

DETERMINING AND IMPLEMENTING POLICY IN CARICOM

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WHAT IS POLICY

- “A definitive course or method of action selected (by government, institution, group or individual) from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and, usually, to determine present and future decisions” *Yamie S. Palao*
- Declared objectives which governments seek to achieve and preserve in the interest of national community.



STAGE OF POLICY FORMULATION

- The policy formation process generally involves the following steps:
 - Agenda setting/identification of issues
 - Policy Formulation
 - Policy Adoption/Legitimization
 - Policy Implementation
 - Policy Assessment/Evaluation



ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS

- Policy Identification/Agenda Setting:
 - Publicized demands for government action by Civil Society can lead to the identification of policy problems.
 - Civil Society can draw attention to areas which need government action



ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS IN CARICOM

- Policy Formulation
 - Civil society can contribute to the formulation of policy proposals or provide guidance to other institutions such as government bureaucracies, state legislature or regional CARICOM organs and bodies.
 - Civil society can develop possible solutions to problems for which policies are desired or consider alternative policy proposals.



ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS IN CARICOM

Policy Adoption/Legitimization

- Policy Adoption/Legitimization is generally within the remit of the governmental institutions (regional or national) which have the authority to do so by adopting laws, rules and regulations, procedures and processes.
- Civil Society can provide support to the process.



ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS IN CARICOM

Policy Implementation

- Policy implementation includes all the activities that take place following the adoption of a policy
- Civil Society may aid the process by agitating for the implementation which have already been adopted.
- In some cases civil society may serve as agents of policy implementation



POLICY FORMULATION IN CARICOM

- At the regional level in CARICOM the various organs play a key role in formulating policies at the regional level for implementation at the national level. The principal organs are the Conference of Heads of Government and the Community Council. The other organs are COTED; COSHOD; COFAP and COFCOR



POLICY FORMULATION IN CARICOM

- CARICOM also has a quasi-cabinet system in which individual Heads of Government have responsibility for specific areas...for example Guyana has responsibility for Agriculture, St. Kitts and Nevis for Health, Barbados for the CMSE and Trinidad and Tobago for regional security etc.
- That function is to advance regional policy implementation in the relevant issue areas. The formulation of the policies are undertaken through the regular CARICOM organs.



POLICY FORMULATION IN CARICOM

- The CCJ has ruled that the decisions of the various organs of CARICOM are binding and therefore have the weight of Community Law.
- As such, Member States of CARICOM are obligated to implement all of the decisions of the CARICOM organs.
- The jurisdiction of the CCJ applies to all Member States of CARICOM on all matters covered under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.



POLICY FORMULATION IN CARICOM

- With respect to social issues, which include health, education, sports etc the Council for Social and Human Development (COHSOD) is the lead organ to co-ordinate regional policy formulation and monitor and evaluate implementation of these policies at the national level.
- National governments are responsible for implementing agreed regional policy decisions through relevant institutional mechanisms.



POLICY FORMULATION IN CARICOM

- CARICOM bodies do not have the power to implement policies at the domestic level, however, to the extent that policies can be implemented through regional organizations policies agreed at the regional level may be enforced.
- Policy implementation in CARICOM is essentially a national responsibility.



POLICY FORMULATION IN CARICOM

- Issue identification and determination of the policy agenda at the regional level originates primarily at the national level. Member States determine the policy agenda. Civil society groups can best influence regional policy formulation through Member States.
- The CARICOM Secretariat is essentially an entity which facilitates the activities of the policy formulation arms of the regional integration movement. It does not create or implement policy.



CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLICY FORMULATION IN CARICOM

- Civil society can influence the formulation and implementation of policy at the regional level by bringing their influence to bear on their national representatives in the relevant organs
- Regional positions are expected to flow from national consultations with stakeholders who are likely to be affected by or who ought to influence the positions tabled by individual governments.



CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLICY FORMULATION IN CARICOM

- In some instances Civil Society are directly involved in the regional processes such as meeting of the Technical Working Groups or Task Forces which develop proposals for regional agreement on policies.
- Civil society should agitate for enhanced involvement in the policy formulation stage of the policy process while at the same time remaining actively involved in the policy identification/agenda setting processes.

