

**HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND  
LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES:  
EMPOWERING CARIBBEAN YOUTH**

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*Paper to be submitted at the  
Fourth Annual SALISES Conference  
Sherbourne Conference Centre  
January 15-17, 2003  
Two Mile Hill  
St. Michael, BARBADOS*

*December 13, 2002*

## ***INTRODUCTION***

During the decade of the 1990s, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt and the 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark were among some of the principal fora reinforcing the need for Caribbean countries to further their thrust towards embracing social policy concerns. They were instrumental in advancing a series of recommendations that have informed initiatives that governments ought to embrace in order to demonstrate their commitment to social development concerns. Such initiatives have been deemed especially important insofar as recent commentaries have conjured up images of a "social mess" that has been an emergent phenomenon in institutional settings characterizing the Caribbean landscape. This means that the region's governments have to make serious commitments toward identifying the myriad forces that interact to create such a "mess" and as such, strengthen their resolve to implement programmes that should be carefully monitored and evaluated to ensure that they bring about the desired effects. Ultimately, the primary focus will be the promotion of the well being of vulnerable sub-populations, whether they be the elderly, the physically challenged, the youth or the myriad groups of individuals who live in conditions tantamount to poverty. In addressing the needs of these sub-populations, considerable emphasis ought to be placed upon improving their living conditions and promoting greater access to social and economic opportunities. All of this will rely upon a sociological imagination that is reflected in the thought processes and commentaries of researchers, scholars and informed elements from the mass public

Throughout the 1990s, these vulnerable sub-populations have confronted numerous challenges that have not only been functions of individuals' social attributes and associated lifetime experiences. They have also encountered challenges that will determine their prospective life chances and those of their dependents. These challenges, if not counteracted, could create imbalances in access to opportunities and inequities in the distribution of national wealth. As one attempts to grapple with the idea of institutional challenges in the context of a given country, a number of critical concerns come to the fore. Insofar as sub-populations are differentiated on the basis of a number of socio-demographic attributes, it might be worthwhile to explore the existence of institutional challenges in relation to individuals' socio-demographic attributes. Where institutional challenges are evident, a principal concern should be to determine variations in resistance across individuals' attributes, primarily those of a socio-

demographic nature and perhaps, the attitudinal and behavioural orientations that might be linked to different socio-demographic profile. Moreover, variations in resistance across individuals can be seen as a function of criteria that empower them and enable them to overcome or at the very least, combat threats posed by institutional challenges.

This paper recognizes the labour market as an institutional framework that is faced with a number of challenges that have differential effects upon different sub-populations in English-speaking Caribbean societies. It considers the region's youth to be a critical sub-population with needs and aspirations that should be carefully understood and met, or where necessary, altered so as to promote congruence with national goals for social development. The paper rests upon the premise that the economic viability of the region hinges upon the sustainability and effectiveness of efforts that adequately facilitate the social development of youth and integrate them into developmental initiatives that are cognizant of domestic and global forces. Human resource development is an integral dimension of social development among youth and this is not only attained through exposure to quality education and training within formal settings. It is also accessed through informal mechanisms and in particular through participation in work-related activities that provide young people with experiential exposure to productive enterprise thereby shaping the nature and scope of their prospective engagement in the labour force. The paper uses data from several sources to throw light upon the situation of contemporary Caribbean youth but with particular respect to issues that impact upon their human resource development and incorporation in the labour market.

### ***HUMAN RESOURCES AND THE LABOUR MARKET IN THE CARIBBEAN***

In the context of the English speaking Caribbean, the link between human resources and the labour market was the subject of a Human Resources Seminar that was held at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica during August 1970. The forum permitted academics, researchers, government planners, official statisticians and technical advisors from international agencies to present papers and discuss ideas relating to some of the principal issues that challenged human resources in Caribbean societies during the 1960s. These papers are compiled in Harewood (1972a) and focus upon some principal themes such as the under-utilization of available resources (Harewood, 1972b), the unavailability of required human resources (Casserly, 1972), human capital, employment opportunities and the human resource

problem (Alexis, 1972), Jamaican work attitudes (Cumper, 1972) and alternative approaches toward solving human resource problems within the Caribbean (Demas, 1972). Insofar as these ideas apply to human resources irrespective of age, they might be useful in unearthing some parallels that might be applicable to the experiences of Caribbean youths in the 1990s and beyond.

In the context of manpower<sup>1</sup> planning, Harewood (1972b) noted that the two most common objectives of development planning were (a) to raise the level of living by maximizing output and hopefully, improving income distribution and (b) to create a situation of full employment. Despite recognizing the availability of surplus labour in the region, Harewood alluded to the fact that professional skills and expertise were not sufficiently available to facilitate the objective of maximizing output. As such, he surmised that the end result was an increase in unfilled vacancies and the employment of non-nationals in professional and para-professional positions.

In the quest to facilitate the objective of full employment, Harewood examined variations in the unemployment rate for different Caribbean countries according to age, education and gender. In essence, he was concerned about the character of the unemployed and provided data that could set in motion a better understanding of the levers that have to be controlled in order to stimulate conditions tantamount to full employment.

Harewood also re-assessed the concept of under-employment in terms of hours worked and whether or not, workers wanted to work more hours. This was particularly important in the context of those who worked for a number of hours that was considered to be below the threshold deemed to be necessary if a worker were to be fully employed. This was characteristic of the experience of young Guyanese women under the age of 20 years and considered to be “involuntarily underutilized” (Abdulah, 1978). Some reference was also made to under-employment from the standpoint of workers who engage in occupations based upon skills' levels beneath their personal repertoire of skills and as a consequence, have a lower real income. Here, the principal point relates to the fact that the employment status of a population or sub-population remains elusive if it is impossible to determine the extent to which individuals are under-employed in keeping with the different conceptions.

Casserly (1972) reinforced the unavailability of critical skills that were germane to the region's development. With reference to the contents of an article in the Jamaica Gleaner in January, 1970, she made the following statement:

The article pointed out that in our increasingly technological society “dependence on years of work experience and familiarity with routine performance no longer suffice to produce an adequate pool of highly trained specialised personnel for the labour force (Casserly, 1972:105)

She was also concerned about the impact that migration had upon draining the region of its best minds and more skilled persons, and in the process, exacerbating the unavailability of highly skilled human resources. Alexis (1972) examined the link between education, training and employment opportunities in the context of white-collar workers. She noted that the grammar school education prepared the average student for work tasks in white-collar settings and not in agricultural, craft or technical settings which are much more akin to the reality of socio-economic life within the English speaking Caribbean. This suggests that during the 1960s, there was already some recognition of the phenomenal role that technical, agricultural and vocational education and training could play in enabling youth to develop their capabilities and rise to employment opportunities deemed to be consistent with the character of the Caribbean as a plantation society. It was her view that special provisions should be made to fill the void among many youth who between the ages of 12 and 17 years were either not exposed to any formal education or had no option but to unwillingly follow an academic programme that was of no benefit to them in the final analysis.

Whether in terms of the unemployment situation, the availability of human resources or the impact of education and training upon employment opportunities, Brown-Chen (1997) noted that very little had changed and by the 1990s, if there were improvements, they were at best, marginal. In accordance with her analyses, the unemployment problem in the region is a function of (a) job aspirations that are not in congruence with available job opportunities, (b) urban-rural differentials in educational achievement, perceptions of employment prospects and resultant internal migratory patterns and (c) structural factors such as a youthful labour force possessing qualifications and skills that do not meet employers' requirement of a skilled labour force capable of rising to the demands of technological challenges. These sentiments are consistent with those raised earlier by Harewood, Casserly and Alexis, and suggest that the

region has not progressed much since the 1960s. Brown-Chen (1997) claims that the technological mode of production points toward the emergence of a worker who understands the role of modern technologies in fields such as agriculture, construction, tourism and transportation. In her view, many of the emergent job opportunities will be to assume managerial and supervisory roles in these arenas. In sum, she believes that:

Education and training systems will therefore need to be able to rapidly meet these new needs in the labour field, provide new types of training, and prepare men and women to adapt to a labour market in a constant state of change (Brown-Chen, 1997:15).

### ***INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES AND LABOUR MARKET FORCES***

The labour market is an institutional artifact in which a variety of social, economic and political forces determine the supply of and the demand for labour. In a purely economic sense, the supply of labour is a function of the size of the actual labour force and especially, those socio-structural and cultural factors that determine whether individuals are employed or unemployed. It should also be noted that the actual labour force is a function of the potential labour force and the set of socio-structural and cultural factors that determine participation or non-participation in the labour force. Moreover, the potential labour force is a function of population size, the age-sex structure of populations and legislative stipulations governing child labour and retirement age. The supply of labour is also enhanced by the quality of the labour force - a dimension that is influenced by socio-cultural constructs, for example, attitudes toward productive enterprise, human resource capabilities, expectations of roles in the work place and behavioural responses as captured by the delivery of labour services among workers. In different socio-cultural and geographic settings, these constructs may vary despite controlling for individuals age and sex and result in differentials in the quality of the labour force. Accordingly, it is clear that qualitative and quantitative factors are instrumental in enhancing the productive capacity of any given labour force - a target that should be central to national initiatives geared toward addressing challenges that are akin to problems associated with the supply of labour.

In contrast, the demand for labour is a derived demand that is triggered by the demand for goods and services in domestic and international markets. This suggests that the demand for labour is influenced by factors such as the domestic social environment and associated economic trends,

global economic trends, technological advancement, labour legislation and wages and salaries. The demand for labour can also be considered to be a function of interactions between these factors and the principal economic pursuits that have exposed, and may continue to expose private and public entities to variable returns on their investment. This may result in corporate entities embarking on policies that either stimulate or inhibit their demand for labour. In cases where the demand for labour is inhibited, there are likely to be negative consequences for initiatives designed to stimulate employment. This is tantamount to a labour market challenge that can be addressed through levers designed to enhance the quality of the labour supply with a view towards improving efficiency, increasing levels of competitiveness and ensuring that corporate ventures are economically worthwhile. Where the demand for labour is stimulated and levels of employment seem satisfactory, consideration ought to be given to factors such as wages, salaries and conditions of work. This brings to the fore another kind of challenge that is manifest in terms of the prospective exploitation of workers who may either be in receipt of inadequate remuneration for their labour services or may be exposed to sub-standard conditions of work.

#### ***HUMAN RESOURCE CAPABILITIES: CARIBBEAN YOUTH IN THE 1990s***

Prior to the 1990s, there were very few research efforts targeting the youth as a sub-population of interest for the development of Caribbean social policy. Apart from Rubin and Zavalloni (1969) and a few other isolated studies that focused upon specific countries of the sub-region, there have been no known efforts targeting the majority of English speaking countries. Since the 1990s, however, independent studies have become more prevalent and in some instances, country specific inquiries such as sample surveys and in-depth interviews have been conducted to learn more about different aspects of youth culture and existence. This was evident in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, St. Lucia and Jamaica. The Caricom Secretariat also commissioned a series of monographs, one of which dealt with the socio-economic conditions of children and youth in Caricom countries (Camejo, 1997).

For the purposes of this paper, youth have been defined as persons aged 15-24 years indicating that there are two categories of youth. The first consists of teenagers aged 15-19 years, a substantial proportion of whom are still in the formal education system, have had no exposure to secondary school leaving examinations and as such, not likely to have ever been in the labour

force. The second are young adults aged 20-24 years, all of whom should have completed their formal education at primary and secondary levels. Compared to their teenaged counterparts, greater proportions of youth aged 20-24 would have had educational qualifications equivalent to or greater than secondary school leaving examinations and higher levels of participation in the labour force.

In the context of the early 1990s, Camejo (1997) reinforces some commonly held notions about youth in the Caricom region as a whole. For instance, he reiterated the view that relatively greater numbers of females performed better at the higher educational levels when compared to males. In terms of occupational pursuits, males were mostly to be engaged in craft related work and elementary occupations while females were mostly to be found in service and sales, clerical work and elementary occupations. Relatively greater numbers among females than among males were engaged in technically oriented occupations, an outcome that was attributed to females' greater prevalence of achievement at the secondary level. This gender differential was evident despite the fact that relatively small numbers of youth engaged in technically oriented occupations.

The link between gender, education and occupational pursuits was noteworthy. Compared to young men, the higher levels of education among young women were consistent with their greater engagement in technically oriented occupations, this outcome being characterized by an observed positive association between education and occupational pursuits. A noteworthy association was also established between exposure to secondary education and participation in clerical work or sales and services activities. In the Caricom region, most of the youth were children of household heads (72 per cent among males and 68 per cent among females) while very small proportions were heads of their respective households (2 per cent among males and 2 per cent among females). Such a pattern persisted whether young persons were teenagers or young adults and was indicative of young persons' inclination toward remaining in their parental home.

For both teenagers and young adults, Camejo (1997) shows substantially high levels of exposure to secondary education in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and St. Kitts and Nevis at the beginning of the decade of the 1990s. In



contrast, lower than average levels were found among youth from Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana and Belize. Turning to youths' encounter with GCE O Levels and CXC, the best performances were evident among youths from Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands. During the 1990-91 period, levels of youthful unemployment were highest in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. For the same period, the greatest proportions of employed youth were to be found in the labour forces of Belize, Montserrat and St. Lucia.

Brown-Chen (1997) examined the employment problem in Caricom countries and made special reference to the situation of the region's youth. She noted that young persons were most seriously affected by the unemployment situation of the 1980s - a pattern which she claims, had persisted into the 1990s. Based upon the available evidence, she indicated:

...the 'unemployment problem' is essentially a problem of youth unemployment, much but not all of which is also unemployment among the educated (Brown-Chen, 1997).

In support of this claim, just about one half of the unemployed in the Caricom region had been found to be youth aged 15-24 years. In Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, the corresponding proportions were 42.3 per cent and 55.8 per cent.

### ***METHODS, DATA AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK***

For the purposes of this paper, the findings are based primarily upon analyses of existing statistics. The main source of data is the 1990-91 Population and Housing Census<sup>2</sup> for the countries and territories under review. The data relate primarily to key indicators of education and labour force characteristics of youth aged 15-24 years and have been processed and analyzed to provide some indication of the character of the region's and countries' youth and their human resource potential at the beginning of the 1990s. In order to obtain a similar profile for the mid to late 1990s, intercensal estimates based upon labour force characteristics in 1997 are provided along with results emanating from two national youth surveys – Trinidad and Tobago (1994) and Grenada (1995-96). Because of the paucity of labour force surveys in the region, the 1997 estimates of labour force characteristics were available for eight countries where such exercises are routinely conducted or where an “ad hoc” exercise conducted around

1997 made such estimates available. For the remaining countries and territories, the decennial population and housing census is the principal source of data on the labour force and other human resource characteristics. Due to the unavailability of 2000-01 census data for the majority of countries, indicators of population sizes during the first decade of the new millennium were based upon population projections (See Table 1 and Table 9).

**Table 1: Population size, 1990-91 census, estimated mid-year population 1998 and population projections 2000-2011**

<b>COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES</b>	<b>1990-92 Census</b>	<b>1998 Estimated mid-year Population</b>	<b>2000-01 Projections</b>	<b>2005-06 Projections</b>	<b>2010-11 Projections</b>
Antigua & Barbuda (1991)	59, 355	69,900	72,311	76,663	81,063
Bahamas (1990)	234, 292	293,000	304,261	319,874	338,149
Barbados (1990)	247, 288	266,800	268,402	270,610	272,112
Belize (1990)	185, 970	238,500	241,653	271,074	297,999
Bermuda (1990)	58, 460	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
British Virgin Islands (1991)	16, 115	19,500	20,437	21,917	23,367
Dominica (1991)	69, 463	75,800	77,508	81,471	84,989
Grenada (1991)	85, 123	100,100	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Guyana (1991)	701, 704	782,400	784,606	804,955	815,656
Jamaica (1991)	2, 314, 479	2,540,700	2,673,700	2,750,300	n.a.
Montserrat (1991)	10, 639	3,600	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
St. Kitts/Nevis (1991)	40, 618	40,700	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
St. Lucia (1991)	133, 308	149,600	151,512	157,052	161,191
St. Vincent/Grenadines (1991)	106, 480	111,700	114,483	119,517	124,606
Trinidad/Tobago (1990)	1, 125, 128	1,281,800	1,330,330	1,396,810	1,463,870

**Source:** Regional Census Office is the source of the data for the 1990-92 round of censuses and the population projections. Caribbean Development Bank (2000) is the source of the 1998 estimates of mid-year population.

**Note:** The label in parentheses represents the census year for the respective country/territory based upon the 1990-91 round of censuses

**Symbols:** n.a. means 'not available'

The paper hinges upon an analytical framework that takes the population sizes of the countries and territories into account. According to Table 1, the population sizes are quite variable – the three largest being Jamaica (2.3 million), Trinidad and Tobago (1.1 million), and Guyana (702 thousand). Five countries had populations ranging between 100,000 and 500,000. These included Barbados (247 thousand), the Bahamas (234 thousand), Belize (186 thousand), St. Lucia (133 thousand) and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (106 thousand). Another five countries had populations ranging between less than 100,000 but greater than 40,000. These included Grenada (85 thousand), Dominica (69 thousand), Antigua and Barbuda (59 thousand), Bermuda (58 thousand) and St. Kitts and Nevis (41 thousand). The British Virgin Islands and Montserrat were the smallest islands with respective population sizes of 16 thousand and 11 thousand respectively. Box 1 represents a classification of the 15 countries and territories according to population size. In accordance with population projections to 2010-11, it is

expected that the classification of countries and territories will remain unchanged, the only exception being Grenada that may be classified with countries having population sizes between 100,000 and 500,000. The countries and territories have also been analyzed according to per capita gross domestic product and the human development index (See Box 2).

**Box 1: Classification of 15 Caribbean Countries and Territories by Population Size**

<b>Large Populations</b> (Greater than or equal to 1 million)	Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago
<b>Medium Populations</b> (500,000 but less than 1,000,000)	Guyana
<b>Small Populations</b> (100,000 but less than 500,000)	Barbados, Bahamas, Belize, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines
<b>Very Small Populations</b> (40,000 but less than 100,000)	Grenada, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda and St. Kitts and Nevis
<b>Micro Populations</b> (Less than 40,000)	British Virgin Islands, Montserrat

**Box 2: Human Development Index and Per Capita GDP – Selected Countries**

COUNTRIES	Human Development Index			Per Capita GDP (PPP\$) <sup>3</sup>	
	1990	1995	2000	1990	2000
<b>HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COUNTRIES</b>					
Antigua & Barbuda	n.a.	n.a.	0.800	4,000	10,541
Bahamas	0.822	0.816	0.826	11,235	17,012
Barbados	n.a.	n.a.	0.871	8,304	15,494
St. Kitts/Nevis	n.a.	n.a.	0.814	3,300	12,510
Trinidad/Tobago	0.781	0.787	0.805	6,604	8,964
<b>MEDIUM HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COUNTRIES</b>					
Belize	0.750	0.772	0.784	3,000	5,606
Dominica	n.a.	n.a.	0.779	3,910	5,880
Grenada	n.a.	n.a.	0.747	4,081	7,580
Guyana	0.680	0.703	0.708	1,464	3,963
Jamaica	0.720	0.736	0.742	2,979	3,639
St. Lucia	n.a.	n.a.	0.772	3,470	5,703
St. Vincent/Grenadines	n.a.	n.a.	0.733	3,647	5,555

**Source:** United Nations Development Programme, 2002

**Symbols:** n.a. means 'not applicable'.

### **KEY OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS**

#### ***A Profile of Caribbean Youth: The Beginning of the 1990s***

Table 1 shows youth as a percentage of the total population of the different countries at the beginning of the 1990s. More than one fifth of the populations of Guyana, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Dominica and Belize were persons aged 15-24 years. Corresponding proportions in the vicinity of 18 per cent were observed for St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada. Less than 17 per cent of the populations of Montserrat, the British Virgin Islands and Bermuda (16.8 per cent, 16.9 per cent and 13.8 per cent) were youth aged 15-24 years. Table 1 also reveals the sex ratios for the different countries based upon the 1990-91 Population and Housing Census. It shows that the greatest imbalance in favour of females was among Guyanese youth and that the greatest imbalances in favour of males were among youth in Montserrat and to a lesser extent their counterparts in Dominica.

Table 2 shows the proportion of the youthful population aged 15-24 years with no more than primary education according to gender. Proportions exceeding 50 per cent were observed in

countries and territories such as Dominica (59.1 per cent), Belize (58.5 per cent), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (53.2 per cent) and St. Lucia (51.8 per cent). Proportions exceeding one quarter of the youthful populations were observed in Grenada (45.8 per cent), Guyana (43.8 per cent), Antigua and Barbuda (30.2 per cent) and Jamaica (25.5 per cent). Just under one fifth of the youthful populations of Trinidad and Tobago (19.6 per cent) and the British Virgin Islands (19.5 per cent) were observed to have had no more than a primary school education. In each of St. Kitts and Nevis, the Bahamas and Barbados, less than one tenth of the youthful population had no more than primary school education, the respective percentages being 7 per cent, 3.7 per cent and 3.1 per cent. In each of the countries and territories, the proportion was higher among males than among females.

**Table 2: Youthful population 15-24 years by sex. 1990-91 census**

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES	Youthful population 15-24 Years			Youth as a percent of total population			Sex ratios (males per 100 females)
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	
Antigua & Barbuda	10, 964	5, 432	5, 532	18.5	9.2	9.3	98
Bahamas	47, 889	23, 636	24, 253	20.4	10.1	10.3	97
Barbados	43, 927	22, 184	21, 743	17.8	9.0	8.8	102
Belize	37, 292	18, 500	18, 792	20.1	9.9	10.2	98
Bermuda	8,078	4, 096	3, 982	13.8	7.0	6.8	103
British Virgin Islands	2, 728	1, 345	1, 383	16.9	8.3	8.6	97
Dominica	14,031	7, 176	6, 855	20.2	10.3	9.9	105
Grenada	14, 950	7, 612	7, 338	17.6	8.9	8.7	104
Guyana	154, 441	75, 323	79, 118	22.0	10.7	11.3	95
Jamaica	472, 051	232, 239	239, 812	20.4	10.0	10.4	97
Montserrat	1, 789	991	898	16.8	9.3	7.5	110
St. Kitts/Nevis	7, 449	3, 739	3, 710	18.3	9.2	9.1	101
St. Lucia	27, 720	13, 666	14, 054	20.8	10.3	10.5	97
St. Vincent/Grenadines	21, 953	11, 142	10, 811	20.6	10.5	10.1	103
Trinidad/Tobago	200, 617	100, 676	99, 941	17.8	8.9	8.9	101

**Source:** Regional Census Office.

Table 3 shows proportions of the youthful population aged 20-24 years that have passed no examinations according to gender. In every case, more than one third of the youthful population had passed no examination with considerable variation across the countries and territories. Proportions exceeding 70 per cent were observed in countries such as St. Vincent and the Grenadines (77.5 per cent), Guyana (75.9 per cent) and Jamaica (70.1 per cent). Similarly high proportions were observed in Grenada (66.6 per cent) and Dominica (64.1 per cent). While less than a half of the youthful population had passed no examinations, the proportions were still notably high in countries such as Antigua and Barbuda (48.9 per cent), St. Kitts and Nevis (48.4 per cent), Trinidad and Tobago (47.1 per cent), St. Lucia (44.6 per cent), the British Virgin Islands (42.2 per cent), Barbados (41.4 per cent) and Montserrat (40.1 per cent). The lowest proportions were observed in the Bahamas (33.3 per cent) and Belize (32.6 per cent). In each of the countries and territories, the proportion was higher among males than among females. Except in St. Lucia (49.1 per cent), Montserrat (47.9 per cent), British Virgin Islands (46 per cent) and the Bahamas (41.1 per cent), more than a half of the male youth in the remaining countries had not passed any examination.

**Table 3: Youthful population 15-24 years - Percentage with no more than primary education according to sex, 1990-91 census**

<b>COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES</b>	<b>Both Sexes</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Antigua & Barbuda	30.2	36.5	24.1
Bahamas	3.7	4.7	2.7
Barbados	3.1	4.1	2.1
Belize	58.5	60.9	56.3
Bermuda	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
British Virgin Islands	16.5	20.6	12.4
Dominica	59.1	69.3	48.5
Grenada	45.8	54.0	37.3
Guyana	43.8	47.8	39.9
Jamaica	25.5	30.3	20.7
Montserrat	11.3	11.7	9.7
St. Kitts/Nevis	7.0	7.8	6.3
St. Lucia	51.8	60.2	43.6
St. Vincent/Grenadines	53.2	63.2	43.0
Trinidad & Tobago	19.6	21.1	18.1

**Source:** Regional Census Office

**Symbols:** n.a. means 'not available'

Table 4 provides a basis for examining the labour force characteristics of Caribbean youthful populations at the beginning of the 1990s. For the countries and territories under review, the labour force is highly correlated with the size of youthful populations. In Jamaica, the size of the youthful labour force stood at 215,583 and was more than twice that of Trinidad and Tobago, which was the next largest amounting to 90,863. Jamaica's youthful labour force was more than three times that of Guyana with 60,553 young persons. The youthful labour force of the Bahamas and Barbados was 28,982 and 26,046 respectively while corresponding figures for Belize, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines were 17,511, 16,232 and 12,358 respectively. In the remaining countries and territories, the youthful labour force was less than 8,000 being less than 2000 in the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat.

**Table 4: Youthful population 20-24 years - Percentage passing no examinations according to sex, 1990-91 census**

<b>COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES</b>	<b>Both Sexes</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Antigua & Barbuda	48.9	55.2	42.8
Bahamas	33.3	41.1	25.9
Barbados	41.4	50.3	32.5
Belize	32.6	33.6	31.5
Bermuda	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
British Virgin Islands	42.2	46.0	38.5
Dominica	64.1	70.2	57.7
Grenada	66.6	71.0	62.1
Guyana	75.9	79.1	72.9
Jamaica	70.1	75.7	64.8
Montserrat	40.1	47.9	32.2
St. Kitts/Nevis	48.4	54.0	42.7
St. Lucia	44.6	49.1	40.2
St. Vincent/Grenadines	77.5	81.7	73.2
Trinidad & Tobago	47.1	54.5	39.9

**Source:** Regional Census Office.

**Symbols:** n.a. means 'not available'.



While having a large youthful labour force in comparison to the other countries and territories, labour force participation rates in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana were among the lowest being 45.7 per cent, 45.3 per cent and 39.2 per cent respectively. In contrast, the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat had the smallest youthful labour force but the highest labour force participation rates, 64.4 per cent and 61.7 per cent respectively. Except for Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize and Grenada, more than a half of the youthful population participated in the labour force. Generally speaking, higher labour force participation rates were observed among males than among females in every country and territory. In every case, more than a half of the male population participated in the labour force. In contrast, more than half of the female population participated in the labour force in a few countries and territories, namely Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis and Montserrat. Two principal characteristics emerge and are likely to be associated with the higher rates of female labour force participation. They include a relatively high per capita GDP in the case of some countries and a small population size in others. It is also worth noting that gender differentials in participation rates were most striking in the case of Belize where young men were almost three times as likely to have been participating in the labour force when compared to their female counterparts. Apart from having the highest rate of labour force participation, the gender differential in labour force participation was smallest in the British Virgin Islands.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the highest rates of youthful unemployment were observed in Trinidad and Tobago (45.1 per cent), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (34.5 per cent), Jamaica (30.9 per cent), Grenada (30.4 per cent) and Barbados (26.6 per cent). The lowest rates were observed in Belize (5.5 per cent), the British Virgin Islands (6 per cent) and Guyana (6.5 per cent). Unemployment rates below 10 per cent were also observed for Montserrat (8.2 per cent) and St. Kitts and Nevis (9.6 per cent). Except for Belize and Guyana, the rate of unemployment among females was higher than that among males. Interestingly, labour force participation rates among females in Belize and Guyana were extremely low to the extent that females who were interested and able to work may have generally found work thus lowering their unemployment rates. Relatively low levels of unemployment were observed among females from very small countries and territories such as the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and St. Kitts and Nevis. In Trinidad and Tobago, it was interesting to note that there were relatively high levels of

unemployment among young persons of both sexes in spite of their relatively low labour force participation rates.

Table 5 examines the number of young persons aged 15-24 years and not in the labour force in the twelve-month period preceding the 1990-91 Population and Housing Census. In every country, females outnumbered males, this being most pronounced in the cases of Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica and Guyana. While the number of females was double the number of males in Belize and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, this was almost the case in Dominica and Guyana. In countries such as the Bahamas, Barbados, Montserrat, the British Virgin Islands and St. Kitts and Nevis, the gender differential was not very pronounced. Table 6 is indicative of the extent to which these young persons are involved in home duties. In Belize and Guyana, substantially higher proportions were engaged in home duties than attending school. Among male youth, such a pattern was evident only in the case of Guyana. Among their female counterparts, however, the pattern persisted in the cases of Belize, Dominica, Guyana, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In Grenada, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, there appeared to be very little difference in the extent to which female youth were involved in home duties and school attendance though in all cases, there was a greater involvement in school attendance. Irrespective of gender, the highest levels of school attendance were observed in Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados and St. Kitts and Nevis. Compared to females, male youth were found to have substantially higher levels of school attendance in every country, the differential being most pronounced in Belize (72.3 per cent versus 28.5 per cent), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (70 per cent versus 46 per cent) and Trinidad and Tobago (71.4 per cent versus 47.1 per cent).

In assessing the prevalence of self-employment among youth in labour markets in the English-speaking Caribbean, Table 7 provides an account of youth according to work status and gender. Two categories formed the basis for capturing one's work status - "employer" and "own account worker". Trinidad and Tobago was observed to have had the highest proportion of employed youth who were employers (13 per cent). Among male youth, the corresponding proportion was 16.3 per cent as opposed to 6.4 per cent among female youth. Much smaller proportions were evident in the remaining countries excluding Jamaica for which the requisite data were not obtained. There was a relatively high prevalence of own account operators among youth in Dominica (14.2 per cent), St. Lucia (13.9 per cent) and Guyana (13.6 per cent).

Though not as high, noteworthy levels of own account pursuits were also observed in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (10.2 per cent), Antigua and Barbuda (9.2 per cent) and Grenada (8.4 per cent). In Barbados, the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago, there were relatively lower levels of own account pursuits when compared to the other countries and territories. These results are interesting and indicative of a negative association between the youth involvement in own account operations and countries' economic performance, the latter predicated upon per capita gross domestic product. In every country and territory, female youth were less likely than their male counterparts to be self-employed whether as employers or as own account operatives.

**Table 5: Youthful population 15-24 years - Participation and employment rates by sex, 1990-91 census**

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES	LABOUR FORCE			LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			UNEMPLOYMENT RATE		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
Antigua & Barbuda	6,395	3,568	2,827	58.3	65.7	51.1	13.3	11.7	15.3
Bahamas	28,982	15,624	13,358	60.5	66.1	55.1	11.9	9.9	14.3
Barbados	26,046	14,564	11,482	59.3	65.7	52.8	26.6	23.1	30.9
Belize	17,511	13,056	4,455	47.0	70.6	23.7	5.5	6.1	3.5
Bermuda	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
British Virgin Islands	1,756	917	839	64.4	68.2	60.7	6.0	5.7	6.4
Dominica	7,615	4,998	2,617	54.3	69.6	38.2	21.3	19.9	23.9
Grenada	6,566	4,123	2,443	43.9	54.2	33.3	30.4	30.0	31.1
Guyana	60,553	44,782	15,771	39.2	59.5	19.9	6.5	7.3	4.3
Jamaica	215,583	134,345	81,238	45.7	58.3	33.9	30.9	30.7	31.2
Montserrat	1,104	641	463	61.7	67.7	51.6	8.2	6.6	10.4
St. Kitts/Nevis	4,510	2,519	1,991	60.5	67.4	53.7	9.6	8.3	11.4
St. Lucia	16,232	9,643	6,589	58.6	70.5	46.9	15.4	15.2	15.6
St. Vincent/Grenadines	12,358	8,001	4,357	56.3	71.8	40.3	34.5	30.8	41.2
Trinidad & Tobago	90,863	58,753	32,110	45.3	58.4	32.1	45.1	43.6	47.9

Source: Regional Census Office

Symbols: n.a. means 'not available'

**Table 6: Persons aged 15-24 years and not in the labour force - Proportion<sup>1</sup> engaged in home duties and attending school by sex, 1990-91 census**

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES	PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE			HOME DUTIES			SCHOOL ATTENDANCE		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Antigua & Barbuda	4,569	1,864	2,705	17.1	5.4	25.1	77.1	87.5	69.9
Bahamas	18,907	8,012	10,895	13.6	3.4	21.2	83.6	92.4	77.2
Barbados	17,881	7,620	10,261	14.9	2.5	24.2	75.7	84.0	69.6
Belize	19,781	5,444	14,337	55.6	16.8	70.3	40.6	72.3	28.5
Bermuda	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
British Virgin Islands	972	428	544	13.2	2.3	21.7	81.1	89.3	74.6
Dominica	6,416	2,178	4,238	42.7	20.8	54.0	49.0	62.7	42.0
Grenada	8,384	3,489	4,895	38.6	25.9	47.6	55.8	65.1	49.2
Guyana	97,813	33,792	64,021	70.9	57.3	78.1	24.1	31.2	20.3
Jamaica	256,468	97,894	158,574	33.4	13.1	45.9	53.8	62.9	48.2
Montserrat	685	350	435	23.5	6.0	32.2	71.8	59.1	65.5
St. Kitts/Nevis	2,939	1,220	1,719	16.2	3.1	25.5	76.7	87.6	68.9
St. Lucia	11,488	4,023	7,465	40.5	24.1	49.3	52.9	63.4	47.2
St. Vincent/Grenadines	9,595	3,141	6,454	43.6	25.0	52.6	53.9	70.0	46.0
Trinidad & Tobago	109,754	41,923	67,831	29.9	7.9	43.5	56.4	71.4	47.1

Source: Regional Census Office

**Note:** 1. Proportions are based upon the persons who were not in the labour force during the 12-month period preceding the census

**Symbols:** n.a. means 'not available'

**Table 7: Employed persons aged 15-24 years - Prevalence<sup>1</sup> of self-employment by work status and sex, 1990-91 census**

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES	EMPLOYED PERSONS			EMPLOYER			OWN ACCOUNT		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Antigua & Barbuda	5,593	3,176	2,417	0.9	1.1	0.6	9.2	9.4	9.1
Bahamas	25,532	14,084	11,448	1.1	1.6	0.6	2.6	3.1	1.9
Barbados	19,128	11,119	7,929	0.8	1.0	0.6	2.9	3.6	1.9
Belize	16,515	12,194	4,321	1.2	1.4	0.7	5.9	7.3	2.1
Bermuda	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
British Virgin Islands	1,639	864	775	0.4	0.5	0.3	2.7	3.7	1.7
Dominica	6,007	3,983	2,024	2.3	3.1	0.7	14.2	17.2	8.2
Grenada	4,899	3,081	1,818	0.8	1.0	0.5	8.4	9.9	5.8
Guyana	56,581	41,436	15,145	1.2	1.5	0.5	13.6	15.6	8.1
Jamaica	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Montserrat	997	586	411	0.4	0.7	-	4.7	6.3	2.4
St. Kitts/Nevis	4,068	2,290	1,778	0.3	0.3	0.3	4.8	5.1	4.4
St. Lucia	13,968	8,297	5,671	1.3	1.8	0.6	13.9	16.0	10.8
St. Vincent/Grenadines	8,138	5,572	2,566	1.2	1.6	0.3	10.2	12.0	6.4
Trinidad & Tobago	53,157	35,252	17,905	13.0	16.3	6.4	1.3	1.5	0.8

Source: Regional Census Office

**Note:** 1. The data relate to youths 15-24 years who were employed during the week preceding the census. "Employer" and "Own Account Worker" reflect the work status of youth during the week preceding the census.

**Symbols:** n.a. means 'not available'

### ***Youth in Trinidad and Tobago 1994***

A National Survey of Youth was conducted in Trinidad and Tobago during the period November-December, 1994. St. Bernard (1997) provides a profile of these youth according to factors that determine their human resource characteristics. He noted that 18.5 per cent of the nation's youth had been estimated to be dropouts of the school system (20.1 per cent among males and 17.1 per cent among females). Most were found to have dropped out at the secondary level (about 11 per cent) as opposed to at the primary level (about 7 per cent). Of those who dropped out while in primary school, the vast majority did so while in Standard 5 and the primary reasons given for their action were problems with school work including common entrance (47.2 per cent) and financial constraints which made school attendance unaffordable. Of those who dropped out while in secondary school, the vast majority did so while in Form 4 and the primary reasons given for their action were financial constraints (25.8 per cent) and dislike for school and the subjects (15.2 per cent). In Trinidad and Tobago, the survey results indicated that educational qualifications of youth were at low levels with 17.1 per cent (14.8 per cent among males and 19 per cent among females) estimated to have passed the equivalent of at least 5 CXC subjects, the minimal requirements for entry into the modern sectors of the labour market. This is indeed alarming since at least 63 per cent of these youth attained at least a secondary level education. As much as one half (49 per cent) had formal qualifications less than the equivalent of CXC Basic.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the survey findings suggest that there was a positive orientation toward technical and vocational education especially among male youths since as much as 62.4 per cent of those who had been exposed to on the job training, gained such exposure in trade, craft and industrial programmes. For youth who had work experience but had never been exposed to on the job training, the preferred fields of training were found to be in the following areas: commercial and business programmes, trade, craft and industrial programmes and service trade programmes. In Trinidad and Tobago, the YTEPP, Youth Camps and Trade Centres have been three organs developed to provide vocational training and enhance the employment prospects of the nation's youth. With regard to this sub-population, the survey findings indicated that there was overwhelming awareness of YTEPP, and to a somewhat lesser extent, of Youth Camps and Trade Centres. Despite having an awareness of these institutions, the findings confirmed that relatively few young persons had been exposed to their programmes (YTEPP -18.1 per cent,

Trade Centres - 6.1 per cent and Youth Camps - 2.9 per cent).

Turning to the subset of youth who never had been exposed to any training at these institutions, it was estimated that more than one half (52.5 per cent) were interested in programmes offered through YTEPP, with smaller proportions being interested in the programmes being offered through Trade Centres and Youth Camps (39 per cent and 31.9 per cent respectively). Generally, female youths were found to have had greater exposure and shown greater interest in the programmes of YTEPP when compared to their male counterparts. On the contrary, the situation was reversed in the case of exposure and interest in the programmes of Trade Centres and Youth Camps. St. Bernard noted that the findings support an interesting interaction effect between gender and highest educational qualifications. While the pattern remained unchanged among youth with less than 5 CXC subjects, a different pattern emerged among those with 5 or more CXC subjects. Specifically, female youths were found to have greater exposure and interest in the programmes of the three institutions when compared to their male counterparts. According to St. Bernard, this suggests that educated female youths could be giving greater consideration to such programmes for two principal reasons, the first being a greater recognition of the need to realize meaningful alternatives for the acquisition of marketable skills and the second being to provide a complementary medium for enhancing their own social development.

The survey findings indicate that the vast majority of youth had no work experience upon leaving school. In terms of their labour force characteristics, participation rates were estimated to be 32.1 per cent among teenagers and 72.2 per cent among young adults aged 20-24 years. Notable gender differentials were evident across age and could be a function of gender differentials in full time school attendance (at post secondary levels in particular), engagement in home duties and a general unwillingness to work despite being able. These are areas for further exploration especially in relation to gender. The unemployment rate was estimated to be about 38.4 per cent with higher rates being evident among females than among their male counterparts (46.3 per cent as opposed to 32.1 per cent). The highest rate of unemployment was among female youths of African origin. According to the survey findings, the vast majority of youth sought work as workers in services and shop sales, as clerks, as workers in elementary occupations or as “hustlers” accepting any kind of work, the latter being evident in rural parts of Trinidad (St. Andrew/St. David and St. Patrick) and in Tobago. It is also worth noting that female youth were found to have a greater orientation toward seeking work in services and shop

sales and as clerks while male youth were more inclined to seek work in elementary occupations and as “hustlers”.

Greater optimism was also displayed by educated youth with regard to their prospects of finding work. Among those who had been working, the survey findings reveal that males were primarily concentrated in craft and related work and in elementary occupations while females were primarily engaged as clerks and in services and shop sales. While 62.5 per cent of the youth worked in the private sector, 17 per cent worked in the public sector and another 8.1 per cent in self-employment. With respect to youthful workers, St. Andrew/St. David, St. Patrick and Tobago had the highest proportions working in the public sector (33.3 per cent, 27.3 per cent and 28.9 per cent respectively). Based on the Trinidad and Tobago Youth Survey, just 20.9 per cent of the youth were estimated to have been self-employed at some point in their lifetime, the majority as elementary workers. For those who had never been self-employed, as much as 44.2 per cent considered such a pursuit.

#### ***Grenada Youth Survey 1995-96***

Based on a youth survey conducted in Grenada during the period December 1995 - January 1996, Carter (1997) summarizes Grenadian youth according to factors that determine their human resource characteristics. He noted that in Grenada, education was compulsory up to the age of 16 years, yet 20 per cent of the youth who had left school were estimated to have done so before their sixteenth birthday. Disinterest in school, the pursuit of work and financial reasons were found to be the most likely reasons that caused them to leave school. Carter also observed that almost three fifths of school leavers did not opt for a Sixth Form education despite having the qualifications. Some of the popular reasons for such a decision were disinterest in further studies and a preference for seeking work. In terms of the educational qualifications of Grenadian youth, generally low levels were reported with only 17.8 per cent estimated to have passed the equivalent of at least 4 CXC subjects, the minimal requirements for entry into the modern sectors of the labour market. Just 12.1 per cent were estimated to have passed at least 5 CXC subjects (the minimum requirement for university entry) and as much as one half had no formal qualifications whatsoever.

There was, however, positive feedback with respect to the pursuit of vocational education with almost three quarters of Grenadian youth having such inclinations. In fact, Carter noted that a little more than half had continued their education or training after they had left school, the majority opting for training in technical/vocational areas. In terms of being able to get ahead in life, notably greater proportions of the youth alluded to job related skills as opposed to educational qualifications as being important. In general, these findings reinforce the view that Grenadian youth have been placing substantial value on the virtues of technical and vocational training and to a somewhat lesser extent, the merits of academic education that in many instances is still an important pre-requisite for the pursuit of a technical education in this increasingly technological world. In conclusion, Carter suggested that Grenadian youth were preparing to enter into the formal labour market at a level above “the base of the occupational hierarchy” - a level tantamount to unskilled manual employment.

Carter noted that upon leaving school, the vast majority of Grenadian youth who sought work did so without any work experience. He indicated that almost one half of those who were not working had not sought work in at least three months and that about one fifth never sought work. Among youth who were not working, some of the principal reasons given for their decisions not to seek work included frustration, the lack of any immediate urge and personal feelings that hinged upon their lack of qualifications and the absence of opportunities and vacancies. Notwithstanding this, Carter found that unemployed Grenadian youth thought that their chances of finding work were generally good. Among Grenadian youth who had been working, most had been employed in low skilled jobs (69 per cent) as unskilled or skilled manual workers (35 per cent and 34 per cent respectively). Most of the jobs were short-term appointments (less than a year). In cases where there were terminations, the primary reason was the temporary/casual nature of such appointments.

The Grenada Youth Survey revealed that just 18.6 per cent of the island’s youth were estimated to have been self-employed at some point in their lifetime, the majority as unskilled or skilled manual workers (58.4 per cent and 29.9 per cent respectively). For those who had never been self-employed, as much as 43 per cent considered such a pursuit, the majority opting for self employment as skilled manual workers (34.5 per cent) with smaller proportions opting for self determination in their capacity as unskilled manual workers (22 per cent) or as employers (12.7



per cent). Carter also noted that the occupational aspirations of Grenadian youth were high with as much as two thirds estimated to have interests in eventually assuming roles as white-collar workers. This is at variance with their current educational and training characteristics.

### *Labour Force Characteristics 1997 – The Mid to Late 1990s*

Table 8 permits analyses of changes in key labour force characteristics in the context of eight countries, namely, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. Reflecting upon the Barbadian labour force at the beginning of the 1990s, Table 8 is indicative of a reduction in its size by 1997 irrespective of gender. In Dominica, there appeared to be little or no change while in the remaining countries, increases were evident irrespective of gender. In such cases, the rates of increase in the size of the female labour force were much more substantial than in the male labour force. This meant that additional pressure would have been placed upon the demand for labour to meet the labour supply.

**Table 8: Youthful population 15-24 years - Size of the labour force and unemployment rates by sex, 1990-91 census and 1997**

COUNTRIES	SIZE OF THE LABOUR FORCE								
	BOTH SEXES			MALE			FEMALE		
	1990-91 Census	1997	Percentage Change	1990-91 census	1997	Percentage Change	1990-91 Census	1997	Percentage Change
Bahamas	28,982	31,565	+8.9%	15,624	16,625	+6.4%	13,358	14,940	+11.8%
Barbados	26,046	25,100	-3.6%	14,564	13,700	-5.9%	11,482	11,300	-1.6%
Belize	17,511	24,290	+38.7%	13,056	15,990	+22.5%	4,455	8,300	+86.3%
Dominica	7,615	7,520	-1.2%	4,998	4,290	-14.2%	2,617	3,200	+22.3%
Grenada	6,566	10,250	+56.1%	4,123	5,950	+44.3%	2,443	4,300	+76.0%
Jamaica	215,583	290,600	+34.8%	134,345	156,700	+16.6%	81,238	133,900	+64.8%
St. Lucia	16,232	18,220	+12.2%	9,643	9,960	+3.3%	6,589	8,260	+29.4%
Trinidad & Tobago	90,863	118,500	+30.4%	58,763	73,200	+24.6%	32,110	45,300	+41.1%
COUNTRIES	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE								
	BOTH SEXES			MALE			FEMALE		
	1990-91 Census	1997	Change in Percentage Points	1990-91 census	1997	Change in Percentage Points	1990-91 Census	1997	Change in Percentage Points
Bahamas	11.9	22.2	+10.3	9.9	16.5	+6.6	14.3	28.5	+14.2
Barbados	26.6	29.5	+2.9	23.1	24.8	+1.7	30.9	35.4	+4.5
Belize	5.5	23.7	+18.2	6.1	17.2	+11.1	3.5	36.0	+32.5
Dominica	21.3	40.6	+19.3	19.9	36.4	+16.5	23.9	46.3	+22.4
Grenada	30.4	30.0	-0.4	30.0	19.3	-10.7	31.1	44.9	+13.8
Jamaica	30.9	33.4	+2.5	30.7	24.2	-6.5	31.2	44.4	+13.2
St. Lucia	15.4	36.6	+21.2	15.2	31.2	+16.0	15.6	43.2	+27.6
Trinidad & Tobago	45.1	27.3	-17.8	43.6	22.8	-20.8	47.9	34.7	-13.2

By 1997, there appeared to be substantial increases in the rate of youthful unemployment in the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica and St. Lucia. More modest increases were evident in Barbados and Jamaica. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, there was evidence of a substantial decline while in Grenada the decline appeared to be marginal. Among female youth, there appeared to be phenomenal increases in the rate of unemployment in countries such as the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica and St. Lucia. An increase was also registered in Barbados though not as phenomenal as in the other countries. In contrast, Trinidad and Tobago experienced a considerable decline in the rate of unemployment among female youth. From the standpoint of male youth, marked increases in the rate of unemployment were observed in the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, and St. Lucia. Barbados experienced a marginal increase in the rate of unemployment while countries such as Grenada, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago experienced notable declines in unemployment rates among male youth. In summary, Table 8 reveals that with the exception of the Bahamas, more than one third of the female youthful labour force in each of the remaining countries was unemployed in 1997. In contrast, St. Lucia and Dominica were the only countries in which more than a quarter of the male youthful labour force was unemployed in 1997. According to Table 8, the prevalence of unemployment among female youth in the mid to late 1990s appears to be largely responsible for the increases that have been experienced in the rates of unemployment of the youthful labour force in many of the countries under review.

***RECONCILING LABOUR MARKET IMBALANCES FACING YOUTH***

Labour markets are usually in disequilibrium because the demand for labour is never equal to the supply of labour. In economic terms, countries strive to attain full employment that may never necessarily coincide with a situation tantamount to perfect equilibrium. For 2000 and 2001, general rates of unemployment in Trinidad and Tobago have been estimated to be between 10 per cent and 11 per cent (Central Statistical Office, 2002). Notwithstanding such an outcome, the unemployment rates among the youth continue to be higher than those for older age group. This is a generally accepted pattern across countries and suggests that substantial reductions in the general rate of unemployment could be attained through seeking reductions in the rate of youthful unemployment. This is further compounded by the fact that in countries such as Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, more than 40 per cent of the unemployed have been young persons aged 15-24 years.

The Caribbean has been aptly described as a region with an unlimited supply of labour and high rates of unemployment and non-participation attest to such a phenomenon among youth in the region's labour force. In the context of Grenada, survey findings revealed that many young persons who were not in the labour force did not seek work as a result of frustration with job search processes. As such, there appears to be some element of disillusionment among some youth who have not participated in the labour force. While it is important to increase the potential supply of labour, it is also important to pursue interventions that would enhance the quality of such a labour force. It has already been mentioned that the demand for labour is a derived demand so that in buoyant economic scenarios, a proliferation in the demand for services and goods in modern, technologically advanced enclaves and societies is likely to stimulate a demand for labour that is highly skilled and equipped to rise to the requisite standards of delivery. To this end, human resources have to be endowed with the essential education, skills and training that will render productive processes competitive on domestic and global scales and as a consequence, stimulate the demand for labour in a manner that could cater to the massive "reserve army" of youth in many of the Caribbean countries and territories.

So far, the paper has been indicative of growth in the sizes of the youthful labour force of several countries during the 1990s. In particular, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have experienced phenomenal increases, these being especially evident among female youth. Similar patterns were also discernible in the cases of female youth in Dominica, St. Lucia and to a lesser extent, the Bahamas. In addition to experiencing increases in labour force participation, many of the countries had also experienced increases in their rates of youthful unemployment, Trinidad and Tobago being the notable exception insofar as its rates had declined irrespective of gender. In the context of English-speaking Caribbean countries, these observations suggest that female youth constitute a primary target for intervention in the quest to reduce rates of unemployment and enhance employment prospects among youth. In targeting female youth, a critical objective has to be the determination of the set of social and demographic characteristics of those who are unemployed and to embark upon action that could yield alternative sets of characteristics that are more likely to be associated with more favourable employment prospects. Despite increases in the size of the labour force of the

..... different countries, the persistence of high and increasing rates of unemployment during the  
..... 1990s is indicative of the fact the demand for labour has not been keeping pace with the  
..... supply of labour.

..... Judging from Table 9, the proportion of youth in several Caribbean countries is expected to  
..... decline during the first decade of the new millennium. Notwithstanding such declines, the  
..... absolute sizes of youthful populations are expected to grow over the period in some countries,  
..... for example, in the Bahamas, Jamaica and St. Lucia. Such outcomes may be concomitant  
..... with corresponding increases in the sizes of the actual labour force and are likely to exert  
..... further pressure on efforts to boost the demand for labour in the early years of the new  
..... millennium and as such, constitute a major labour market challenge that can thwart  
..... development processes targeting young persons. In this regard, different means of youth  
..... empowerment ought to be an essential objective towards reversing this situation. In the  
..... 1990-91 period, the available evidence show that countries such as St. Vincent and the  
..... Grenadines, Jamaica, Grenada and Dominica had high proportions of youth who had not  
..... passed any examinations and at the same time had high rates of unemployment. In Guyana,  
..... the high proportion of youth who had not passed any examinations was concomitant with a  
..... rate of labour force participation that was the lowest in the region and thus, may have  
..... accounted for the relatively low unemployment rate.

..... In fostering modernization processes, it is advantageous that countries develop the technical  
..... skills and expertise of their youth. This hinges upon a youthful population that has had as a  
..... minimum, successful exposure to secondary education and is especially important in  
..... situations where there are favourable prospects for economic returns that can stimulate the  
..... demand for highly skilled labour. More specifically, it suggests that countries such as St.  
..... Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, Grenada, Dominica and Guyana have to ensure that  
..... relatively greater numbers of young persons successfully complete secondary level education  
..... and develop interests in pursuing tertiary level education. This is a critical point as the  
..... findings of the Grenada Youth Survey 1995-96 revealed that substantial numbers of youth  
..... were averse to pursuing sixth form education despite having the qualifications. In order to  
..... have a highly skilled and technically equipped labour force, there have to be increases in the  
..... proportion of young persons with a minimum of secondary-level education and exposure to

..... education at tertiary levels. In many Caribbean countries and territories, the current thrust is ..... towards increasing the proportion of young persons attaining and successfully completing ..... tertiary-level education. A comprehensive evaluation of countries' efforts to overcome such ..... challenges will depend upon the availability of data on educational enrolment based upon the ..... 2000-02 round of censuses and intercensal survey sampling exercises targeting the human ..... resource characteristics of Caribbean populations and in particular, young persons during the ..... 2000s.

**Table 9: Size of youthful population 15-24 years and as a proportion of the total population, 1990-91 census and projections 2000-11**

<b>COUNTRIES</b>	<b>1990-91 census</b>	<b>2000-2001 projections</b>	<b>2005-2006 projections</b>	<b>2010-2011 projections</b>
Antigua & Barbuda	10,964 (18.5%)	12,776 (17.7%)	13,126 (17.1%)	12,745 (15.7%)
Bahamas	47,889 (20.4%)	51,795 (17.0%)	52,484 (16.4%)	54,669 (16.2%)
Barbados	43,927 (17.8%)	41,312 (15.4%)	39,205 (14.5%)	37,688 (13.9%)
Belize	37,292 (20.1%)	51,747 (21.4%)	57,704 (21.3%)	59,390 (19.9%)
Dominica	14,031 (20.2%)	15,270 (19.7%)	15,247 (18.7%)	15,082 (17.7%)
Guyana	154,441 (22.0%)	155,966 (19.9%)	139,521 (17.3%)	135,725 (16.6%)
Jamaica	472,051 (20.4%)	482,800 (18.1%)	484,500 (17.6%)	n.a.
St. Lucia	27,720 (20.8%)	29,871 (19.7%)	30,064 (19.1%)	32,232 (20.0%)
St. Vincent/Grenadines	21,953 (20.6%)	23,786 (20.8%)	22,268 (18.6%)	21,016 (16.9%)
Trinidad/Tobago	200,617 (17.8%)	262,200 (19.7%)	262,600 (18.8%)	229,720 (15.7%)

**Source:** Regional Census Office and STATIN, Jamaica.

**Note:** The percentages in parentheses represent the proportion of youth in respective populations.

**Symbols:** n.a. means 'not available'.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Trinidad and Tobago had one of the highest rates of youthful unemployment in the region. By the mid to late 1990s, Trinidad and Tobago was the only country to have experienced a noteworthy decline in the rate of youthful unemployment. Such benefits could be associated with that country's establishment of the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) that recognized the importance of complementing academic exposure with on-the-job training of young persons rendering them more amenable to the skills and experiential requirements of prospective employers. Despite the fact that work experience was considered to be a premium asset in job search efforts, the youth surveys of Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada revealed that young persons in both countries had no work experience when they left school during the 1990s. In Trinidad and Tobago and in Grenada, the survey findings also revealed that young persons generally had an interest in pursuing technical and vocational training. Such training should be geared towards boosting their employment prospects including interests in self-employment. In stimulating interests in self-employment among young persons, there should also be meaningful thrusts toward the provision of financial assistance for business ventures. The successful attainment of such assistance hinges in part upon the credentials of young persons including means of demonstrating experience in their prospective area of economic pursuit.

At the beginning of the 1990s, an examination of the work status of employed young persons showed that Trinidad and Tobago was observed to have higher proportions of employers (13 per cent) than other Caribbean countries and territories. With respect to youth who engaged in own account operations, higher proportions were observed in countries such as St. Lucia (13.9 per cent), Guyana (13.6 per cent), Dominica (14.2 per cent) and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (10.2 per cent) when compared to the rest. Slightly lower proportions were observed in Antigua (9.2 per cent) and Grenada (8.4 per cent). The sample surveys for Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada support the view that the majority of these persons were unskilled manual workers. Generally speaking, populations are expected to increase whether nationally or internationally. This is likely to spawn increases in the demand for goods and services and stimulate a demand for labour that could be augmented through encouraging young persons to pursue self-employment initiatives. Though such young persons may embrace such opportunities, they should be cognizant of the impacts of liberalization and technological advancement on the sustenance of their efforts.

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In the Caribbean, this derived demand could be met through efforts on the part of youth, the  
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government and the different arms of civil society. More specifically, each of these organs  
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should seek to produce the enabling conditions that would sustain and expand sources of  
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financial and technical support for youth entrepreneurial initiatives. In every country and  
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territory, efforts toward upgrading self-employment capacity are germane to the viability and  
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eventual sustainability of self-employment initiatives whether as employers or as own  
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account operators. In essence, contemporary youth do not only have to be computer literate  
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but also, academically and technically equipped to sustain business ventures that will become  
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IT intensive in their operations. This is especially important as the IT intensive character of  
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production processes is expected to intensify in accordance with the changing face of modes  
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of production in post-industrial societies.

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With respect to young persons who were engaged in home duties and as a result, not in the  
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labour force at the beginning of the 1990s, every country and territory had shown  
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overwhelmingly greater proportions among females than among males. In countries such as  
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St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Dominica, Guyana and Belize, greater proportions  
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of young females were observed to be involved in home duties than attending school. This  
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points towards the need for further research among female youth to determine the profile of  
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active and inactive youth. Essentially, there is a need to determine the nature of relationships  
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that exist between labour market characteristics of the potential labour force, that is, whether  
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employed, unemployed or inactive and a host of social characteristics. The latter might  
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include educational characteristics, childbearing and childrearing activities, the desire to seek  
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gainful employment, exposure to discrimination or harassment, opportunities for training and  
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further education, household characteristics and individual demographic characteristics. With  
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respect to educational characteristics for example, it is interesting to note that Belize,  
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Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia had relatively higher proportions of  
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female youth with no more than a primary education at the beginning of the 1990s. This  
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bears some association with cross-country differentials in female engagement in home duties  
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and could be a factor for consideration.

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In this regard, improving the educational credentials of young females in such countries could  
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be considered as a first step in transiting from an involvement in home duties. Due  
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consideration also has to be given to evaluating their desire to engage in gainful employment  
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and the extent to which their childbearing and childrearing circumstances could be militating  
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against such desire. This places tremendous pressure upon governments to expedite efforts  
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geared toward the establishment of public early childhood education centers or upon business  
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establishments to embrace employee friendly practices by establishing childcares centers at  
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work sites. Particularly in the context of females desirous of pursuing own account ventures,  
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incentives should be provided for the establishment of cottage enterprises that are effectively  
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monitored and evaluated by state agencies to ensure that they remain sustainable. This should  
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provide a medium for women to be gainfully employed while being able to care for their  
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children and other dependents in their home environments. These initiatives constitute  
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noteworthy interventions in countries where levels of engagement in home duties deemed  
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unacceptably high based upon domestic developmental prescriptions.

In accordance with the 2002 Human Development Report, the United Nations Development Program classified the human development status of Caribbean countries into two main groups – high and medium. For the purposes of this paper, population size has been classified as large, medium, small, very small and micro. Population size and human development status have been observed to be associated with inter-country differentials in attributes such as educational attainment, school attendance, unemployment rates and prevalence of engagement in home duties. In the countries and territories characterized by high human development status, young persons exhibited more favourable levels with respect to educational attainment credentials and participation in home duties at the beginning of the 1990s compared to their counterparts from countries characterized by medium human development. During the mid to late 1990s, a similar observation was made with respect to rates of unemployment. These trends were most pronounced in the case of young persons from Barbados and the Bahamas, two countries characterized by high human development but small population size. At the beginning of the 1990s, similar observations were also made of young persons from the territories such as the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat.



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Despite having among the highest rates of labour force participation and lowest rates of unemployment among female youth at the beginning of the 1990s, Barbados, the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat were observed to have the highest rates of school attendance for those female youth who were not in the labour force. These rates were observed to be markedly higher than those in the other countries and were likely to enhance the prospects of young women's participation and gainful employment in the labour force during the mid to late 1990s and in the first decade of the new millennium. It is also expected that such prospects would have also been enhanced by greater exposure to opportunities for further education and training due to sustaining relatively higher levels of school attendance. Interestingly, trends indicative of increases in the rate of unemployment among female youth have been observed in Barbados and the Bahamas by 1997. To some extent, such an outcome could have been due to inadequacies in the labour market to meet the supply of female labour that may have been adequately skilled and technically equipped to perform in modern sectors of the respective economies. This, however, constitutes a basis for further inquiry insofar as it is purely speculative. In general, similar scenarios were evident among male youth though the differentials did not appear to be as pronounced.

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Gauging from patterns at the beginning of the 1990s, countries characterized by micro populations and those with small populations and high human development (that is the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Barbados, the Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis) had substantially larger proportions of their inactive female youth attending school as opposed to being engaged in home duties. The vision of the 1970s geared toward In terms of the provision of educational services targeting female youth, the experiences of these countries constitute lessons that ought to be considered and critically assessed before being embraced in the remaining countries with small populations. In the case of inactive young females from medium and large populations, in particular, Belize, Guyana and Jamaica, smaller proportions were attending school than engaging in home duties. Assuming that such trends persist throughout the 1990s, the prospects of young women in the respective labour markets will continue to be negative.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This paper has examined human resource characteristics of youth in the English-speaking Caribbean and sought to identify some principal labour market challenges and their variable impacts in different countries and territories. It has relied on data emanating from sources such as the 1990-91 population and housing census, intercensal surveys of youth and the labour force, and population projections for the period 2000-10. Generally speaking, the data reveal a number of consistent observations between education and labour market characteristics of young persons in the different countries. They have been indicative of the relatively high rates of unemployment among young persons in several countries and thus suggest that substantial reductions in the general rate of unemployment could be attained through seeking reductions in the rate of youthful unemployment. Except for Trinidad and Tobago, the paper is indicative of increases in the unemployment rate among youths in several of the other countries during the mid to late 1990s. Given projected increases in the sizes of youthful populations during the first decade of the 2000s, increases in rates of unemployment could intensify if there are inadequate initiatives to increase the demand for labour to at least meet projected increases in the supply of youthful labour.

Given projected increases in population size, the paper contends that pressure quell levels of unemployment among youth ought to stimulate government's initiatives toward boosting the demand for labour in the early years of the new millennium. For every country and territory, the paper recommends mechanisms through which the demand for labour can be stimulated in a manner that could cater to the massive 'reserve army' of youth. The paper contains data supporting the view that female youth constitute a primary target for intervention in the quest to reduce rates of unemployment and enhance employment prospects among youth. While alluding to thrusts in several countries to increase the proportions of young persons with a minimum of secondary-level education and exposure to education at tertiary levels, the paper acknowledges that at the beginning of the 1990s, educational levels of the region's youth were inadequate in terms of satisfying the requirements of a highly skilled and technically equipped labour force during the latter half of the 1990s. If such a pattern persisted through the 1990s, then prospects for the first decade of the 2000s will be similar.

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The paper recognizes the role of self-employment in enhancing young persons' fortunes in the labour market and highlights the observed decline in levels of unemployment among youthful populations in Trinidad and Tobago during the 1990s. It draws reference to that country's establishment of the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) and its possible concurrence with reductions in the level of unemployment. In promoting self-employment as a viable option, the paper reinforces the need for prospective youth to become conversant with the demands of the IT revolution in their respective domains of interest. The paper also recommends strategies for engaging young women in the labour force in countries where levels of engagement in home duties might be considered to be unacceptably high.

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The paper contends that small countries such as Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia can improve the labour market fortunes of their youth by considering and critically reviewing the experiences of the countries and territories characterized by micro populations and those with small populations and high human development (that is the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Barbados, the Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis). With respect to the 1970s, earlier discussions have alluded to the under-utilization of available resources, the unavailability of required human resources, the human resource problem in the context of human capital and employment opportunities and attitudes toward work. On examining the experiences and conditions of youth in contemporary Caribbean societies, such concerns persist and thus are worthy of attention whether or not gains had been made with respect to the labour market conditions and experiences of older populations.

## *Endnotes*

<sup>1</sup>"Manpower" is the term used by Harewood but in more recent times, there has been an orientation towards the use of "human power" in keeping with more gender neutral language.

<sup>2</sup>The main source of the data from the 1990-91 Population and Housing Censuses was the Regional Census Office. The Regional Census Office was established as an arm of Caricom with administrative responsibility for overseeing regional efforts pertaining to a wide cross-section of activities related to the 1990-91 round of censuses. The Regional Census Office published a number of monographs and statistical reports that were used to obtain the statistical data contained in the tables. These included eleven country monographs (Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Guyana, Montserrat, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago), a Compendium of Basic Tables for Sixteen countries of Caricom, and a number of thematic studies targeting women, children and youth, women, migration, the elderly and employment, education and training.

<sup>3</sup>Per Capita GDP (PPP\$) is gross domestic product in purchasing power parity (PPP) divided the estimated mid-year population. It refers to gross domestic product converted to "international" dollars using a purchasing power parity conversion factor. International dollars indicate the amount of goods and services one could buy in the United States with a given amount of money.

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