



CIPRIANI COLLEGE
OF LABOUR AND CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES



ICBEC
International Co-operative
Business Education Consortium



THE **CARIBBEAN** WORLD OF WORK FORUM **2025**

The Future of Work: A Social & Solidarity
Economy Approach

CONCEPT NOTE

@cclcs.edu.tt





Caribbean World of Work Forum 2025

The Future of Work: A Social and Solidarity Economy Approach

Introduction

The **Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies (CCLCS)** has established itself as a key institution in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean. It is dedicated to advancing education, research, and advocacy in labour, cooperative studies, and social development. As the region grapples with rapid economic, social, and technological changes, the role of CCLCS as a thought leader is more crucial than ever.

The Caribbean World of Work Forum is a biennial conference hosted by the Cipriani College for Labour and Co-operative Studies. It focuses on assimilating the collective thought of regional Workers and related Worker issues. Therefore, it provides an environment for research, thought, and debate concerning matters related to the World of Work. Working People's issues are placed at the forefront to emphasize local, regional, and international interest and importance.

Importantly, CWFF serves as a major advocacy platform through which CCLCS leverages its ability to shape discourse, influence policy, and foster transformative change via knowledge generation, capacity building, and collaboration.

CWFF 2025's theme, "*Future of Work: A Social Solidarity Approach*," aligns with the UN declaration of 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives and the 2023 UN General Assembly resolution on "promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) for Sustainable Development" (A/77/L.60).

Context

The future of work in the Caribbean is characterized by three significant trends:

1. Technological Disruption: Automation, artificial intelligence, and digital platforms are reshaping industries such as tourism, agriculture, and finance—the backbone of Caribbean economies. While these technologies promise increased productivity, they also pose risks of job displacement, particularly for low-skilled workers.

2. Climate Vulnerability: The Caribbean is one of the most climate-vulnerable regions in the world. Hurricanes, rising sea levels, and environmental degradation threaten traditional livelihoods in agriculture and fisheries, creating the need for resilient, adaptive economic models.

3. Informality and Precarious Work: The region's labor market is marked by a high prevalence of informal and precarious work, offering limited social protection and job security. Women, youth, and marginalized communities are



disproportionately affected, exacerbating inequality.

Anatol et al. (2023) have posited that developing a social justice model tailored to the regional realities of vulnerability and inequality is necessary. Social solidarity—rooted in the principles of mutual aid, cooperation, and collective well-being—has deep cultural roots in the Caribbean. Historical practices such as **“susu” (rotating savings schemes)** and **“maroon communities”** exemplify how solidarity has served as a survival mechanism in the face of adversity. Today, these principles can guide the region in constructing a future of work that is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. Moreover, the broader, long-term concept of the social and solidarity economy offers an alternative way of understanding the entire ecosystem of work, placing people and the environment at the centre. It is transformative as it prioritises people and their needs, abilities, and work over capital accumulation. It calls for a more redistributive and equitable socio-economic model, promoting social inclusion and cohesion in a sustainable and continuous manner.

Objectives / Outcomes

Through advocacy, partnership building and knowledge sharing the conference aims to deepen the collective understanding of the principles of social solidarity and contribute to:

1. An improved industrial relations (IR) system through enhanced mobilization and organization and increased capacity of worker/social groups for wealth generation and creation.

In acknowledging the role the IR system in the Caribbean can critical role in promoting workplace harmony, enhancing productivity, and ensuring social justice, CWFF 2025 will promote dialogue that addresses challenges such as outdated labor laws, limited institutional capacity, and changing workforce dynamics. It will also look at the mobilization of non-traditional partners and ways in which workers groups can add value for their constituents beyond collective bargaining.

2. Improved cooperative systems through the development of a cooperative recovery strategy and the articulation of a Caribbean cooperative business model.

Cooperatives and mutual associations have long been a cornerstone of Caribbean economies, particularly in agriculture and finance. These institutions embody the principles of solidarity by pooling resources, sharing risks, and prioritizing community welfare. Expanding cooperatives into emerging sectors like renewable energy, digital services, and agro-processing can create sustainable jobs and empower marginalized groups, including women and youth. In promoting the cooperative business model as an alternative means



of conceptualizing the economy to advance social solidarity, CWFF 2025 will: highlight the role of cooperatives in addressing regional challenges such as climate change and food security; promote cooperation among the financial and non-financial cooperatives to enhance sustainability; and advocate for more responsive regulatory ecosystems for the effective operation of cooperatives.

Format and Methodology

The conference will be a three-day hybrid event (in-person and virtual participation) featuring:

- **Keynote Addresses:** Daily insights from global thought leaders and policymakers in the SSE space.
- **Panel Discussions:** Interactive sessions with diverse perspectives on SSE.
- **Case Studies:** Good Practice at national and institutional levels

Target Audience

Based on previous sessions, the conference will bring together more than 700 participants, including:

- Policymakers and government officials.
- Representatives of the co-operatives sector (financial and non-financial)
- Representatives of workers' organisations.
- Private sector leaders interested in inclusive business models.
- Academics and researchers in the fields of social economy and sustainable development.
- International organizations and development agencies.
- Civil society organizations and youth leaders.

Dates: 6 to 9 May 2025

- **6 May: Opening Ceremony**
- **7, 8 and 9 May: Working Sessions**

Venue: Cipriani College for Labour and Cooperative Studies, Churchill Roosevelt Highway, Valsayn, St Joseph



THE **CARIBBEAN** WORLD OF WORK FORUM **2025**

The Future of Work: A Social & Solidarity
Economy Approach



59
60th



ICBEC
International Co-operative
Business Education Consortium



International Year
of Cooperatives