

Preface

This volume is the fifth in a series of books arising from the British-Caribbean Geography Seminar (BCGS) Series. The chapters have been selected from among the thirty-seven papers presented at the sixth BCGS held at the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies in June 2014. The papers have been suitably revised and edited for publication. The theme of the meeting and the title of the book, *Global Change and the Caribbean: Adaptation and Resilience*, focus on the reaction of human systems in the face of global change as it affects the Caribbean.

The seminar series was inspired originally by the successful “Overseas Seminars” promoted by the then Institute of British Geographers during the 1970s and 1980s. It has gone from strength to strength and is the only one to last into the new century. This is a fact recognized by the Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers, as it lent its prestigious support to the series, in the present case through “seed corn” grants from its Developing Areas and Climate Change Research Groups. The Jamaica National Foundation contributed funds towards the publication costs of this book while project funds from USAID supported *Caribbean Geography* volume 20, a companion publication which contains papers presented by a selection of postgraduates at the sixth BCGS meeting.

The aims of the sixth BCGS, as in previous meetings, was to bring together geographers and researchers from cognate disciplines to exchange ideas and present their research; to provide a platform for younger researchers to present their work to a professional audience, perhaps for the first time; and to focus on Caribbean environments. This meeting involved over fifty participants and papers presented ranged across the geographical spectrum from subregional climate prediction to the social impacts of environmental change and economic globalization. Once again, the meeting had a truly international flavour, including presenters from eight Caribbean territories (Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, St Kitts/Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, St Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as from the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States, Canada and Colombia. Other participants in attendance

were from Antigua and Martinique. Although the majority of participants were geographers, the disciplines of geology, anthropology, development studies and environmental studies were represented, together with contributions from outside the tertiary academic sector – schoolteaching, international conservation NGOs and research institutes, and government departments of meteorology, environment and education.

The research themes established for the first conference in 1992 have evolved over a period of more than two decades, and this progression is discussed in previous publications in the series. For this conference the organizers were particularly keen to build on the momentum from the 2006 meeting. It was held under the theme of “Global Change and Caribbean Vulnerability”, and publications from the meeting appeared in a book of the same title published by the University of the West Indies Press in 2009. In that volume, the complexities of responses to the combined forces of global change, that is, environmental processes such as climate change and climate hazards, and economic processes such as globalization and trade liberalization, were highlighted through case studies drawn from across the region. Since then, there has been a shift in the research agenda and the wider literature towards how these factors provide opportunities and set constraints in the way societies adapt to and develop resilience to global change. The latter were some of the issues we asked participants to address in their presentations.

As in the previous volumes, the chapters here have been subjected to a rigorous peer-review process. Authors of conference papers selected for the volume were invited to submit manuscripts based on their presentations, and these were reviewed by the editors and selected referees. Changes were then requested for each of the submitted chapters to ensure quality and consistency in the collection, as well as to help elucidate the main themes of the book. Next, the publishers engaged independent, external reviewers who made general comments on the collection and specific comments on each chapter. Both authors and editors then went through another round of changes, trimming, extending and generally fine-tuning the collection. We feel confident that this rigorous two-step review process has produced another volume of high-quality papers.

This University of the West Indies Press publication, *Global Change and the Caribbean: Adaptation and Resilience* (Barker, McGregor, Rhiney and Edwards 2016), and the special issue of *Caribbean Geography* (volume 20, 2015) brings to an end the involvement of the senior editors (Barker and McGregor). The overall number of book chapters and *Caribbean Geography* articles published from the BCGS meetings is 114, out of a total of 181 papers presented at the six meetings. More than 40 publications have at least one author who was a postgraduate at the time of the conference, usually the presenter, and this represents around a third of the publications

from the series. It is to this generation of scholars that the series editors will look to take up the baton for the future.

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