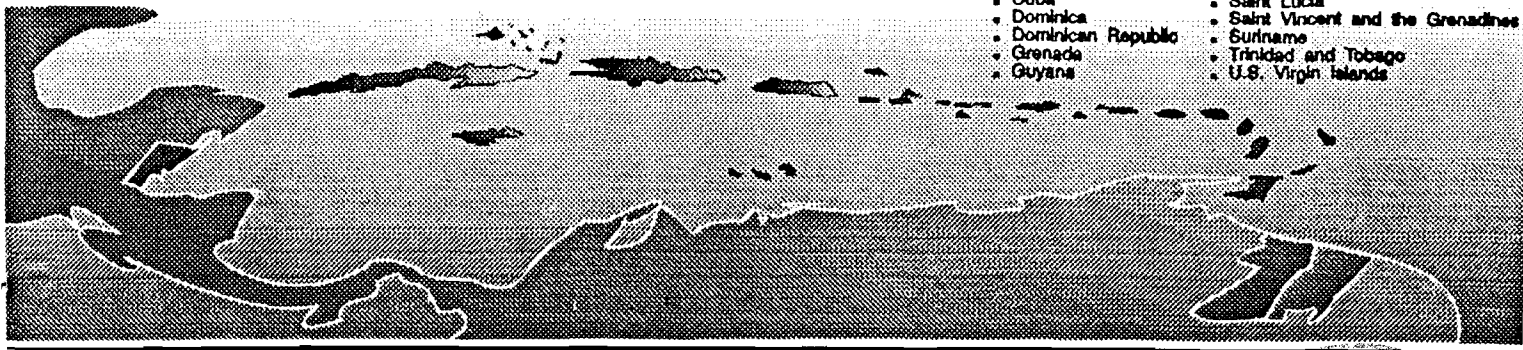
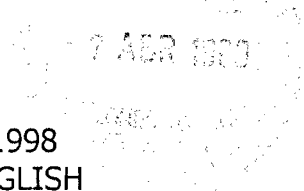


- Antigua and Barbuda
- Aruba
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Br. Virgin Islands
- Cuba
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Montserrat
- Netherlands Antilles
- Puerto Rico
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Suriname
- Trinidad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



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**REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE SIDS BUREAU AND
 THE INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATIVE GROUP**



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
 Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean
CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE SIDS BUREAU AND THE INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATIVE GROUP

A Joint Meeting of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Bureau and the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG), convened by the Joint Interim Secretariat (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (ECLAC/CDCC) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat) for implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS-POA) in the Caribbean, was held on 6 November 1998, at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

The Bureau member countries represented were: Barbados (Chairman) and Guyana. Jamaica and Suriname were also represented. The organizations represented were: Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD), Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI), Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change - Regional Project Implementation Unit (CPACC-RPIU), ECLAC/CDCC, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Organization of American States (OAS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations-Special Unit/Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (UN-SU/TCDC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) and the University of the West Indies Sustainable Economic Development Unit (UWI-SEDU). A list of participants is attached at Annex 1.

Agenda item 1 ***Opening remarks***

The Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean welcomed participants to the Joint Meeting of the SIDS Bureau and the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group which would assess progress in implementation of the SIDS-POA and advance the subregion's preparedness for the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) to review implementation of the SIDS-POA. The Director identified the subregion's progress as being generally satisfactory. Many activities, however, which were now being reviewed in the context of the Programme of Action, had been conceived and initiated without any reference to the POA. Overall, implementation was better than expected, although performance was uneven among the respective countries and agencies. Areas in which there was a high rate of implementation included tourism and solid waste management, while others, such as energy, still recorded a low implementation rate. She noted, in addition, that political support for the process remained at a less than optimal level.

She identified three main challenges for the subregion, namely to establish the SIDS POA as the framework for sustainable development activities; to firmly insert the SIDS POA on the national, regional and international political agendas; and to educate civil society on the Programme of Action so as to generate the broad-based support it deserved.

Agenda item 2
Adoption of the agenda

The agenda adopted by the meeting is attached at Annex 2.

Agenda item 3
Procedural matters

The Meeting adopted its hours of work.

Agenda item 4
Report on regional implementation of the SIDS POA

The secretariat presented a status report on the implementation the Joint Work Programme. The information, submitted by members of the IACG, was collated into a document "Status on the Implementation of the Joint Work Programme". The secretariat informed that progress in implementation was encouraging, although uneven. Implementation was indicated to be at a high level in some areas, for example, climate change and coastal and marine resources, but was low in the area of energy. Performance was described as "middling" in the area of biodiversity.

The agencies present also made oral presentations on the status of their respective activities in relation to the Joint Work Programme. Much of this information had already been set out in the status document. Information was also presented, however, by a number of agencies which had not previously submitted any report of their activities, or whose submissions were received after the preparation of the document.

The meeting reviewed the status of the proposal for the international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area in the context of sustainable development and it was observed that little progress was made in its development since the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the SIDS POA, which was held in Barbados, in November 1997. This issue provoked extensive discussion, with particular emphasis on the most appropriate mechanism for advancing the process. The view was expressed that in order to capitalize on a number of events, namely, the 1998 International Year of the Ocean, the occupation by Guyana of the Chair of the G-77 and a position on the Bureau of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), it was opportune to include the proposal on the Caribbean Sea among the regional projects. A second view held that any

proposal presented should be supported by a strong technical submission. It was recognized, however, that the time-frame did not allow for a detailed proposal to be developed for presentation to the CSD. It was decided that in order to place this important subregional concern on the international agenda, a proposal to launch an initiative for the recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area in the context of sustainable development, should be submitted to the seventh meeting of the CSD, which is to serve as the preparatory meeting for the UNGASS. This would signal that the subregion had a proposal and was enlisting the assistance of the international community in its further development. Once the general merits of the proposal have been accepted, the technical aspects would be elaborated. It was decided that this proposal would be included in the report on implementation of the SIDS POA in the Caribbean to the seventh meeting of the CSD, as an issue of priority subregional concern. It was also proposed that Caribbean countries prepare a more suitable proposal for submission to the CSD. It was suggested that an inter-agency working group be established for the purpose of such a proposal. No decision, however, was taken on this.

Agenda item 5

Status of regional projects for submission to the meeting of prospective donors and representatives of Small Island Developing States 24-26 February 1999

In his introduction of this item, the representative of the UN/SU-TCDC advised that the proposed agenda for the Donors' Meeting was still being formulated and that it had been discussed with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The Unit was awaiting a response from AOSIS before proceeding to its formal distribution.

The UNDP delegation informed that a number of United Nations agencies were available to assist governments in the preparation of project proposals for submission to the Donors' Meeting. Some reluctance by governments, based on prior experiences, to formulate project proposals for submission to this meeting was noted. The meeting was also informed that support in project preparation was currently being finalised for Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Assistance was also being provided by UNDP, through the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Secretariat, to Eastern Caribbean States.

One delegation commented on the absence of guidelines for the formulation of project proposals. In addition, the modality for submission of subregional projects to the Donor Meeting provoked an extended discussion as the proposed agenda incorporated no specific provision in this regard.

The meeting explored the feasibility of having subregional projects, developed by agencies, presented by governments within their limited time allotment. It was recommended that members of the SIDS Bureau apprise other governments of the situation with regard to projects. The Bureau would request governments to submit subregional project proposals together with their individual national submissions.

The Barbados delegation indicated that it would advise its Government to recommend to the Office of the Under-Secretary General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) that specific accommodation be made on the proposed agenda for the presentation of subregional projects and that the deadline for submission of projects be extended to allow for this.

Agenda item 6

Regional position on UNDP compendium of project proposals

The UNDP delegation informed that in light of the failure to obtain endorsement from governments when the Compendium had first been presented at the ministerial meeting in November 1997, the Compendium had been referred to national governments for their individual consideration and possible endorsement. The process would advance when such endorsement will have been granted. It was expected that at least some projects contained in the Compendium would be endorsed. The Compendium had received the endorsement of the Government of Barbados.

It was proposed that the Compendium be referred to the Secretary-General of CARICOM requesting his assistance in securing the endorsement of the member States of that organization.

Agenda item 7

Status of consultations with CARIFORUM and the EU on proposed acceleration of the release and disbursement of funds under the regional environmental programme

The Barbados delegation, which had been requested to apprise the meeting on developments relating to this matter, informed that they were unable to obtain any information. The delegate of CARICAD, however, informed that the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) had communicated approval, in principle, for the proposal on strengthening of the programme for the establishment of Sustainable Development Councils.

The meeting was informed of the European Union's (EU) concern about the lack of progress in the implementation of the Caribbean Environmental Programme. This prompted speculation that requests for funding might be favourably received.

There was some discussion on the need for a modality by which CARIFORUM might be encouraged to support and fund the Regional Coordinating Mechanism(RCM). One delegate informed that there had been some indication that CARIFORUM could fund the RCM but needed thematic lines under which to do so.

Agenda item 8
***Reformulation and funding of the draft budget for the
Regional Coordinating Mechanism and consultation***

The Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean recalled the decision taken at the previous meeting of the SIDS Bureau to present the budget for the Regional Coordinating Mechanism in two parts to reflect, respectively, the costs of the process of preparation for the 1999 UNGASS and the cost of the actual establishment of a permanent secretariat. In order to carry out the preparatory work needed to meet the necessary deadlines within the stipulated time-frame, ECLAC/CDCC had decided to absorb the relevant costs. The only cost to be met by governments, therefore, would be in respect of a secretariat which was expected to involve modest funding requirements. The view was advanced that any proposal being submitted for funding must show viability or sustainability beyond "seed money".

The ECLAC/CDCC representative requested that any comments by governments on its proposal be received by Tuesday 10 November 1998. The Barbados delegation informed that approval for the hosting of the "permanent" secretariat in its country was being sought and that it was envisaged that the national contribution in this regard would be complemented by the proposal to be submitted to the donor meeting.

Agenda item 9
***Preparation for the Special Session of the
United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) to
review implementation of the SIDS POA, September 1999***

(i) Seventh meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development, 19-30 April 1999

The secretariat presented a draft Report on Implementation in the Caribbean of the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States which it had prepared with a view to its presentation to the seventh meeting of the Committee on Sustainable Development (SCD), which will serve as the preparatory meeting of the UNGASS to review the Implementation of the SIDS-POA.

The secretariat acceded to a request by a number of delegations for time to review the document and urged that all comments be submitted to it by 10 November 1998. These submissions would also be circulated.

The representative of the CARICOM Secretariat endorsed the document fully.

(ii) Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) September 1999

The meeting recalled that the Special Session of the United Nations to review the implementation of the SIDS POA will convene in September 1999. Discussion focused on the need for adequate preparation by the subregion with a view to, inter alia, securing the maintenance of the SIDS POA beyond 1999 with strong support from the international community. Related to this was the emphasis placed on the critical need for political support of the SIDS POA at the subregional level, as articulated by the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting, held in Barbados in November 1997. With respect to the former aspect, emphasis was placed on the timely submission of project proposals to the Donors' Meeting which is to convene in February 1999 and on effective participation in the seventh meeting of the CSD, which is to convene over the period 19-30 April 1999. Both aspects were reviewed under separate agenda items. As regards the issue of political support for the SIDS POA at the subregional level, note was taken of the decision of the nineteenth meeting of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in July 1998, endorsing the need for the SIDS POA to continue beyond 1999 and agreeing that subregional representation should be at the highest possible level at UNGASS and other related meetings.

(iii) Status of and/or options for interregional cooperation with regard to preparations for UNGASS 1999 e.g. with SPREP

The representative of SIDSnet volunteered that organization as a tool that could be employed for these preparations.

(iv) The Way Forward

The Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean identified four principal challenges in advancing Caribbean implementation of the SIDS POA. These were: the need to finalize a permanent structure for coordination of implementation; the need to obtain political support for the SIDS POA; the need to ensure that the SIDS POA was used as the framework for sustainable development in the subregion; and the need to educate both politicians and the general public in the subregion about the SIDS POA. Furthermore, she identified the need to refine the original SIDS POA to make it more functional. She stressed that the subregion could not convince the international community to support the POA without providing evidence of its own support. She suggested that agencies should identify those areas in which further work was needed.

Suggestions for addressing these concerns were offered, among them being that the subregion should capitalize on the current relationship between the present Chairman of the CSD and Guyana. Included among the suggestions was the use of various techniques for creating public awareness of the SIDS POA. It was suggested that both the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA) and CARICAD could undertake such activities.

Agenda item 10
***Options for and logistical details of a ministerial meeting on
SIDS POA implementation***

The desirability of convening a ministerial meeting on the implementation of the SIDS POA before the CSD was discussed. Problems of funding and logistics, however, were identified as constraints to such an event.

Agenda item 11
Other matters

There were no matters raised under this agenda item.

Agenda item 12
Closure

The Chairman closed the meeting.

Annex 1**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****COUNTRIES****BARBADOS**

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Annex 2**AGENDA**

1. Opening Remarks
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Procedural Matters
4. Report on regional implementation of the SIDS POA
5. Status of regional projects for submission to the meeting of prospective donors and representatives of Small island Developing States, 24-26 February, 1999
6. Regional position on UNDP compendium of project proposals
7. Status on consultations with CARIFORUM and the EU on proposed acceleration of the release and disbursement of funds under the Regional Environmental Programme
8. Reformulation and Funding of the Draft Budget for the Regional Coordinating and Consultation Mechanism
9. Preparation for the special Session of the United Nations General Assembly to review implementation of the SIDS POA, September, 1999
 - (i) Seventh Meeting of the Commission for Sustainable Development, 19-30 April 1999
 - (ii) Special Session of the UNGA, September, 1999
 - (iii) Status of and/or options for interregional cooperation with regards to preparations for UNGASS 1999 e.g. with SPREP
 - (iv) The Way Forward
10. Options for and logistical details of a ministerial meeting on SIDS/POA implementation
11. Other matters
12. Closure

Annex 3**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

1. Programme of Work
2. Revised Provisional Agenda
3. Revised Provisional Annotated Agenda
4. Agenda Item 4: Report on Regional Implementation of the SIDS POA
 - i. Reports by Agencies on Implementation of the Joint Work Programme
 - ii. The Way Forward
5. Status on the Implementation of the Joint Work Programme (Matrix)
6. Agenda Item 5: Status of Regional Projects for Submission to the Meeting of Prospective Donors and Representatives of Small Island Developing States, 24-26 February 1999
7. Agenda Item 6: Regional Position on UNDP Compendium of Project Proposals
8. Agenda Item 8: Reformulation and Funding of the Draft Budget for The Regional Coordinating and Consultation Mechanism
9. Agenda Item 9: Preparation for the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly to Review Implementation of the SIDS POA, September 1999
 - i. Seventh Meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development, 19-30 April 1999
 - ii. Special Session of the UNGA, September 1999
 - iii. Status of and/or options for inter-regional cooperation with regards to preparations for UNGASS 1999 e.g. with SPREP
10. Agenda Item 10: Options for and logistical details of a Ministerial Meeting on SIDS/POA Implementation
11. National Implementation of the SIDS-POA: A Caribbean Perspective, (LC/CAR/G.520), 27 March 1998
12. Status of Implementation of the SIDS POA: Experience of Barbados, prepared by the Government of Barbados

13. Status of Implementation of the SIDS POA: Experience of Grenada, prepared by the Government of Grenada
14. Comments on Report of an Assessment of Unmet Technical Cooperation needs of Caribbean SIDS-UNDP Compendium of Project Proposals Prepared by the Government of Barbados
15. Status of Implementation of the SIDS POA: Experience of CUBA, prepared by the Government of Cuba (available in *spanish* only)
16. Progress to date in reference to the Joint Work Programme Submitted by the Organization of American States (OAS)
17. Progress to date in reference to the Joint Work Programme Submitted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
18. Progress to date in reference to the Joint Work Programme Submitted by the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA)
19. Progress to date in reference to the Joint Work Programme Submitted by the University of the West Indies - Sustainable Economic Development Unit (UWI-SEDU)
20. UNDP Activities in support of the SIDS POA based upon decisions of the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting, November 1997 prepared by UNDP.

