EDITORIAL

EYEING A BRIGHT FUTURE

With our tenth anniversary in the air, this quarter’s Think Tank is very special and offers up commentary on new structures for Caribbean cooperation, continues to stay on top of Jamaica’s structural benchmarks, and to commemorate this ten year milestone, it chronicles our journey, our work and special moments over the past ten years.

While the Caribbean is a well-endowed region with rich culture and a wealth of talent it has barely lived up to its potential. The Caribbean 2030 initiative, through its Caribbean Leaders’ Network, is aimed at propelling the Caribbean region forward to realising its social and economic possibilities. Caribbean 2030 is a Caribbean-UK partnership including the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI), the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the UK-based Caribbean Council and the Jamaica National Foundation. The Caribbean-UK initiative, over a three-day forum held in 2015 in the UK, brought together in one room, key Caribbean figures from academia, the private sector, government and civil society, to discuss their shared concern for the future of the region, and subsequently forming a network.

Ensuing meetings have led to coordinated goals among Caribbean Leaders’ Network members, to drive the region towards good governance, green

BY 2016, THE COUNTRY’S ECONOMY HAD IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY WITH ENHANCED FISCAL PERFORMANCE ALL ROUND, INCLUDING A 2.2% GROWTH IN GDP FOR THE THIRD QUARTER.

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growth, enhanced innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth. This stakeholder-focused collaboration intends to generate meaningful change in the region. CAPRI now acts as a secretariat for this new Caribbean Leaders Network, supporting the completion of key milestones as the members seek to make a difference in the region. Exciting times are ahead for the Caribbean.

Since embarking on a 4-year IMF agreement in 2013, the Jamaican economy has once again, gained some momentum. With strong fiscal responsibility and determination, successive administrations have harmonised their efforts and successfully implemented a range of fiscal and structural reforms, producing balanced budgets and overall maintaining discipline in managing the economy. Commendably, all the targets and benchmarks were met.

By 2016, the country's economy had improved significantly with enhanced fiscal performance all round, including a 2.2% growth in GDP for the third quarter. Despite the upturn in the economy, fiscal discipline needs to continue as the country is still economically vulnerable as unemployment and debt are still precariously high, prompting the country to enter into a new IMF agreement which provides some insulation to external economic shocks.

With a now more stable economy, a better environment for sustainable growth and development, the country is now able to place more focus on addressing challenges which plague the country like crime and poverty. As Jamaica embarks on a new and ‘precautionary’ agreement with the IMF, the prospects remain positive. Economic performance is expected to continue and even accelerate, as the country stays on the path of fiscal discipline.

CAPRI also looks ahead at its research agenda for 2017-2020, which tackles critical and relevant policy issues in the thematic areas of Energy and the Environment, Governance, Social issues and the Economy. More specifically, hot topic issues like the GOJ budget, Corruption and new cutting edge research in violent crime reduction will be addressed and offer insightful findings to inform policy debates on the issues.

As CAPRI celebrates ten years, we are reenergised and will continue to do what we do best, that is, remain on the cutting edge of policy research and dialogue within Caribbean societies. We give thanks for the continued support and strategic guidance of our Board of Directors, led by our Chairman Dr. Marshall Hall. We are also grateful for the financial support of our Gold Circle sponsors over the years. With our committed team, CAPRI looks forward to the next 10 years!
Before 2016: A stagnating economy

Jamaica has produced global superstars, brands, and cultural icons. The weather is warm, the beaches idyllic with displays of turquoise shallows, and new toll roads that beckon. Yet, challenges remain. Jamaica, for the greater part of the last two decades, has been characterised by a stagnant economy on the back of unsustainable fiscal and debt dynamics accompanied by sustained high unemployment and poverty rates.

With Jamaica’s debt at the precipice, the Government entered into a four-year programme with the IMF in May 2013 under the Fund’s Extended Fund Facility. The programme involved the undertaking of a comprehensive and ambitious programme of reforms, primarily built around fiscal consolidation and key structural reforms in exchange for a modest amount of financial assistance of US$932m and much more of the technical variety.

Addressing the economy’s imbalances and the weaknesses in its policy framework to create an economic environment for engendering growth has been the primary objective of Jamaica’s IMF-monitored reforms. Primarily, the government ushered in some much-needed fiscal discipline. The agenda has been driven by the creation of a stable, predictable and resilient macroeconomic environment which could nurture economic growth.

Under the programme, Jamaica produced balanced budgets, improved public cash management, cheaper debt servicing, harmonisation of the incentive regime, improvement in the ease of doing business, and increased social expenditure. While this effort has been underway, the improvement in fiscal sustainability has allowed the central Bank to focus more of its attention on driving inflation down. Remarkably, all the programme’s quantitative targets and structural benchmarks have been met.

2016: Clear Improvement

At the start of the year, the country had already seen clear evidence that the economy had been improving. Inflation had fallen to record lows; the balance-of-payments current account deficit had shrunk by more than 2/3rds; the net international reserves had risen; and the stock market was surging.

2016 was a continuation of these, still gradual, indicators of an improving economy. Net international reserves remained at a healthy US$2.4 billion throughout the year, a figure which is two and a half times greater than it stood at the start of the programme.

Continued strict adherence to fiscal discipline together with the PetroCaribe debt buyback helped place debt on a firm downward trajectory, with public debt falling more than 25 percentage points of GDP. The improved
fiscal performance and debt outturn has contributed to
greater confidence at home and abroad. Local business
confidence is reflected in historically high levels in the
Business Confidence Index, up 12 percent since 2015.
Internationally, Moody’s upgraded Jamaica’s sovereign
credit ratings in November from Caa2 to B3.
And economic growth, finally, may be starting to pick
up in a sustainable way. While GDP growth had been
averaging less than 1 percent over the duration of the
programme so far, the third quarter outturn for 2016
showed expansion of 2.2 percent over the previous 12
months, the strongest growth performance in nine years.
Corroborating this growth is an increase in employment
over the year to July of 3.2 percent.

2017:
Staying the course

Notwithstanding the clear indicators of an
economic upturn, the job is not done. Strong program
implementation over the last three and a half years has
improved fiscal credibility, lowered debt and reduced
borrowing costs. However, the public debt remains
precariously high and, as reported by the IMF, is
expected to remain broadly constant in FY16/17 due to
a combination of small amortizations during the year and
pre-financing for large redemptions coming due in early
FY17/18. This leaves the country vulnerable to adverse
domestic and international developments. In this context, fiscal discipline must be maintained.

Moreover, Jamaica’s growth, while positive, remains weak; unemployment, while declining, is still high (at 13% in July of 2016). As the country has now signed a new ‘precautionary’ agreement with the IMF – further boosting investors’ confidence – social protection initiatives are particularly important to maintain social cohesion, build capacity, and improve productivity.

Fiscal consolidation, while crucial, does not address all the economy’s problems. Key among Jamaica’s pressing concerns is crime. With the murder rate being the 6th highest worldwide, Crime continues to be major deterrent to investment in particular and economic activity in general. Going forward, addressing crime and other security challenges remains a priority.

Staying the course with continued fiscal discipline is critical to further reduce the debt and creating the fiscal space needed for productive spending in priority areas such as education, water access, infrastructure development, and crime reduction. Along this trajectory, the improvements in economic outcomes that were in evidence in 2016 should continue and even accelerate in 2017.
Across the Caribbean there is the pervasive view that the countries haven’t delivered and lived up to the social and economic development potential of the region. Often cited as the reason for this precarious reality is the absence of vision, leadership and implementation. To this end, the Caribbean 2030 initiative was formed with the mission to address these issues with a different approach through new leadership, innovative thinking, entrepreneurship and regional cooperation. The Caribbean 2030 initiative is a Caribbean–UK partnership including the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI), the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the UK-based Caribbean Council and the Jamaica National Foundation.

The forum brought together key Caribbean figures from academia, the private sector, civil society, and government to discuss the future of the region. Over a three-day event held in the UK in June 2015, they interrogated the questions. How do the new and next generation of leaders in the Caribbean see the future? What is their vision for 2030 and beyond? How can they work better together to face the economic, political and security challenges and opportunities they face? How do they envisage the Caribbean countries can best work together in the future? What relationships do they want with the wider region and traditional and new partners?

Out of this first meeting the group identified the areas of green growth, governance, trade, entrepreneurship and information technology infrastructure as priorities, and espoused a vision for the region:

Creating a Caribbean that is peaceful, self-sufficient, globally competitive and resilient – promoting innovation and entrepreneurship.

Since then the group as had two other meetings in Kingston, Jamaica and the United Kingdom. At the second meeting in Jamaica the network focused on identifying the four key priorities of green growth, governance, trade, and information technology to support innovation, entrepreneurship and growth.

The third forum built on the first two meetings with the specific action plan outlined aimed at focusing on the two areas of green growth and open data towards good governance. Also, coming out of this meeting was the formation of the group – Caribbean 2030
Leaders Network committed to undertaking projects geared towards making the vision a reality. Self-dubbed as a "do tank", the group, now 70 strong, leverages individual passions, and uses their networks and platforms to make a difference. As a result, members have volunteered to take on different projects for the year. These include:

1. Advocate for governments to promulgate open data policy and relevant Access to Information Acts where they do not currently exist
2. Promote transparency and good governance principles by defining the principles of open data and articulate its benefits
3. Advance Sustainable Waste Management practices through inputs to Styrofoam and plastic policy processes as well as the application of relevant best practices
4. Evaluate, monitor and develop relevant Sustainable Development indicators for the Caribbean, and adopt/adapt relevant indicators to attract sustainable investments to the region
5. Identify and design a programme for the elimination of perverse incentives to green growth in the region
6. Seek funding to conduct open data readiness assessments in other Caribbean countries

The Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI) now acts as a secretariat to support this “new model of stakeholder-focused Caribbean collaboration” as described by CAPRI Co-Executive Director Imani Duncan-Price. Damian King, CAPRI’s Co-Executive Director said he is “happy with how the Caribbean 2030 Leaders Network is proceeding and optimistic about achieving meaningful outcomes”.

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**CAPRI’S RECENT EVENTS**

Prime Minister, the Most Hon Andrew Holness shakes hands with US Ambassador to Jamaica, Luis. G. Moreno at CAPRI’s ‘Dialogue between Democracies’ forum, as they engage in conversation with CAPRI Co-Executive Directors Dr. Damien King and Imani Duncan-Price. This event was the closing of a series of forums organised in conjunction with the Embassy of the United States in Kingston. (UWI Regional Headquarters)

CAPRI Co-Executive Director Imani Duncan-Price answers, along with CAPRI Affiliate Researcher, Dr. Yonique Campbell, and Jamaicans for Justice Chairman, Dr. Horace Levy, reporters’ questions during a Gleaner Editor’s Forum set up to discuss CAPRI’s recommendations pertaining to the Tivoli Commission of Enquiry.

A panel consisting of Imani Duncan-Price (CAPRI Co-Executive Director), Natallie Rochester King (CAPRI Affiliate Researcher), Dr. Gaunett Maragh-Sinclair, Head of the Hospitality and Tourism Department at UTECH; and Dr. Richard Bernal, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Global Affairs at UWI, discuss responses to the thawing of US-Cuba diplomatic relations. (Spanish Court Hotel, October 6, 2016)

CAPRI Co-Executive Director Dr. Damien King compares the advantages of both ‘carrot’ and ‘stick’ approaches to increasing tax compliance in Jamaica, during CAPRI’s ‘Greater Tax Compliance’ breakfast, at the Knutsford Court Hotel.
# JAMAICA’S STRUCTURAL BENCHMARKS

## Last Quarter (Oct–Dec 2016)

### Employee Census
- **Objective:** Verify each government employee’s work post and eligibility for allowances in a two-part pilot.
- **Action:** Verification for all entities involved.
- **Deadline:** November 30, 2016
- **Status:** Delayed. Expected to be completed by March 2017

### Financial Sector Reform
- **Objective:** Draft a consultation paper for the resolution framework for the entire financial sector.
- **Action:** Draft Consultation Paper.
- **Deadline:** October 30, 2016
- **Status:** Delayed. Completed by November 2016.

### Compensation Review
- **Objective:** Complete a 2-part islandwide pilot to build a comprehensive database on all allowances paid to public employees in Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies.
- **Action:** Build a database.
- **Deadline:** November 30, 2016
- **Status:** Delayed. Expected to be completed by March 2017.

### Tax Reform
- **Objective:** Conclude all work on the calculation of new rates and bands for property taxes, consistent with the 2013 valuations, and submitting them to Cabinet for approval.
- **Action:** Submit for approval.
- **Deadline:** December 31, 2016
- **Status:** Completed.

## This Quarter (Jan–Mar 2017)

### Accountant General’s Department
- **Objective:** The AGD to conduct a Training Needs Assessment to identify priorities and develop a medium term training program.
- **Action:** Conduct assessment.
- **Deadline:** January 31, 2017
- **Status:** On Schedule

## Upcoming Next Quarter

Jamaica to embark on a new IMF agreement, one that will replace the existing Extended Fund Facility (EFF) that ends in March 2017.

The new US$1.7 billion three-year successor standby programme is expected to provide some protection for Jamaica from external economic shocks.

In the upcoming Think Tank, we will be introducing the new benchmarks.
The difference between our toughest challenges and our opportunities for solutions has been the belief that better is possible – and necessary.

**PARTNERS** who support the future

**RESEARCHERS** that do the work

**DATA** that sharpens insights

**SOLUTIONS** that have demanded important shifts – both large and incremental.

It started 10 years ago and today we celebrate the impact we have had and challenge ourselves and our neighbours to do even more to produce better outcomes for tomorrow.

**10-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS**

**JULY 2016**

Rethinking Solid Waste Management

Recommendations. Including public-private partnerships, shift an important byproduct of urban growth from a complex health and environmental challenge to a means for sustainable growth.

**JUNE 2016**

Mobile PATH Payments

Case studies across a range of countries provides practical solutions for implementing mobile money services that empower the unbanked and modernise our systems.

**MAY 2016 (REVISED JUNE 2016)**

An Assessment of the NHT

New strategies for addressing the growing need for housing, home loan financing to social properties have encouraged an NHT subcommittee to explore reforming its mandate.

**SEPTEMBER 2012**

Booms Need Busts

Careful review of the banking crisis of the nineties provided important lessons for the future, including the funding of insolvency, which has led to the passing of protective legislations.

**MAY 2012**

10 Steps to a Scrap Metal Solution

The rise of international scrap metal prices resulted in increased theft locally, and more severe consequences. Capri’s research led to 10 firm recommendations for tackling the problem.

**JANUARY 2008**

Investigating Informal Investment Schemes

The collapse of informal investment schemes have proven negative consequences for economies. Capri’s report helped guide the GOJ when faced with the fallout, and provided a path for minimising the impact.

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**CAPRI 10**

CARIBBEAN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

capricaribbean.org

Our Partners

[Image of logos representing various partners]
The Caribbean Policy Research Institute, which celebrates this year its 10th anniversary, was born out of a comprehensive, interdisciplinary research project which brought together, in 2005, over thirty researchers together to investigate the causes of Jamaica’s economic underperformance since 1962. The two-year project was called ‘Taking Responsibility: The Jamaican Economy Since Independence’ (TR).

We speak with CAPRI’s current Co-Executive directors, Dr. Damien King and Mrs. Imani Duncan-Price about the journey from a short-term project to the reputable, impactful first Caribbean think tank.

What were the goals of the Taking Responsibility project, and what did you achieve?

DAMIEN KING: The TR project was motivated by a paradox, which is that upon independence, it was widely believed, both in academic circles and the mood of the country that Jamaica had the potential to be one of the most successful developing economies. Some of it, of course, had to with the spirit of independence; however, some of it was grounded in recognising the reality of a country which had a lot of institutional, natural, educational advantages.

This optimism, juxtaposed with the realisation that Jamaica had underperformed, led to this project which wanted to reconcile the country’s economic underperformance with the expectation. Did the project achieve its goals? Yes, and the great insight that came out of it was that, contrary to popular narrative at the time, Jamaica was not the victim of forces beyond its control. We needed to first convince Jamaicans that the country’s development was up to us, and that we needed to start taking responsibility not only for what we had done, but for what we could do.

DID THE PROJECT ACHIEVE ITS GOALS? YES, AND THE GREAT INSIGHT THAT CAME OUT OF IT WAS THAT, CONTRARY TO POPULAR NARRATIVE AT THE TIME, JAMAICA WAS NOT THE VICTIM OF FORCES BEYOND ITS CONTROL.

IMANI DUNCAN-PRICE: I recall as Executive Director of the Taking Responsibility project that we had multiple goals. One of them was to garner genuine understanding, from a cross-sectoral perspective, of the reasons Jamaica had underperformed since independence – from the perspectives of governance, crime, education, economy and other disciplines. At that time, Ireland and Singapore were the comparative success stories in the national dialogue and we wanted to examine why Jamaica had not fared as well. Up to that point, most examinations of Jamaica’s path were from a single perspective, not comprehensively.

The second goal was to mobilize some of the best minds in each area to work on this exciting project, and bring intellectual rigour to the examination. We brought together Jamaicans living in Jamaica, as well as Jamaicans who had gone away to do their PhDs in France, in the UK, US – all partnered with professors at UWI Mona.

Thirdly, we wanted to debunk the myths. If you ask Jamaicans why the country has underperformed, everyone has an answer for you. However, their answers are all very different. A critical component of TR was to engage the public with the findings, debunk the myths that hold us back and see how we could create a narrative of possibility for Jamaica. By us, Jamaicans, taking responsibility for our decisions, our choices, we can shape a positive path for our country.

Tell us about the transition between this project and CAPRI.

DK: Once the project was completed, we came to realise that despite good intentions, Jamaica’s results were primarily due to bad policy decisions at critical junctures
in its history. Trying to understand why told us that there was a need for support towards better policy making, which was the raison d’être for a policy research institute. As it turns out, we had assembled a strong team of researchers, and therefore leveraged that strength towards establishing the Caribbean Policy Research Institute.

IDP: In the process of getting the Taking Responsibility project off the ground, we also found a unique funding structure, with the Jamaican private sector supporting the project. This sent a positive message to international funding bodies – Jamaica was ready to invest in such types of analyses for its own needs rather than solely relying on international funding. This struck a particular type of partnership in our funding structure – with local and international funding that was ready to move from the TR project into a sustainable, longer-term entity. Furthermore, the gap in consistent data-driven or evidence-based policy analysis to support better decisions was not only a Jamaica issue. Indeed, it was a challenge for governments throughout the Caribbean. And so with the support of then Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie and Professor Gordon Shirley (respectively, outgoing and incoming UWI Mona Principals) and our funders, we founded the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI).

Where did CAPRI have the most impact over the last 10 years?

DK: CAPRI has had impact on both general and specific levels. On the general level, it is disseminating the idea that policies need to be evidence-based and call upon the relevant knowledge. General appreciation for not making policy decisions based on whims has been important to CAPRI. 

CAPRI HAS HAD IMPACT ON BOTH GENERAL AND SPECIFIC LEVELS. ON THE GENERAL LEVEL, IT IS DISSEMINATING THE IDEA THAT POLICIES NEED TO BE EVIDENCE-BASED AND CALL UPON THE RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE.

In the past, specific CAPRI reports made contributions to the overhaul and design of the new scrap metal legislation, to insolvency legislation, to government’s response to the failure of informal investment
schemes, to its foreign exchange policy, amongst others. Most recently, we produced a report on the National Housing Trust which stimulated the formation of a commission to look at how housing solutions are financed. Our report on stimulating the transition to mobile money in Jamaica recommended using the government’s PATH programme as a catalyst – a pilot project is underway, citing CAPRI’s report as its basis. After a decade of work and contribution, CAPRI has a solid reputation of credibility and trustworthiness, which creates a much better platform for us to be effective.

What do you look forward to in CAPRI’s next decade?

IDP: CAPRI will continue robust evidence-based analysis on key public policy issues here in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. I look forward to us also building the capacity for improved advocacy, so we see more implementation of our solid recommendations. I also look forward to the Caribbean states maturing as democracies, where citizens don’t just feel they get to exercise their right to participate every five years in an election, but instead see it as every day. Thriving democracies where people write Letters to the Editors of the leading newspapers, write to Parliamentarians, referencing our reports and recommendations, and “speak truth to power”. Shared understanding and more active accountability, I believe will lead to improved implementation of better policies to benefit the development of Caribbean nations.

What would you celebrate as a highlight of the last decade?

DK: Every time a policy maker, minister, prime minister, Permanent Secretary or ambassador says to me: “This is an important area and I would like CAPRI to do some research on it”, each of those moments tells me how impactful and useful CAPRI has become. That is the recognition of what we have achieved. The very constituency that we set out to influence not only recognises our role and ability, but now comes to us for assistance and answers – that’s powerful.
## LEGISLATIVE TRACKER

### BANK OF JAMAICA ACT

**Objective:** Further enhance BOJ’s governance and autonomy.  
**Action:** Submit Proposal.  
**Deadline:** September 2016  
**Status:** Delayed

### CUSTOMS ACT

**Objective:** Phase III of the Customs Act to be tabled in Parliament  
**Action:** Submit Proposal.  
**Deadline:** March 2017  
**Status:** No update obtained
Below provides a peek into CAPRI’s research agenda 2017 to 2020. The areas of focus are determined by upcoming policy decisions and challenges to enable economic development and growth.

WASTE TO ENERGY FRAMEWORK

- Perform economic assessments of various models for Waste-to-Energy (WTE) exploitation under a privatized solid waste management sector
- Identify barriers to, and design a policy framework for WTE exploitation including:
  - Addressing Fiscal Transparency: the Friendly Budget, which is a framework for the design and publication of fiscal information in a manner that facilitates public engagement.

The associated public events will focus on presenting this accessible version of the budget and fiscal accounts, and allowing members of the public to be better able to ask questions of their political leaders on the budget and accounts.

Looking 3 Years Ahead!

CAPRI Research Agenda

Energy

Governance

- Addressing Fiscal Transparency: the Friendly Budget, which is a framework for the design and publication of fiscal information in a manner that facilitates public engagement.

The associated public events will focus on presenting this accessible version of the budget and fiscal accounts, and allowing members of the public to be better able to ask questions of their political leaders on the budget and accounts.
- Review countries which have consistently performed well and those countries that have improved significantly on government indices such as: Rule of Law Index, Corruption Perceptions Index, and World Government Indicators.
- Confirmed openness of the current legislation in Jamaica into the creation of anti-corruption application as well as the applicability of these global anti-corruption innovations utilising technology applications accessible by the public.
- Recommend actions to strengthen Jamaica’s overall national integrity systems.

Tax Compliance

- Create indices to measure tax evasion by type for individuals and companies, to allow comparisons across tax types and overtime, especially before and after compliance measures are introduced.

Corruption – Integrity Innovations

Social Issues

- Collaborating to Transform Citizen Security a Yaad, aims to improve the immediate and long term security of citizens through encouraging coordinated action between relevant government institutions, private sectors and civil society, informed by relevant evidence based research and analyses.
- The project comprises a program evaluation of August Town Violence Reduction Initiative, a case study of Montego Bay crime problem, high-level stakeholder workshops, six research reports geared towards understanding crime, a crime report card and several public engagement forums. It will run over a two year period.
• Economic Inclusion – The Care Economy and Women’s Economic Empowerment
• Women Entrepreneurship
• Tackle barriers facing women entrepreneurship by proposing policy responses to deal with women’s right to land ownership and assets, access to financing, and measures to ease the burden of unpaid work in the economy, largely borne by women.

With rural women producers/farmers being the sub-group most affected, the research could address this area specifically as a case study within the work.

• Financing Public Health
• Economic Potential of the Jamaican Diaspora
OUR VISION FOSTERS OUR MISSION

The Caribbean Policy Research Policy Institute (CaPRI) is a think tank which promotes evidence-based policy dialogue within Caribbean societies. In an effort to create better policies, CaPRI informs debate through the production of evidence-based research of the highest quality.

The ultimate goal and mission of the Institute is to change the various national policy-making environments – public and private sector – in the Caribbean to one based on research (comparative and otherwise) from one based on partisanship and polemic.

Our Vision is the development of indigenous research capabilities and the production of research work more relevant to the pertinent issues of economic development in the Caribbean.

CAPRI 10
THE CARIBBEAN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE