvement of border security in both states.

The examination of Suriname – Brazil border integration has revealed that some progress has been made in expanding areas of cooperation and introducing new forms of collaboration in areas where they did not exist in the past, such as mining and security issues. There however needs to be sustained programmes which involve border communities both in Suriname and Brazil, to bring about greater social cohesion.

XI. CARICOM: ISSUES CONCERNING SHARED MARITIME SPACE

Of its fifteen (15) member states, CARICOM consists of eleven (11) islands located in the Caribbean Sea. These members do not therefore share land borders but instead share maritime space. These island states are relatively small in physical size and are separated by significant expanses of sea. This suggests that maritime transport is a crucial element in the socio-economic development process of these states. Further, since the movement of agricultural produce is vital to these agriculturally- based economies, sea transport is seen as an essential component in the development process. This section examines the principal issues involved in governing this shared maritime area, its challenges and prospects.

1. Areas of maritime cooperation

Since agriculture has been identified as a key component in the development of Caribbean states, and there is an identified link between the movement of agricultural produce and maritime space, it is important to examine the areas of cooperation and the challenges faced in the efforts to enhance maritime border integration in the Caribbean. Recently, the Jagdeo Initiative on agriculture, which forms part of the CARICOM process of integration activities, that inadequate transportation systems, especially for perishable agricultural produce was a major constraint to agricultural development in the region. Additionally, Girvan (2007), having identified significant gaps in the regional transport systems placed as a priority for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), "the upgrading of facilities for intra-regional trade and transport". Many analysts have argued that shipping within the Caribbean is significantly underdeveloped and is a constraint to the integration process and as Bourne (cited in Yearwood 2008)

posited, Caribbean shipping arrangements are largely geared towards extra regional trade instead of the priority being centred on the movement of commodities among the Caribbean island-states. Additionally, the view has been advanced that port facilities are inadequate and inappropriate, with limited phyto-sanitary inspection arrangements, low levels of staffing and low occupational efficiency. It is important to note, however, that the informal intra-Caribbean maritime trade is significant with the small craft or 'schooner' moving agricultural products around the region, facilitated by informal networks. Undoubtedly, there can be important benefits to be gained through the formalisation of regularised arrangements so as to increase maritime border integration, reduce transaction costs, spoilage and related risks. It is therefore important for the Caribbean, as it moves towards the structured integration of its maritime space, to facilitate the development of adequate and efficient intra-regional sea transport systems, especially to facilitate the movement of agricultural products.

One of the major economic drivers of Caribbean economic development is arguably the tourism industry. It is therefore not surprising that tourism is one of the principal areas of regional maritime cooperation. The importance of regional cooperation in tourism development has been acknowledged since the establishment of the Caribbean Community with the 1973 Treaty of Chaguaramas (Section VI, Article 50). Since 1997 the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has been convening the Sustainable Tourism Conference (STC), more commonly referred to as the Annual Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development, the most recent of which was held in April 2013 in Trinidad and Tobago. The organisation's aims include the development of Sustainable Tourism (ST) in the Caribbean, the promotion of the region as a premiere tropical weather destination, the improvement of regional transport and the provision of financial assistance to member states of the CTO.

It follows that regional transport of persons and goods is a crucial domain of regional integration. The region recognises the gravity of regional maritime transport for fostering not only intra-regional tourism, but also for trade, regional economic development and deepening of overall regional integration (Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas 2001, Preamble and Article 40; Vaccianna 2007). Vaccianna (2007) acknowledges a number of regional barriers to providing maritime services such as restrictions on nationality, work permits and other licensing and customs constraints for foreign seamen and pilots.

Additionally, crucial element in maritime border integration is the issue of efficient transport of Caribbean around the region. In this regard, a fast ferry service between Trinidad and Tobago and the Eastern Caribbean has been proposed and in January 2012 the Barbados-based Fast Caribbean Ltd. pledged its commitment to provide 100,000 seats on its ferries (Taitt 2012). This would improve inter-island movement of regional nationals and tourists. There is regional consensus that the development of regional maritime transport policies which would harmonise laws and facilitate regional transportation is a crucial need in the Caribbean, and that this would be in keeping with the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) Caribbean Maritime Port Strategy created in 2012 (Trinidad Guardian, January 2012).

Additionally, cooperation in environmental protection is noteworthy. Environmental cooperation in the Caribbean is indispensable by virtue of the region's susceptibility to hurricanes, dependence on the ecological integrity of its marine, coastal and in-land environment for tourism development and Sustainable Development. As the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) has stated, , the CEP recognises the value of the land and marine resources to the socioeconomic wellbeing of the Caribbean region, and as such attempts to promote responsible resource management, reduction of land and marine

pollution and identification of specially-protected areas and wildlife (SPAW). Regional environmental cooperation is facilitated through Regional Activity Centres (RACs) which serve as hubs for information and cooperation. More of these centres throughout the region are necessary to further environmental cooperation and research in the area of maritime resource management.

Fisheries Management has long been a contentious issue in the region. Indeed, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago have historically had problematic relations in this respect (Griffin 2007). For this reason, regional fisheries supervision is indispensable. The Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) (2001) states as the organisation's broad objectives, the promotion of sustainable fisheries management and regional cooperation. Through the CRFM, progress made in marine resource management has been promising with several consultations and workshops which facilitate stakeholder collaboration and information sharing.

Furthermore, Caribbean fisheries management benefits significantly from the interest displayed by the international community. For example, the European Union's (EU) interest in the sector created the conditions in which several of the region's fisheries professionals benefited from the ACP Fish II/CRFM regional technical consultation and regional training sessions held early in 2013, which addressed a new communications strategy and training in international best practices and the utilisation of modern fisheries technology (CRFM 2013 a; CRFM 2013 b).

In addition, maritime integration in the Caribbean prioritises cooperation in the maintenance of security. Given the numerous maritime spaces between the Caribbean's chain of islands and permeable borders of many island nations due to their often limited financial and military capacity to thoroughly monitor their borders and waters, the region is an easy transshipment point for illicit drugs and transnational crimes. One mechanism for regional security cooperation is the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), a partnership of the United States, CARICOM and the Dominican Republic. CBSI aims to foster collaboration to prevent the trafficking of illegal drugs, improve public safety and social justice and the Caribbean stands to benefit from technical expertise and training in aerial and maritime security operations, border and port patrol, legislative and institutional capacity building and justice sector reform (US Department of State 2012).

Another such mechanism for regional security integration is the Caribbean Regional Maritime Agreement (CRA) which was proposed in 2003 to suppress trade in illegal substances in the region by arresting and investigating aircraft and marine vessels suspected of carrying illicit drugs and psychotropic substances (Gilmore 2005). However, it failed to receive the required minimum of ratifications to be put into effect. How to enhance the capacity of Caribbean states to act speedily to enhance maritime collaboration remains therefore an issue of interest.

XII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING BORDER INTEGRATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (LAC)

After close examination of various land and maritime border relationships amongst CARICOM island nations and the Latin American states with which the mainland CARICOM countries share borders, a range of recommendations is proposed.

1. Region-wide recommendations

There is the view among some stakeholders that while there have been several recent initiatives to foster increased levels of border integration, there are challenges

which remain which should be addressed. It has been stated that because border locations are situated long distances away from major cities and capitals, there has been the tendency to relegate border issues to the 'back burner' and to treat the border areas as marginal to the national development process. Additionally, it has been observed that unresolved territorial issues constrain the development of border integration programmes. An important recommendation for LAC border integration advocates the formalisation and institutionalisation of border cooperation through decentralised organisations specifically aimed at executing border integration (AEBR 2010). Cross border cooperation (CBC) in the region is still largely characterised by informal and individual projects. Bilateral border integration in LAC would therefore benefit from the establishment of binational border integration committees, with several divisions specifically addressing various issues such as environmental conservation, which would render cross border cooperation more efficient.

While there has been a marked increase in regional political will to strengthen cross border cooperation (CBC) and on intergovernmental frameworks, the region might need to consider the relevance and potential impact of embracing collaboration amongst a broad spectrum of public and private, state and non-state actors. There is significant room for NGO and private sector participation in all border integration processes in the LAC region with regard to identifying transboundary issues and fostering bilateral cooperation.

This must therefore be facilitated through the formulation and unambiguous articulation of public policy mechanisms established with the input and 'buy-in' of the entire stakeholding community – state and non-state actors, the private sector, NGOs, the international community and the border communities – all operating in tandem so as to ensure efficient operational arrangements geared towards successful outcomes. Indeed, there should also be the encouragement of the 'bottom up' approach to ensure that the communities themselves are actively engaged in the process of border integration so that mutual trust and respect are enhanced and the process of social and economic cohesion is facilitated.

Further, reports on South-American border integration acknowledge the difficulty accessing funds from the central government for border development projects (SELA 2011 b; AEBR 2010). As such it is recommended that funding be decentralised in order to facilitate easier and swifter access to the finances necessary to execute projects. To this extent, binational border integration organisations must have their own budgets or national funds must be dedicated to cross border cooperation.

It is recommended that there be sustained investment in Institutional and human resource capacity-building to improve the ability of border commissions to carry out projects. Training programmes and languages courses relevant to border relationships are therefore crucial. For instance, English should be taught in Spanish-, Portuguese- and Dutch-speaking states and vice versa to enhance cultural and economic collaboration

Oliveros (2002) in his study of the Andean region argues that roads must be adequately constructed and borders equipped to facilitate transport of goods and persons, which will foster reciprocal trade and economic development by extension. This idea is broadly applicable to all border relationships in Latin America. Border facilities must be furnished with the security personnel and technology to monitor these flows, in order to allow for legitimate cross-border business and travel and reduce criminal activities. One can, however, support the view that these border developments must take into account each peculiar border context so as not to upset the fragile sociocultural and economic

balance created by the merge of distinct border cultures and national systems (Oliveros 2002).

With respect to infrastructure, the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) plays a critical role by providing funding, planning and executing infrastructural developments which facilitate cross-border or regional integration. If non-South American states may be included, the work of IIRSA can be expanded and would contribute significantly to region-wide border integration. An IIRSA-proposed network of Highways to connect Venezuela and Brazil with Guyana and Suriname will undoubtedly facilitate closer relations amongst these nations and promote further economic development (van Dijck 2010). It will potentially increase the ease of transport for goods and persons, open up several areas to economic activities such as the exploration and exploitation of minerals as well as tourism and improve access to health, education and energy infrastructure especially in the smaller states like Guyana and Suriname.

However, it also raises potential environmental concerns which must be considered before embarking on this project. The various governments must weigh the potential economic benefits against the potential environmental losses in order to determine the feasibility of the project for the sustainable development of the affected communities and areas. Given the widespread interest already expressed by the states of the region in improving surface communication including roads and highways, mechanisms for the mitigation of biodiversity loss should be considered.

The importance of regional institutions cannot be underestimated. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Unión de Naciones Suramericanas or Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), Mercado Común del Sur or Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América or Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), Sistema Económico Latinoamericano y del Caribe or Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) The Central American Integration System (SICA), PetroCaribe, Comunidad Andina or Andean Community (CAN), Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and other regional bodies all play a role in facilitating border integration.

Further, there are several international organizations with an interest in border integration which can provide valuable support and assistance in the development of greater levels of cross-border cooperation. These include the Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Cooperation (IICA), which promotes harmonisation of agricultural programmes, The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) which provides support on health issues and United Nations agencies such as the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), UNESCO and UNICEF which have all developed mechanisms for increasing border collaboration.

Consequently, the LAC region must tap into international value chains and networks in order to benefit from the expertise, technology and experiences of the US and EU for example. Rhi-Sausi and Coletti (2009) and Constantini et al (2012) recognise the value of working with Fronteras Abiertas in this respect. Development Agencies such as the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) or French Development Agency which currently lends development assistance to Suriname can play a crucial part in financing development initiatives and improving border communities' access to health, education and infrastructure, promoting their economic development and implementing programmes for natural resource management for instance.

Furthermore, the media plays a fundamental role in dispelling stereotypes. Newspaper articles, television broadcasts and other forms of media must be monitored to ensure neutral and objective journalism, without infringing upon the right to freedom of speech. There must also be the introduction of special programmes in the print and electronic media which portray the realities of the border regions which can reduce the negative stereotypes which are at times associated with border communities.

Additionally Border projects must provide job opportunities, seek to encourage diversification of the goods and services of the border region and to maximise local content in local, regional and international trade, in order to maximise national and regional economic development (Oliveros 2002). Cross-border cooperation must also be carried out with respect of sovereignty and cultural differences. Prejudices must therefore be overcome (AEBR 2010).

Kuwayama (2005) acknowledges that intra-LAC regional trade is drastically affected by trade to the North. Regional inequalities and failure to fully satisfy multilateral obligations have hindered the region's integration processes. It is therefore crucial to deepen regional trade and improve competitiveness in order to better cope with international trade.

2. Specific recommendations

Several specific recommendations are also noteworthy. In terms of the Belize-Guatemala relationship, more confidence- and solidarity-building projects which foster cooperation and understanding may be considered until and after the longstanding territorial dispute is resolved. The common interest of the two nations in developing tourism sustainably may be used as a catalyst for collaboration in the environmental realm. Additionally, the work of NGOs in the Adjacency Zone must be facilitated as they tend to play a crucial role in fostering development in disenfranchised areas.

In addition, though the Mexico-Belize border integration process has been largely beneficial, border projects which strengthen cooperation in the fight against transnational crime and infrastructural development may be implemented to improve public safety and facilitate trade. Continued cooperation in police force training and narco-trafficking expertise is welcome.

With regard to Haiti-Dominican Republic border integration, in order to bring harmony to this trade relationship, efforts must be made on the Haitian side to boost agricultural production, increase local content in manufacturing and improve governance. This is needed to further improve food security and the gains from cross-border trade in order to bring prosperity to border communities and balance out border inequalities.

Information about formal border integration between Guyana and Venezuela is not readily available and evidence of progress towards such goal scarce. A solution to the historical land dispute would not probably contribute to deepen border integration. Until then more confidence-building initiatives must be embarked upon. Cooperation under PetroCaribe, ALBA and other regional initiatives can be used to further strengthen the bilateral relationship.

Guyana-Brazil border integration is perhaps the most formalised of Guyana's border relationships. Significant progress has been made in infrastructure and cooperation in education and security are noteworthy. There is great potential for cultural cooperation, in particular with regard to protecting the rights and heritage of indigenous communities which reside on either side of the border. Nonetheless, efforts must be made on the part

of Guyana to build its production capacity and quality in order to offset its trade imbalance with Brazil and enhance the overall bilateral border relationship.

Guyana-Suriname border integration has potential to flourish in numerous areas such as agriculture, infrastructure, natural resource management, tourism, environment, security among others. More confidence-building projects are needed to deepen border integration.

Specifically, with regard to the border relations among Guyana, Venezuela, Brazil and Suriname, Brazil's hosting of the World Cup Football Championships in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016 represents a valuable opportunity for multi-destination tourism and special visa arrangements may be put in place for extra-regional visitors to engage in cross-border travel. This would have the effect of displaying the diversity of cultures and provide the opportunity for increased financial resource generation and cross-border cooperation.

Additionally, the idea of 'twinning' of border towns and cities has become popular in Latin America. This can play an important role in the development of socio-cultural ties, and serve as the catalyst for the implementation of long-term projects which can be mutually beneficial. It is recommended that consideration be given for the twinning of border towns in the cases of Belize- Guatemala, Haiti-Dominican Republic, Guyana-Venezuela, Guyana-Brazil, Guyana-Suriname and Suriname-Brazil.

With regard to CARICOM, Vacciana (2007) purports that the CSME permits an integrated maritime policy which potentially offers significant opportunities for cooperation in port development, easier capital flows and shipment of goods, all of which would facilitate trade. Prime Minister Tillman Thomas of Grenada has also reiterated the indispensability of modernising maritime seaports, assets and vessels, and rationalising air transport arrangements.

Greater cooperation in counter-narcotics trading, fisheries and environmental protection is needed. Collaboration in tourism development by imposing a regional maritime tax for cruise ships for example, would benefit the whole region. Given the limited financial capacity of many of these islands, issues that have a regional impact may be more practically dealt with in regional organisations, perhaps coordinated by the CARICOM Secretariat, where resources may be pooled. Financial challenges can also be offset by partnerships with selected extra regional partners which can also provide expertise, training and technology transfer.

There are also challenges to border integration between the Caribbean and Latin America which involve the understanding of the different legal systems in both sets of states. There should therefore be focused efforts to facilitate the process of sensitising both sets of states with the legal frameworks and processes need to ensure closer collaboration.

XIII. CONCLUSION

This study has raised several issues pertinent to the examination of border integration in the LAC region. It has reiterated the importance of infrastructure and border integration itself to the facilitation and enhancement of trade and cooperation. However, just as states with limited capacities struggle to take full advantage of opportunities afforded by international trade, LAC countries fail to accumulate the projected benefits of bilateral trade if their internal capacities are limited.

It is therefore crucial to emphasise that LAC states need to embark on endogenous capacity-building strategies in order to enhance economic, human resource and technological capabilities in the border regions. It may reasonably be suggested that this should be a critical public policy priority for states in this region like for those in the Caribbean. Undoubtedly, the very border integration processes may be used to build capacity through expertise and technology sharing and training. However, countries need to build internal capacities among border communities in order to improve production and export sales, balance out trade deficits and therefore reduce regional inequalities.

Furthermore, border integration processes which facilitate the cross-border flow of cargo and individuals may also bring with them illegal activities such as illegal immigration, smuggling and other types of transnational organised crime. When establishing such infrastructure, measures and mechanisms for ensuring security and monitoring cross-border flows to mitigate potential negative impacts must also be established.

Overall, this study on LAC border integration has highlighted several areas of progress, some challenges and areas where integration is lagging behind. There is therefore much more room for improvement in each border integration relationship.

One can therefore support the view that the border integration process has the potential to be the central axis for greater collaboration between Latin American and Caribbean states and influence the development of mutual trust, social cohesion and shared cultures. It is therefore critical that public policy be structured so as to ensure sustained engagement among border communities and that the efficient coordination of activities and programmes ensure positive and sustainable outcomes.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACS	Association of Caribbean States
ACTO	Amazonian Cooperation Treaty Organization
AEBR	Association of European Border Regions
AFD	French Development Agency
ALBA	Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America
AZ	Adjacency Zone
BI	Border Integration
CAN	Andean Community
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
CBSI	Caribbean Basin Security Initiative
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CEP	Caribbean Environmental Programme
CIAT	International Centre for Tropical Agriculture
CLACS	Centre for Latin American and Caribbean Studies
CRA	Caribbean Regional Maritime Agreement
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organization
GANSEF	Committee to Combat Drug Trafficking and the High Level Group on Border Security
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
IIRSA	Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America
IRTA	International Road Transport Agreement
IVPP	Venezuelan Institute for Culture and Cooperation
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MERCOSUR	Common Market of the South
OAS	Organization of American States
OAS/AZ Office	Office of the OAS in the Belize-Guatemala Adjacency Zone
PAHO	Pan American
Health Organization	
REDAZCO	Friends of the Cooperation Zone Network
SELA	Latin American and Caribbean Economic System
SICA	Central American Integration System
SRE	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico
ST	Sustainable Tourism
STC	Sustainable Tourism Conference
UNASUR	Union of South American Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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