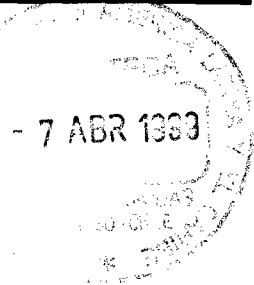




- Antigua and Barbuda
- Aruba
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Br. Virgin Islands
- Cuba
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Montserrat
- Netherlands Antilles
- Puerto Rico
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Suriname
- Trinidad and Tobago
- U.S. Virgin Islands



GENERAL
 LC/CAR/G.545
 1 September 1998
 ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE SIDS BUREAU



REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE SIDS BUREAU

The Meeting of the SIDS Bureau, convened by the Joint Interim Secretariat for implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS/POA) in the Caribbean - ECLAC/CDCC and the CARICOM Secretariat, was held on 16 June 1998, at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

The Bureau member countries represented were: Barbados (Chairman), Cuba and Guyana. Also, present was a representative from Jamaica. A list of participants is attached at Annex I.

The Meeting adopted the following Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Presentation of the Report of the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG)
3. Review of the Draft Budget for the Regional Coordinating and Consultation Mechanism
4. Funding of the Budget
5. Preparation for the Donor Council Meeting, February 1999
6. Establishment and Functioning of the Interim Secretariat
7. Implementation of Decisions of the Ministerial Meeting
8. Development of a Caribbean Position for the 1999 SIDS Review
9. Raising awareness for the SIDS Priorities
10. Any other matters

Agenda item 1 Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed members to the first official meeting of the SIDS Bureau, noting that an Informal Meeting had been held on 23 March 1998. She stressed the need to urge action on decisions made at the Ministerial meeting held in November 1997, if the Region was to progress in implementing the SIDS POA.

Agenda item 2 Presentation of the Report of the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group

The Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean presented a Summary Report on the Meeting of the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG), held on 15 June 1998. The main objectives of that meeting were: to review the implementation of the SIDS POA to date and the progress made in the execution of the Joint Work Programme (JWP). The Director reported that, to date, most agencies had begun to undertake several of the activities assigned to them in the context of the JWP and that some of which had already been completed. Satisfactory progress was noted in many areas of the JWP. However, it was observed that in those areas of the JWP whose execution required the collaboration of a number of institutions, implementation could be better

achieved if a single institution were to be designated as lead agency for that particular area. The role of lead agency is still evolving but includes the coordination of the activities of other institutions toward the implementation of the JWP and reporting to the SIDS Bureau on the status of implementation. The "Lead Agency" concept does not imply the assumption by the institution so designated, of total responsibility for the implementation of the activities of the areas in question. The Report of the IACG Meeting which incorporates a schedule of proposed Lead Agencies is attached at Annex II.

Agenda items 3 & 4
Review of the Draft Budget for the Regional Coordinating
and Consultation Mechanism
Funding of the Budget

The Meeting agreed to review the envisaged budget for the joint secretariat since it was perceived that the current budget was becoming inapplicable. It therefore defined the budget as comprising two parts: the cost of the process of preparation for the 1999 Special Session of the General Assembly and the cost of the actual establishment of a permanent secretariat. These were seen as separate but parallel processes. It was agreed that ECLAC/CDCC would reformulate the budget accordingly.

The representative from the Government of Barbados expressed his/her country's interest in hosting a secretariat with the reservation that political agreement by other Caribbean countries would simplify the process for its establishment.

The Meeting noted that during the preparatory period for the Special Session of the General Assembly, both CARICOM Secretariat and ECLAC/CDCC were incurring costs, which were identified as contributions by these organizations to the process. In this context, each organization was in the process of hiring an additional staff member to assist with the SIDS POA effort.

Agenda item 5
Preparation for the Donor Council Meeting, February 1999

The meeting was informed that some countries were ill prepared for the forthcoming Donor Council meeting. While recognizing the resource constraints facing the subregion, it was noted nevertheless, that countries had not taken full advantage of available resources and opportunities.

In preparation for the Donor Council meeting, it was suggested that each country prepare a list of national projects that required funding. The Secretariat indicated its willingness to offer assistance in this regard. The Interim Secretariat would prepare a list of regional projects contained within the JWP on the basis of which, potential regional projects could be developed. Assistance could also be obtained through the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) Project Preparation Facility. A deadline of 15 November 1998 was set for the completion of these activities.

Agenda item 6
Establishment and Functioning of the Interim Secretariat

The meeting discussed the respective roles of the two organizations which formed the Interim Secretariat of the SIDS Bureau and it was agreed that there was a natural division of labour between them. CARICOM Secretariat had proven itself to be particularly useful and instrumental in the area of political relations since its budget allowed for representation at various fora. It was thereby perceived as the political arm of the Interim Secretariat. ECLAC/CDCC's role was more of an operational nature, dealing with technical aspects and, also the convening of meetings.

It was established that the Interim Secretariat had been entrusted with two priority areas of concern namely: the coordination of follow-up activities and dissemination of information. In addition, the Interim Secretariat was required to act as an intermediary body between the IACG and the SIDS Bureau. In this context, the Interim Secretariat would report to the Bureau on the activities of the IACG.

Agenda items 7 & 8
Implementation of Decisions of the Ministerial Meeting
Development of a Caribbean position for the 1999 SIDS Review

The SIDS POA will be reviewed at a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 1999.

The Meeting identified the critical need for political support of the SIDS POA and of the preparatory process leading to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Recognizing that the agenda of the Conference of the Heads of Government and CARICOM did not include an item on the SIDS POA, the Meeting requested the representative of Guyana to ask of his President to bring the issue of the SIDS POA to the attention of the Heads of Government Conference. That request was supported by the representative of the Government of Barbados. In that regard, the Bureau requested that the following text be presented for consideration of CARICOM Heads of Government Conference:

- CARICOM Heads of Government express political endorsement of the SIDS POA up to and beyond the 1999 United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) review;
- CARICOM Heads of Government express support for the ongoing activities of the Bureau and the Interim Secretariat toward implementation of the SIDS POA, in particular,
 - Preparation of a Regional report which will have two major components, (1) Status of Implementation, and (2) Strategic Plan for Future Implementation;

- Preparation of both national and regional project proposals for the execution of sustainable development initiatives that are in accordance with the requirements of the SIDS POA and that will be compiled into a portfolio for submission to the February 1999 SIDS Donor's Meeting;
 - Coordination of the implementation of the JWP which is a plan for collaboration and joint implementation between countries, regional and international agencies and NGOs, covering all chapters of the SIDS POA as well as cross-sectoral issues;
 - Follow-up meetings of the Bureau and the Interim Secretariat as well as inter-agency meetings that will be held to prepare positions for the UNGASS 1999 SIDS Review;
 - Attempts to work with other regional bodies such as SPREP, toward establishing a collaborative SIDS position for the 1999 review;
- Heads of Government decide to convene a CARICOM Ministers of the Environment meeting early in December, so that Ministers can endorse the work executed above; and agree to the submission of the Regional Report and positions of CARICOM SIDS on priority areas and issues encompassed therein;
 - Heads of Government express support on the intention to establish a Permanent Mechanism in one of the islands to facilitate continued regional efforts and SIDS implementation beyond 1999; and
 - CARICOM Heads of Government support the representation at the highest possible level at the 1999 United Nations General Assembly and the above referred to CARICOM Ministers of the Environment meeting in December 1998.

It was agreed that the Interim Secretariat would draft the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Regional Report and consult with the SIDS Bureau prior to commencement of its work. The draft report would be reviewed at the SIDS Bureau/IACG meeting scheduled for October 1998. The final draft would be submitted to a SIDS Ministerial Meeting to be held in December 1998.

The representative of Guyana informed the Meeting that Guyana was now a member of the Bureau of the CSD. He stated that the trend of the CSD Meetings had changed, and instead of revisiting past issues they were now focusing on decision making. Therefore it was suggested that the Report focus on outstanding national, regional and global commitments; on overcoming implementation handicaps and deficiencies, and highlighting the issues/needs of all governments.

It was also agreed that countries should clearly indicate their priority concerns with respect to the implementation of the SIDS POA and present these to the CSD and other international agencies for commitment. The need for a deliberate attempt at re-emphasizing the issue of commitment was emphasized. Countries should, therefore, identify very early what they wanted to achieve from the 1999 Special Session of the General Assembly to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

The Meeting agreed that three briefs covering respectively, the SIDS POA and the Tourism and Ocean Chapters of Agenda 21, should be prepared for review at the CARICOM SIDS Ministerial Meeting, December 1998, and by the CSD in 1999. The Joint Interim Secretariat would collaborate with the SIDS-IACG on the preparation of these papers.

Agenda item 9 **Raising awareness for the SIDS Priorities**

It was agreed that there was need for raising awareness for the SIDS priorities since (it appeared that) while the SIDS POA related activities were being carried out in all countries, often a direct reference to the SIDS POA was absent. Therefore, the impression was created that there was low priority for the SIDS POA. It was suggested that getting people involved with implementation of the SIDS POA should start with governments, which should interact closely with their communities in this exercise. The view was expressed that education and environmental awareness were critical variables in raising awareness at the regional level. The Meeting noted the work of the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA) in this area and recognized its important role in achieving this goal.

Agenda item 10 **Any other matters**

The SIDS-IACG requested that the status of the TCDC Compendium of Projects be brought to the attention of the Bureau. At present, no action was being taken with regard to furthering the implementation of any of the projects in the compendium. As such, the SIDS-IACG requested that governments, through the Bureau, be made aware of this matter and furthermore be urged to determine the future of the projects.

The SIDS-IACG meeting also requested that the Bureau make further efforts to persuade CARIFORUM and the European Union (EU) to speed up the release and disbursement of the regional funds under the Regional Environment Programme.

It was agreed that the next Meeting of the Bureau would be held in October 1998, as will a meeting of the SIDS-IACG. The Meeting also discussed the possibility of convening a Bureau Meeting in August 1998.

Annex I

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Annex II

**Report of the
Meeting of the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group**

The meeting of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG) was convened by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat on 15 June 1998, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The following agencies were in attendance: the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM); the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD); the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA); the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST); the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB); the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI); the Food and Agriculture Organisations of the United Nations (FAO); the International Maritime Organisations (IMO); the International Telecommunications Union (ITU); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development (UWICED); and the University of the West Indies Sustainable Developing Economic Unit (UWISEDU).

Dr. Len Ishmael, Director, ECLAC/CDCC secretariat, welcomed representatives and outlined the main objectives of the meeting. These were: to review the implementation of the SIDS POA to date and the progress made in the execution of the Joint Work Programme; to address the apparent lack of ability to coordinate the activities of the Group; and to find a solution to the problem of information-sharing within and among countries of the subregion.

The meeting adopted the following agenda:

- Welcome and Introduction
- Implementation of decisions and progress made in the execution of the Joint Work Programme
- Establishment and functioning of the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group
- Review of the draft budget for the Bureau
- Any other matters.

**Agenda item 2
Implementation of decisions and progress made in the
execution of the Joint Work Programme**

In this session, each agency presented an update of the activities for which it was responsible in the implementation of the Joint Work Programme (JWP) as reflected in the Ministerial Decisions

of the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States held in Barbados, November 1997.

- It was noted that, to date most agencies have begun to undertake several of their activities in the JWP, some of which have already been completed;
- UNDP/TCDC requested feedback on the follow-up steps re compendium of proposals submitted to the ministerial meeting last year;
- There was much discussion on the modality for continuing the implementation process, particularly with respect to inputs to the report expected at the end of October 1998.
- A number of agencies requested that the Bureau exert pressure on CARIFORUM and the European Union to speed up the release and disbursement of the regional funds under the Regional Environment Programme;
- Lead agencies were identified in each issue, using the format as presented in the CARICOM/UNDP document.

1.0 Cross-sectoral issue	Lead agency	Activities
1.1 Global, hemispheric and regional initiatives: Implementation/negotiation conventions and agreements	CARICAD CARICOM	Nos. 1-6 All others
1.2 Regional preparations for 1999 Special Session	ECLAC CARICOM	No. 10 No. 11
1.3 Capacity-building and technical assistance	CARICAD	All
1.4 Sustainable development indicators	CDB	All
1.5 Science and technology	ECLAC/CCST	All
1.6 Resource mobilization	UWI (CED and SEDU)	All
1.7 Information for sustainable development(SIDSnet)	UNDP	All
1.8 Environmental information management	CCA	All
1.9 Legislation, rationalization and institutional reform	CARICAD CARICOM	7-8 9-15
1.10 Communications for sustainable living	UNIC, ACS	All
1.11 Regional Implementation Mechanism		
2. Sectoral issues: SIDS priorities		
2.0 Coastal and marine resources	CARICOM	All
2.1 Climate change and sea-level rise	CARICOM	All
3.0 Biodiversity	UNEP	All
4.0 Tourism	ECLAC (include	All

		CAST)	
5.0	Caribbean Programme for Code of Conduct for responsible Fisheries	FAO	All
6.0	Management of Wastes	CEHI	All
7.0	Energy	ECLAC/CCST	All
8.0	Land Resources*	ECLAC	All
9.0	Freshwater Management*	CEHI	All
10.0	Disaster Management*	CDERA	All

- Additional elements to decisions to include more action-oriented activities.

Agenda item 3

Establishment and functioning of the Interagency Collaborative Group

- Agencies were requested to update focal points list and return to ECLAC.
- UNDP offered SIDSnet as modality for facilitating communications and information exchanges within the IACG by: (a) providing electronic bulletin boards by sector on SIDS priority on its Website to be managed by each lead agency; (b) to mirror/reflect Websites of agencies in the Caribbean; and (c) to manage the SIDSnet mailing list in consultation with IRF.
- The merits and demerits of an informal collaborative group was discussed, but the need for ownership at the national level and for a country-driven approach to implementation of POA was clearly underscored, however, a mechanism for coordinating the work of the political arm, i.e. the Bureau, and the IACG was needed.
- ECLAC pointed to the advantages and disadvantages of an informal IACG. Advantages included flexibility in action; exchange of information; networking. Disadvantages included: limited access to financial resources.
- Meeting expressed the need for both the Bureau and the IACG to meet.
- The next meeting of the IACG will be held in the last week of October 1998 in Port of Spain.
- Agencies were requested to update their various timetables of meetings for Caribbean preparation for the 1999 Special Session.

Agenda Item 4
Review of the draft budget for the Bureau

- CDB indicated that it would be willing to make available funding to individual countries from their national allocations to support environmental initiatives.
- ITU identified that it could fund activities under the SIDS POA that were ITU-specific and that specific requests could also be considered.
- There was a need to further break down the budget to identify those activities, which were absolutely essential.
- There was a need to formulate a proposal for a permanent facility for SIDS, including costs, and submit this to the Government of Barbados by February 1999.
- UNDP was not yet in a position to speak on financial contributions from UNDP/RBLAC.

Annex III

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