

PRESS KIT: INFORMATION SESSION FOR CARIBBEAN MEDIA PRACTITIONERS

SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

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CARIBBEAN OVERVIEW

The Caribbean is a diverse region with significant economic potential and growth opportunities. Gross National Income (GNI) per capita varies from around US\$800 to over US\$30,000 and most countries rely primarily on tourism, while some on commodity exports. With its stunning scenery and vibrant cultures, the Caribbean is one of the world's top tourist destinations. Sustainable use of ocean resources, known as the “blue economy,” offers potential for economic diversification, while preserving the region's environment, as well as further development of other sectors with potential for growth.

COVID-19 pandemic impact in the Caribbean resulted in GDP contraction by as much as 16-20 percent in some countries in 2020. As tourism returned, uneven recovery started in 2021 with average growth in the region recording 9.7 percent. Worsening global economic environment in 2022 slowed the momentum and average growth in 2022 is estimated at 7.9 percent. As recovery continues, levels of debt to GDP started to trend down for most countries. Rising price levels and challenging global environment pose significant challenges as countries work to strengthen fiscal balances, revitalize growth and build resilience against natural disasters and to help cope with climate change.

Caribbean countries are extremely vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. Extreme weather events are common – the region experienced nine hurricanes at Category 3 and above in 2019-2020, and a record number of named storms in the 2020 hurricane season. When a hurricane strikes, it can wipe out more than the entire annual GDP of a small island and it is often the poorest that suffer the most. Major hurricanes include Irma and Maria in 2017, and Dorian in 2019. In April 2021, the eruption of the La Soufrière volcano in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has required mass evacuations, and is having widespread impacts on the country's people, infrastructure, and economy.

Building fiscal and financial resilience and investing in preparedness – be it physical, health-related, or social safety nets – are critical to reducing the large human and economic costs caused by climate change. The Caribbean also aims to develop new sources of economic growth and high productivity jobs, which will require investing in people and climate adaptation, improving the investment climate and connectivity, and safeguarding the environment.

COUNTRY LIST

- Aruba
- Barbados
- Bahamas
- Belize
- Cayman Islands
- Curacao
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Dominica
- OECS (Antigua & Barbuda, Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines)
- Sint Maarten
- Suriname
- Trinidad & Tobago
- Turks & Caicos



Lilia Burunciuc
Country Director for Caribbean Countries

Lilia Burunciuc is the World Bank's Country Director for the Caribbean countries. Ms. Burunciuc, a Moldovan national, is responsible for maintaining the partnership with the countries to address their development challenges.

Since joining the World Bank in 1996, she held a range of increasingly challenging positions: Director for Central Asia; Manager in Operations Policy and Country Services; Country Manager for Macedonia; Country Program Coordinator for Southern Africa and Central Asia; and Senior Country Officer for Ukraine and Belarus.

She has extensive experience on leading policy dialogue with governments on various aspects of development. She has a Master's degree in Public Administration from George Washington University (USA) and a Master's level degree in Economics, Management and Planning from the Technical University of Moldova.



E. Gail Richardson
Operations Manager for Caribbean Countries, Latin America and Caribbean

E. Gail Richardson is the World Bank Operations Manager for the Caribbean countries and Head of the World Bank's Office in Jamaica. In this role, she works closely with government counterparts, the Country Director, and technical teams to support countries to address their development challenges.

Prior to joining the Latin America and Caribbean region, Ms. Richardson was the Practice Manager for the Health, Nutrition and Population (HNP) portfolio for the South Asia region. In this role, she guided the development and quality of Bank supported HNP analytical products and financing operations in support of the Bank's goals to end poverty and boost shared prosperity.

Ms. Richardson, a United States national, holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration focusing on health policy and finance from the New York University (NYU).



Federico Baechli

Senior Country Officer for Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, The Bahamas and high-income countries in the Caribbean

Federico Baechli is the World Bank Senior Country Officer for Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, The Bahamas, and Overseas Countries & Territories in the Caribbean and manages the Bank's engagement, portfolio and pipeline of projects therein. Mr. Baechli is responsible for strategic engagements and policy discussions with clients and stakeholders, and strategic directions for Reimbursable Advisory Services (RAS) in OCTs.

He holds a Master of Business Administration with concentrations in Finance and International Business from The George Washington University School of Business, and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Denison University.



Diletta Doretti

Resident Representative for Guyana and Suriname

Diletta Doretti is the Resident Representative for Guyana and Suriname. Ms. Doretti, an Italian national, is responsible for maintaining the day-to-day dialogue and solid partnership around the World Bank programs in both countries.

Since joining in 2002, Ms. Doretti has held various positions at the World Bank, the most recent one as Senior Private Sector Development Specialist for the World Bank West Africa region, based in Mali. Ms. Doretti has strong and diversified World Bank experience in leading teams and in corporate assignments, including country engagements, developing World Bank's strategies around private sector, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Ms. Doretti holds a Master's degree in international economics from SAIS Johns Hopkins and Bachelor degree in International Affairs and Law from University of Florence.



Laurent Msellati
Country Manager, Haiti

Laurent Msellati is the Country Manager for Haiti. He recently served as the World Bank Country Manager for Mauritania after being the Practice Manager for the Latin America and the Caribbean Region in the Agriculture Global Practice of the World Bank. Previously, Mr. Msellati, a French national, held various positions in the Bank in the Middle East and North Africa (MNA), East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) and Latin America (LAC), including field assignments in Morocco between 1998-2001, as Senior Operations Officer and in Vietnam between 2003-2008 as Portfolio and Operations Manager.

He has a Masters of Business Administration in Finance and Economics from the Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi (Italy), and a Doctorate degree in Veterinary Medicine from the Ecole Nationale Vétérinaire de Nantes (France). He served as the editor for a “special issue” of the Scientific and Technical Review of OIE on “Good Governance and Financing of Efficient Veterinary Services” (August 2012).



Karlene C. Francis
Senior Country Officer, Jamaica and Dominica

Karlene Francis is Senior Operations Officer in the Caribbean Country Management Unit, in Kingston Jamaica. She leads the Bank's high-level dialogue with Jamaica, Dominica, and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Commission to build strong engagement and collaboration on program preparation and implementation. She also supports the Operations Manager in the planning, delivery, implementation, and monitoring of the Caribbean Country Management Unit's work program.

Karlene holds a MSc in Computer Based Management Information System and a BSc in Computer Studies (Computer Science and Management) both from the University of the West Indies. She is a Project Management Professional and has a Post Graduate Diploma in Public Sector Management.



Ricardo Habalian
Country Coordinator, OECS Countries

Ricardo Habalian is a World Bank Operations Officer for the Caribbean. He supports the Country Management Unit in the preparation of analytic and strategic reports and briefs, and in overseeing the quality of World Bank operations in the Caribbean.

Previously, Ricardo worked as the World Bank's Operations Analyst for Southeast Asia and as Junior Professional Associate for Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. Ricardo has a Masters in Development Studies from the London School of Economics.



Toyin Jagha
Programme Manager, Sint Maarten

Toyin Jagha heads the World Bank's Sint Maarten (SXM) Trust Fund portfolio in the Caribbean Country Management Unit of the Latin America and Caribbean region (LCR) at the World Bank Group. In this role, she provides overall strategic direction, leads program delivery and management, and contributes to knowledge management in Sint Maarten. She leads the Bank's dialogue in Sint Maarten on a broad range of operational, policy, and program issues, including establishing the office, identifying risks, overseeing staff, and managing resources effectively to deliver high quality investment projects, analytics, and advisory services.

Ms. Jagha holds a Master's in Public Health, focusing on health education and communication, from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria's Premier University. She also has a Bachelor's in Human Nutrition and is completing a Master of Business Administration at the University of Warwick, United Kingdom.



Frederic Verdol
Senior Energy Specialist, Programme Leader

Frederic Verdol is a Senior Power Engineer working at the World Bank Energy Global Practice. He is in charge of the Haiti Energy portfolio and is providing support to several teams and Clients in Latin America and Africa regions. Prior to working at the World Bank, he worked for 10 years at Electricite de France as Research Engineer on Energy Markets then as Planning Engineer for the French islands' power system operators. Frederic Verdol holds a Masters of Engineering from EPF, a masters in Environmental Management from ISIGE and a post-grad master in Energy Systems Optimization from Ecole des Mines de Paris.



Nataliya Mylenko
Lead Country Economist, Caribbean

Ms. Mylenko is the Lead Economist for the Caribbean at the World Bank, overseeing engagement on macroeconomic policy, financial and private sector development, governance and poverty in the region. Over the past two decades Nataliya worked at the World Bank, IMF and IFC on macroeconomic policy, private and financial sector development issues in over 50 countries.

Before joining the team in the Caribbean she led economic team for Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan. Earlier, she was based in East Asia region and focused on financial sector in the Philippines as well as worked on financial inclusion in Myanmar, SME finance policy in Malaysia, and financial inclusion and community development in Indonesia.



Emre Özaltın
Programme Leader, HLCDR

Emre Özaltın has over 20 years of experience in Global Development. His current work focuses on program implementation in FCV settings; designing multisectoral programs to build human capital; and donor coordination for sustainable development financing.

Emre leads country strategies in Human Development, works closely with country teams in the development and supervision of Human Development programs, and is responsible for multi-sectoral synergies and ensuring technical quality across the World Bank portfolio. He leads the policy dialogue in Human Development, supporting client countries to develop solutions to key development challenges.

Emre holds a Doctorate in Health Economics from Harvard University and a Masters in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from McGill University.



JB Collier
Senior Environmental Specialist, Programme Leader - SLCDR

John Bryant (JB) Collier is the Sector Leader for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean based at the World Bank's Regional Office in Kingston, Jamaica. In JB's 29 years at the World Bank, he has worked on environmental management and regional integrated water resources programs in the Europe and Central Asia, Africa, Middle East and North Africa, and now, the Latin America and Caribbean Regions.

JB is currently coordinating the World Bank's Sustainable Development in the Caribbean. His particular interest is focused on improving knowledge around the blue economy, climate finance, and disaster risk management in order to help clients continue to develop in the face of a changing climate.

JB holds a master's degree in International Relations from George Washington University. Prior to joining the World Bank, he served as a lieutenant in the US Navy.



Penny Bowen

Senior External Affairs Officer, Caribbean

Penny believes that communication can be a precursor to social change and strives to attain this in her professional life.

Prior to joining the World Bank in September 2022, Penny worked for the UN Development Programme, UNICEF, the University of the West Indies and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). She counts as her key skills being detail-oriented and results driven and, creates space for those who may not otherwise have.

Penny is a graduate of the University of the West Indies where she pursued a Master's degree in Communication for Social and Behavioural Change and completed with distinction.



Yuri Yamashita

External Affairs Officer, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Yuri is an External Affairs Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean at the World Bank. Based in DC, he manages the regional media pipeline, and is the communications advisor for the regional Chief Economist. Prior to joining the Bank, he worked at the World Trade Organization as a speechwriter for the former Director-General Roberto Azevedo.



Peleg Charles

External Affairs Associate, Haiti Country Office

Peleg is a Haitian national. He has joined the World Bank since January 2018, where he oversees all communication-related activities in the country office. Prior to joining the World Bank, he worked for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as a Public Information Officer, as a Communication Specialist and Knowledge Products Coordinator for UN Environment in Haiti, and for OXFAM as a Media and Communication Officer.



Jevon Minto

External Affairs Associate

Jevon is a Jamaican national. He joined the World Bank in November 2022 where he's managing and leading the Bank's digital engagement in the Caribbean. Before joining the Bank, Jevon was Economic Affairs and Public Diplomacy Officer at the Embassy of Mexico in Jamaica, a consultant with the IDB and a journalist with Nationwide Radio in Kingston, Jamaica.

October (biennial)
Poverty and Shared Prosperity

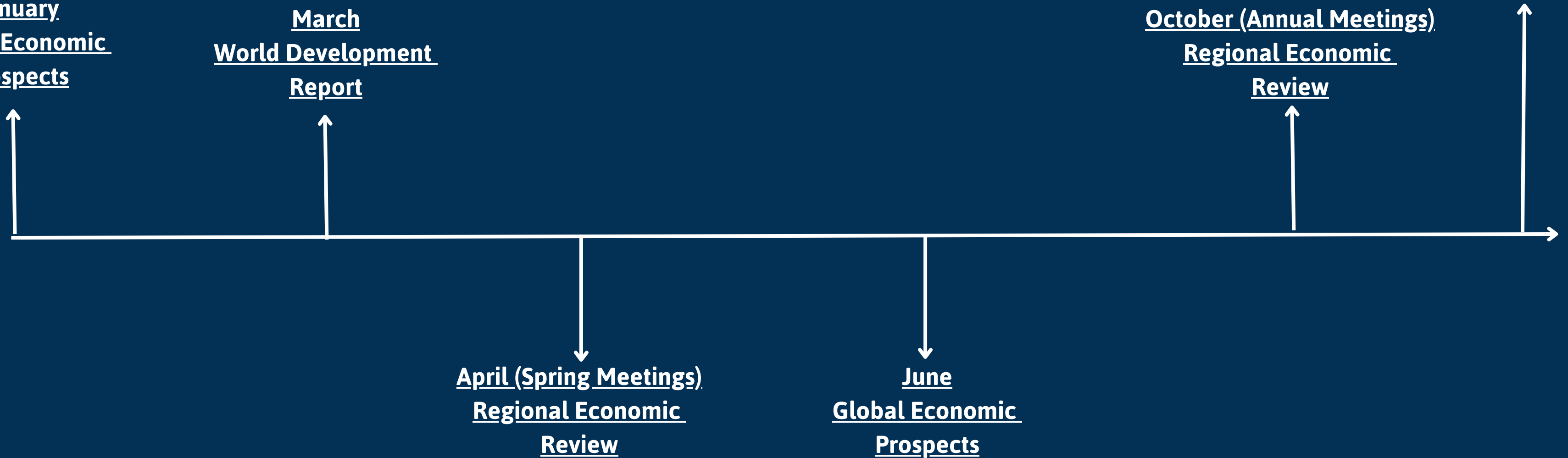
January
Global Economic
Prospects

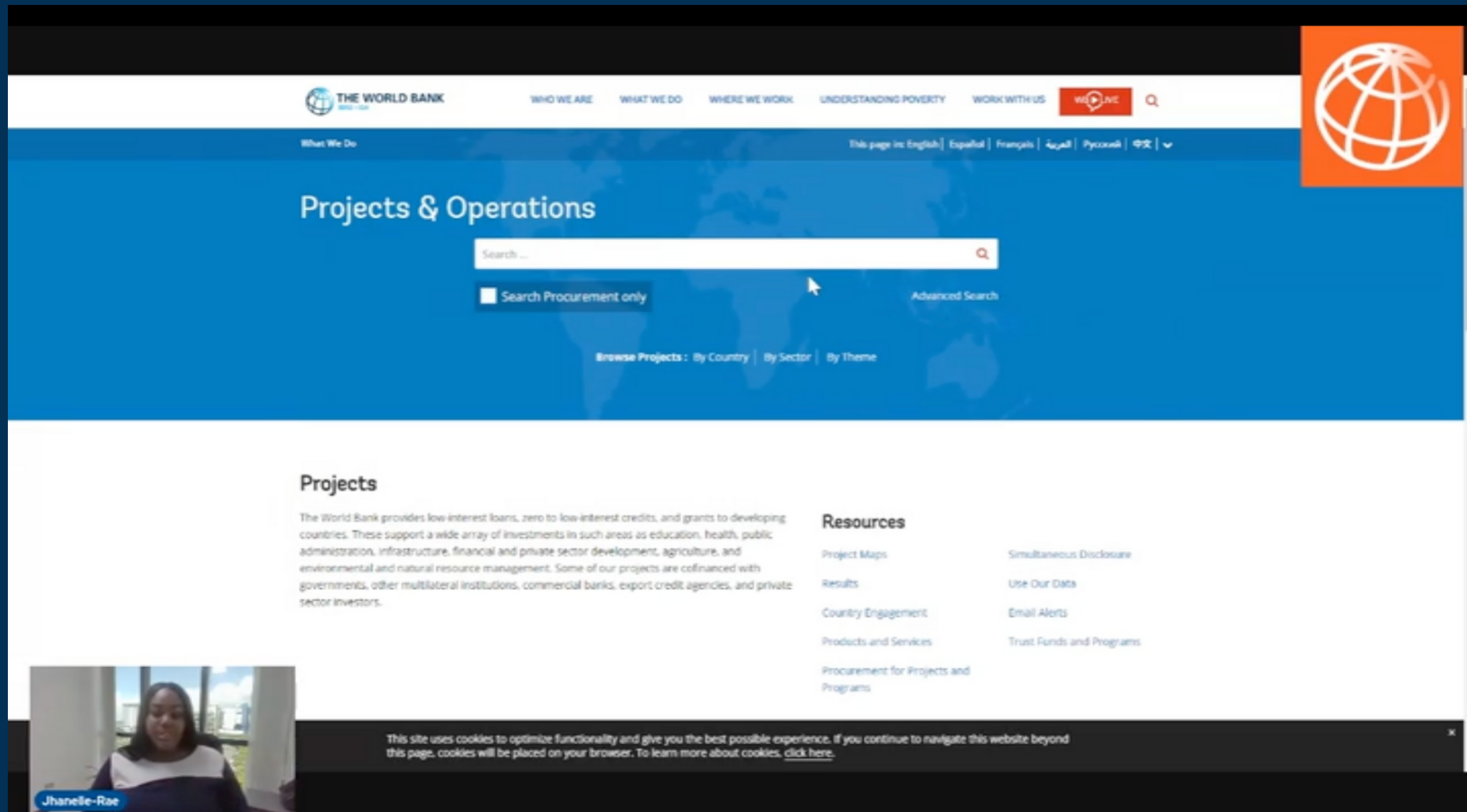
March
World Development
Report

October (Annual Meetings)
Regional Economic
Review

April (Spring Meetings)
Regional Economic
Review

June
Global Economic
Prospects





The screenshot shows the 'Projects & Operations' page on the World Bank website. The page features a blue header with the World Bank logo and navigation links: WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO, WHERE WE WORK, UNDERSTANDING POVERTY, and WORK WITH US. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the header, the main content area is titled 'Projects & Operations' and includes a search bar with the placeholder text 'Search ...'. A checkbox labeled 'Search Procurement only' is visible, along with a link for 'Advanced Search'. Below the search bar, there are links to 'Browse Projects: By Country | By Sector | By Theme'. The page is divided into two main sections: 'Projects' and 'Resources'. The 'Projects' section contains a paragraph describing the World Bank's role in providing loans and grants to developing countries. The 'Resources' section lists various links such as 'Project Maps', 'Results', 'Country Engagement', 'Products and Services', 'Procurement for Projects and Programs', 'Simultaneous Disclosure', 'Use Our Data', 'Email Alerts', and 'Trust Funds and Programs'. A video player is visible in the bottom left corner, showing a woman named 'Jhanelle-Rae'. A cookie consent banner is at the bottom of the page, stating: 'This site uses cookies to optimize functionality and give you the best possible experience. If you continue to navigate this website beyond this page, cookies will be placed on your browser. To learn more about cookies, [click here](#).'

- [PROJECTS.WORLDBANK.ORG](https://projects.worldbank.org)
- [MEDIA.WORLDBANK.ORG](https://media.worldbank.org)
- [WORLDBANK.ORG/EN/COUNTRY/CARIBBEAN/OVERVIEW](https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/caribbean/overview)
- [WORLDBANK.ORG/EN/PUBLICATION/MACRO-POVERTY-OUTLOOK/MPO_LAC#SEC3](https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/macro-poverty-outlook/mpo_lac#sec3)