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REPORTS

THE ORGANIZATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES—AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN SUB-REGIONAL INTEGRATION

P.K. MENON*

I. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The history of integration and the functional cooperation process in the Eastern Caribbean began in 1962. Following the dissolution of the West Indies Federation, the political leaders of Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent met in 1962 with the United Kingdom's Secretary of State and Officials of the Colonial Office in London to discuss plans for the formation of a federation of the eight countries.¹ The Conference decided that the Premier of Barbados and the Chief Ministers of the other territories (or their nominees) would constitute the Regional Council of Ministers of the Eastern Caribbean States (the Regional Council) chaired by the Governor of Barbados. The Regional Council's purpose was to consider any problem of common interest to the eight territories concerned in connection with the setting up of the new Federation.

The Regional Council functioned on an ad hoc basis from 1962 to 1966. During this period Barbados was granted independence and the political status of several colonies as associated states changed. As a result, in 1966 the Regional Council was replaced by a new body called the West Indies (Associated States) Council of Ministers (WISA). WISA was not formally organized by a treaty, but was an administrative arrangement for joint action. Seven ter-

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1. Report of the East Caribbean Federation Conference, Command 1746 (HMSO 1962), commonly referred to as the White Paper, was published specifying the type of Federation acceptable to the eight governments.

ritories² formed WISA with the primary purpose "to administer such common services of the participating territories, and to perform such other functions as may be agreed upon from time to time."³

From its inception, WISA was intended to be an ad hoc administrative and institutional arrangement to meet, within the framework of their respective constitutional statuses, the needs of the seven territories. WISA, however, became a hybrid body of free and semi-free islands and colonies. The very name West Indies Associated States became an anachronism. WISA's structure was disjointed, thus making the coordination and achievement of its objectives, as a unit, ineffective to meet the needs of its members.

A reappraisal of WISA's machinery for functional cooperation was necessary when several of WISA's member states obtained political independence. It was important for the independent countries to become involved in international affairs and to contribute in the world community's debates on contemporary issues, such as the North-South dialogue and the New International Economic Order. Even within the region, the WISA member states were described as the Less Developed Countries, yet their goal was to become a fifth force in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).⁴

In May 1979, inspired by a common determination to strengthen the links between member states and to exercise their individual sovereign rights in a collective manner, WISA adopted a resolution to draft a treaty creating the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (the Organization).⁵ In October 1980, at the

2. Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts, St. Lucia and St. Vincent.

3. In the pursuit of common services and functional cooperation, the related arrangements which have been maintained over the years include: the Eastern Caribbean Common Market (ECCM); the West Indies Associated Supreme Court; the Eastern Caribbean Currency Authority (ECCA); the Directorate of Civil Aviation (DCA); and the Overseas Missions in the United Kingdom and Canada.

4. The other four countries (Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago) were designated More Developed Countries. See Treaty Establishing the Caribbean Community, July 4, 1973, art. 3, 12 I.L.M.

5. The Resolution stated:

RECOGNIZING that since the establishment of the said Council of Ministers significant constitutional and other changes have taken place in the region;

REALIZING that new mechanisms are required for the achievement of economic and social development for their peoples;

INSPIRED by a common determination to strengthen the links between member states by uniting their resources and establishing and strengthening common institutions which would serve to increase their bargaining power with third countries and groups of countries;

twenty-fifth Meeting of the WISA Council of Ministers, the member governments reached an agreement on the text of the treaty. They further decided that the treaty would be effective on July 4, 1981 to coincide with the eighth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Chaquaramas (the creator of CARICOM).⁶ Prior to the effective date, information about the treaty was disseminated throughout the region.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES

A. *Membership*

The membership of the Organization is limited to political entities in the Caribbean region.⁷ Political entities includes both Caribbean states and non-autonomous territories in the region.⁸

An entity may be admitted as a full or associate member. An associate member has a limited right to participate in the Organization.⁹ The nature and scope of the rights and obligations of associate members is determined by the Authority.¹⁰ The countries that were members of WISA immediately prior to the establishment of the Organization are eligible for full membership. The following are the eligible countries: Antigua, Dominica, Grenada,

REAFFIRMING the commitment of member states to the Caribbean Community and CONVINCED that the strengthening of sub-regional ties can lead to more effective participation in the Community;
RESOLVES that the Treaty establishing the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States be accepted in principle.

6. See Simmonds, *The Caribbean Economic Community: A New Venture in Regional Integration*, 23 INT'L & COMP. L.Q. 453-58 (1974).

7. Treaty Establishing the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, July 4, 1981, art. 2, para. 4, 20 I.L.M. 1166 [hereinafter cited as *The Organization's Treaty*].

8. *Id.* See also *id.* at para. 3 which states:

Notwithstanding that a territory or group of territories listed in paragraph 1 of this article is not a sovereign independent state, the Heads of Government of the member states of the Organization (hereinafter referred to as "The Authority") may by a unanimous decision admit such territory or group of territories as a full member of the Organization. . .

This treaty provision is not unique. Other international organizations have accorded full membership to autonomous territories, for example, Universal Postal Union, International Telecommunication Union, World Meteorological Organization, and General Agreement of Tariff and Trade. See D.W. BOWETT, *THE LAW OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS* 385 (4th ed. 1982).

9. International organizations commonly utilize the concept of associate memberships.

10. *The Organization's Treaty*, *supra* note 7, art. 2, para. 4. The Authority is composed of the Heads of Government of the Organization's member states.

Montserrat, St. Kitts/Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent, and The Grenadines.¹¹ If the WISA member states sign and ratify the treaty, then their independent states will automatically become full members.¹² The Authority may admit the non-independent territories to a full membership in the Organization by a unanimous decision.¹³

The treaty is of unlimited duration. The treaty provides for the withdrawal of any member state ". . . from the Organization if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this treaty, have seriously endangered its supreme national interests."¹⁴ If a member decides to withdraw, then the member should submit a written notice of withdrawal to the Director-General of the Organization. The withdrawal will be effective after twelve months. A member who withdraws must discharge its financial obligations and respect any commitments the state has undertaken before the effective date of withdrawal.¹⁵ The member, however, may not claim any part of the assets it is entitled to possess. Any claim of the assets by a member must wait until "the liquidation of the assets of the Organization on the termination of this treaty at which time it shall be entitled to the value of its assets as at the date of withdrawal."¹⁶ There is no express expulsion or suspension provision in the treaty. Therefore it must be assumed that the framers of the treaty did not intend to permit these two forms of membership termination. The inclusion of a termination or suspension provision would not be conducive to the ideal of fostering unity and cooperation and it would be derogatory to the spirit of the Organization.

The seven WISA countries previously listed comprised the founding members of the Organization. They are very small in size, with populations ranging from 12,000 in Montserrat to 120,000 in Saint Lucia and with the land area ranging from thirty-nine square miles in Montserrat to 290 square miles in Dominica. The founding

11. *Id.* para. 1.

12. *Id.* para. 2.

13. *Id.* para. 3. At a two day summit meeting in June, 1984, the Organization considered a membership application from two British colonies, the British Virgin Islands and Anguilla. The Organization voted to accept the British Virgin Islands as a member, but rejected the application of Anguilla. *OECS Vote Favours BYI*, Barbados Advocate, June 2, 1984, at 1.

14. The Organization's 'Treaty, *supra* note 7, art. 24, para. 2.

15. *Id.* para. 3.

16. *Id.* para. 4.

members have a combined population of 547,000 and a combined land area of 1,121 square miles. The per capita income is less than the average for the middle-income countries of the Third World. Therefore, they can be described only as micro-states.

B. *Purposes and Functions*

The major functions of the Organization as enunciated in article 3 of the treaty are:

(a) to promote cooperation among the member-states and at the regional and international levels having due regard to the treaty establishing the Caribbean Community and the Charter of the United Nations;

(b) to promote unity and solidarity among the member-states and to defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence;

(c) to assist the member states in the realization of their obligations and responsibilities to the international community with due regard to the role of international law as a standard of conduct in their relationship;

(d) to seek to achieve the fullest possible harmonization of foreign policy among the member-states; to seek to adopt, as far as possible, common positions on international issues and to establish and maintain wherever possible, arrangements for joint overseas representation and/or common services;

(e) to promote economic integration among the member-states through the provisions of the agreement establishing the Eastern Caribbean Common Market; and

(f) to pursue the said purposes through its respective institutions by discussion of questions of common concern and by agreement and common action.

To accomplish the six functions, the member states would attempt to coordinate, harmonize, and pursue joint policies in fields such as: external political and economic relations; tourism; transportation (including civil aviation) and communications; economic integration among the member states; the judiciary, currency, and banking; mutual defense and security; income tax, customs, and excise administration; scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation; tertiary education (including a university); and training in public administration and management. The Organization's functions will be further examined with references below to the princi-

pal institutions of the Organization.

C. *Institutions of the Organization*

In order to accomplish the functions entrusted to it, the Organization established five principal institutions. They are: (1) The Authority; (2) The Foreign Affairs Committee; (3) The Defense and Security Committee; (4) The Economic Affairs Committee; and (5) The Central Secretariat.

1. The Authority

The Authority is composed of Heads of Government of the member states. The Authority's chairmanship is annually rotated among its members in alphabetical order.¹⁷ The Authority meets a minimum of twice per year. Additionally, when necessary, extraordinary sessions may be convened.

The Authority is the policy-making institution of the Organization. It is responsible for the direction and control of the performance of the Organization's functions, for the progressive development of the Organization and for the achievement of its goals. The Authority may make recommendations and issue directives to ensure that the various organs of the Organization operate smoothly.

The Authority has the power to formulate and execute its decisions rather than serve as a passive forum for discussion and debate. The Authority's decisions are binding on all the member states and on all of the institutions of the Organization. However, all decisions require the affirmative vote of all of the member states, making unanimity the rule and not the exception. The significance of the unanimity rule is that the member states must expressly agree to be bound by any Organization action. Therefore, the autonomy of national discussion-making is well protected. Additionally, every member has veto power and, even when the veto is not exercised, a member may purposefully use stall-tactics.

Apart from the general policy-making power, the Authority has competence in certain specific matters. First, the Authority has the power to

make decisions for the purpose of establishing the financial ar-

17. The Organization's Treaty, *supra* note 7, at art. 6, para. 10.

rangements necessary for meeting the expenses of the Organization and shall be the final authority on questions arising in relation to the financial affairs of the Organization.¹⁸

The power to manage the financial matters is of paramount importance, because the Authority must administer the Organization's funds and other resources that are received from various countries and international and regional organizations. The proprietary rights in the funds are vested in the Authority and not in the individual countries. The power to make the necessary financial arrangements to meet the Organization's expenses might become a means to strengthen the Authority's position vis-a-vis its member states and vis-a-vis third-party states and other international organizations.

The Authority is responsible for the conclusion of treaties and other international agreements on behalf of the Organization.¹⁹ Its legal capacity to conclude agreements is particularly important, because the Authority must make requests on behalf of the Organization for special financial and technical assistance and to take title to property. Acquisition of the capital received from grants and loans from countries and organizations requires protracted negotiations and guarantees, therefore the Authority must be able to assert claims and make requests on its own behalf.

The Authority has the power to establish organs additional to those specified in article 5, paragraph 1 of the treaty in order to achieve the Organization's purposes.²⁰

The Authority is also responsible for deciding the admission of membership (both full and associate) and determining the nature and extent of the rights and obligations of associate members.²¹

Finally, the Authority is authorized to adopt its own rules of procedure.²² The rules of procedure are of an organizational nature. The rules do not deal with substantive functions. Only the Authority is bound by the rules; the member states are not.

18. *Id.* para. 9.

19. *Id.* para. 8.

20. *Id.* para. 7.

21. *Id.* art. 2, para. 4.

22. *Id.* art. 6, para. 10.

2. The Foreign Affairs Committee

The Foreign Affairs Committee (the Committee) is composed of "the Ministers responsible for foreign affairs in the governments of the member states or such other Ministers as may be designated by the Heads of Government of the member states."²³ Like the Authority, the Committee may adopt its own rules of procedure to conduct its business. The chairmanship is annually rotated among its members in the alphabetical order of the member states.

The Committee has the "responsibility for the progressive development of the foreign policy of the Organization and for the general direction and control of the performance of the executive functions of the Organization in relation to its foreign affairs."²⁴ The Committee must make unanimous decisions and its decisions are binding on the subordinate institutions of the Organization unless otherwise determined by the Authority.²⁵ The Committee can also make recommendations to the Authority. The Committee is responsible to the Authority and must take appropriate action on matters referred to it by the Authority.²⁶

3. The Defense and Security Committee

The Defense and Security Committee (the Defense Committee) is composed of the ministers responsible for Defense and Security of each member state or other ministers or plenipotentiaries designated by the Heads of Government of the member states.²⁷ The Defense Committee can adopt its own rules of procedure. The chairmanship is annually rotated among its members in accordance with the alphabetical order of the member states.

The Defense Committee is responsible for the coordination of collective defensive action against external aggression for the preservation of peace and security. Article 8, Paragraph 4 provides that the Committee

shall have responsibility for coordinating the efforts of member states for collective defense and preservation and for the devel-

23. *Id.* art. 7, para. 1.

24. *Id.* para. 4.

25. *Id.* para. 5.

26. *Id.* para. 3.

27. *Id.* para. 3.

opment of close ties among the member states of the Organization in matters of external defense and security, including measures to combat the activities of mercenaries, operating with or without the support of internal or national elements, in the exercise of the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Article 8, paragraph 5 explains the procedure to be used for decision making. Paragraph 5 states that there must be unanimous consent to all defense and security decision or directives. All unanimous decisions are binding on the subordinate institutions of the Organization unless otherwise determined by the Authority.

As a subordinate entity, the Defense Committee is responsible to the Authority and must take appropriate action on matters referred to it by the Authority. The Defense Committee can advise the Authority "on matters relating to external defense and on arrangements for collective security against external aggression, including mercenary aggression, with or without the support of internal or national elements."²⁸

4. The Economic Affairs Committee

The Economic Affairs Committee (the Economic Committee) is composed of ministers appointed to the Committee by the heads of Government of the member states. The Economic Committee was delegated the functions of the East Caribbean Common Market's (ECCM) Council of Ministers (the ECCM was established in the agreement of June 11, 1968).²⁹ In effect, the Economic Committee replaces the ECCM Council of Ministers and the ECCM

28. *Id.* para. 3.

29. In general, the Council of Ministers (the Council) is responsible for attaining the objectives of the Common Market and facilitating the establishment of closer links with other countries, unions of countries, and international organizations. In exercising its responsibility, the Council may make decisions which are binding on all member states and can make recommendations to the member states. The Council makes decisions for the following purposes: (a) to devise the rules of procedure of the Council and for other bodies in the Common Market (e.g., a rule allowing procedural questions to be decided by a majority vote); (b) to make arrangements for the Secretariat services required by the Common Market; (c) to establish the financial arrangements necessary for the administrative expenses of the Common Market and the method for establishing an annual budget. East Caribbean Market Agreement, June 11, 1968, art. 8, 20 I.L.M. 1176.

Agreement forms an integral part of the Organization's Treaty.

5. The Central Secretariat

The Central Secretariat is the principal institution responsible for the administration of the Organization. The Central Secretariat consists of a Director-General and any other staff as the Organization may require.

The Director-General is the chief executive and legal representative of the Organization. He is appointed by the Authority for a four year term and is eligible for re-appointment. The terms and conditions of his service are governed by Authority approved rules and regulations. The Director-General is responsible for the direction and control of the Organization. In the performance of his functions, he is accountable to the Authority, the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Defense Committee, and the Economic Committee.

In general, the Director-General is responsible for the overall operation and efficiency of the administrative service and for coordinating the activities of the Organization.

In particular, the Director-General's duties include the following:

- (a) to service meetings of institutions of the Organization;
- (b) to take appropriate follow-up action on decisions, recommendations, or directives taken at such meetings;
- (c) to keep the functioning of the Organization under continuous review and to report his findings to the appropriate Chairman;
- (d) to make reports of activities and an annual report to the Authority on the work of the Organization; and
- (e) to undertake such work and studies and performance of such services relating to the functions of the Organization as may be assigned to him from time to time and also make such proposals relating thereto as may assist in the efficient and harmonious functioning and development of the Organization.³⁰

To maintain impartiality, objectivity, and independence in the performance of their duties, the Director-General and the Secretariat's staff may not seek or accept instructions from any government or from any other external authority. They must also refrain from any action which might reflect upon their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization.

30. The Organization's Treaty, *supra* note 7, art. 10, para. 4.

In accordance with the treaty, the location of the Organization's headquarters was designated by the Authority at its first meeting after the treaty became effective. The WISA Council of Ministers, at its special meeting in May 1979, agreed that the Central Secretariat of the Organization would be located in St. Lucia and that the Economics Affairs Division would be located in Antigua.

III. FOREIGN POLICY AND JOINT OVERSEAS REPRESENTATION

The treaty provides for the establishment and maintenance of arrangements involving joint overseas diplomatic representation in order to help achieve the harmonization of foreign policy among the member states, and to adopt common positions on international issues. The heads of the joint diplomatic missions are selected by the Authority after consultation with the Foreign Affairs Committee. The Director-General is responsible for issuing the Authority's directives involving joint foreign policy matters to the heads of overseas diplomatic missions.

Since 1967, WISA has jointly conducted an overseas representation through a consular officer with the Eastern Caribbean Commissions in the United Kingdom and Canada. The WISA representation has been upgraded and the diplomatic missions are now accorded full diplomatic status as High Commissions.

At the June, 1985, organization summit meeting in Grenada, the leaders stressed the need to broaden the joint foreign representation in order to enable the Eastern Caribbean States to speak abroad through one voice.³¹ Some of the leaders were interested in a joint representation in Washington and a diplomatic presence in Brussels, the headquarters of the European Economic Community. In this context, John Compton, Prime Minister of St. Lucia stated:

I think it is important for us to look at Brussels now particularly when so much of our aid comes from the European Community, and the fact is that we ought to have a presence because each of us cannot afford to have a presence there, so there must be a joint presence of the Eastern Caribbean.³²

31. See *OECS Leaders Favour More Joint Action*, Sunday Advocate, June 16, 1985, at 5 col. 4-5.

32. *Id.* John Compton, Prime Minister of St Lucia stated

I think it is important for us not only to discuss this but come up with a positive solution to this position. . . I always think that we ought not only for the ques-

To cope with the diverse activities of a foreign mission, the size and quality of the diplomatic establishment assumes vital importance. Small states are at a disadvantage with respect to their interactions with medium or large states. Small states lack sufficient manpower resources and financial capability. Thus, joint representation is an effective method for states with limited resources to administer their foreign relations.

IV. PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES

The Organization must have a defined status to fulfill its functions. It must be endowed with the capacity to exercise functions and undertake rights and obligations on a parity with the individual member states. The importance of conferring a predictable legal status upon the Organization cannot be overemphasized.³³

The treaty contains an express provision conferring legal status upon the Organization. Article 17, paragraph 1, provides that the "Organization as an international organization, shall enjoy legal personality." By virtue of its international legal personality, the Organization can conclude agreements governed by international law with states and international organizations.

The legal capacity of the Organization under municipal law is important for consistency and predictability. The Organization may be involved in transactions which are incidental to its daily operations, such as: the purchase of supplies and equipment; the lease of premises; and the employment of personnel. If the Organization was without a legal status, the national law of each state would determine the extent of the Organization's legal capacity, which is undesirable because of the variance in national laws.

tion of economy but for a question of political and diplomatic effectiveness, that we ought to have joint positions.

Id.

33. This is not without historical precedent. In an advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice, the Court stated

In the opinion of the Court, the Organization (the United Nations) was intended to exercise and enjoy and is in fact exercising and enjoying, functions and rights which can only be explained on the basis of the possession of a large measure of international personality and the capacity to operate upon an international plane. It is at present the supreme type of international organization, and it could not carry out the intentions of its founders if it was devoid of international personality.

Reparation for Injuries Suffered in the Service of the United Nations, 1949 I.C.J. 179 (Advisory Opinion).

Therefore, under article 17, paragraph 2, the Organization, within each member state's territory has: (a) the legal capacity required for the performance of its functions. . .; and (b) power to acquire, hold, or dispose of movable or immovable property. The Organization exercises its legal personality through the Director-General.

The Organization's senior officials and the Secretariat are granted the same privileges and immunities accorded to the members of the diplomatic mission under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of April 18, 1961. Other privileges and immunities granted by the member states will be determined by the Authority.³⁴

V. PROCEDURE FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

Article 14 of the treaty prescribes the procedure for the settlement of disputes arising from the interpretation and application of the treaty. An annex to the treaty details the conciliation procedure of article 14, paragraph 2.

Article 14, paragraph 1, states that disputes between the member states regarding the interpretation and application of the treaty should, if possible, be amicably resolved by direct agreement. If the dispute cannot be resolved by direct agreement within three months, any party to the dispute may submit it to the conciliation procedure specified in the annex. The party requesting conciliation must refer the dispute to the Director-General and inform the other participant(s) in the dispute of the referral. The Director-General will then bring the dispute before a conciliation commission.

Each party to the dispute must appoint:

- (i) one conciliator who is a citizen of that state or of one of those states and who may or may not be chosen from the list referred to in paragraph 1; and
- (ii) one conciliator who is not a citizen of that State or of any of those States and who shall be chosen from the list.³⁵

34. The Organization's Treaty, *supra* note 7, art. 17, para. 4.

35. In accordance with paragraph 1:

A list of conciliators consisting of qualified jurists shall be drawn up and maintained by the Director-General of the Organization. To this end, every member state shall be invited to nominate two conciliators, and the name of the persons so nominated shall constitute the list. The term of the conciliator, including that of any conciliator nominated to fill a casual vacancy, shall be five years and may

The four conciliators will then appoint a fifth conciliator, chosen from the list, as chairman.

If the appointment of the chairman or the conciliators is not made within a prescribed time, the appointment will be made by the Director-General within the thirty days following the expiration of the prescribed period. The Director-General can appoint the chairman from the list or from the membership of the International Law Commission.³⁶

The conciliation commission is entitled to hear the parties, to examine the claims and objections, and to make proposals to the disputant states for reaching an amicable settlement. The conciliation commission functions as a tribunal. The decisions and recommendations of the conciliation commission are made by a majority vote of five members.

Within six months of its formation, the conciliation commission must make a report. The report is binding upon the parties. The Organization is responsible for the conciliation commission's expenses.

VI. SOME CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The Organization, once an unknown entity outside the region, gained recognition in October, 1983, by its regional peacekeeping and humanitarian protection actions in Grenada.

The establishment of the Organization was a bold initiative by the governments of the Eastern Caribbean region to deepen and strengthen the integration movement. The institutionalization of the ten year relationship existing among seven states of WISA provides a sound basis for the continued progressive development of their relationship. Furthermore, because of their small size and

be renewed. A conciliator whose term expires shall continue to fulfill any function for which he shall have been chosen. . . .

The Organization's Treaty, *supra* note 7, at annex A. para. 2.

36. The Organization's member states attended a special meeting on October 21, 1983, to consider the deteriorating situation in Grenada, (St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Dominica, Antigua, St. Kitts/Nevis, Montserrat, Barbados, and Jamaica were present). The states present decided for military action in Grenada to remove an intense security threat to their territories and to establish "peacekeeping forces in order to restore and maintain law and order in the country." In light of the member states' military forces their decision was dependent on persuading the United States to assist in the regional peacekeeping action forces. On the evening of October 24, the United States affirmatively responded to the Organization's appeal for peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance.

common historical background, these nations share a common market, a common currency, and to some extent common administrative, diplomatic, judicial, and defense functions.

The arrangements envisaged under the Organization's framework are to maximize its benefits by broadening and accelerating regional economic integration and functional cooperation. The existing institutions and activities (e.g., the East Caribbean Common Market (ECCM); the East Caribbean Currency Authority (ECCA); the Common Court of Appeal; the Directorate of Civil Aviation; and Joint Overseas representation) promote coordinated development, the availability of scarce high level manpower, and increase the external bargaining power of the member states. The institutions therefore foster greater effective sovereignties in the small member states.

Since the Grenadian revolution, politics are no longer the primary source of tension and instability in the region. However, with small developing states special economic problems exist. As always, finances can make or break the best laid plans. The member states, acting independently, may not have the creditworthiness to obtain the necessary long term development financing on reasonable terms. Acting jointly, they may be able to persuade the aid-donor organizations and countries to give special consideration to the peculiar nature of small island states.

Naturally, the degree of interest by the member states varies in the joint undertakings and integrated development activities. The states with a strong interest in concluding a particular project should be willing to share the project's benefits as widely as possible with other states. However, any government not directly benefiting from a particular project must not see it as a threat to its interests. Once this attitude exists, the road to further progress will be open. The sub-region's common economic interests will become predominant while the political differences may dissipate. The success of this approach does not entirely depend on the existence of precise treaty commitments, but it should basically be founded on mutual help and a good neighborly relationship. The value of any inter-governmental engagement is determined by the goodwill of the participating states. If goodwill exists, even mere recommendations may lead to action, but if goodwill is lacking even the best formulated obligations may not be executed.