



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

Caribbean Regional Strategic Consultation on
the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation
of the Barbados Programme of Action for the
Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States
25 August 2013
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**REPORT OF THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL STRATEGIC
CONSULTATION ON THE MAURITIUS STRATEGY FOR THE
FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME
OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

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A. DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The following decisions and recommendations were expressed:
 - (a) The institutional aspect of sustainable development required attention;
 - (b) There is need to graft the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) agenda onto the post-2015 agenda;
 - (c) It is necessary to strengthen the framework for sustainable development throughout the public sector;
 - (d) It is important to more effectively integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely the social, economic and environmental;
 - (e) The special vulnerabilities of Caribbean SIDS need to be granted special consideration within the context of building resilience;
 - (f) Caribbean SIDS should develop a long term vision for sustainable development and shape a development strategy to pursue it;
 - (g) Caribbean SIDS need to develop a common understanding of the blue and green economy and more clearly articulate the particular interests and objectives for each in respect of SIDS;
 - (h) Caribbean SIDS need to clearly describe what they, as SIDS want, what can be realistically achieved within the shaping of the post-2015 agenda, and should also determine what space they can occupy in the new reform structure;
 - (i) There is need to strengthen regional coordination among Caribbean countries for more effective delivery of development assistance;
 - (j) Implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy is essential to successful implementation of a sustainable development agenda in the Caribbean;
 - (k) There is need to place greater emphasis on forging relationships with new development partners and on seeking new avenues to support implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;
 - (l) The SIDS Technical Assistance Programme (SIDS/TAP) needs to be promoted and operationalised and the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSNet) enhanced and expanded;
 - (m) A platform to promote the further development of information and communication technology is needed;
 - (n) A small group comprising representatives and some member States will be established to facilitate strategic planning by Caribbean SIDS between this meeting and the Third International Conference on SIDS in 2014.

B. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date

2. The “Caribbean Regional Strategic Consultation on the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States” was convened by ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean on 25 August 2013 in Bridgetown, Barbados.

2. Attendance

3. Present at this meeting were representatives from the following countries: Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. Also represented was the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The list of participants can be found at Annex I.

3. Agenda

4. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Gaps in implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy and concrete actions to address these gaps
3. Interventions by individual experts
4. Summary of discussions and recommendations and the way forward to Samoa
5. Closure

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of the meeting

5. The Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the Caribbean Strategic Consultation in preparation for the Third Conference on Small Island Development States. She stated that ECLAC was indeed pleased to support the request of the Government of Barbados for the convening of these consultations. She expected that the deliberations and discussions would produce tangible strategies that might be useful to Caribbean SIDS in implementing the BPoA and the Mauritius Strategy. She noted that member States were already familiar with the challenges facing SIDS. What was now important was the need to focus on the political intergovernmental process in the launching of the global dialogue. Furthermore, she stated that it was important for the Caribbean to identify its priorities and to more clearly define the relationship with colleagues from the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and South China Seas (AIMS) and the Pacific in advancing the Caribbean development process. She further emphasized the need to maximize the international processes related to review of the Cairo Programme of Action on Population and Development and the Beijing Programme on Women and to develop synergies among them. The Director of ECLAC noted that it was also necessary to consider the review of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) implementation, the evolving post-2015 development agenda and the global focus being given to shaping of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). She asked the meeting to consider the necessary actions at the national and international levels that the SIDS agenda should pursue, especially in exploring partnerships, and the steps

that will lead up to the Third International Conference of SIDS that will be convened in 2014. She also asked the meeting to consider the modalities for developing, over the next 12 months, a strategy for SIDS to identify a way in which the debate at Samoa may be used to insert SIDS concerns into the post-2015 dialogue.

In conclusion, she underscored the importance of the theme “leave no one behind” in bringing equity into focus as regards the social agenda. This dimension of sustainable development will demand greater attention, along with the economic challenges faced by SIDS including their middle income status, and the many environmental fragilities characteristic of SIDS.

6. The Senior Foreign Service Officer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados welcomed participants to the informal consultation and requested open discussions during the course of deliberations. He underscored the importance of the international conference as a strategic opportunity to pursue the development agenda. The success of the Samoa Conference will depend on the interregional SIDS meeting that will take place from 26 to 28 August 2013 in Barbados. The representative of Barbados indicated that the process leading up to the Third International Conference on SIDS began with the preparation of national reports and the convening of three regional meetings. He stated that the Caribbean needs to refine its approach during the interregional meeting. He therefore looked forward to interactive discussion to produce tangible and practical solutions. He also noted that issues such as implementation gaps, enabling environments, institutional and financial support to position SIDS in the 2013 debate on SDGs and the role of the United Nations are critical. He drew attention to the need for the United Nations to adopt a better approach to development. In conclusion, he provided information on the side events that would occur at the interregional meeting.

7. The facilitator from the Ministry of Environment and Drainage of Barbados outlined the process for the interregional meeting and advised that a drafting group would be formed to work on the negotiating document previously developed in New York. He referred the meeting to the Caribbean Regional Synthesis Report that included information from the National Assessment Reports (NARs) and the Caribbean Forum on the post-2015 development agenda that was convened in Colombia in May 2013.

2. Gaps in implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy and concrete actions to address these gaps

8. The Director of ECLAC presented the Regional Synthesis Report that was informed by 11 NARs. She highlighted the challenges that Caribbean SIDS continue to face in implementing the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy. In terms of gaps, she noted the absence of any reference to institutional frameworks in the Caribbean Regional Synthesis Report. With respect to partnerships, she recalled initiatives on climate change, water and biodiversity as well as the SIDS Consortium of Universities. Challenges were then addressed and these were mainly in the areas of technical, financial and human resources as well as in the area of economics; but it was noted that the institutional challenges were not mentioned by Caribbean SIDS.

9. Gaps in implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy ranged from lack of ocean governance policy frameworks to systems for monitoring and evaluating implementation; inclusive of the development of targets and indicators as part of such systems, and integrating the social dimension in the sustainable development agenda. She continued to focus on Caribbean priorities and presented a number of concrete actions that may be employed by countries to meet the challenges and gaps and to address the concerns of Caribbean SIDS in implementing the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy. Among these were greater regional collaboration, SIDS-SIDS and SIDS-South cooperation, access to foreign direct investment and calling upon the developed countries to utilize another measure of economic progress apart from gross domestic product (GDP).

10. Finally, she focused on new and emerging issues such as non-communicable diseases, oceans governance, cyber crime, employment creation and global cultural penetration on social capital. She then presented proposals for practical and pragmatic action-oriented strategies. These included strengthening of National Councils for Sustainable Development, the establishment of cooperation platforms for interregional cooperation, strengthening of the Sustainable Development Unit at CARICOM Secretariat. She concluded by suggesting issues for discussion which included the need for strengthening statistical capacity, the conduct of environmental audits and addressing sustainable consumption and production.

3. Interventions by individual experts

11. The representative of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology of Saint Lucia expressed the need for data strengthening in terms of producing quantitative assessments of activities towards implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy. He mentioned the need to capture data for evidence-based policy making. He also emphasized the importance of developing concerted action to address food, water and energy security which are fundamental economic and social needs of all SIDS. He stated that the question of gender should be pursued in a manner that more truly represented the Caribbean reality rather than addressing a women's agenda only. He said that this was important since the data showed evidence of increasing risk of marginalization among young men in particular.

12. He noted that regional connectivity including transport to facilitate travel and trade was important and yet had not received adequate attention. He pointed to the air passenger duty (APD) recently imposed on passengers arriving in the Caribbean from the United Kingdom, suggesting that such a tax was viewed as a penalty that may well be applied to the shipping sector in the future. With respect to imposition of the APD, he indicated that countries such as Grenada and Saint Lucia that had suffered severe setbacks due to natural disasters should not reasonably be penalized with the imposition of this tax. He indicated that pursuing a hard line on compensation for loss and damage from natural disasters might result in a failure to obtain the support of developed country parties that might be more inclined to provide support for rehabilitation. He added that at the level of Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), there were issues that, if not addressed, could result in a rift between the regional groupings.

13. He also noted the ongoing challenge faced by SIDS to cope with new international processes and suggested that national visions and plans be used to contextualise these processes. He invited reflection on the extent to which Caribbean SIDS were setting a space for themselves and achieving long-term visioning within the context of "the SIDS we want." He suggested that this visioning be taken at the regional level to assure a more proactive approach for each new global process. He enquired of actions at the national and regional level that might be considered in pursuing this visioning.

14. The delegate from the Permanent Mission of Guyana to the United Nations suggested that even as consultations on the preparation and consolidation of the SIDS agenda for the Third International Conference advanced, SIDS should remain seized of the need to become actively involved in, and to influence current processes that have the potential to significantly impact the strength of the SIDS position in global discourse. These processes include the Open-ended Working Group on SDGs, the Committee on Financing and the ongoing consultations on the post-2015 development agenda. He underscored the importance of developing a coordinated strategy for implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy and the need to consolidate the messaging on the special vulnerability of Caribbean SIDS and the need to build a platform to address their resilience to the international community.

15. He complimented the Secretariat on the quality of the Caribbean Regional Synthesis Report. He expressed the view that the reports' analysis of gaps and challenges were too subjective and that a more objective analysis of the issues was necessary. This was important in ensuring accountability on the part of Caribbean SIDS in implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy. He underscored the need for the

energy, financing and institutional aspects to be given more attention and that the interests of SIDS have not been adequately articulated and accommodated at the international level. He concluded that it was necessary to mainstream the SIDS agenda in the international discourse and particularly across the United Nations system.

16. The facilitator noted that many of the gaps in implementation highlighted ten years ago were still apparent. He questioned the capacity of the Caribbean countries to build the enabling environment necessary to support implementation of the BPoA and the Mauritius Strategy.

17. The representative of the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development of Trinidad and Tobago underscored the importance of proper and measurable indicators for successful implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy. Such indicators would ensure more effective monitoring and accountability on the part of member States. He identified as a continuing challenge the fact that in many countries sustainable development portfolio remained the purview of the ministries of the environment and that the involvement of the ministries of Finance, Planning and Public Administration in many instances still has not been secured. He suggested that the Caribbean was still not clear on the most effective mechanisms for implementation of a sustainable development strategy. He also indicated the need to streamline governance systems related to implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy and that the consequences for failure to meet the agreed targets should be carefully examined. He welcomed the tone of the discussions and suggested that more attention be given to promoting cross-cutting collaboration among policymakers and to the agendas of multilateral financial institutions. He underscored the importance of ensuring that the SIDS agenda is integrated in the global political agenda.

18. The representative of the Office of the President of Guyana welcomed the contributions of the Caribbean Regional Synthesis Report in a number of practical areas. He also noted its value in articulating problems and identifying strategies which provide a good base for going forward. He mentioned that there was sectoral reporting on national activities to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and he recommended that such reporting be conducted cross-sectorally and in pursuit of the three dimensions of sustainable development. He cited an example of trade that was a matter of concern to all Caribbean countries although at the regional level the countries have not yet developed strategies to examine the ways in which trade issues could be addressed *en bloc* at the World Trade Organization. He further emphasized the need to address sustainable development through cross-cutting issues. He stated that the Caribbean should focus on:

- (a) Securing Caribbean interests, using as leverage the review process of the Third International Conference on SIDS;
- (b) Strengthening the commitment of Caribbean SIDS to actively participate in the formulation of the SDGs at the political level; and
- (c) Influencing the international community to deliver on commitments to Caribbean SIDS.

19. The representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba sought clarification on the scope of definition of Caribbean SIDS. He specifically wanted to know whether the larger islands were indeed considered SIDS. The meeting agreed that all Caribbean islands are SIDS, given that they face common challenges. He further mentioned that it was necessary to align Caribbean regional documents with those from the World Summit on Sustainable Development. He questioned the need to describe as emerging issues in the Regional Synthesis Report long-established challenges like debt and food security. Noting that many of the structural problems of Caribbean SIDS still exist, he recommended reaffirmation of agreements and commitment to build on these before addressing new issues. He recommended that emphasis be given to international cooperation while not losing sight of national circumstances and demands.

20. A representative of the Ministry of Environment and Drainage of Barbados noted the attention given to the issue of integration in the three regional outcome documents. He also underscored the importance of improving national, regional and international enabling environments. He also shared the view that efforts should be made to integrate the Caribbean SIDS agenda, especially new and emerging issues, into the post-2015 development agenda. He invited views on practical actions which might be taken to meet the objectives of the Third International Conference on SIDS. He recommended that the objectives of the Conference be more carefully articulated. The representative of Barbados also suggested separating the new and emerging issues from the ongoing challenges that Caribbean SIDS were facing and supported the views expressed that the international community be held more accountable in respect of their commitments to support the efforts of SIDS.

21. In response to a question from the facilitator regarding inequities in employment and GDP among Caribbean SIDS, the Director of ECLAC explained that the goods-producing economies were performing better than the service-oriented economies, the latter being more seriously affected by global recession. She mentioned that a long-term vision for SIDS should be articulated. She recalled that during the Mauritius Strategy +5 Review, a multisectoral platform had been designed to map the sectoral issues in the BPoA and to identify the United Nations agencies that could provide support. This platform was slow in being operationalised. She explained that as a result of concern expressed by the CARICOM Secretariat, the platform was withdrawn and replaced with a new arrangement led by the United Nations Development Group for Latin and American and the Caribbean whereby United Nations support would be offered to the Caribbean at the regional level with focus on only a few priorities. These have been identified and proposed most recently as climate change and the environment, institutional strengthening and human security. She further stated that it would be for the Caribbean to determine whether or not this new arrangement would respond adequately to their needs as regards support for the implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy. She reiterated the need to graft the SIDS agenda to the post-2015 agenda. She concluded that it was necessary to examine the development of a strategy to support implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy. This strategy should seriously consider the ministerial location of the sustainable development portfolio.

22. The representative of CARICOM underscored that although goods-producing economies were performing better than service-oriented economies, this effect may well be short lived since they are producing mainly primary goods. He also suggested that the gains made in goods-producing economies may be eroded in an instant from the impact of a natural disaster as occurred in Grenada. Such extreme events inevitably require the rebuilding of capital stock, infrastructure and productivity and Caribbean countries face high probability of recurrence of these disasters. These events significantly affect the ability of the Caribbean to produce goods and meet export commitments and often undermine the reliability of SIDS as a trading partner because of lost markets. He recommended the establishment of a disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation grant funding facility to finance infrastructure damaged as a result of disasters. This would complement the programme that the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility currently provides.

23. The representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica noted that countries were inserted into the global economy in different ways and therefore were constrained by the choices made. Such circumstances were not always conducive to the promotion of a sustainable development agenda. She indicated that there was a lack of coherence and consistency in the approach of the developed countries to the sustainable development of SIDS. Practical and pragmatic actions were needed but these may not address the inherent vulnerabilities of SIDS. She encouraged more attention be given to the provision of quantitative evidence of the special vulnerability of Caribbean SIDS and to the mainstreaming of SIDS in all international activities. She further recommended that more attention be given to strengthening an institution such as the AOSIS in support of more effective advocacy.

24. The representative of the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment of Cuba pointed to two proposals from the Kingston outcome document; one for the establishment of a mechanism for financing and another for technology transfer. These proposals were articulated in the Rio+20 meeting and are being addressed in the post Rio+20 ongoing processes in New York. The representative suggested that it was important to focus on these proposals and to avoid the creation of additional mechanisms that will achieve the same purpose. She further indicated that those mechanisms would be based on the presentation of concrete projects on sustainable development by developing countries and in particular Caribbean SIDS. In this regard, she also indicated that it was important to identify the priorities of Caribbean SIDS in the support of these proposals for the further operationalisation through Agencies, Funds and Programmes of the United Nations system. She concluded that the priorities needed to be concretised if support from the international and United Nations communities was to be obtained.

25. The representative of the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic stated that it was necessary to focus on specific priorities and main objectives. She acknowledged that Caribbean countries are at different stages of economic development and face varied vulnerabilities. She agreed that it was necessary to seek additional financing to support Caribbean SIDS and to strengthen SIDS-SIDS relationship.

26. The representative of the Office of the President of Guyana reiterated that the United Nations was now focused on a single post-2015 development agenda for the international community and that this agenda would not automatically consider the special circumstances of SIDS. For this reason, it was imperative that SIDS follow this agenda carefully to determine how the specific needs of SIDS could be most effectively incorporated. He underscored that while many of the issues of importance to Caribbean SIDS (such as trade) were common to all developing countries, Caribbean SIDS had special vulnerabilities especially in relation to climate change and natural disasters, which would demand a unique treatment of common issues. He reminded the meeting of the “sustainable energy for all” initiative established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations which allowed SIDS to garner greater support from SIDS DOCK, which provides access to financial resources in the promotion of low carbon economies, financing for climate change initiatives and for investing in sustainable energy projects.

27. The representative from the Ministry of Environmental Planning of Bermuda stated that his country faces the same challenges as other SIDS. Convincing politicians to develop national sectoral development plans remains a challenge. In this regard, it is necessary to elicit the support of policymakers in developing national sectoral plans and in ensuring coordination among sectors in the implementation of such plans. He mentioned that the economy of Bermuda was service-oriented and was therefore being negatively impacted by the global situation.

28. A representative of the Ministry of Environment and Drainage of Barbados mentioned that full operationalisation of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for SIDS had been retarded due to inadequate attention by policymakers. He underscored the importance of securing the Kingston outcome. In this regard, the Caribbean Regional Synthesis Report should serve as the basis for discussions in the interregional meeting. He also suggested that a group be constituted to work on a road map to the Third International Conference on SIDS. The issue of the position of SIDS in the General Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme and operationalisation of SIDS/TAP should be discussed.

29. The representative of the Permanent Mission of Belize to the United Nations agreed that it was important to consider the objectives of the interregional meeting and to ensure that these Caribbean consultations prepared the group for the interregional meeting.

4. Closure

30. The Director of ECLAC thanked the hosts of the consultation, the facilitator and all participants. She reiterated that in respect of both SIDS and the post-2015 development agenda, the discussions have only just begun and ECLAC will seek to facilitate another engagement before Samoa to sharpen the ideas in the Kingston document.

Annex I**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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