

**THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL MEETING TO FOLLOW-UP ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MAURITIUS STRATEGY
St Kitts and Nevis, 5 - 7 October 2005**

The Caribbean Regional Meeting to Follow-up on Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy was convened in St Kitts and Nevis from 5 to 7 October 2005 at the Marriott St Kitts Resort and Royal Beach Casino. The meeting was attended by Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico and United State Virgin Islands, the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Secretariat (OECS), the Association of Caribbean States Secretariat (ACS), the Caribbean Regional Negotiation Machinery (CRNM), the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI), the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Relief Agency (CDERA), the University of the West Indies (UWI), the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), the Sub-regional Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for the Caribbean (ECLAC-POS), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the Caribbean Conservation Alliance (CCA), CPDC, Caribbean Civil Society Forum (CCSF), Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST), Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN), the Caribbean Water Partnership (CWP), the Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Trinidad & Tobago for the Advancement of Women, Coalition for Community Participation in Governance Jamaica and the Non-Governmental Organizations Women's Resource and Outreach Centre Jamaica. The list of participants is attached as annex 1.

The opening session was chaired by Ms Shirley Skerritt-Andrews, Ministry of Sustainable Development. Welcoming remarks were given by Ms. Diane Quarless, Chief of the SIDS Unit, UNDESA, Mr. Thomas Gittens, on behalf of the UNDP Resident Representative and Resident Coordinator for Barbados and the OECS, Mr. Neil Pierre, Director of the Sub-regional Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for the Caribbean, and Ms Lolita Applewaite, Deputy Secretary General of the CARICOM Secretariat. A keynote address was given by His Excellency the Honorable Timothy Harris, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Commerce of St. Kitts and Nevis. The vote of thanks was given by Mr. Carlisle Richardson, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of St. Kitts and Nevis to the United Nations.

**Panel Presentation and Policy Dialogue on
Critical Challenges and Opportunities to Be Addressed by the Region**

The session was held on 5 October, and was facilitated by Mr. Thomas Gittens, UNDP. Ms. Shirley Skerritt-Andrews of St. Kitts and Nevis was elected Chairman of the Meeting. Mr. Hector Conde Almeida of Cuba and Mr. Roland Antonius of Netherlands

Antilles were elected Vice-Chairmen, and Ms. Henna Uiterloo of Suriname was elected as Rapporteur.

Panel presentations were made by Mr. Franklin McDonald, Dr. LaVerne Ragster, Dr. Leonard Nurse and Mr. Gordon Bispham. Statements were made and questions raised by CEHI, OECS Secretariat, Cuba, St. Lucia, Guyana, Suriname, Barbados, CKLN, CDERA, Trinidad and Tobago, Netherlands Antilles, CARICOM Secretariat and responses were given by the panelists.

Mr. Franklyn McDonald gave an overview of the priorities and continuing needs of the region, focusing in particular on marine, coastal and natural resources. Dr. LaVerne Ragster focused on capacity building possibilities for the region with emphasis on the newly proposed University Consortium. Dr Leonard Nurse elaborated the role of the UWI in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Mr. Gordon Bispham gave perspectives on the importance of continued civil society participation in the articulation of national strategies towards the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

During discussion, the following were highlighted:

- There are training and capacity building needs at all levels;
- There is also a need to place emphasis on training persons who are actual practitioners;
- There is an absence of a mechanism for best practices and information and skills sharing at the regional level, which has led to the perception that sustainable development was being implemented in a fragmented manner;
- The need for an enhanced reporting mechanism in the region
- The need to revise systems of land classification for environmental planning, improvement of regulatory arrangements for land use management and the enhancement of physical development plans;
- Further development of regional and local area plans for disaster mitigation;
- The need to adhere to existing standards such as building codes;
- Continued attention to coastal zone and water resource management;
- There is need for greater integration of the private sector in sustainable development strategies;
- Importance was given to building economic competitiveness and social resilience, and the need to focus on implementation of the MDGs and poverty reduction plans;

- Consideration of measures to implement the MEAs;
- The need for partnerships between government agencies, private sector and regional Universities for capacity building;
- Consideration should be given to framing sustainable development plans within the CSME. In this regard there is need for further analysis on how the social and environmental programmes will be impacted by the CSME;
- The need to coordinate environmental standards across the region;
- The importance of generating relevant data for decision-making; and
- The need to improve synergies among regional organizations in areas of importance to SIDS.

Consideration of Integrated Approaches to the Implementation of the MSI - Linkages and Synergies between Sectors, using Climate Change, Energy, Atmosphere and Industrial Development as Examples

The session was held on 6 October, and was chaired by the Vice-Chairman. Presentations were made by Ms. Skerritt-Andrews, Dr. Hugh Sealy and Professor Albert Henry Binger. Statements were made and questions raised by Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, St Lucia, Haiti, CCA, CEHI, Guyana, CCSF, UNDP, CCST, CARICOM Secretariat, ECLAC-POS, CWC, and ACS Secretariat.

Ms Shirley Skerritt-Andrew and Dr. Hugh Sealy described the experiences of St Kitts and Nevis and Barbados in their implementation of a national mechanism for the implementation of a national sustainable development strategy. Their experiences underscored the following:

- The importance of an integrated rather than sectoral approach to programming for sustainable development;
- The challenges of limited human resource capacity in specialized fields such as GIS, building management and environmental impact assessment;
- Note was made that CARICOM has a technical assistance programme, subsumed under the Work Programme of the CSME. This is an entry point that could be expanded to take on board the needs of sustainable development, as noted by the meeting.
- The need for reconciling policymaking functions with practical implementation;
- The continuing need for financial resources and the national level;

- The desirability of establishing a pool of regional experts for deployment on short term assignments in the service of national governments;
- The importance of developing national sustainable development policies The Barbados Model was based on the following principles and objectives: quality of life; conservation of resources – recognizing that there are bio-physical limits to growth; determining the carrying capacity of the island; ensuring economic efficiency and equity It should also ensure true participation of all stakeholders;
- The importance of developing sustainable development indicators.

Professor Binger discussed the importance of maximizing synergies among sectors to build resilience in small states, using as example the energy, tourism, agriculture, wastewater and land management. He also discussed the importance to SIDS of improving energy efficiency and on developing alternate energy sources, with emphasis on OTEC. He noted that SIDS tend to discount the vast resource that the oceans offer as an energy option. He also presented a case study on the use of sugar cane as biofuel for electricity production. He highlighted the importance of cutting import expenses for fuel which would in turn lead to social and economic benefits. SIDS should carry out energy audits, resource evaluation and energy usage profiles. They should assess and take action on the most suitable renewable energy and energy efficiency measures available. OTEC and biomass were in his view the most promising applications, but there is also ample scope for using simple solar applications.

Consideration of a Regional Mechanism/Consultative Framework for Most Effective, Coordinated, Coherent Implementation of The Implementation of the BPOA/MSI

The session was held on 6 October, and was chaired by the Vice-Chairman. Presentations were made by Mr. Arthur Gray (ECLAC-POS) and Ms. Glenda Itiaba (CARICOM Secretariat). Statements were made and questions raised by Trinidad and Tobago, ACS Secretariat, CEHI, Guyana, CSTC, CCSF, CPDC, CDERA, ECLAC-POS, CRNM, and CCA.

The session was continued on 7 October, and was chaired by the Vice-Chairman. Statements were made and questions raised by St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Montserrat, Guyana, Netherlands Antilles, Cuba, OECS Secretariat, UWI, CDERA, CPDC, Grenada, CCA, CCSF, ECLAC-POS and CARICOM Secretariat.

The presentations from ECLAC-POS and CARICOM Secretariat described the region's experience in attempting to establish a permanent regional coordinating mechanism to support national implementation of sustainable development and the Barbados Programme of Action. They made recommendations on possible approaches for the creation of a new mechanism.

The meeting reaffirmed that there was need for a regional coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the BPOA/MSI. It should be pan-Caribbean in scope, and should mirror national coordination efforts and reflect national priorities. Some functions of the mechanism were discussed such as coordination of implementation across the region through liaison with governments and agencies, provision of advice on global and regional sustainable development issues for governments, agencies and civil society, identification of transboundary issues for the region, and supporting national implementation via technical and other resources, arranging and coordinating consultative meetings. Furthermore, there was a need to establish commonly agreed sustainable development indicators to be utilized by the mechanism for reporting and monitoring purposes.

It was noted that there should be a clear political directorate for oversight, as well as a need for agreement on the functions of the mechanism, to identify gaps in the region. The very serious issues of coordination at the national level and reporting need to be addressed

It was noted that SIDS and regional agencies should apply the MSI to their current activities and development plans. It was suggested that a meeting could convene at end of CARICOM Council as a Caribbean sustainable development council. Other alternatives could also be explored. It was concluded that the mechanism needs to be financially sustainable and properly resourced. Finally it was emphasized that the mechanism should promote cooperation among the countries of the region.

A core group was established for considering elements for the new mechanism, with the following members: ACS Secretariat, ECLAC-POS, CARICOM Secretariat, OECS Secretariat, United States Virgin Islands, St Lucia, Belize (not present), Cuba, Jamaica, Guyana, CCA (facilitating and coordinating with NGOs, CAIC and CCL). The recommendations of the core group are attached in Annex 2.

Consideration of National Mechanisms and Frameworks for Most Effective Implementation of the BPOA/MSI

The session was held on 7 October, and was chaired by the Vice-Chairman. Statements were made by Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Dominica, Jamaica, Guyana and St. Lucia. A number of countries presented their experiences with national coordination of sustainable development issues. Key principles identified for constructive processes include transparency, inclusiveness of all stakeholders, and adequate resources. Some countries emphasized that sustainable development principles had been included in their national planning processes, including consideration of cultural aspects to development. While there were many best practices identified, it was recognized that each individual country must adapt these according to its national circumstances.

Consideration of Programmes for Operationalization of the MSI with focus on Regional and Sub-Regional Programming

based on Priorities Identified by the Region.

The session was held on 7 October, and was chaired by the Chairman. Presentations were made by the CARICOM Secretariat and UNDESA.

A chart describing the operationalization structure proposed by UNDESA is attached as Annex 3.

Statements were made and questions raised by United States Virgin Islands, Guyana and Cuba.

Conclusion of the meeting

The session was held on 7 October, and was chaired by the Chairman. The report of the meeting was presented by the Rapporteur. Statements were made and questions raised by CPDC and Netherlands Antilles. A clarification was given by the Secretariat. The Chairman proposed that the report of the meeting be adopted by acclamation and that the Rapporteur be entrusted with completing the editing of the report supported by the secretariats, for subsequent circulation to all participants.

CARICOM also circulated their document on “Partnerships for sustainable development in the Caribbean Region” which documented a series of partnership proposals developed by the region in preparation for the Mauritius International Meeting. A Youth caucus representative presented a statement on behalf of civil society participants, which is included as annex 4.

The Chairman thanked the organizers and declared the meeting closed.

Annex 2

Recommendations of the Core Group Regarding the RCM

Core Group Membership

Member States

- Belize – Not present - membership to be confirmed by Belize
- Cuba
- Guyana
- Jamaica
- Saint Lucia
- U S Virgin Islands - current Chair of CDCC

ECLAC/CDCC

OECS Secretariat

CARICOM Secretariat

ACS Secretariat – not present

CCA

1. With respect to the guiding principles and proposed objectives, it was agreed that:

- The CARICOM-OECS and the ECLACC/CDCC Submissions would be merged, taking on board the comments from Member States during the discussions.
- The merged document – to be called the Interim Report on the RCM - would be completed by 21 October for circulation to Member States and to facilitate the preparation of briefs for Ministers and other Officials attending the (UNEP) Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean to be held in Venezuela in October/November 2005;
- The opportunity of the UNEP Meeting should be taken for further discussions among Caribbean SIDS on the Interim Report.

2. As regards the Structure of the RCM, the Core Group agreed that;

Taking on board the recommendations of Member States and bearing in mind the Pan-Caribbean scope of the RCM Membership,

- The Secretariat functions for the RCM would be performed, in the first instance, by the CDCC Secretariat. The RCM Secretariat would work collaboratively with the Core Group;
- The Core Group should continue to provide coordination services to the RCM

Secretariat in the form of a Coordinating Committee. This Committee should be formally established at the time of the CDCC Ministerial Meeting to be held in January 2006. Its functions will be elaborated on in a report which will be submitted to Member States for comment by mid-November with a view to finalization in time for consideration and endorsement at the CDCC meeting.

To facilitate the smooth functioning of the RCM at the national level, the Core Group recommends that steps be taken to identify national focal points. To this end, Terms of Reference of the focal points will be elaborated in the report to be submitted to Member States in mid November with a view to finalization in time for consideration and endorsement at the CDCC Meeting.

3. With respect to the recommendations set out in decision 4 of the Fourteenth Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama, November 2003),

The Core Group underscores that the Coordinating Mechanism for Sustainable Development being established through this MSI implementation process is being created on the basis of a "... well-established, well defined regional co-ordinatory mechanism.." as articulated in decision 2(e) which calls for "Support for a well-established, well defined regional co-ordinatory mechanism for the further implementation of the BPoA."

The Core Group therefore:

- Calls on UNEP to lend support to the RCM
- Agrees that it would be critical for the RCM to collaborate with UNEP and other Agencies in the implementation of the RCM's Work Programme

Annex 3
UNDESA operationalization structure

Annex 4

Civil Society Statement at the Caribbean Regional Meeting to Follow-Up On Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy October 5-7, 2005

We thank the government and the people of St. Kitts and Nevis for their warm hospitality, and we thank those governments, CARICOM, and UN agencies especially UNIFEM and UNDP, for facilitating and supporting our participation.

We Caribbean civil society representatives, participating in these deliberations, have produced this statement, focusing on some priority issues and recommendations.

We reiterate our commitment to working with the governments in our respective countries towards incorporating sustainable development principles in our daily activities. We have journeyed with our governments on these issues since Rio and we are still here, committed and focused in our efforts to achieve the sustainable development of SIDS.

We are pleased with the movement of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) towards action with Caribbean SIDS and we are heartened by the current presence of the head of UNEP in the region, notably his very recent discussions not only with the Prime Minister of Jamaica but also with a broad cross-section of Jamaican civil society. We also continue to be appreciative of the efforts of the SIDS Unit to include us in the process. We also congratulate warmly CARICOM's introduction of the Sustainable Development Programme with a desk and warm body in the person of Mr. Garfield Barnwell and other colleagues. Such a focal point is a strong indication that CARICOM intends to take the issue of Sustainable Development forward.

The deliberations over the last three days have raised some 'old' issues and have also presented us with hints of new ways of planning, preparing for and managing the risks to our sustainable development. We are pleased to hear of the progress being made with: the University Consortium; the active role of the UWI; the development of CKLN, and the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands. We also take energy and strength from the developments in the OECS and the bold vision of St. Kitts and Nevis in their 'post-sugar' era.

We are however disappointed that the 4th pillar of sustainable development, that of Culture, has not yet been mentioned and accorded the importance it deserves as key to the implementation strategy, in particular with regards to sustainable livelihoods, and the distinct identity of our people.

Civil society strongly urges our governments to strengthen or develop strong, inclusive, effective, and efficient national coordinating mechanisms that feed into an equally effective, efficient and inclusive regional coordinating mechanism. The development of

the Barbados Sustainable Development Council as a national mechanism is one example of a possible national mechanism; we urge colleague governments to move in a similar direction as a possible means of developing a National Coordination Mechanism. In these deliberations we urge that in the establishment of the RCM, the strengthening of and respect for the work that regional organizations have been doing on our behalf, in many cases tirelessly and without recognition, be in our minds at all times.

Colleagues, civil society is committed to working with our governments and development partners on the further implementation of the BPOA/MSI. In this regard, a non-negotiable part of the framework for implementation is the meaningful, active, and inclusive participation of civil society. Civil society must be represented in any mechanism national or regional for it to be relevant, workable or successful. In too many of our states, alienation, isolation and apathy towards the political process reign in the minds of our people. A people-centred approach to development and SIDS-SIDS cooperation are fundamental to these mechanisms.

Governments need to live up to their commitment to include civil society as stakeholders in all spheres of planning; implementation; monitoring and evaluation of programmes and mechanisms, including the development of benchmarks and indicators.

The 10 year review process revealed a deep lack of awareness of the BPOA within all of our countries among our peoples. A strong public awareness and education process must be put in place, in order to ensure that the energies, innovation, expertise, capacities and resilience of our people will inform and work towards the success of the BPOA/MSI.

Colleagues, there are many issues and competing priorities that we must attend to. However, we believe that some issues have to be prioritized. From our perspective we believe that the future is now in regards to some issues ; these include acting boldly on the issue of renewable energy with all its implications for poverty eradication, food security, social cohesion, cultural identity, industry, and sustainable livelihoods; the HIV and AIDS pandemic and its impact on social development, gender equality, health, poverty and sustainable livelihoods; climate change and sea level rise – the implications for land use, industry, sustainable livelihoods; the use of science and technology to advance our development and the implementation of participatory governance.

Agriculture is critical to sustainable development of our region, a truth that cannot be over-emphasized at trade negotiations, including the upcoming WTO Ministerial Meeting

Calling to mind the commitment made by Caribbean governments to the development and implementation of A Gender Impact Assessment of the BPOA to be led by UNIFEM, we strongly urge you to live up to this commitment.

Youth empowerment, gender equality, and inclusion of the poor in decision-making all form part of the framework for successful sustainable development. Capacity building has a key role to play in achieving success.

We urge our governments not to act within the narrow confines of partisan political goals, but to demonstrate their capacity to effect a bold inclusive and participatory vision towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean SIDS.

Civil society's lifelong work is the creation of a resilient, self-reliant, socially cohesive, and equality-based Caribbean society where equal rights and justice prevail. We strongly urge our governments to journey with us towards this goal.