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## The Caribbean's Nurses Shortage

The World Bank has recommended greater collaboration between nations to address the exodus of nurses from the English speaking Caribbean to more developed countries like Canada, the US and the UK.

The Bank wants the three countries to help Caribbean states to increase their training capacity and also better manage migration to help solve the problem. A report from the Washington-based institution, released on Tuesday, said the chronic shortage of nurses is limiting the quality of health care and may also be hindering development in the region.

The Caribbean countries named include Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

The report estimates that 7,800 nurses are working in the English speaking Caribbean - about one-tenth the concentration of nurses in some developed countries. The lead author of the report, Christoph Kurowski, said that figure is not adequate to serve the region. It is estimated that more than 1,800 nurses left the Caribbean to work abroad between 2002 and 2006. "People do not leave only for higher salaries abroad but for work conditions, career, opportunities and that is the problem," Mr Kurowski said. "These push factors are very hard to fix." The document also said that 21,500 nurses trained in the region now work in Britain, Canada and the United States - that's three times as many as those in their home countries. World Bank officials believe that the shortages of highly trained health care providers can also hinder economic growth, because businesses and retirees will stay away from the region if quality care is not available.