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Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

Sixth meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee
of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the Mauritius
Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme
of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island
Developing States

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**REPORT OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATING MECHANISM
FOR THE MAURITIUS STRATEGY FOR THE FURTHER
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND
DEVELOPING STATES**

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date

1. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) convened a one-day meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) in Port of Spain on 15 April 2014.

2. Attendance

2. Representatives of six Member States of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) attended the sixth meeting of the TAC: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.

3. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended the meeting: the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

4. Representatives of the following regional institutions attended the meeting: the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and the Caribbean Youth Environmental Network (CYEN).

5. Representatives of the following development partners attended the meeting: The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC), the Australian High Commission in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Delegation of the European Union in Trinidad and Tobago.

6. Representatives of the United Nations country team were present: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, the International Organization for Migration, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO)/World Health Organization (WHO), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Caribbean Regional Support Team, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC).

3. Agenda

7. The agenda adopted by the meeting is attached as annex II.

B. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of meeting

8. Welcome and opening remarks were delivered by the Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, who extended a warm welcome to all participants. She underscored the importance of the International Year of Small Island Developing States and the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. She urged participants to fully participate, deliberate and more effectively present the case regarding the unique development challenges faced by Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS). She highlighted the importance of adopting a comprehensive and integrative approach in addressing both sustainable development and SIDS issues to support the advocacy of Caribbean representatives negotiating in the SIDS post-2015 development processes in New York. The Director underscored the point that the sixth meeting of the TAC presented an unprecedented opportunity for Caribbean SIDS to prepare to insert themselves in a meaningful way into the multilateral development

agenda. She emphasized that the shaping of sustainable development goals will be the focus of the post-2015 development agenda, thus providing substantive context for the sustainable development of SIDS. The TAC was challenged to reflect on the circumstances and find inspiration to seize the day, given the context of the meeting. The Director concluded by reaffirming the commitment and support by ECLAC to the RCM/TAC in overseeing the implementation of the sustainable development programme of Caribbean SIDS.

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

9. An amendment to the agenda was proposed by the Chair of the RCM/TAC, Navin Chandarpal. He suggested to the meeting that, given its relevance to the discussions on the way forward to Samoa, the presentation on “Outcomes of the SIDS Interregional Preparatory Meeting” be addressed in agenda item 8 instead of agenda item 4 as it was anticipated that it would provide context to the item on “Preparations by Caribbean SIDS for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States”. The proposed amendment was approved by the meeting.

3. Review of Progress in implementation of the Mauritius Strategy: Caribbean Regional Synthesis Report

10. The Economic Affairs Officer in the Sustainable Development Unit of ECLAC presented a review of progress made in implementation of the Mauritius Strategy: The Caribbean Regional Synthesis Report. His report, which was informed by 13 national assessment reports (NAR), articulated progress in the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action (BPoA) and Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States (MSI). He reviewed the background that justified the preparation of the report and traced the progress of Caribbean States’ implementation of BPoA and MSI. He gave an overall account of the region’s achievements under each of the thematic areas, highlighting areas where countries reported significant progress¹ and those where progress was less notable.² He spoke to the absence of an integrated approach to the implementation of policies and strategies across thematic areas. He presented both general and specific challenges in implementation, highlighting in particular the difficulties posed by Caribbean SIDS’ graduation to middle-income status, debt burdens and social issues. He further focused on new and emerging challenges in terms of increasing costs of food and agricultural inputs, increasing fuel costs, long-term debt sustainability, the impact of carbon tax and border tax adjustments on Caribbean trade in goods and services, increasing antimicrobial resistance, rising unemployment, especially among the youth, women and other vulnerable groups and the threat of alien invasive species to biodiversity. He outlined the priorities of Caribbean SIDS going into the post-2015 development agenda as including the need for more reliable data on migration flows; the advantages of widening trading blocks especially with Latin America; the compilation and frequent updating of robust data to provide an integrated view of the issues; the need for increased investment in research and development and further the patenting of inventions originating in the region; improvement in the availability and efficiency of regional air and sea transport; the need for strategies to promote energy security; improvements in food and nutrition security; equality of educational opportunity and the need for increased attention to non-communicable diseases. He concluded that Caribbean SIDS have performed creditably in advancing the development agenda of the BPoA/MSI and that the post-2015 development agenda provides a context to examine gaps in implementation of the BPoA/MSI especially given the rapidly changing development environment.

¹ Climate change and sea-level rise, natural environment and disasters, waste management, health, coastal and marine, freshwater, energy, biodiversity resources.

² Transport and communication, science and technology, graduation from LDC status, sustainable production and consumption, national and regional enabling environments, knowledge management, culture, science development and technology transfer, national and international governance.

11. In response to the presentation, the meeting noted that countries are often overwhelmed by the reporting requirements under the various multilateral agreements to which they are signatory. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago gave an example of the challenge that his Government faced in attempting to report on the SIDS agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. The CPDC representative suggested that addressing governance is important in the strengthening of the Caribbean's approach to implementation of the BPoA/MSI. The CARICOM representative agreed that many existing governance systems needed enhancement and offered the Barbados model as one worthy of emulation.

12. The representative of CARICOM also highlighted the relative value of programme over project implementation, and in this regard, called for increased financing to be delivered at programme level in order to support sustainable development initiatives.

13. The Barbados representative noted that a major constraint for the region's development was the lack of availability of quantitative data, adding that an apparent increasing trend throughout the region was the production of reports and documents that were largely qualitative in nature. He therefore questioned whether or not the region was accurately tracing progress in implementation of the BPoA/MSI at the national and regional levels given the fact that such progress was being assessed largely using qualitative information. The participant from CANARI enquired of the methodology used in measuring progress in the region. She drew attention to the fact that the region would have to embrace the new post-2015 reporting system which would be results-based and as such it would be necessary to assess progress based increasingly on quantitative information. The representative of FAO suggested that an integrated approach to implementation utilising both qualitative and quantitative information may be one solution to the reporting challenge.

14. The CARICOM representative recalled that the regional Heads of Government expressed their concern regarding debt sustainability and growing unemployment. It was also a matter of concern that there was no institutional arrangement that offered any solutions to these challenges, since debt sustainability was dealt with on a case-by-case basis, when it ought to be treated as one of the subregion's priorities. He cautioned against the continued use of the debt for nature swap mechanism, and instead encouraged the region to invest in science and technology development. He suggested that a risk assessment framework is needed, given the open nature of the economies of the region.

15. The CPDC representative lamented that there was an excess of liquidity in the Caribbean that was underutilized and that countries seemed to prefer to seek external financial resources in implementing the BPoA/MSI. He therefore suggested that the region should review its business culture by focusing on the more efficient use of national resources and by offering an environment in which it would be easier to do business in the region. In this regard, the representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis stated that Member States should engage the private sector more vigorously in addressing national development issues.

16. The representative of UNFPA indicated that the challenges raised during the post-2014 review of the International Conference on Population and Development were lack of evidence based research, adolescent pregnancy (family planning), gender-based violence and adolescent sexual and reproductive health rights.

17. The issue of unemployment among youth was addressed by the representative of CYEN who reported that her organization promoted innovation and job creation at a regional youth conference convened in 2013 to address this continuing challenge. She expressed the view that educated youth were underutilised and linked this to the increasing trend of young people emigrating to search for better opportunities. The representative from ILO encouraged the exploration of opportunities in small and medium enterprises, and noted that self employment and job creation were positive initiatives towards addressing youth unemployment.

18. Furthermore, and in terms of the development status of Caribbean SIDS, the representative from ILO indicated that graduation to middle income status was a topic which the region should ensure that it was placed on the development agenda, as it did not accurately represent the economic and social status of countries and therefore compromised access to external resources. Many participants shared his views that the economics behind the classification needed to be revised or alternative indicators of development should be considered. The representative of CARICOM noted that other regions were agitating for a longer period for the process of graduation and challenged the region to define their position on graduation.

19. The representative of CPDC highlighted the fact that the region was losing competitiveness in the tourism sector due mainly to insufficient diversification of tourism products. He stated that the region had stopped delivering a unique product and should therefore focus more on strengthening the quality of service offered. He also suggested that governments should be encouraged to focus on investment initiatives that maximise use of the region's biodiversity given the substantial wealth of such resources in the Caribbean.

20. Although countries had reported progress in the area of health, the representative of PAHO indicated that social determinants which created challenges for health were still to be properly addressed. She mentioned the need to ensure that adequate attention be paid to non-communicable diseases as there was an emerging trend of increases in the incidence of such diseases. She further pointed to the increasing trends in the incidence of crime and violence across the region that put a strain on health resources. She was convinced that a more holistic approach to health care and, moreover, primary health care was needed.

21. The representative of CARICOM expressed concern that the region was not on track with its objectives to achieve sustainable development, although he had faith that it was still possible to do so. He emphasized that the region's priorities needed to be clearly defined and as such suggested that the establishment of a robust database that would facilitate quantitative assessments of progress made in implementation of the BPoA/MSI was essential. He also underscored the important role that the RCM should play as an effective tool in supporting sustainable development in the Caribbean.

4. Strategies to overcome barriers to implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in the Caribbean

22. A presentation on the barriers to implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in the Caribbean was delivered by the Sustainable Development Officer of ECLAC. In her introduction, she identified the constraints associated with implementation of the BPoA/MSI in chronological order starting from 1998 to present. She noted that as time progressed new challenges emerged. She presented a paper that identified possible strategies to overcome the barriers to implementation of the BPoA/MSI in the Caribbean. Analysis of the data highlighted has a common theme the lack of coordination and communication of activities among various entities at national, regional and international levels. Graduation to middle income status and the consequent reduced access to official development assistance and other concessionary sources of financing were also identified as major constraints. Other key issues such as insufficient investment in science, technology and innovation, the need for greater strengthening of the capabilities of research agencies in the collection, processing and evaluation of data, and in the redesign of existing social safety net programmes were emphasized.

23. The presentation addressed several strategies to enhance implementation of the BPoA/MSI including changes in the current structure and composition of National Councils for Sustainable Development that would provide greater support to the SIDS agenda in coordinating of activities towards implementation of the MSI at the national level. Some of the areas that were highlighted included access to financial resources to facilitate full operationalization of the RCM, capitalization of the Caribbean

Sustainability Fund³ and Green Climate Fund⁴, and participation in Aid for Trade⁵ initiatives. Establishment of the Climate Technology Centre and Network to enhance technology cooperation and transfer to developing countries was also considered necessary to facilitate implementation of the BPoA/MSI. It was recommended that this should be supported by the establishment of a dedicated technology transfer facilitation mechanism and financing strategy with the support of United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes in order to ensure that environmentally sound and appropriate technologies are developed in SIDS.

24. The presentation also recommended the promotion of SIDS-SIDS and South-South cooperation as well as collaboration with the Caribbean diaspora which could facilitate the introduction of new technologies that were deemed applicable to Caribbean SIDS. It was stated that this should be complemented by investment in science, technology and innovation to promote effective and efficient sustainable development in the subregion, in accordance with national interests and priorities. Of importance in this regard is the strengthening of capabilities of research agencies in the collection and processing of data, as well as the generation and analysis of statistical indicators. The need to evaluate and redesign existing social safety net programmes that would focus on improving conditions which provide greater incentives for highly skilled workers to remain at home thereby limiting “brain drain” was also discussed in the presentation.

25. The presentation also addressed the need for International support for implementation of the United Nations Political Declaration for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases at the regional and national levels as well as support for the Strategic Plan of Action for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases for countries of the Caribbean Community 2011-2015. In terms of partnerships, the presentation recommended support from the international community in the establishment of a SIDS Partnerships Support Framework.

26. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda observed that the identified barriers focused on weak institutions and suggested that there were many other barriers to implementation of the BPoA/MSI that were not mentioned. The presenter clarified indicating that the study was intended to address the emerging challenges that were highlighted at the regional preparatory meeting held in Jamaica in 2013 which were primarily in the areas of social and economic development and governance. Participants generally agreed that the barriers were relevant and that implementation of the BPoA/MSI was stymied by lack of coordination of activities resulting in a disjointed approach to programme implementation. Issues regarding the rationalisation of implementation of activities at the regional level and the appropriate institutional mechanism to advance SIDS issues were raised. The representative of CARICOM, CDB and the OECS underscored the importance of improving coordination and cohesion among entities at the national and regional levels.

27. The representative of the OECS indicated that this approach should also be applied at the subregional level. In this regard, he noted that the OECS had successfully submitted proposals to the donor community through existing strategies such as the Growth and Development Strategy. He further suggested that CARICOM, as a subregional agency could also use the existing policy framework to support implementation at the national level.

³ http://www.pnuma.org/sids_ing/documents/National%20Reports/Regional%20Sustainability%20Fund%20_last%20version_.pdf.

⁴ http://unfccc.int/cooperation_and_support/financial_mechanism/green_climate_fund/items/5869.php.

⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/development/aid-for-trade/>.

28. The meeting's subsequent discussion was given largely to consideration of the challenges presented by a lack of effective coordination. Representatives noted that the SIDS sustainable development agenda was very broad and involved a variety of stakeholders rendering coordination a formidable challenge at the national level. There was also general consensus that coordination at all levels; national, regional and international was not adequate to advance the SIDS agenda and that this could be pursued by raising awareness of challenges being experienced by Caribbean SIDS in implementation of the BPoA/MSI with a view to improving communication among relevant line ministries and regional and subregional organizations.

29. It was also determined that the recommendations coming out of the study would need to be presented in an appropriate manner if they are to be taken into account by policymakers. Additionally, it was agreed that the report was indeed a good entry point for establishing benchmarks which could be used to measure progress in implementing the BPoA and MSI. It was also agreed that a mechanism for raising the importance of SIDS issues at the political level should be developed and the need to define a financial mechanism to facilitate implementation of the SIDS agenda was underscored. In this regard the meeting accepted the study with amendments to the recommendations.

5. Update on the Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme (SIDS/TAP)

30. An update on the SIDS/TAP was provided by the Research Assistant in the Sustainable Development Unit of ECLAC. The presentation gave a historical account of the development and evolution of the SIDS/TAP, starting from its earliest elements which focused on technical support for development at the international level in 1964, leading to its application at regional and national levels for SIDS by 1995. She indicated that the objectives of SIDS/TAP were to strengthen inter- and intraregional cooperation among SIDS; to provide a mechanism to facilitate the promotion and utilization of experiences and knowledge from and among SIDS and; to provide a pool of expertise relevant to the sustainable development of SIDS which could be used as the basis for promoting technical cooperation among them.

31. The following recommendations were presented as a strategy for revitalizing the SIDS/TAP: (i) review original structure and interconnectivity of SIDS/TAP and its link to the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSNet), (ii) strengthen technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) and their Information Referral System for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (INRES), (iii) update versions of SIDSNet, TCDC and INRES.

32. In the ensuing discussions, the representative of Antigua and Barbuda noted the need for full assessment of the sustainable development experience at the national level, and questioned whether or not the data collected for development were suitable for this purpose. She suggested that the challenge nationally was to secure political support for SIDS development. She also posited that there was a need for more quantitative data to gauge sustainable development, rather than a simple reliance on qualitative data. The CARICOM representative emphasized that data were critical for development. He also affirmed that from the global standpoint, data were better utilized to inform the development aspirations of the advanced economies, while data for small states were not as readily available. He asked the meeting to consider what could be done to ensure the availability of data for development of Caribbean SIDS.

33. The representative of CPDC, in addressing the recommendations for revitalizing the SIDS/TAP proposed that Caribbean SIDS strategically pursue donors who would be willing to provide meaningful support to their sustainable development efforts. The representative of CANARI endorsed the proposal for reactivating SIDS/TAP, particularly at this time when there is significantly more information available.

34. The ECLAC Sustainable Development Officer sought clarity on the key functional differences between SIDS/TAP and SIDSNet and inquired about the role to be played by SIDS/TAP that could not have been achieved with SIDSNet. The representative of CPDC clarified that SIDS/TAP was in effect a mechanism for generating the exchange of skills among SIDS and in so doing effectively stimulating economic activity among them. The Barbados representative affirmed that SIDS/TAP was intended to facilitate the sharing of technical expertise among SIDS and that it was to serve as a facility to support increased South-South cooperation. The Sustainable Development Officer suggested that SIDSNet was essentially a knowledge exchange forum, while SIDS/TAP had more of a research focus. The Research Assistant also conveyed her understanding that SIDS/TAP was intended as a clearing house for SIDS skills and experiences.

35. The representative of CDB questioned the need for SIDS/TAP if the intention was merely to facilitate the movement of persons and skills, suggesting that other mechanisms already existed for this purpose. The representative of CYEN concurred that SIDSNet already played such a role.

36. The Chairman of the TAC, in summary, offered the perspective that the intention of SIDS/TAP was to provide for the special resource needs of SIDS. However, he wondered, given the evolving circumstances of time, whether the mechanism as it currently existed could still serve this particular need.

37. The ECLAC Director suggested that perhaps a new database for the purpose of facilitating exchanges among SIDS was not necessary. At the same time however, she questioned whether or not the RCM in its present configuration had the facility to secure sufficient information to support decision-making in Caribbean SIDS. The ECLAC Sustainable Development Officer in responding used the opportunity to underscore that the RCM structure as proposed had never been fully operationalized and that only the TAC Secretariat had been functioning to provide support to the process. She reiterated the need for the Member States to support the RCM. She also observed that with respect to the research undertaken on SIDS/TAP, ECLAC was specifically responding to the expressed needs of the member countries.

38. In this regard, the Chairman of the TAC proposed that the meeting encourage Member States to give greater consideration to supporting the RCM process. He concluded by appealing to the countries to establish the national mechanisms which were considered critical for the full operationalization of the RCM.

39. The meeting agreed that SIDS/TAP could serve as a useful mechanism for the sharing of information and data and, once operationalized, could well complement SIDSNet.

6. Developing an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) platform in support of the BPoA/MSI

40. A demonstration of the Caribbean Development Portal and draft ICT platform was given by the Associate Management Information Officer of ECLAC. In this demonstration he set the context for the RCM ICT Platform, highlighting the importance of sharing information such as digital documents and news in the Caribbean. He introduced the platform as an internet-based community where information and experiences could be shared. He further showed that activities undertaken in the implementation of the BPoA and MSI could be entered directly into the website under a particular thematic area, and the modality of initiating related discussion forums. Additionally, he presented particular graphs, explaining the value of data correlation and information to decision-making in the region. He emphasized the importance of stakeholder participation in ensuring that the objectives of the platform were achieved. Lastly, he demonstrated how reporting fatigue should be countered to ensure a constant supply of information by highlighting which indicators were most important, how value could be added to the

platform, and asked for opinions as to the issue of whether or not certain areas should be limited to particular personnel.

41. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda reported that the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) had launched a system to retrieve information from national platforms to populate their central system. She suggested that consideration be given to adopting the same. Many participants agreed that integration between information platforms would indeed assist the process and thereby prevent reporting fatigue.

42. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda further added that it was unlikely that countries would employ services to ensure that data and reports would be submitted to the platform because of concerns with confidentiality. In response, a representative from ECLAC underscored the importance of the platform to the monitoring and implementation of the BPoA and MSI, emphasising that countries would have to commit to the facility for it to be useful and would need to make decisions with respect to sharing of confidential information and data. He added that data should be shared to ensure regional success and that this point must be emphasized at a national level. The CARICOM representative added that countries that mask or hide their information do so at their own peril. He commented that it was crucial to strengthen user ownership and added that the platform could serve as an incentive for countries through effective showcasing of implementation of the BPoA and MSI and their status in that regard could be documented and displayed.

43. The representative of Guyana pointed out that the absence of statistical data was often due either to their unavailability or their unavailability in a user-friendly format. He added that it was important to show country comparisons and that the demonstrated ICT mechanism could serve as a catalyst to ensure the process would be made easier.

44. The representative of CYEN stated that the platform was very appealing from a youth perspective and that it was an extremely useful tool for information gathering. She also suggested that a method be considered to maximize the knowledge management potential of the platform which would be to allow access to students in particular, so that they could utilize the information as well as share the results of their research. She also added that a survey platform may be useful for the collection of data to be presented.

45. There were several ideas regarding the most effective strategy for engaging the public. It was suggested that the ICT platform should be as dynamic as possible, should maximize the use of social media by for example placing the Twitter feed higher on the page; visual clips could be used; an interactive map that would show the status of implementation could be prepared and updated and substantial and high quality information could be made available. The CPCD representative noted that the presentation of the data itself should be informed by a communication action plan so that it remained of high value to the user. The representative of Barbados stated that was it imperative to nurture a discussion forum to facilitate exchange of data and information among countries and that the ICT platform was well positioned to ensure this.

46. The Sustainable Development Officer of ECLAC concluded that the platform was intended to be of service to all countries, and that its aim was to be dynamic and to encourage and facilitate high quality communication among countries so that experiences and discussions could be shared in real time.

7. Preparations by Caribbean SIDS for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States

47. The Outcome of the SIDS Interregional Preparatory Meeting (IPM) that was held in Barbados in August 2013 was presented by the Senior Environmental Officer from Barbados. He highlighted the relevant documents of the meeting which included the Barbados Declaration and the Barbados outcome document, both of which found expression in the zero draft for final negotiation in the upcoming Third International Conference on SIDS that will be held in Samoa in 2014. He focused on the outcome document stating that it reflected reaffirmation of the commitment of SIDS to all previous relevant declarations and agreements that mirror their special circumstances and called for support from their partners in pursuit of their sustainable development goals. This, he mentioned was within the context of a common shared vision and commitment of SIDS to collective action and a post-2015 development agenda that included an institutional framework that took into account the particular concerns and priorities of SIDS. This vision was summarized in short as “nothing about us without us”.

48. The presentation acknowledged progress made by SIDS in implementation of the BPoA and MSI but noted that this progress had been uneven and required continued effort and support by development partners. The challenges faced by SIDS in implementation of the BPoA and MSI and the gaps that still existed in meeting their commitments were highlighted. These gaps existed in the energy, climate change and land degradation sectors. The enabling environment in terms of availability of financial resources, capacity, integration of the BPoA and MSI into national sustainable development plans, trade, middle income status, indicators of development, unemployment, citizen security and transboundary issues were also mentioned. The presentation introduced new and emerging issues such as non-communicable diseases, pursuit of the green economy and information and communication technologies for development, and reiterated the need for practical and pragmatic actions for addressing these new and emerging issues. He suggested that priorities for the post-2015 agenda should include special consideration of the uniqueness and vulnerabilities of SIDS, and a people-centred approach and development of appropriate indicators to measure progress were underscored. Emphasis was also placed on the importance of oceans and the need to address oceans governance in formulation of the sustainable development goals. The presentation emphasised the importance of having measurable outcomes from Samoa and on the formation of technical cooperation and partnerships, especially since the negotiating text for Samoa was now in the forum of the Group of 77 (G-77). He concluded that the implementation of the Samoa outcome was immediate and that integrated, balanced and inclusive development was the main focus.

49. During the subsequent discussions one of the ILO representatives suggested that a strategy for measuring, assessing and prioritising development aspirations for the Caribbean was necessary. He stated that specific proposals should be drafted going forward to the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Samoa in order to support implementation of the BPoA and MSI and to ensure that priority areas were addressed in a substantial and tangible way. He noted that not all proposed development issues would necessarily be accepted in the meeting negotiations. Many representatives expressed that they too considered the preparation of specific proposals to be presented to the donor community to be of utmost importance. In response, the Chair pointed out that the Caribbean Region was already aligned with the position presented in the G-77 draft negotiating document and further indicated that the upcoming discussions in New York at the intersessional meeting to be held during the week of 23 April 2014 would be seeking to determine non-negotiable issues. He also observed that the outcome of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States would strongly inform the SIDS perspective in the shaping of the sustainable development goals going forward to the post-2015 development agenda.

50. The Trinidad and Tobago representative reminded the meeting that the negotiations from the region were not limited to the CARICOM States but included the wider region. He also noted that the crafting of the Caribbean position for the SIDS Conference had so far not sufficiently involved the political leadership of the Caribbean. He therefore underscored that the critical dimension going forward would be securing political guidance for the process. In this regard, he considered it important that Caribbean political heads convene prior to the International Conference in order to present their perspective on key issues.

51. The Antigua and Barbuda representative expressed concerns about the integration of the negotiation process with the rest of the wider institutional process and underscored the need to examine the relevance of the SIDS process to the national development agendas of individual countries.

52. The CPDC representative observed that many development partners may have adopted their programmes years in advance and this may well have limited their capacity to take into consideration the needs of Caribbean SIDS that would be agreed to at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. He pointed out that it would therefore be necessary to examine how the work programmes of these organizations could be influenced, especially when consideration of issues were usually urgent. He further commented that the views of the development partners found strong expression in the zero draft prepared for the negotiations in Samoa, and suggested that this could be disconcerting for SIDS. He also noted, with concern, that there was misalignment between policy and project priorities and suggested that this occurred due to projects being donor driven. Lastly, he agreed that the region needed to decide on the most relevant and appropriate partnerships that it would seek to negotiate and develop before going forward to Samoa.

53. The CARICOM representative stated that a multilateral system was fundamentally important to SIDS in the development of programmes that would support implementation of the BPoA/MSI. He was of the opinion that few institutions had a comprehensive development framework for SIDS and that the SIDS development agenda was the only flexible policy space available. He reflected that the G-77 draft was deficient on social issues and that the focus on climate change was narrowly defined. He also noted that the revised draft did not call for the establishment of a Disaster Resilience Fund which as a key request of Caribbean SIDS. Ultimately, he suggested that the region's negotiators should closely re-examine the revised G-77 document to ensure that these issues were fully addressed in the text going forward to Samoa. Participants who had not yet seen the document were urged to review it closely and to forward relevant comments to the country representatives who were involved in the negotiating process.

54. The representative of CANARI expressed concern that there was no robust linkage between the proposed outcome document reviewed to date, and the proposed post-2015 agenda. She suggested that CARICOM needed to advocate for specific priorities and indicated the critical need for specific targets and indicators to inform the draft outcomes and that both the issues and their related targets and indicators should be negotiated in tandem.

55. There was concern expressed as to whether or not consideration of new issues tabled by Caribbean SIDS could be entertained in the final negotiating text at this stage. It was noted that the perception of SIDS from other regions was that the issues of the Caribbean SIDS were relatively well reflected in the document as compared to those of other regions.

56. The Director of the ECLAC subregional office for the Caribbean suggested that at the core of the SIDS discussions was the question of the modality of maximizing the benefits of the negotiations. She identified that political leadership was absolutely essential, underscoring the continuing need for the Caribbean Region's political leaders to be convinced that sustainable development was currently the most important agenda that had to be embraced. She wondered whether or not the group gathered for the

present RCM/TAC meeting could make decisions for the region in the absence of their political leaders. She gave priority to the building of partnerships and expressed the view that Caribbean SIDS, as middle income countries, needed to better make an effective case on their vulnerability in order to gain adequate attention from the international community. The Director queried which critical projects should be derived from the current SIDS negotiation process and suggested that there should be clear priorities as well as strategies to exploit the momentum of the International Year of Small Island Developing States in order to obtain the maximum development benefit. She cautioned that the region may not necessarily obtain all that it sought in the negotiations and further suggested that the region should also have a back-up list of priorities. She concluded by suggesting the need for two broad outcomes, namely, stronger political advocacy and practical, solid, and specific outcomes from Samoa.

57. The Chair observed that while the Caribbean did not achieve all the specific results which it sought from the International Conference in Mauritius, a clear set of project proposals which had resulted in financing in nine areas programmes were successfully negotiated with the international donor community. He identified, for instance, the Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Management regional project as well as several renewable energy projects. In this regard, he recommended that a similar approach be adopted with respect to the International Conference in Samoa. The meeting agreed with this approach and the intention to develop project proposals that would be used in bilateral meetings with the international donor community in Samoa.

58. The ECLAC Sustainable Development Officer inquired as to representation on behalf of the associate members at the negotiations in the SIDS meeting that was held in Mauritius. This was asked within the context of representation of this group at the Conference in Samoa. The Chair indicated that in Mauritius meeting, while CARICOM did not speak specifically for the associate members, they raised related pertinent concerns on behalf of the associate members. However, he sanctioned that the best available mechanism for all Caribbean SIDS to pursue their negotiations would be through the CDCC. He further noted that the majority of Caribbean SIDS was CDCC members and therefore CDCC could be utilized in representing the views of the associate members.

59. The Saint Kitts and Nevis representative expressed the view that an analysis should be performed on the methodology and subsequent gains of other SIDS regions regarding negotiations in other fora as this could be useful in gauging likely expectations and assisting the Caribbean's case in the upcoming negotiations.

60. The Chair requested the meeting to identify the key thematic areas that would inform the preparation of proposals. The CANARI delegate shared 13 areas which were already identified by that organization through previous consultations with CARICOM delegations.⁶ Additional proposals were raised from the floor.⁷ In light of the several proposals, the ILO representative suggested that the proposals be clustered into core areas with a view to identifying possible regional and national projects

⁶ New internationally accepted measures for development beyond gross domestic product, climate and disaster risk reduction. Energy: increased use and access to renewable technologies, reduced reliance on fossil fuels. Non communicable diseases; Food security and nutrition, Gender: elimination of violence against women, under education, women in decision-making, maternal health; citizen security; debt sustainability; global partnerships – enablers e.g. technology transfer, capacity building; infrastructure for sustainable transportation; job creation – entrepreneurship (and capacity building), small, medium-sized and micro enterprises development; data collection and statistics.

⁷ National enabling environment, community based adaptation, strengthening institutional infrastructure in the United Nations, debt financing and sustainability, disaster risk reduction, waste and marine pollution management from land based sources, monitoring and evaluation, ICT and knowledge management, a suitable replacement for the Commission on Sustainable Development, non-communicable diseases, migration, sea level rise, cultural industries, integrated trade assessment facility, comprehensive risk assessment framework, environmental indicators, financial mechanism for SIDS, renewable energy development; energy security, health and social issues: HIV/AIDS, financing for development, human rights, youth, international shipping instruments to assist the region with meeting the requirements and codes for safe maritime operations, small scale fisheries – linked to livelihoods and pollution from land-based sources of marine pollution, food and nutrition security, transportation and communication.

which could be presented for support from development partners. The Barbados representative also proposed that meeting participants forward their suggestions to members of the CARICOM delegation for inclusion in the negotiations to take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York the following week.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

61. The Chair of the TAC subsequently concluded by providing a brief summary of the day's discussions and highlighted the following issues:

1. The region should prepare specific and targeted programmatic proposals that would focus on strong partnerships given that the overarching theme of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014 was "The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships."
2. The G-77 negotiating document should be circulated for review and comments to ensure priority areas are incorporated into the zero draft.

62. Recommendations to be taken to the CDCC meeting to be held in Jamaica on 25 April 2014 were as follows:

1. The CDCC should review effectiveness of the support provided by ECLAC as the Secretariat of the RCM and obtain a definitive response from ECLAC as to support for full operationalization of the RCM.
2. The CDCC should decide on ways to improve its effectiveness in providing leadership to the implementation of the BPoA and MSI.
3. The CDCC should address support for the work of the TAC and for the meaningful involvement of all countries and regional institutions in its work.
4. Member States should ensure the identification of national focal point mechanisms, in order to commit and maintain linkages with the RCM. The national focal points should make every effort to ensure that coordination at the national level was optimized.

9. Closure

63. In closing, the ECLAC Director encouraged countries to participate in the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda and indicated the need to mobilize representation for Caribbean SIDS at the Conference at the highest political level. She suggested that the RCM/TAC take a decision to maintain ongoing consultations with the negotiators in New York in order to guarantee the finalization of proposals for presentation at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Samoa. She also reiterated the need to be proactive in the search for partnerships to support the proposals. She expressed the hope that the Caribbean would be able to engage donors who are willing to provide support in pursuing initiatives going forward to Samoa. She finally thanked participants for enriching the discussion on the post-2015 development agenda and looked forward to continuous collaboration with the subregion in operationalization of the RCM.

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Annex II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of Progress in implementation of the Mauritius Strategy: Caribbean Regional Synthesis Report
4. Strategies to overcome barriers to implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in the Caribbean
5. Update on the Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme (SIDS/TAP)
6. Developing an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Platform in support of the BPoA/MSI
7. Preparations by Caribbean SIDS for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States
8. Conclusions and recommendations
9. Closure