



**TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE
CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE**
22-23 April 2004, St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands

LIMITED
LC/CAR/L.2
CDCC 20/Inf. 3
1 March 2004
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**CARIBBEAN SUBREGIONAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE
INTERNATIONAL MEETING TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

This document has been reproduced without formal editing.

Table of Contents

1

1. Background	1
1.1 The Joint Meeting of the Small Island Developing States and the Agencies of the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG)	1
1.2 The CARICOM-sponsored Regional Meeting to Develop a Follow-up Strategy for the Caribbean for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and Preparations for the Ten Year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action.....	2
1.3 The Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting to Review the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.....	3
Summary of Documents LC/CAR/G.749 and 750	3
Summary Review of the Final Report of the Caribbean SIDS Regional Preparatory Meeting.....	4
The CARICOM Synthesis Report for the Caribbean Community SIDS on the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) for the Inter-Regional Meeting on the Review of the BPOA, The Bahamas, 26-30 January 2004.	5
Summary Review of the CARICOM Synthesis Report	5
The International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.....	7
Towards a Caribbean subregional position for the Mauritius International Meeting	8
Identification of strategically identified priority concerns: priority areas that impact a range of sustainable elements:	8
Financial Constraints	9
Institutional Issues	9

CARIBBEAN SUBREGIONAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

1. Background

By virtue of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 57/262, an international meeting is to convene in 2004 to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS POA). The international meeting will be hosted by the Government of Mauritius, over the period, 30 August-3 September 2004.

Significantly, resolution 57/262 established a preparatory process, including regional preparatory meetings in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) regions, followed by an interregional preparatory meeting of all SIDS. According to the resolution, the interregional meeting was to undertake a review of the implementation of the POA at national, subregional and regional levels and to formulate joint proposals by the SIDS of all geographical regions with respect to the future implementation of the SIDS POA. It was also to commence the identification of elements for incorporation into the final documents to be adopted in Mauritius. The interregional meeting convened in Nassau, The Bahamas, over the period, 26-30 January 2004.

Within the Caribbean, the first step in the preparatory process for the international meeting was, in fact, the Joint Meeting of the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean and the Agencies Members of the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG) which convened in Puerto Rico, on 11 April 2003. This was followed by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)-sponsored Regional Meeting to Develop a Follow-up Strategy for the Caribbean for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and Preparations for the Ten-Year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action. This meeting convened in Grenada, over the period, 14-16 April 2003.¹

1.1 The joint meeting of the Small Island Developing States and the agencies of the IACG

At the Joint Meeting of the Small Island Developing States and the Agencies of the IACG, in document SIDS/IACG/4, entitled Subregional Preparations for the International Meeting that will undertake a Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the SIDS POA to ensure the most effective participation of Caribbean SIDS, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat, *inter*

¹ The Joint Meeting of Caribbean SIDS and the IACG recommended that efforts be made to harmonise the execution of the mandate, according to which the provision of secretariat services for the implementation of the SIDS POA in the Caribbean subregion was the joint responsibility of the CARICOM and ECLAC/CDCC secretariats. In the view of the meeting, that required a greater degree of coordination than existed currently and also management at the highest levels.

alia, drew attention to a number of suggested strategic inputs that might be fed into the interregional meeting and, also, the international meeting. These included the following:

- Identification of priority areas of concern to the Caribbean SIDS;
- The challenges encountered in the implementation process and the recommendation of measures to overcome them;
- Identification of new and emerging issues;
- The need to establish benchmarks and other means of measuring progress in the further implementation of the SIDS POA;
- The urgent need to finalize indices of economic, social and environmental vulnerability; and
- The urgency of the honouring of the commitments made by the international community at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

A number of threats to the SIDS process were also articulated at the joint meeting, among them:

- The reopening of the SIDS debate and the preference, in some significant quarters of the international community, for attention to be directed to small States or to the Less Developed Countries (LDCs);
- Questions regarding the link between size and vulnerability;
- Trade liberalization and the loss of preferential access, the erosion of the principle of special and differentiated treatment, and the “anything but arms” affirmation within the EU-ACP Cotonou arrangements; and
- The new and emerging trade blocs with emphasis on trade in goods.

1.2 The CARICOM-sponsored regional meeting to develop a follow-up strategy for the Caribbean for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and preparations for the 10-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action

This meeting adopted a somewhat different approach vis à vis that of the ECLAC-sponsored Joint Meeting of the SIDS and the Agencies of the IACG, notwithstanding which, the substantive conclusions of both were quite similar. For example, while within the ECLAC forum, a review of the implementation of the SIDS POA was undertaken at both national, as well as subregional levels and problems, constraints, as well as achievements identified, leading to conclusions that would inform the subregional report, within the CARICOM process, the entire exercise was predicated on the explicit operationalisation of the concept of the vulnerability of small island developing States. Thus, three panels were convened to address, respectively, the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the vulnerability of the CARICOM SIDS. This was followed by a synthesis of the findings of each panel and the application of the result towards the formulation of recommendations and the preparation of an overall strategy.

In the event, the pervasive nature of the vulnerability concept in any discussion on SIDS-related issues dictated a coincidence of findings as between the CARICOM and ECLAC/CDCC

forums. Taking into account the approaches utilized by the two forums, it was evident that the operationalization of the vulnerability concept whether in explicit terms, or implicitly incorporated into the analytical process, would yield similar findings. The outcomes of the CARICOM-sponsored meeting are reflected in the Synthesis Report for the Caribbean Community SIDS on the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) for the Inter-regional Meeting on the Review of the BPOA. This synthesis report was presented to the Interregional Preparatory Meeting.²

1.3 The Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting to review the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

In the context of the preparatory process established in United Nations General Assembly resolution 57/262, the Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting convened in Trinidad and Tobago over the period, 6-10 October 2003. This meeting was co-sponsored by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA); the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); and the CARICOM Secretariat. An initial proposal for the amplification of this meeting to incorporate the participation of SIDS of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea Group, was abandoned.

As foreshadowed at the Joint Meeting of SIDS and the Agencies of the IACG, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat prepared document LC/CAR/G.749 entitled Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean Subregion, 1994-2003. A companion document (document LC/CAR/G.750) embodying a Summary was also prepared.

Summary of documents LC/CAR/G.749 and 750

Document LC/CAR/G.749 portrays the experience of the Caribbean SIDS in the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action from the time of its adoption, in 1994, to 2003. It also set out a range of perspectives on developments up to 2004, when the full and comprehensive review will take place. In addition, the document reviews the institutional arrangements that have evolved within the subregion to facilitate implementation, including the central role of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean; reviews the key issues in the implementation process at different phases of the process, including the constraints; the factors that have facilitated implementation; and the overall achievements of the subregion. The more outstanding achievements are highlighted. Section II of document LC/CAR/G.749 contains a review of implementation of the Programme of Action in Barbados; the British Virgin Islands; Cuba; Curacao; Jamaica; St Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

² This report was transmitted to the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean on 19 December 2003. Also tabled at the *Interregional Meeting* in The Bahamas, was the *Caribbean Regional Assessment and Position*, a document that was indicated to be largely a combination of, *inter alia*, the initial draft Regional Synthesis of National Assessment Reports; the Report of the Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting; and comments received from Caribbean States and relevant agencies on the two draft reports. It also embodies elements extracted from, *inter alia*, Review Document LC/CAR/G.749, prepared by ECLAC.

The final sections of the document are dedicated to “The Future; Outstanding and Unresolved Issues; and Recommendations for the Future”.

Document LC/CAR/G.750 is of similar content only in abbreviated format. However, the section (Section II) in Document 749 which deals with the review of implementation of the SIDS POA and of other selected aspects of sustainable development in selected Caribbean SIDS is omitted.³

Paragraph 9 of the final report of the Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting records that: Valuable contributions from the international organizations represented were received. The meeting took note of the ECLAC reports “Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS in the Caribbean Sub-Region 1994-2003 (LC/CAR/G.749 and 750)”.

Summary review of the final report of the Caribbean SIDS Regional Preparatory Meeting

The structure of the final report of the Caribbean SIDS Regional Preparatory Meeting reflects the chapter headings of the SIDS Programme of Action. Additionally, there are headings covering: Other institutional issues (addressing the need for mainstreaming and popularisation of the SIDS message; sensitization of key policy makers; improving the status and level of participation of grass roots organizations and civil society; formalization of AOSIS structure to strengthen the institutional infrastructure for advocacy for SIDS; improved cooperation and coordination between regional bodies, UN representation, international and regional institutions and meetings); and new and emerging issues (security-drug trafficking, illegal trade in small arms; trade; health; culture: poverty; and partnerships). In each case, the major challenges confronting Caribbean SIDS are summarily identified; achievements and other activities undertaken summarily described; and appropriate recommendations formulated for future action.

Of particular importance to the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat, in the context of the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action in the Caribbean, is the section of the report dealing with regional institutions and technical cooperation. The two relevant paragraphs state as follows:

Regional institutions and technical cooperation

45. It was agreed that a well-established, well-defined regional coordinated mechanism was needed for the further implementation of the BPOA in the region, taking into consideration the special circumstances of the associate members of ECLAC. In that regard, there was a need for careful review of the existing arrangement in the region for the implementation of the BPOA, with a view to its improvement.

³ Documents 749 and 750 contain 259 and 28 pages, respectively.

46. It was therefore recommended that a group of experts be tasked with identifying within a given time frame an appropriate and effective regional mechanism, in accordance with the guidelines and modalities as outlined below:

- Assessment of the capacity of Caribbean regional agencies in the delivery of sustainable development initiatives.
- Consideration of a regional coordinating mechanism founded on existing institutions/arrangements;
- Consideration of a mechanism which, in addition to coordinating activities in the region in implementing the BPOA, would also serve to reduce duplication among regional agencies for scarce regional resources; enhance and encourage information-sharing and exchange of technical expertise among countries; identify synergies and close gaps.

The other aspect of particular interest to ECLAC is set out in paragraph 87 of the report according to which:

The meeting recommended that a regional task force, including civil society, be established to further develop, coordinate and facilitate the short and medium term action-oriented recommendations arising out of this preparatory meeting. It further requested that national governments and regional institutions support the work of the task force, and that ECLAC and CARICOM identify funding to assist with the work of this task force, including through the possible provision of a technical officer.

The CARICOM Synthesis Report for the Caribbean Community SIDS on the Implementation of the BPOA for the Inter-Regional Meeting on the Review of the BPOA, The Bahamas, 26-30 January 2004

In late December 2003, the above-quoted report was circulated by the CARICOM Secretariat, together with, inter alia, an advisory to the effect that, its content would be combined with that of the Report on the Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting to produce a final CARICOM document for circulation to the interregional meeting of January 2004.

Summary review of the CARICOM synthesis report

This report essentially extracts, from the National Assessment Reports, the major findings and recommendations, with particular focus on those that have strong regional significance. It also identifies gaps in implementation that may be addressed through regional and/or international initiatives.

Following a review of the major socio-economic challenges that confront Caribbean SIDS; the national policy and institutional framework for sustainable development; and the impact of international sustainable development agreements, especially the SIDS POA, in the Caribbean, the report identifies a number of benefits that have accrued to the region from the

implementation of these agreements. Such benefits are indicated to span the entrenchment of environmental considerations into economic planning; an enhanced understanding of sustainable development issues and concepts; an increase in the quantity and quality of trained Caribbean nationals in environmental and sustainable development disciplines; the proliferation of major investments by Governments in sustainable development initiatives e.g. in waste management, Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and freshwater resources; and increased cooperation among intergovernmental agencies.

Also explored in the report, are a number of cross-cutting issues relating to, *inter alia*, financing for sustainable development; and capacity-building, as well as the increasing reliance on regional integration mechanisms, in particular, the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), as major elements of strategies for building resilience. Progress towards implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is also evaluated. In this context, the observation is made that the capacity of regional governments to deal with the several issues such as poverty-reduction; HIV/AIDS; and the empowerment of marginalized groups, is being compromised by unfavourable international developments. Emerging concerns are also identified, among these, debt servicing and a range of other issues in the context of economic, social and economic vulnerability. Finally, actions are recommended for regional and international intervention.

As earlier indicated, the interregional meeting convened in The Bahamas, over the period, 26-30 January 2004 and brought together the SIDS of all geographical regions for the development of concrete proposals towards the formulation of a strategy for the further implementation of the SIDS POA. The meeting also commenced the development of elements for incorporation into the final documents envisaged for adoption in Mauritius. The outcomes of the interregional meeting are embodied in The Nassau Declaration⁴ and the AOSIS Draft Strategy Paper. Copies of these documents are attached.

The international meeting preparatory to the international meeting is scheduled to convene in New York, over the period 14-16 April 2004, in the context of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-12), to finalize preparations for the Mauritius meeting. The elements identified for development at the International Preparatory Meeting include:

- Its agenda;
- The identification of issues identified as priorities by SIDS;
- Recommendations for the further implementation of the SIDS POA; and
- Refinement of elements to be incorporated into the final document(s) to be adopted in Mauritius; and
- A strategy for the development and implementation of the Mauritius agenda

⁴ Structurally, the Nassau Declaration contains clusters of paragraphs covering elements of background and issues facing SIDS; sectoral issues, such as climate change; new issues (graduation of SIDS, trade issues, capacity-building; production and consumption issues etc); implementation; financial resources; and monitoring and review.

The international preparatory meeting is expected to have before it, inter alia, a synthesis report, prepared by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on the basis of:

- National assessment reports of SIDS, where available;
- Reports of expert thematic workshops; and
- Reports of the regional and interregional preparatory meetings.

A report on the outcome of the International Preparatory Meeting will be presented to the CDCC Session.

The International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

The international meeting in Mauritius is to include a high-level segment; a civil society forum; a SIDS business forum; cultural events; and an eminent persons group. The major outputs of the international meeting are expected to be a Mauritius Declaration and agreement on approaches to the further implementation of the SIDS POA as might be incorporated into a Plan of Action. An initial proposal for the convening of what would have been the second Caribbean ministerial meeting on the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action to prepare Caribbean SIDS for Mauritius was abandoned in light of the eventual agreement to convene the regional preparatory meetings at the technical level and the incorporation of a high-level segment into the interregional meeting.

At the interregional preparatory meeting, the high-level segment took the form of, for the most part, statements by ministers and other heads of delegations during the morning sessions.⁵ These statements were essentially in the nature of country profiles which almost invariably did not address issues in the specific context of the forthcoming international meeting.

The decision of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to convene an international meeting in 2004 to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the SIDS POA, provides the international community, including the small island developing States of all geographical regions, with an opportunity to further address those issues whose treatment was not as thorough as it might have been at the 1994 United Nations Global Conference on Small Island States (UNGCSIDS). It also permits the examination of those new issues that have either emerged since 1994, or have assumed increased significance since the five-year review which took place in the context of the twenty-second special session of the UNGA in 1999. Fundamentally, though, the international meeting provides the opportunity to clearly identify the gaps that remain in the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action and to formulate concrete recommendations in that regard.

Finally, it is appropriate to recall that resolution 57/262 which calls for the convening of the international meeting:

Also calls for the participation of associate members of regional commissions in the comprehensive review...and in the preparatory process thereof, in the same capacity as

⁵ The afternoon sessions were devoted to Panel Discussions on six SIDS-related topics.

observer that held for their participation in the 1994 Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and in 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.

Towards a Caribbean subregional position for the Mauritius International Meeting

The following elements are to be clearly articulated:

- The context of the subregion's participation in Mauritius: the political recognition of SIDS as a special case for environment and development; the vulnerability/resilience relationship as the overarching elements of the framework for the implementation of sustainable development; the evolving regional, hemispheric and wider international environment and the implications for the ability of SIDS to build resilience;
- The evident shortfall in implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action to date;
- The identification of specific gaps in implementation embodying also the areas of priority concern to the subregion, among them, the new and emerging issues; the MDGs; as well as elements from among those identified in Sections VII and also Section IV of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI);
- The mechanisms or modalities for the achievement/implementation of the elements identified, including (1) through the adoption of commitments on the part of members of the international community or the international community as a whole; (2) the identification of funding sources and/or partnerships
- The development of a strategy to ensure the most effective participation of the subregion in the Mauritius International Meeting.

Other critical elements include:

- The need to have the SIDS POA and other relevant international decisions entrenched as the framework for the pursuit of sustainable development in SIDS;
- The need to reiterate certain key principles on the SIDS POA; Agenda 21;
- The importance of SIDS-SIDS cooperation at the regional, as well as interregional levels.

Identification of strategically identified priority concerns: priority areas that impact a range of sustainable elements:

- Coastal and marine resources
- Natural and Environmental Disasters
- Sustainable Tourism
- Trade Issues
- Climate change
- Health: HIV/AIDS

- Freshwater Resources
- Waste Management

Within each of these elements, specific, implementable activities would have been identified.

In addition, attention needs to be paid to:

- Elements to ensure effective implementation of SIDS Programme of Action; MDGs and related elements, with particular focus on the constraints that have hindered the implementation process to date: financial and institutional.

Financial constraints

Elements to be emphasised include:

- The need for the commitments made at Rio and Barbados to be honoured by the international community;
- The need for the identification of funding at the national; intraregional and interregional levels; and
- The need for very careful identification of sources, many of which have been relatively untapped such as debt-for-nature swaps. Moreover, many project proposals can be fitted into the work programme of regional and regionally-based agencies, thus obviating the need for the identification of specific financing.

Institutional issues

These span elements related to, *inter alia*:

- Institutional capacity; human resource development; integrated planning modalities and mechanisms for the management of sustainable development in its: economic, social, and environmental dimensions.
- The need for a permanent and adequately resourced Regional Coordinating Mechanism to promote the more effective implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action and for the general promotion of sustainable development across the subregion. This is an area of priority interest as a way of coping with the limited human, financial and institutional constraints. This element needs to take account of positions articulated at the Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting and at the Interregional Preparatory Meeting with respect to, *inter alia*, the perceived less than ideal performance of the Caribbean Model for implementation as formalised at the 1997 Caribbean Ministerial Meeting; the observation that the Caribbean Model stands in need of review; and the need to more generally review the issue of regional approaches to implementation.
- With respect to the new structures that have emerged since 1997 and those which are currently emerging for the implementation of POA and of sustainable development,

- more generally, there is the need to be mindful of the need for coordination; coherence and synergy;
- The need for institutional building/strengthening at national level must also be emphasised.

The Nassau Declaration and the AOSIS Draft Strategy Paper adopted at the interregional preparatory meeting provide useful starting points for the further articulation of the priority interests and concerns of the Caribbean SIDS. Likewise, the reports on implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action in other SIDS regions can also inform the feasibility of the establishment of alliances and trade-offs in the respective areas as might become necessary.

Delegations are invited to:

Note the outcomes, to date, of the preparatory process leading to the International Meeting to review the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action;

Identify those additional elements of particular concern to Caribbean SIDS for incorporation into the final positions to be adopted by the subregion at the international meeting;

Recommend measures for the refinement of the positions to be adopted at the international meeting in Mauritius;

Develop the main elements of a strategy for the articulation of Caribbean concerns in the Mauritius international meeting, as these relate to, inter alia, the identification of lead speakers; the building of alliances with other SIDS regions incorporating the identification of the scope for trade-offs as might be gleaned from the respective regional submissions to the preparatory process.