

## **OECS HDR - THEME SELECTION**

### **Concept Note**

#### **Background**

The OECS Secretariat produced its first Sub-Regional Human Development Report (SHDR) in 2002 in collaboration with and the support of the United Nations Development Programme Sub-Regional Office for Barbados and the OECS with the theme – **Building Competitiveness in the Face of Vulnerability**.

The report assesses the status of nine OECS Member States in terms of their capacity to achieve competitiveness, maintain growth, even while being influenced by, and integrated into the external environment, and at the same time improve the conditions of the social and human and social development, as well as reduce poverty.

It acknowledges that any attempt at addressing current approaches to human development for purposes of enlarging peoples' choices in a way that is equitable, participatory, productive, and sustainable over time, can be typically constrained by various social economic and natural assets and events.

In the report, the standard measures of human development are revisited in an attempt to adequately capture the social and economic realities of the in the OECS countries. Indicators of disadvantage, resilience, and sustainability, are constructed, and the traditional UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) adjusted accordingly.

Discussions in the report are centred on the potential that exists in the areas of education, health, and employment generation to widen development choices for OECS citizens. In addition, other immediate actions relate to encouraging diversification; increasing flexibility; reducing the level of exposure to threat and risk. The policy recommendations set out in the report reinforce those outlined in the OECS Development Strategy and hinge to a large extent, on building the external capacities that will enable successful competition in the external market.

#### **Justification**

Since the publication of the first Global Human Development Report in 1990, and follow-up national and regional HDRs, these UNDP flagship reports documents have established a tradition as policy and resource allocation guides, as a means of tracking national and regional performance, building consensus and, offering data, often not published elsewhere. They have also served as a catalyst for change, spurring shifts in budget priorities, policy innovations, and the establishment of new institutions and the improvement of the old. They reach UNDP country offices and communities globally, contributing to the knowledge networking, sharing of best practices and inspiring NGO

and private sector advocacy. They can also stimulate policy reform and provide the platform for viewing human development from various angles.

These reports have addressed topics such as poverty, human security, trade-aid-security, culture migrations, governance and gender to name a few.

The first OECS HDR offers a basis for a powerful tool in providing concrete policy proposals, and rigorous data analysis, while articulating national priorities. The analysis in the report uncovers what is perhaps the greatest challenge to the region's competitiveness and, as a result, possible direction to OECS governments - human capacity development. In addition, it shows that the assumption that economic growth will reduce poverty does not hold true for the OECS Region. That despite growth in GDP and per capita income, poverty persists or increases. In light of the various findings, the report has been recommended to policy makers as an aid to development programmes and for consultation with development stakeholders, and to researchers for further analysis, to secondary and tertiary academic institutions as required reading, and to the public at large.

The preparation of the second OECS HDR is predicated upon the above and requires the identification of a theme to be addressed in the report. It is anticipated that the theme will emerge from a consultation among a broad cross-section of development stakeholders. At this consultation, it is envisaged that the various human and social development issues will be discussed in-depth to allow for a consensus on a theme for the new report. This participatory method of theme selection will also allow for the identification of other themes for subsequent OECS HDRs.

HDR approach involves the following **phases** and **corporate principles**:

**Preparatory Phase (up to 6 months)** – Theme Selection, Resource Mobilization, Team Building, Training and Orientation, Communication Strategy

**Research and Writing Phase (6 to 9 months)** – Research, Preparation of first draft, External Review of First Draft, Preparation of Final Draft

**Production Phase (6 to 8 weeks)** – Design of Report, Presentation of text

**Advocacy and Follow-up (on-going until the next report)** – Media and Communications, Launch and Outreach Strategy, Marketing and Dissemination, Monitoring and Assessing Impact.

The core corporate principles are as follows:

1. National and Regional Ownership
2. Participatory and Inclusive Preparation
3. Independence of Analysis
4. Quality of Analysis

5. Flexibility and Creativity in Presentation
6. Sustained Follow-up

### **Objectives**

- To discuss in-depth the critical human and development issues facing the OECS sub-Region.
- To select by consensus a theme for the new OECS HDR emerging from the discourse on critical human and social development issues.
- To agree on criteria for the various support mechanisms ( writers' group; external advisor; peer reviewers; steering committee; editorial committee; statistical panel) in the preparation of the OECS HDR.
- To agree on the elements of the **Methodology** and a **Guidance Note** for the Research and Writing Stage of the HDR.

### **Format**

Panels of experts from governments, regional non-governmental institutions, the United Nations System, academia, other development partners, the private sector, will address the issues and challenges confronting the OECS sub-Region.

Each panel will comprise high level experts who will address a selected topic for 10- 15 minutes, followed by discussion.

Participants will break out into groups to formulate a theme based on the presentations and the discussions. Each group will present to plenary.

Plenary will decide on the themes in order of a priority and select one for the new OECS HDR.

Plenary will also review and decide on the criteria for the various support mechanisms, the Methodology, and the Guidance Note.

### **Coverage**

Participants will be drawn from representatives of governmental, non-governmental and regional and international, academic institutions, and civil society.

## **Output**

The main output of the meeting is the identification of a theme for the new OECS HDR. It is also anticipated that the main criteria for the Support Mechanisms, the Methodology, and the Guidance Note will be agreed upon.