

Brainstorming Session on Stakeholder  
Consultations to inform the Work Programme  
Of the Caribbean Sea Commission  
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago  
14 March 2007

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**REPORT ON THE BRAINSTORMING SESSION  
ON STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS TO INFORM  
THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE CARIBBEAN SEA COMMISSION**

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## **Introduction**

An informal brainstorming session on stakeholder consultations to inform the work programme of the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) was convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. The session was held at the ECLAC Port-of-Spain Office on Wednesday 14 March 2007. The main expectation of the meeting, as noted by Mr. Neil Pierre, Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, was to unearth ‘practical steps for giving life to the Caribbean Sea Commission’.

A list of participants is annexed to this report.

### **I. Opening remarks**

In his opening remarks, Mr. Pierre indicated that the brainstorming meeting had been convened as a result of a request for the hosting of stakeholder consultations received from participants at the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) Ministerial Council Meeting held in Guatemala City on 23 January 2007. He noted that the meeting was seen as an opportunity for collaboration and partnership and that it was, in fact, an evolution of ECLAC's work coming out of the Mauritius Strategy (MSI) for the further implementation of the Small Island Developing States Programme of Action (SIDS POA) and the establishment of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM). Mr. Pierre suggested that one approach would be to coordinate the work on sustainable development currently taking place in the Caribbean. As such, it was imperative that we build on and strengthen collaboration and partnerships especially with the ACS. This statement was endorsed by the ACS Secretary-General, Mr. Ruben Silié, who stated that the session was an ‘opportunity for us to work together...to allow us to focus on, and identify objectives’.

His Excellency John Williams, Ambassador of Barbados to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the ACS, and Chairman of the CSC, contributing via teleconference, informed the meeting that a progress report should be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly at its session in 2008. Also participating via teleconference was Mr. Franklin McDonald of the United Nations Environment Programme/Regional Coordinating Unit (UNEP/RCU), Jamaica.

The specific aims of the meeting, as proposed by Mr. Rudolph Buitelaar, Deputy Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, who served as chair, were ‘identifying who are the CSC stakeholders; identifying how the CSC approaches the stakeholders and determining what the stakeholders needed to be asked during consultations’. His presentation focused on the historical beginnings and the evolution of the CSC. He stated that the delegates to the third meeting of the CSC were unable to address the work programme issues since much of the discussion had centered on the rules of procedure of the Commission. He suggested that both ECLAC and UNEP, as members of the Commission and mandated by the General Assembly, might need to take the lead on the stakeholder consultation process and provide support for the development of the CSC programme of work. He pointed out that the Statutes and the Rules of Procedure of the Commission set out its operational structure, while

Rule 3 established the priorities for areas of cooperation which were not necessarily the same priorities as those set out in the Statutes. As such, he reiterated that the CSC should prioritize its action within the broad parameters listed in Annex 1 of Agreement No.14/07: Agreement endorsing the recommendation of the Caribbean Sea Commission to the Ministerial Council on its work programme. This agreement was reached at the twelfth Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council held in Guatemala on 26 January 2007.

Senator Angela Cropper of The Cropper Foundation suggested that the immediate focus should be on the conceptualization of the process rather than on the generation of a specific programme of work. She suggested that discussions should aim at identifying elements for the work programme.

Professor Stephen Vasciannie, University of the West Indies (UWI), Jamaica, categorized possible stakeholders for the CSC consultations as those who exploited the Caribbean Sea, namely, fisher-folk, governments, marine transport operators, marine researchers/environmentalists and seafront-based tourism operators. Opinions were expressed that even polluters could be included in discussions for a work programme. The fact that there was a lack of integration among Caribbean Sea States was raised, and that different nations had their own rules for exploitation and use of the Caribbean Sea, but little or no assessment existed concerning the differences between these rules and the gaps that needed to be bridged.

Mr. Rubén Silié expressed his thanks to ECLAC for organizing the meeting and also to the members of the CSC who were present. He articulated that the CSC was extremely important to the region since it was a useful and insightful mechanism. It offered a great opportunity to work together, to conceptualize and pay special attention to the Caribbean Sea. He spoke briefly on the unique nature of the ACS mentioning the Ministerial Council's decision to support the work of the CSC, in particular, and the sustainability of the region in general. Mr. Silié indicated that it was important to define the institutionalization provisions of the CSC operations, such as its budget and also to review the rules of procedure. He drew attention to rule 4, sub-paragraph 4, which dealt with the relationship between the CSC and the ACS functions and to rule 5 which dealt with the relationship with other organizations.

## **II. Presentations**

The presentation of ECLAC examined the components of work programmes of the *Black Sea/Istanbul Commission*, the *Baltic Sea/Helsinki Commission* and the *North Sea Commission* with the view to inform participants of the nature of work of other sea commissions and the possibility of learning from the organization, content and experiences of their work programmes. The structure and functions of their advisory groups were also outlined. It was evident that these commissions received considerable support from their member States and the European Union (EU) and had developed concrete integration with regional initiatives which seemed to facilitate their operation.

The commissions placed emphasis on the following work programme elements:

- (a) Pollution reduction through assessment of baseline levels;
- (b) Regional collaborative efforts/workshops re transport of hazardous substances through the region;
- (c) Use of “hot spots” in the marine environment facilitating identification of priority polluted areas;
- (d) Habitat mapping;
- (e) Public awareness programmes in collaboration with non-governmental organizations;
- (f) Monitoring and assessment programmes;
- (g) Data handling strategies to avoid duplication of data reporting and databases;
- (h) Integration of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) into management plans for the marine areas;
- (i) Programmes to reduce the emissions from ships;
- (j) Comprehensive pollution emergency response programmes;
- (k) Programmes to improve stakeholder participation and stewardship;
- (l) Collaborative development of intermodal transport corridors;
- (m) Knowledge transfer and sharing of experiences among the commissions

The *concept paper* on the project “*Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) and Adjacent Regions*” was also presented by ECLAC. The paper noted that the CLME was being developed by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), upon a proposal of the IOCARIBE on behalf of its member countries. IOCARIBE, at its fifth session held in Barbados, in December 1995, adopted the resolution "to develop a proposal for submission to the GEF to fund project formulation for an LME monitoring and assessment program for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions in conjunction with member countries and other relevant regional organizations."

The project was intended to be implemented at a total value of about \$19.17 million in the countries of the wider Caribbean, which included both GEF and non-GEF eligible countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France (French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Barthelemy, St. Martin), Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico,

Nicaragua, Panama, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, The Netherlands (Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, St. Eustatius, St. Maarten), Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands), United States of America (Puerto Rico, United States Virgin Islands), and Venezuela.

The overall objective of the project was the sustainable management of the shared living marine resources of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) and adjacent areas through an integrated management approach that would meet the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) target for sustainable fisheries.

The specific objectives of the project were:

- (a) To identify, analyze and agree upon major issues, root causes and actions required to achieve sustainable management of the shared living marine resources in the Caribbean Sea LME;
- (b) To improve the shared knowledge base for sustainable use and management of transboundary living marine resources;
- (c) To implement legal, policy and institutional reforms to achieve sustainable transboundary living marine resource management; and
- (d) To develop an institutional and procedural approach to LME level monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

The project will adopt the following approach focusing on:

- (a) Preparing and later updating a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for Caribbean LME shared living marine resources;
- (b) Compiling and sharing of existing information and filling critical data gaps through targeted assessments, using new and improved information to update the TDA and SAP;
- (c) Implementing and building capacity for legal, policy and institutional reforms for sustainable management of Caribbean LME shared marine resources; and
- (d) Developing and institutionalizing process, stress reduction and environmental status indicators to track effectiveness of actions taken through the SAP.

There would be four components to the project and the expected outcomes would comprise:

- (a) An analysis of transboundary Living Marine Resources (LMR) issues and its needed actions;

- (b) The filling of knowledge gaps and sharing information needed for management;
- (c) Implementing necessary governance reforms (institutional, legal and policy); and
- (d) Establishing an LME level monitoring, evaluation and reporting structure.

The next ECLAC presentation noted that the *Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Management (IWCAM) concept and approach* provided a framework for countries to better address the environmental management challenges they faced. The long-term goal was to enhance the capacity of the countries to plan and manage their aquatic resources and ecosystems on a sustainable basis. Thirteen countries were included in the project and these countries, by being involved in the Project, had agreed to adopt IWCAM as a management approach.

The project had five main components listed as follows:

- (a) Demonstration, capture and transfer of best practice;
- (b) Development of IWCAM process, stress reduction and environmental status indicator frameworks;
- (c) Policy, legislative and institutional reform for IWCAM;
- (d) Regional and national capacity building for IWCAM; and
- (e) Project management and coordination.

The project was developed by GEF, under its Project Development Facility (PDF), and was currently being implemented by UNEP, the lead agency, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The co-executers of the project were the UNEP-CAR/RCU and the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI).

The representative of the Cropper Foundation informed the meeting that *The Caribbean Sea Ecosystem Assessment (CARSEA)* was a part of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which set out a detailed picture of the condition and trends of the ecosystem and then developed a number of scenarios aiming to simulate the likely outcome of different plausible future paths for the region.

The three key messages of CARSEA were firstly that some of the vital services which human communities derived from the Caribbean Sea Ecosystem were being placed in jeopardy often by the very activities whose long-term future depended on the continuation of those services; secondly, a reduction in the stresses being placed on the natural functions of the Caribbean Sea would require new ways of working together among the disparate political authorities comprising the region; and thirdly, the combination of dependence on the integrity of its marine ecosystem and vulnerability to global forces beyond its control put the Caribbean in a special position which merited recognition and concrete action by the international community.

### **III. Discussion on the regional initiatives and planning for stakeholder consultations**

A concern raised by many participants was the need to ensure that the brainstorming session achieved its main objective, namely, to conceptualize the consultation process, and to avoid becoming focused on the generation of the work programme.

One participant suggested the possibility of making contact and collaborating with the CLME and other regional programmes, as it was felt that it was necessary to utilize their consultation process to inform the CSC of the possible work programme elements, especially considering the limited time frame and financial resources available to the CSC at this time.

The meeting agreed that the primary stakeholder at this time should be the regional governments. The meeting further agreed that there was a need to focus on the suggested main elements outlined in Annex 1: Agreement Endorsing the Recommendations of the Caribbean Sea Commission to the Ministerial Council on its work Programme (Agreement No. 14/07 of the Twelfth Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial held in Guatemala on 26 January 2007). It was stated that components in this annex could be elaborated through a consultative process, the results of which could lead to a clearer identification of the state of play in the Caribbean Sea, the main actors, the principal medium and longer-term objectives and the steps required for achieving those. The CSC was not to be viewed as an implementing entity that operated on a project basis but rather as a coordinating entity that would engage in a consultative process with the bodies that undertook scientific and technical work. It was felt that one of the functions of the CSC should be to act as a communication channel among communities, non-governmental organizations, governments/ambassadors and other partners.

The meeting noted the importance of engaging with extraregional partners and obtaining information and experience from similar entities. In this respect, the meeting was informed that the Government of Italy had invited the Secretary-General of the ACS and representatives of the CSC to visit that country to engage in discussions on the operational structure of the Mediterranean Sea Commission. It was further expressed that the CSC should be an overarching legal entity that was results based.

The discussion then addressed the possible questions that should be posed to the stakeholders. One suggestion was that the Commission should engage in an information-gathering exercise or a fact-finding mission to avoid duplication of activities. This could be achieved through a knowledge/experience sharing process and could determine the structure of the consultation process.

One participant expressed the urgent need for the region to become at least bilingual to reduce the language barrier and the related disadvantages experienced in contributing to discussions when conducted solely in English.

Reference was made to the importance of concretizing the definition and implementation of the CSC in relation to paragraph 1 of the United Nations resolution.



The following questions were asked:

- (a) Who are the stakeholders?
- (b) What strategy should be used to gather information from these groups?

Political, social and economic interest groups were identified as some of the stakeholders and, as such, it was suggested that the strategy would be shaped or adapted to suit these groups. In order to increase political awareness, it was recommended that ambassadors should be involved in technical discussions or at least there should be more feedback from such specialists on these discussions.

Another important point highlighted was the need to include a wider cross section of countries from the region in the formulation of the CSC work programme in order to ensure maximum cooperation at all stages. It was proposed that a CSC meeting be convened on 11 June 2007 for further discussion on a proposed work programme and that the report of the meeting should be submitted for consideration by the meeting of the ACS Ministerial Council in July.

It was recognized that the United Nations resolution declaring the Caribbean Sea a special area in the context of sustainable development was not an end in itself but a means to an end, and was a response to the threats and challenges of sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea. The CSC, therefore, was seen as the vehicle through which the countries of the region could respond to such threats. ECLAC and UNEP were currently undertaking scientific assessments and the CSC could incorporate these experiences and articulate them to the Ministerial Council as a comprehensive report on the state of the Caribbean Sea. It was further emphasized that the mandate of the CSC should not be limited.

One participant stated that although the United Nations resolution outlined mechanisms to organize and mobilize regional and international support, the work of the CSC should be geared towards the political and policy level to address governance of the wider Caribbean. Furthermore, it was proposed that the CSC should go beyond what was outlined in the resolution and engage in dialogue on managing the Caribbean Sea. It was also expressed that the CSC should firstly self-educate on the issues of the Caribbean Sea and understand the work of other actors within the arena. In this regard, it would be important to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders.

The importance of consultations with member States, especially at the ministerial level, was reviewed as this would encourage buy-in at a high political level and promote a more holistic approach to managing the Caribbean Sea. The input of a broader stakeholder group was highlighted. However, it was articulated that public awareness, although one of its overall goals, should not be one of the roles of the CSC which should focus more on developing the political understanding of the Caribbean Sea issues.

The components of Annex 1 (Agreement No.14/07) were re-emphasized as setting the framework for the elaboration of a work programme. The need to develop mechanisms that could create linkages among the CSC, government ministers (ministries of foreign affairs,

fisheries and maritime security) was also stated. Further, States should be encouraged to ratify relevant conventions and implement actions needed to meet their commitments under these conventions so as to advance progress.

The resolution of the delimitation issues that existed within the region was also raised, as it was felt that this was crucial to promoting the Caribbean Sea as a larger entity that needed to be managed. The Caribbean Sea was described as a political and legal mine field with respect to the delimitation issues. It was felt that the results from the CARSEA Project could be used by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and other research institutions and projects to inform policy makers of the state of the living marine resources however the meeting noted that it was imperative that this information be made available where it could make an impact at the national and regional levels.

The meeting agreed that a gap analysis was required at the scientific, legal, policy and political levels, and it was necessary to ask who the stakeholders were and how the consultation process would be structured. It was felt that the CSC should focus on governance of the wider Caribbean Sea and should mainstream a work programme into other ongoing initiatives. It was underscored that a method of soliciting explicit approval of all stakeholders was required to reduce frictions at a later stage.

One participant commented that a review of documents from the last three decades was needed to track trends and emerging situations that the CSC needed to address. In addition, the development of special ministries within the region to address maritime issues was necessary as well as linkages to private sector and stakeholders at the grassroots level. The discussion at the CLME level was essential as it incorporated the academic and research communities that could increase the knowledge base and address the need for a database that could then be shared with the Caribbean region.

#### **IV. Summary and conclusions**

It was underscored that the CSC should commence with the elaboration of its work programme that should include a determination of the following:

(a) Identification of stakeholders. These should include the member governments of the ACS as well as stakeholders who did not form part of the group that were consulted during development of the CLME Project. It was reiterated that the primary stakeholders at this stage should be the governments of the region and the participation should involve more countries than those represented at this meeting;

(b) Structure of the consultations. This should include a gap analysis, accompanied by liaising with the CLME in designing the format of such consultations;

(c) Activities of the stakeholders. The dimensions to be addressed are as follows:

- i. Political – engage in ongoing dialogue with Caribbean countries and beyond e.g. civil society and others;

- ii. Policy – elaboration of policies that would contribute to the work programme of the CSC;
- iii. Legal – encouraging treaty ratification and implementation e.g. delimitation of maritime boundaries;
- iv. Governance - develop a framework for governance of the Caribbean Sea;
- v. Scientific research – it is important to continue the level of research that would produce results in order to inform improved management of the resources of the Caribbean Sea;
- vi. Expansion of the components of Annex 1 of Agreement No. 14/07 (Twelfth Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial held in Guatemala on 26 January 2007). With regard to public awareness, this should not necessarily be an action point for the CSC, but it should focus on its role and the impacts of activity on the Caribbean Sea and build on the political understanding in the region.

(d) Outcome of this process. A draft work programme and recommendations would be presented to the ACS Intersessional Meeting through the CSC.

The meeting agreed that the planned consultation process would be centered around the CLME consultations which would include some or all of the stakeholders of the CSC consultative process, thereby dovetailing and integrating with the CLME process. The CLME consultative process was due to conclude at the end of May that will be convenient for the proposed meeting of the CSC scheduled for 11 June 2007.

It was agreed that there was a need to consult with stakeholders in other regions e.g. Indian Ocean Marine Corporation (IOMC) and the Italian government.

It was suggested that since the CLME consultative process engaged a larger stakeholder group, the CSC would have to broaden its scope of stakeholders to include a regional presence.

It was stated that the CSC should respond to threats – as an overarching mechanism – in the Caribbean Sea under the headings outlined in Annex 1 of Agreement No. 14/07 of the twelfth Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the ACS held in Guatemala on 26 January 2007. This could be done by utilizing existing frameworks and networks in the process of detailing work.

Follow-up actions include:

(a) A draft report will be prepared by ECLAC on the outcomes of this meeting, which will be circulated to all participants for comment;

(b) The final report will be sent to the Chair of the CSC and the ACS Secretariat as well as to all participants;

(c) The consultation process will be linked to the CLME process, thus contact with the CLME is required;

(d) Preparation of a full report incorporating the consultation outcomes along with possible work programme elements and recommendations will be undertaken for presentation to the next meeting of the CSC and later to the ACS Ministerial Council.

It was noted that the ACS would provide translation services for the prepared documents.

Annex 1

**PROGRAMME**

1. Welcome and opening remarks – Mr. Neil Pierre
2. Background and objectives – Mr. Rudolf Buitelaar
3. Presentation of work programmes of other sea commissions - Ms. Elizabeth Thorne
4. Presentation of the LME project – Ms. Aruna Bolaky
5. Presentation of the IWCAM project – Ms. Charmaine Gomes
6. Presentation of the CarSea project – Ms. Angela Cropper

*Coffee Break: 9.45 – 10.00 am*

7. Discussions on regional initiatives – Mr. Rudolf Buitelaar
8. Planning for stakeholder consultations – Mr. Rudolf Buitelaar
9. Summary and conclusions – Mr. Neil Pierre

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