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Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

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of the SAMOA Pathway
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REPORT OF THE REGIONAL SEMINAR ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAMOA PATHWAY

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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) in collaboration with the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology of Saint Lucia convened a one-day seminar of experts in Castries on 15 March 2015.

2. Attendance

2. Representatives of three member States of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee attended the regional seminar: Barbados, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia. The seminar was also attended by representatives of intergovernmental organizations such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Representatives of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) were also in attendance. The Chief of the Small Island Developing States Unit, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) attended the seminar.

3. Agenda

3. The agenda adopted by the participants is attached as annex II.

B. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of seminar

4. 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 seminar as a forum for initiating dialogue on how the Caribbean could forge strategies for achieving the targets of the SAMOA Pathway. She further noted that the one-day seminar was timely since it afforded discussions; the results of which could find expressions in subsequent meetings such as the OECS Commission/DESA Meeting for Enhancing the Science Policy Interface in small island developing States (SIDS), and subsequent dialogues for finalizing the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the post-2015 development agenda. She urged participants to fully participate, deliberate and more effectively present the case regarding the unique development challenges faced by Caribbean SIDS. The Director concluded by reaffirming the commitment of ECLAC to supporting the implementation of the sustainable development programme of Caribbean SIDS.

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

5. The agenda was adopted without amendment.

3. Objectives of the seminar

6. In order to articulate the objectives of the seminar, the Economic Affairs Officer in the Sustainable Development Unit of ECLAC presented a paper which reviewed the economic, social and environmental context as a basis for crafting a strategy for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in the Caribbean. In his presentation, he highlighted the issue of vulnerability and its impact on sustainable

development of Caribbean SIDS, as well economic considerations such as debt and fiscal sustainability challenges. He also noted social concerns such as poverty and inequality, ageing, and non-communicable diseases, as well as environmental challenges such as climate change and sea level rise. By way of setting the framework for strategic analysis, the Economic Affairs Officer also presented a scheme for analysis which proposed that strategy be examined as a nexus between the private and public sectors, as well as the interaction between technology and innovation and natural capital. The framework also recognized the overarching role of financing and partnerships as a basis for driving the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, taking into account its proposed actions, and means of implementation.

7. In response to the presentation, the CPDC representative noted that the proposed strategic framework provided a good starting point for the analysis. The representative from Saint Lucia observed however that financing was both an enabling and constraining element for implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, and suggested that this should not be the point of departure for the discussions since other variables were also critical to implementation. He noted further that countries needed to organize their internal institutions in order to be able to secure external financing, and to better utilize internal, but limited financing for their development.

8. The Barbados representative also endorsed the proposed framework by observing that the role of institutions needed to be more prominently represented in the framework. He further surmised that a major constraint for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway is likely to be the lack of quantitative data, both for setting development policies as well as monitoring progress under the SAMOA Pathway. Ultimately, the regional seminar agreed that the framework would be used to guide future decisions relating to the future role out of the SAMOA Pathway agenda in the Caribbean.

4. Consideration of priority elements in the SAMOA Pathway for the Caribbean

9. A presentation on the Caribbean priorities in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway was delivered by the Director of Sustainable Development of the CARICOM Secretariat. In this presentation challenges and lessons learnt from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were elaborated as a context for informing the Caribbean's priorities with respect to the SAMOA Pathway. He summarized the Caribbean Community's priority areas as: 1) Sustainable growth and development; 2) Agriculture and food security; 3) Climate change and sea-level rise; 4) Sustainable energy; 5) Integrated water management; and 6) Management and governance of an ocean-based economy. He further identified cross-cutting and implementation issues such as data and statistics, science and technology, trade and development, and finance.

10. By way of response, participants endorsed these priority areas, and noted the centrality of financing towards the achievement of the SAMOA Pathway outcomes. Concerns were however raised about the institutional mechanisms which may be employed by countries in arriving at both country and regional priorities. The representative from Barbados endorsed the area of oceans and seas as a regional priority given its potential for economic development. He further identified food and nutrition security as priorities and concurred that the means of implementation as specified in the SAMOA Pathway document were also relevant constraints to the achievement of the SAMOA Pathway.

11. The CANARI representative also indicated that a higher priority should be given to enabling small and medium enterprises and the informal sector, as well as renewable energy and energy efficiency in the SAMOA Pathway implementation, while the representative from the CPDC identified sustainable consumption and production as important given its integrated approach to development.

12. Some countries noted the apparent deficiency in obtaining both strategic and technical information in order to advance the negotiation process for setting regional priorities.

13. In conclusion, the seminar noted the need for the negotiations to also consider how the Samoa priorities could link to the post-2015 framework for SIDS development in a manner that facilitates public-private partnerships, macroeconomic development and trade.

5. Consideration of a strategic alignment of the SAMOA Pathway with the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda

14. This session was moderated by the SIDS expert of the Caribbean Policy Development Centre. He noted that the preparatory process for both the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs provided good opportunities for the forging of synergies between the two.

15. The CARICOM Director for sustainable development observed that the key entry point for linking the two depends on where each country's development was at a point in time. In this regard, he further observed that there have been two overarching concerns among countries, these being universality and diversity. He felt that some countries could be disadvantaged depending on how each of the concepts is applied.

16. Another point raised was that among the Caribbean country statisticians, there was concern about the burden of data and statistics that would be necessary in order to monitor progress under the SAMOA Pathway goals.

17. The CARICOM Senior Project Officer for sustainable development spoke to the issue of what exactly should come out of the discussions leading up to the finalization of the SDGs. She suggested that if countries could get a commitment to strengthening their data and statistics regimes, then this would be a significant achievement. She reflected that a constant limitation of the MDGs experience for the Caribbean was the absence of data for monitoring.

18. The Barbados representative indicated that the alignment issue is mainly about how governments sign on to the SDGs. He expressed concern that the governments in the Caribbean are not yet aware of what exactly the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs are all about.

19. In responding to these comments, the representative from Jamaica reiterated the need to focus on: 1) Data and statistics, and 2) Financing for development, as at least two areas where there can be synergy between the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs.

20. The Barbados representative noted the issue of indicators in specific reference to programming of Overseas Development Assistance and how these could be monitored to ensure that the Caribbean actually receives its targeted share.

21. Speaking to the issue the CARICOM Senior Project Officer sought to enlighten the seminar with respect to how the Caribbean would be able to use these indicators to achieve the SAMOA Pathway and SDG targets. She suggested that the proposed list of indicators would likely be sufficient and that countries would not likely need to develop new ones.

22. In winding up the discussions, the moderator observed the three key summary elements for alignment, these being: 1) Monitoring and evaluation; 2) How Overseas Development Assistance would be calculated; and 3) The need for effective institutional frameworks for implementation.

23. The Jamaica representative reflected on the requirements needed to access increased Overseas Development Assistance and to guard against the new trend by the OECD to redefine this type of

assistance as a single financing source. She also observed that there was the need for a stronger framework for the mobilization of domestic finance.

24. On a related issue, the Director for sustainable development of CARICOM asked which was leading: whether it was the SAMOA Pathway, or the SDGs. In response, the ECLAC Director contended that the challenge was to see how the SDGs could be used to drive the SAMOA Pathway, being fully mindful of the need for the commitment of the national governments to programme the SAMOA Pathway objectives into the countries' development agenda.

25. The Jamaica representative endorsed this point by noting that countries had a conceptual as well as an implementation problem. She felt that the SIDS agenda remains largely an environmental agenda on the ground, while the SDGs is wider. She suggested that overcoming this challenge would require countries to take a more comprehensive look at the implementation process. She stated that an integrated and coherent approach was necessary.

26. The CANARI representative added to the discussions by suggesting the need for the SAMOA Pathway to be nested in the SDGs as an approach, and recommended that there be focus on the governance mechanisms at the national level in order to ensure that the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs are reflected in the national development process.

27. In closing the discussions on this session of the seminar, the representative from Barbados proposed and called on ECLAC to lead in a set of development dialogues as a process, which could show the Caribbean region talking about its development challenges. He concluded by identifying the following elements as the basis for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in Caribbean countries: 1) Need for a revamped Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) process; 2) Need for mainstreaming the SAMOA Pathway locally; 3) Need for a Caribbean Development Week to engage all players; 4) Need for a Caribbean Major Groups Forum; and 5) Need for a CARICOM Matrix of development akin to the United Nations Matrix for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs.

6. Preliminary consideration of indicators for the monitoring of the SAMOA Pathway/ Sustainable development goals

28. Discussions on this agenda item were postponed to a proposed subsequent Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (TAC/RCM) meeting to be held by the end of April 2015.

7. Exchange of views on the way forward

29. The ECLAC Director noted some gaps which might not yet have been identified in the SAMOA Pathway/Sustainable development goals. These were: 1) Marginalization of young men; 2) Air and maritime transportation; and 3) Information and communication technology.

30. She also proposed the preparation of Caribbean SDGs as a basis for prioritizing the set of core SDGs which suit the Caribbean's Development experience, and noted the need for articulating to the global community the Caribbean's desire to nest the SAMOA Pathway into the SDGs as a basis for prioritizing the SDGs in the region.

31. The Director further emphasized the importance of demonstrating readiness for the process, especially in light of two further dialogues, these being a proposed TAC/RCM in April 2015, and the global meeting on financing for development to be held in Addis Ababa in June 2015.

32. In response to this proposal the representative from the Caribbean Policy Development Centre suggested that the Caribbean SDGs position should be completed just after the September SDG launch.

33. The Director for Sustainable Development of CARICOM also noted the need for the Caribbean to have a supporting mechanism to support its negotiations process in the international arena.

8. Closure

34. In closing, the ECLAC Director encouraged countries to participate in the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda as well as to prepare themselves for vigorous engagement in the financing for development meeting which would take place in June 2015. She reiterated the need for the region to be fully mobilized to adequately represent itself at the highest levels of the multilateral negotiation process.

Annex I**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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Annex II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the seminar
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Presentation on the objectives of the seminar
4. Consideration of priority elements in the SAMOA Pathway for the Caribbean
5. Consideration of a strategic alignment of the SAMOA Pathway with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
6. Preliminary consideration on indicators for the monitoring of the SAMOA Pathway/ SDGs
7. Exchange of views on the way forward
8. Closure