

structural adjustment as usually conceived (mainstream) as well as the longer-term strategy required for job creation. The pragmatic approach was peculiarly suitable to the circumstances of the small, open Caribbean state. There is thus an urgent need to explore alternative approaches, perhaps organised formally at the regional level, which may enable the small states of the Caribbean to implement longer-term strategies with an emphasis on rural development and food production. Such longer-term strategies are particularly important in view of the prospect that in the future large scale emigration may no longer be possible.

The economic dilemmas which confront the small Caribbean state must be understood in a wider context. The mounting debt crisis (the per capita debt burden of some Caribbean countries is now higher than that of several well-known Latin American debtor countries) and the consequent pressures to abandon national planning and development in favour of short-term crisis management including frequent devaluations, whether projected as stabilization or structural adjustment, derive ultimately from the weakness of the global economic and financial systems.

However, in some instances, the structure of Caribbean debt differs from that of Latin America since it is owed to multilateral organizations rather than private institutions. There is a role for the Commonwealth to play here in "softening" debt policy and supporting attempts at debt renegotiation and restructuring.

### **Threats to Nationhood — Erosion of Identity**

The maintenance of identity is of crucial importance, as is self-confidence which can alone provide the basis for undertaking new and innovative forms of development. Threats to the national and cultural identity of the Caribbean small states are legion. In the case of the media, a shared language and geographical nearness has made American electronic media easily accessible with consequent influences on life styles and attitudes. In the area of education, there is a fundamental need for the Caribbean to generate its own knowledge rooted in the specific nature of its own experience; this is a task for which the regional universities are especially fitted.

A further problem is that while the region has recognized the need to enter the "information age", there is a danger that the scientific skill which underpins technological advances may not be transferred sufficiently rapidly, thereby leaving the region dependent on overseas expertise and on supplier agencies.

The Caribbean sense of self had been built on political action; but there