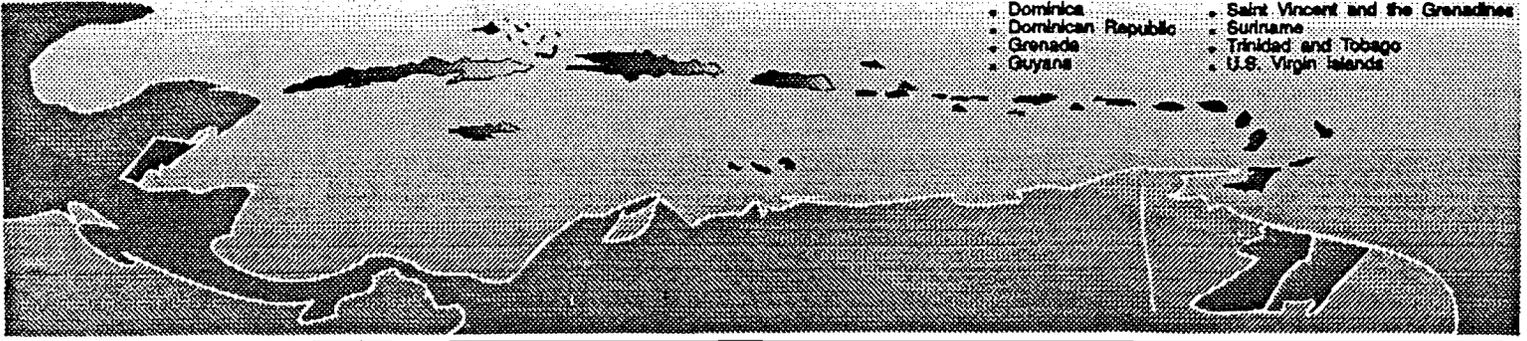




**UN ECLAC/CDCC**

- 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 ON THE STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CARIBBEAN  
 OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR  
 SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**



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



# **REPORT ON THE STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CARIBBEAN OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

## **SECTION 1: OVERALL PROGRESS**

In the Caribbean region, greatest concerns with respect to the implementation of the Small Islands Developing States Programme of Action (SIDS POA) have been articulated by reference to such priority areas as "Coastal and Marine Resources", "Natural and Environmental Disasters" and "Tourism", among the substantive elements of that Programme and by reference to "National Institutions and Administrative Capacity", among the cross-sectoral areas. However, in this region, all 14 priority areas embodied in the SIDS POA are deemed to be of direct importance and relevance to its sustainable development and significant progress has been made by many regional SIDS in their implementation. What is needed to maintain and enhance the contribution of activities in these areas to national and regional development, is a well focused and sustained effort, once certain constraints will have been overcome. This would involve, inter alia, more rigorous adoption of sustainable development approaches, the explicit integration of the SIDS POA into the national planning and decision-making exercise and the provision of much-needed financial resources.

Among the lasting achievements in the implementation of the SIDS POA in the Caribbean, is an enhanced understanding of sustainable issues to which this process has given rise. This is already evidenced by, inter alia, the improved identification of environmental as well as socio-economic concerns and projects throughout the region. Further, governments and civil society have reacted to the needs of the SIDS POA by forging innovative partnerships for collaboration at unprecedented levels, both in terms of intensity and scope. The role of civil society, including the private sector, in identifying as well as achieving the objectives of the SIDS POA has been recognized and encouraged in a novel and intense system of co-management of natural resources, in setting standards and in preparing environmental policies and action plans. Another significant area in which lasting gains have been recorded, relates to the appreciation of the importance of the critical area of institutional-strengthening, whether through capacity-building, enactment of environmental legislation, the application of management tools, such as environmental impact assessments, and the adoption and implementation of environment action plans. These, plus environmental authorities and ministries, are among the mechanisms through which Caribbean SIDS have given explicit recognition to the need for an adequate institutional framework for the promotion and advancement of their sustainable development endeavours. In addition, at the wider international, institutional level, strenuous efforts are being made by Caribbean SIDS to ratify such international conventions as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC). By July 1997, all SIDS in the Caribbean had become signatories to the FCCC.

An important observation in the context of the implementation of the SIDS POA, refers to the fact that, as reported by many Caribbean SIDS, many activities relevant to the SIDS POA, were neither conceived nor implemented in direct response to the adoption of the SIDS POA. Rather, the

commencement of such activities, in many cases, predated the adoption of the SIDS POA and these activities continue to be pursued in the context of the respective national sustainable development plans.

Notwithstanding this state of affairs, the SIDS POA has nevertheless been able to impact these activities, imparting greater focus and renewed emphasis on them in a sustainable development context, thereby contributing to a more holistic approach to their management and to the development of new projects and programmes.

### **The regional joint work programme**

In an effort to accelerate the then acknowledged modest rate of implementation of the SIDS POA, the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States which convened in Barbados, over the period, 10-14 November 1997, adopted a Joint Work Programme comprising some 130 concrete activities extrapolated from all Chapters of the SIDS POA. Regional SIDS, United Nations and non-United Nations institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), were requested by the ministers to embark on what has turned out to be a perhaps unprecedented and quite successful exercise in collaboration towards the achievement of regional objectives in the area of sustainable development. That Joint Work Programme was envisaged for execution during the 1998-1999 biennium. One year later, progress, except in a few areas, has been satisfactory. Significantly, at the Ministerial Meeting, agencies supported the Joint Work Programme fully aware that no extrabudgetary funds would have been forthcoming.

The Ministerial Meeting also entrusted its Bureau with the task of overseeing implementation of the Joint Work Programme and the preparation for the 1999 Review of the SIDS POA. The Secretariats of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (ECLAC/CDCC) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have been requested to act as Interim Secretariat to the Bureau and the preparatory process until such time as a permanent arrangement is agreed upon. In turn, the Interim Secretariat is to be supported by an Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG) comprising, inter alia, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC), the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Secretariat, the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the United Nations Environment Programme/Regional Coordinating Unit (UNEP/RCU) and the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI). This IACG represents another innovative device established by the Caribbean Region to promote collaboration among agencies towards implementation of the SIDS POA. The IACG also greatly facilitates the convening of meetings as well as the reporting function in the context of which the identification of Lead Agencies has evolved in the implementation of the respective priority areas. Through the IACG, ECLAC/CDCC, in partnership with the CARICOM Secretariat, is centrally involved in the coordination of implementation at the regional level.

## SECTION 2: SUCCESS STORIES

Reference has already been made to "Coastal and Marine Resources", "Natural and Environmental Disasters" and "Tourism" as being among the priority concerns of Caribbean SIDS. For the first illustration of particularly successful implementation in this region, attention will be drawn to a centrally important factor whose effects are already being felt and whose persistence will have critical implications for these priority areas and for the economic and even physical survival of Caribbean SIDS, among others. Reference is here being made to the first priority area to have been mentioned in the SIDS POA, namely, "Climate Change and Sea Level Rise". The second illustration will draw on achievements in what has been identified among the most critically important cross-sectoral issues in the successful implementation of the SIDS POA, together with financial questions: "National Institutions and Administrative Capacity".

### **Success Story 1: Climate change and sea-level rise**

The Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change (CPACC): The most significant regional initiative to date aimed at addressing the issue of climate change in the Caribbean Region, is the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change Project which is being funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The Project, which was developed and executed by the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Executing Agency for the World Bank, commenced in April 1997 and is attempting to support 12 countries in preparing to cope with the adverse effects of global climate change through vulnerability assessments of sea-level rise, adaptation planning and capacity-building linked to adaptation planning. This Project is being implemented by a Project Unit attached to the University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development (UWICED).

The participating countries are: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts-Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

The CPACC Project was designed in anticipation of possible threats to low-lying coastal States as a result of global warming and sea-level rise. The Project is assisting governments and regional institutions to strengthen their capability for monitoring and analyzing climate and sea-level trends; identify areas vulnerable to the effects of climate change and sea-level rise; develop an integrated management and planning framework; enhance regional and national capabilities through human resource development and institutional strengthening; identify and assess policy options and instruments, and collect information for preparing national communications. The Project builds on existing initiatives and includes nine components, namely, Sea-level and Climate Monitoring Network; Databases and Information Systems; Inventory of Coastal Resources; Coral Reef Monitoring; Coastal Vulnerability and Risk Assessment; Policy Framework for Coastal and Marine Management; Economic Valuation of Coastal and Marine Resources; Formulation of Economic/Regulatory Proposals; and Greenhouse Gases Inventory. All components are either on or ahead of schedule.

The Project focuses on building the capacity of national and regional institutions to implement specific measures, administer the network and information systems, research and monitor selected parameters, analyze data and manage the process of preparation for adaptation. Providing further evidence of the strong and productive partnerships that are being forged in the implementation of the SIDS POA, partners in this exercise include the CARICOM Secretariat, UWICED, OAS, UNEP/RCU and the World Bank.

### **Success Story 2: National institutions and administrative capacity**

In the pursuit of their sustainable development, many States have, with donor support, prepared national environmental strategies, sector strategies and action plans. However, in the general absence of effective national coordinating mechanisms to ensure the cross-sectoral and inter-departmental cooperation required, these initiatives have lacked the momentum to make them effective. In addition, many government departments are still to come to terms with the integration of environmental considerations into national development strategies. Institutional adjustments for such integrated planning and management of programmes have not yet evolved and are constrained by the following factors:

- ◆ Insufficient staff with appropriate skills and experience;
- ◆ Inadequate resources for timely and effective discharge of duties;
- ◆ Ineffective mechanisms for inter-sectoral collaboration;
- ◆ The frequent determination of ministerial and departmental priorities on the basis of political and economic considerations without due consideration to the environmental implications.

### **Overview**

Pursuant to Agenda 21 and the SIDS Plan of Action, the "Capacity 21" Project, a major initiative funded by the UNDP, embarked on the strengthening of the capacity of national and regional institutions to implement sustainable development programmes. In response to this challenge, the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD), as implementing agency of a UNDP/CDB pilot project on "Strengthening Capacity for Sustainable Development in the English-speaking Caribbean", has established mechanisms called Sustainable Development Councils (SDCs) in six countries, namely, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Lucia. The membership of the SDCs is broad-based and cross-sectoral and includes representatives from all national stakeholder groups: government, the private sector, the NGO and CBO communities, and civil society, in general.

At the national level, the Councils are meant to serve as the primary mechanisms for coordination and information exchange in the elaboration of sustainable development plans. In Dominica, Grenada and Saint Lucia, the Councils are focal points for the OAS Regional Project

"Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change". It is anticipated that the SDCs will also become the national focal points for the Sustainable Development Network Programme (SDNP), as well as for the OECS-Natural Resources Management Unit's "Coastal Resources Management Project".

The CARICAD "Capacity 21" Programme has collaborated extensively with the SDCs in five strategic areas:

- i. Facilitating the consultative process for policy planning and implementation;
- ii. Strengthening public environmental management systems;
- iii. Developing a regional sustainable development network;
- iv. Organizing and conducting training in key areas pertaining to organizational development and capacity-building;
- v. Conducting case studies in priority areas identified through the consultative process.

### **Prospects and recommendations**

Already, SDCs have demonstrated their potential to be the mechanisms, par excellence, for coordinating national level planning for enhanced sustainable human development in the context of the SIDS POA.

However, the full exploitation of that potential requires the elimination of certain problems relating to the management of the often large membership of these cross-sectoral bodies and their fuller recognition by decision makers both at the level of the central government and in the respective sectors. This project is nevertheless regarded as a "success story" given the important lessons it has provided towards the establishment of the appropriate modality for the coordination of sustainable development initiatives at the national level.

On the basis of consultations at the regional level, a major recommendation has been to the effect that the SDCs that have been established, should continue to receive developmental and financial support to strengthen their organizational capacity. It was also recommended that the SDC network be extended to other Caribbean countries. Also recommended was the continuing involvement of CARICAD, which now functions as the de facto regional SDC, as the modality for providing such assistance on an ongoing basis. Above all, however, was the recommendation that CARICAD collaborate with the UNDP towards securing additional financial resources to enable the implementation of a second phase of the "Capacity 21" Project. UNDP has expressed a willingness to explore that possibility.

**Associate members of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC)**

Turning briefly to the achievements as reported by the Associate Members, significant progress has been made in the areas of Natural and Environmental Disasters; and Biodiversity Resources (including Protection of Intellectual Property Rights) by the Netherlands Antilles. Aruba has reported significant progress in Natural and Environmental Disasters; Management of Waste; Coastal and Marine Resources; and Tourism Resources. Similar reports have been received from the British Virgin Islands in the areas of Coastal and Marine Resources; Freshwater Resources; Land Resources; Biodiversity Resources; and Tourism Resources.

### SECTION 3: CONSTRAINTS ENCOUNTERED DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

All the major constraints to sustainable development in the context of the ability of SIDS to implement the SIDS POA were already clearly set out in the Declaration of Barbados which was adopted at the conclusion of the UNGCSIDS and which, necessarily, informed the content of that Programme of Action. For example, with respect to SIDS, the Declaration identifies the need "to enhance their national capacities and self-reliance"; the need to "actively promote human resources development programmes including education, training and skills development". Further, "Their institutional and administrative capacity to implement the programme of action must be strengthened at all levels by supportive partnerships and cooperation, including technical assistance, the further development of legislation and mechanisms for information sharing". Also, "The international community should cooperate with small island developing States in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States by providing effective means, including adequate, predictable and new and additional financial resources in accordance with chapter 33 of Agenda 21 ...."

Among Caribbean SIDS, at both national and regional levels, the most commonly mentioned constraint to implementation of the SIDS POA is "inadequate funding or resources". At the national level, insufficient human resources, coupled with inadequate training, were identified as major constraints. Technical considerations relating, for example, to the absence of an integrated approach to issues at the national level were also identified as factors militating against successful implementation.

Broadly summarized, the constraints identified by Caribbean SIDS to the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action fall into three main categories: financial; institutional and human resources and training.

#### **Financial constraints**

Shortfalls in financial assistance, reflecting the absence of assured financial support, coupled with other constraints such as those related to human resources, have been identified by Caribbean SIDS as major elements of the explanation of the significant gaps in implementation of the POA. Fundamentally, many of the constraints identified can be traced to the tight financial situation being experienced which provides evidence of what has been described as a "retreat from the sustainable development commitments and ideals agreed at Rio in 1992..." Many critically needed infrastructural projects lie beyond the resources of SIDS. Caribbean SIDS therefore urge the importance of the honouring of commitments on the part of the international community, in this critical area. Financial constraints present insurmountable handicaps to essential efforts at the establishment and strengthening of infrastructure, institutions and capacity-building, among other important developmental aspects.

In a strategic partnership with the CARICOM Secretariat, ECLAC/CDCC has provided a mechanism through which the implementation process of the SIDS POA has been kept alive

through, inter alia, the convening of regional meetings, including the facilitation of participation in such meetings, and the constant efforts to ensure that issues relating to the sustainable development of SIDS are kept on the agenda of other international organizations. Further, ECLAC/CDCC continues to confront the basic problem of the poor level of information-sharing in the region, at the level of countries and agencies, but also through the conduct of Briefing Sessions with representatives of CDCC countries to the United Nations and to the OAS. ECLAC also maintains contact with Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). In relation to the European Union, briefing materials are transmitted to the Missions of Barbados and Grenada and also to the Eastern Caribbean Mission. These critical functions, reflecting the increased responsibilities with which ECLAC/CDCC has been entrusted in relation to the SIDS POA are being discharged without specific financial provision as an expression of commitment to the development of the Region.

### **Institutional constraints**

Elements identified under this category include the following:

1. Absence of explicit integration of the SIDS POA and, more generally, of sustainable development approaches into national policy-making;
2. The need for, inter alia, enhanced awareness, capacity-building, training, information management and adjustments in organizational behaviour;
3. The need to establish National Sustainable Development Councils for the development of strategies that respond to the collective sustainable development goals of all social partners;
4. The absence of a Coordination Mechanism at the regional level.

This element last mentioned has been identified as a critical factor retarding the pace of implementation of the SIDS POA at both national and regional levels. The functions envisaged for such a Mechanism include:

- a. To support and facilitate implementation at the national level by functioning as a source of information and technical assistance, among other operational requirements;
- b. To serve as a focal point for information and for regional and international liaison;
- c. To identify transboundary and other regional sustainable development issues, including the formulation of regional projects and the mobilization of resources for their execution;
- d. To mobilize support for the SIDS POA;

- e. To serve as the Secretariat of an appropriate Regional Consultative/Advisory Body that would include NGOs and other interest groups.

This institutional aspect constitutes a major priority area. The potential contribution of effective mechanisms at the national, as well as regional level, to propel sustainable development initiatives at the national, regional and even global levels, is an aspect which Caribbean SIDS are eager to pursue.

### **Human resource and training constraints**

The shortage of relevant skilled human resources affects all aspects and levels of the implementation process and is, therefore, not confined to the more novel elements such as the generation of sustainable development indicators, or the design of economic instruments. It is urged that the "Human Resource and Training" element be incorporated into the Projects that are designed under the respective Priority Areas of the SIDS POA.

### **General note with respect to constraints to implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action**

Notwithstanding the significant constraints that have been identified to the implementation of the SIDS POA, Caribbean SIDS, among others, remain convinced of the long-term viability of the Programme of Action. Nor have they overlooked the fact that primary responsibility for implementation rests with the SIDS themselves. It is nevertheless recalled, in this context, that the SIDS POA was adopted not only by SIDS but also by the international community as a whole.

**SECTION 4:  
EMERGING PROBLEMS IN PARTICULAR COUNTRIES, REGIONS OR  
SUBREGIONS IN PARTICULAR PROGRAMME AREAS**

On the basis of responses to questionnaires prepared by this Subregional Office, a number of emerging problems have either been made explicit or may be reasonably inferred. Such "emerging problems", for the most part, occur unevenly across the Region and relate to the following:

- Concerns about the continuing degradation of the Caribbean marine environment;
- Difficulties encountered in managing the implementation of Projects where the collaboration of a number of agencies is involved;
- Limited capability in and attention to the generation and use of such modalities as economic instruments and indices of sustainable development in policy development and planning;
- Sparse efforts at the compilation of biodiversity resources;
- Frequent absence of measures to ensure ownership and protection of intellectual property rights in the area of biodiversity;
- Sparse arrangements of the reintroduction of bio-genetic resources following disasters;
- Problems relating of freshwater resources, both as regards the quantity required to meet increasing demand, as well as the quality of the water supplied;
- Concerns related to land resources involving intensified land-use conflicts;
- Insufficient attempts at the co-management of major economic sectors e.g. tourism, and wider conservation and sustainable development activities involving all economic and social sectors, as well as local communities;
- The low priority attached to the commercial development of energy based on renewable sources;
- Unavailability of resources for Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and mapping;
- The apparent de-emphasising of sustainable development criteria in a few cases, and the emphasis on economic goals in a context of a tightening financial situation.

**SECTION 5:  
PRIORITIES OF SIDS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS**

The ranking of the Priority Areas of the SIDS POA at the regional, as opposed to the national level, by Caribbean SIDS, is as follows:

- |      |   |       |                             |
|------|---|-------|-----------------------------|
| i.   | Coastal and Marine Resources                      | viii. | Tourism Resources           |
| ii.  | Natural and Environmental Disasters               | ix.   | Biodiversity                |
| iii. | Land Resources                                    | x.    | Science and Technology      |
| iv.  | Waste Management                                  | xi.   | Transport and Communication |
| v.   | National Institutions and Administrative Capacity | xii.  | Human Resources             |
| vi.  | Climate Change                                    | xiii. | Regional Cooperation        |
| vii. | Freshwater Resources                              | ix.   | Energy Resources            |

As regards Cross-Sectoral Issues, priorities have been ranked at the level of the Region, as follows:

- |      |                        |       |                                |
|------|------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| i.   | Financial              | vi.   | Policy                         |
| ii.  | Capacity-building      | vii.  | Training                       |
| iii. | Legislation            | viii. | Technical                      |
| iv.  | Poverty Alleviation    | ix.   | Involvement of Marginal Groups |
| v.   | Information Management |       |                                |

Rather than present a selection of Priority Areas from among those listed in the SIDS POA for special attention during the next five years, Caribbean SIDS have opted to indicate their preferences in ranked order and this for three main reasons. Firstly, the order of priority at the regional level does not fully reflect the order at the national level. Secondly, the identification of only a selection from among the Priority Areas might conceivably result in the neglect of those not mentioned for half a decade, with a possibly negative impact on donor activity in the sectors concerned. Thirdly, it is suggested that a listing would facilitate the comparison as well as the integration of submissions from other SIDS regions.

**SECTION 6:  
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CSD's  
PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS**

Recommendations by Caribbean SIDS with respect to the content of the CSD's Work Programme for the next five years necessarily reflect the Priority Areas of the Programme of Action in the context of the rank assigned to each of them as set out in Section 5, above.

A proposal has been endorsed by the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the SIDS POA in November 1997; the Ministerial Council of the ACS, also in November 1997; and the Meeting of Representatives of the Secretariats of CARICOM, the Indian Ocean Commission and the South Pacific Forum, in February 1998, to exploit the opportunity presented by the 1998 International Year of the Ocean, to launch an initiative for the international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area in the context of sustainable development. This would involve an international effort to develop a regime for the regulation of all the uses and abuses of the Caribbean Sea and, as a first major step, to have an appropriate Resolution tabled at the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 1999 endorsing the proposal and requesting the assistance of the various agencies whose major activities relate to the marine environment in its further development and operationalization.

In advancing their recommendations, Caribbean SIDS wish to make explicit their observation that the nature of the constraints identified to their rapid implementation of the SIDS POA in no way detracts from the relevance, validity and viability of that Programme beyond 1999 and well into the future. This observation has been reinforced by the important decision taken by the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) at its Nineteenth Meeting held in Castries, Saint Lucia, in July 1998. At that Meeting, following its consideration of the Item on its agenda entitled "Caribbean Preparations for the 1999 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States", the Conference, inter alia,

**Endorsed** the need for the SIDS POA to continue beyond 1999.

Reflective of the profound interest of CARICOM States in the SIDS POA, the Conference also:

**Accepted** the recommendation that representation be at the highest possible level at the 1999 United Nations General Assembly.....

Recalling that the SIDS POA was adopted by the international community as a whole and in an effort to overcome the major constraint to its implementation, namely, the "retreat from the sustainable development commitments" on the part of the developed countries, Caribbean SIDS would be enthusiastic in their support for any initiative aimed at the reinsertion of SIDS-related issues as a central theme of international discourse. Currently, apart from the CSD, other agencies of the United Nations System, the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) and, now, the European Union and a few others, SIDS-related issues have all but disappeared from the Agenda of international concerns.

In addition, Caribbean SIDS fully expect the international community to honour the commitments agreed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Informing this orientation, at least partially, is the emphasis placed by them on having the SIDS POA regarded by all decision-makers as well as by the donor community as the framework for sustainable development in the region. Thus will focused attention be directed to the Programme of Action and, with that, funding to projects arising from that internationally agreed instrument.

To summarize, the main challenges to be addressed in the next five years of the SIDS POA from the perspective of Caribbean SIDS are:

1. To operationalize the SIDS POA to make it the framework for sustainable development within the region;
2. To have SIDS-related matters of the POA placed high on the international political agenda;
3. To popularize the SIDS POA within civil society.

