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Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Third Meeting

Port of Spain, 13 April 2011

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT
TO THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE
REGIONAL COORDINATING MECHANISM
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 2010-APRIL 2011**

**Submitted to the Third Meeting of the Technical Advisory Meeting
April 2011**

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 2010- APRIL 2011

1. Background information

At the Twenty-first Session of the Caribbean Development Cooperation Committee (CDCC) in January 2006, Member States and Members agreed to set up a Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action (BPOA)¹. This followed the call made by the Deputy Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat who, while acknowledging the relatively weak level of implementation of the BPOA, noted the need to develop an innovative and uniquely Caribbean methodology for implementation of the MSI.

A core group was established to give further consideration to the details regarding the establishment of the RCM with particular attention to the implementation of the BPoA/MSI.²

The RCM was designed to promote awareness at all levels of issues and activities related to sustainable development and assist in the mobilization of new and additional resources. Specific tasks under the aegis of the RCM was the facilitation of the exchange of best practices and transfer of knowledge; and liaising with SIDS in other regions for the promotion of joint positions at international forums.

In response to the request of governments, ECLAC created the post of a Regional Adviser to act as the Regional Coordinator of the RCM, based at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. The Adviser provides leadership and direction in the administration and execution of the RCM activities and primarily coordinates disaster risk reduction initiatives for the Caribbean subregion.

Since its inception, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the RCM has held two face to face meetings³, and a number of teleconferences to advance the work of the RCM. Its greatest challenges have been: (a) to establish the TAC with its multidisciplinary and multi stakeholder framework; (b) to provide technical assistance to governments in the subregion for the national reporting process for the MSI+5 Review and in their preparations for the high level review of the MSI; and (c) to raise the necessary resources to strengthen the RCM processes.

At the first meeting which took place in Port of Spain on 21 April 2008, the TAC highlighted the many challenges it faced as a coordinating mechanism. Despite these challenges, the first meeting of the TAC considered an important component of its work of activities, the document "*Towards the Implementation of the MSI*".

¹ Resolution 65(XXI) "Establishment of a Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy".

² The Core Group was chaired by the Government of Saint Lucia. See LC/CAR/L.90/Rev1 dated 7 June 2006

³ LC/CAR/L.248/Rev.1 5 March 2010, Institutional Report

The second meeting of TAC, held in Port of Spain on 7 September 2009, reviewed the work of activities of the RCM for the period 2008-2009 and developed a programme of activities for 2010-2011 period for submission to the Inter Governmental Council (IGC)⁴.

2. Work of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in support of Caribbean Small Island Developing States

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) convened their first meeting on sustainable development in Barbados in 1993 resulting in the *Barbados Programme of Action* (BPoA). At this meeting, ECLAC was appointed focal point for Caribbean SIDS. ECLAC, in this capacity, strengthened its processes of researching and documenting progress made by Caribbean SIDS in achieving sustainable development. The work of ECLAC in this area has been through research on critical issues of development facing Caribbean SIDS and through the provision of technical assistance to governments in monitoring and documenting the implementation the BPOA and the MSI; the concrete actions taken in order to achieve the targets, best practices and challenges in implementing the MSI.⁵

The commitment to support the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy is stated in the mission statement of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. The role and mandate is derived from, but not limited to, the following paragraphs:

- (a) Paragraph 129 of the BPoA, on the importance of regional/subregional cooperation
- (b) Paragraph 134 of the BPoA on the role of the relevant regional commissions of the United Nations in supporting regional activities to coordinate the implementation of conference outcomes (in providing resources, for example)
- (c) Paragraph 101 of the Mauritius Strategy, calling on the United Nations Secretary General to mobilize/coordinate United Nations agencies within their respective mandates⁶.

During the period 2000-2005, ECLAC contributed to the development of a Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) for SIDS. The measure was developed to better reflect the status of Caribbean SIDS and to contribute to the development of a composite vulnerability index for SIDS which, at that time, had treated with elements of ecological fragility, economic vulnerability but lacked the elements for defining social vulnerability.⁷

In 2006, ECLAC carried out two studies with the aim of deepening the appreciation of Caribbean SIDS for the implementation of the MSI and providing improved understanding of obstacles to its implementation. In October 2006, the paper “Caribbean priorities in implementation of the SIDS/PoA” (LC/CAR/L.100) was elaborated on the premise that the

⁴ See LC/CAR/L.215 dated October 2009

⁵ Caribbean Regional Report for the Five year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the BPoA for the Sustainable Development of SIDS (MSI+5). LC/CAR/L.258 dated 3 May 2010

⁶ LC/CAR/L.248/Rev.1 5 March 2010

⁷ The work of ECLAC is documented in piece by Kambon, Asha. “Caribbean Small States, vulnerability and Development” in Caribbean Development Report, Volume 1.2009

Mauritius Strategy did not address the full range of priorities of Caribbean SIDS, as expressed by subregional stakeholders. SIDS were also concerned with energy resources, coastal and marine resources, natural and environmental disasters, climate change and sea level rise. The second study also contributed to an enhanced understanding of MSI as it focused on “Challenges in the implementation of the MSI in the Caribbean” (LC/CAR/L.101). Difficulty in accessing financial and technical resources was cited as one of the main deterrents to implementation of the MSI.

Support provided by ECLAC to Caribbean SIDS in the implementation of the BPoA/MSI was documented in the institutional report prepared as part of the MSI+5 review process. They include support in the areas of freshwater resources, climate change and sea level rise, energy and biodiversity resources, studies on trade issues and policy, knowledge management and information for decision making, tourism, gender equity and disaster management and risk reduction.⁸

3. Details for the period under review, January 2010 to April 2011

A. Institutional strengthening/Capacity building

The secretariat sought to identify resources which could assist countries that requested such, in the development of national reports for the MSI+5 Review. Four countries made such a request. Resources to support one such request were not identified. National level reports had been collected for those countries that had completed reports, namely: Bahamas, Cuba, Grenada, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago⁹. Partial resources for the support of the development of national reports were drawn from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

To better inform the regional synthesis reporting process, a questionnaire was circulated to RCM members and consultants were hired to support countries in the completion of the questionnaire. In all, some 14 countries were able to complete the assessment questionnaire. ECLAC, with the assistance of country representatives, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Secretariat, the CARICOM Secretariat and a regional level consultant¹⁰ produced the Caribbean Regional Report for the Five-year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI+5), often referred to as the Synthesis Report. This report was disseminated to all 21 participants of the second meeting of the TAC in September of 2009 and uploaded on the website at the portal for the TAC. See Report of the Regional Review Meeting for a list of participants.¹¹

No members of the RCM reported that they were able to organize national consultations, which had been recommended by the United Nations DESA as part of the reporting process. The

⁸ See Institutional Report of the Review of the MSI. LC/CAR/L.248/Rev1 dated 5 march 2010

⁹ http://www.sidsnet.org/msi_5/nars.shtml

¹⁰ DrVasantha Chase formerly of the OESC Secretariat was secured to undertake the compiling of the Synthesis report.

¹¹ LC/CAR/L.256 dated 22 April 2010

secretariat concludes that this might have been due to the limitations of funding and the very tight timeline for the reporting process.

Participation in the other aspects of the review process was fulsome.

The Caribbean regional review meeting held on 16 and 18 March 2010 in St. Georges¹², was held as part of the MSI+5 Review. The review meeting was jointly organized by ECLAC and DESA as part of the regional preparatory process for the high-level review to be undertaken by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session in September 2010 and had an excellent representation of Caribbean delegates. The output of Caribbean regional review contributed to the global synthesis report, and was to be considered by the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) 18 acting as the preparatory committee for the high-level review. The Inter-regional Meeting - New York, 8 May 2010¹³, which brought together SIDS from all the regions provided a forum for SIDS to: evaluate continuing national and regional challenges in implementing the MSI; to discuss common priorities for action; and to finalize a global synthesis report for consideration at the high-level review of the Mauritius Strategy convened in September 2010. Again, there was full participation and representation of Caribbean SIDS. ECLAC supported the process through the Institutional Report¹⁴ which together with national assessment reports by SIDS formed the basis for the regional synthesis reports. The report of the CSD 18¹⁵ indicated that a total of 190 delegates including those from Latin America and the Caribbean were in attendance.

The high-level review meeting on the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States during the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 24-25 September 2010, New York¹⁶, again had full participation of Caribbean SIDS.

B. Scaling up, gathering and dissemination of information with special attention to best practices

The secretariat continued to receive documentation and made them available on a TAC portal on the ECLAC website. In that regard, all RCM members were sent information regarding the website and its contents. A database of focal points was developed. All national reports that were produced and received by the secretariat were uploaded to the website. The synthesis report and its accompanying institutional report were completed and disseminated widely also through the site.

The managers of the website have submitted the following report represented in figure 1. It suggests that during the period of the review process, the portal providing information about the TAC and its activities was highly accessed resulting in many downloads.

¹²http://www.sidsnet.org/msi_5/docs/interregional/statements/Remarks_%20Minister%20David_%2028th_May.pdf

¹³http://www.sidsnet.org/msi_5/docs/interregional/statements/Remarks_%20Minister%20David_%2028th_May.pdf

Remarks for the Presentation of the Grenada Outcome Statement by the Honorable C. Peter David Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Grenada

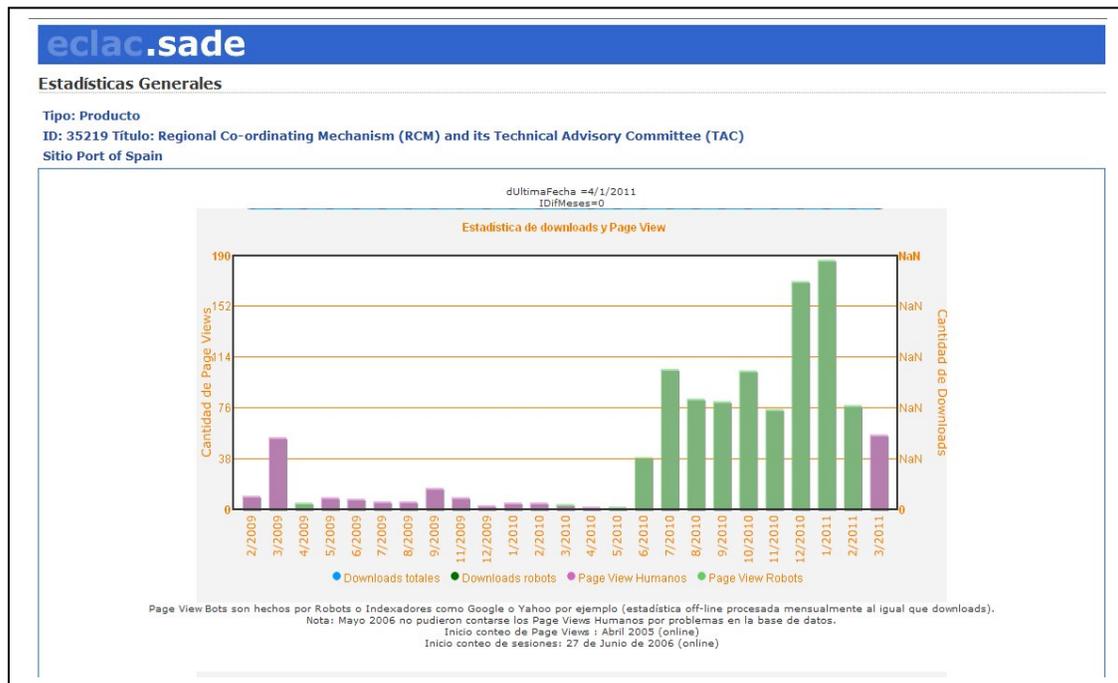
¹⁴http://www.sidsnet.org/msi_5/docs/inputs/ECLAC-MSI_2010-Report.pdf

¹⁵A/CONF.218/PC/1 3 June 2010

¹⁶<http://www.iisd.ca/vol08/enb0848e.html>

The website has been under reconstruction to facilitate ease of reference.

Figure 1: Report on access to the RCM and TAC portal



Source: ECLAC Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre (CKMC). Dated 4/1/2011

C. Encourage the development/strengthening of partnerships

The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain continued to provide the secretariat services to the TAC for the period under review through the services of the following personnel:

- Regional Adviser
- Assistant
- Support from the Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre (CKMC);
- Support from Information Technology (IT) Unit

The secretariat convened and provided substantive and technical support for teleconference of the TAC of the RCM following the high level review. An informal document, “Notes for consideration in follow-up action to the High Level Review of the MSI +5: Particularities of specific relevance to Caribbean SIDS”, was circulated to TAC members as a brief. The purpose of the TAC teleconference was to alert members to issues highlighted by governments during the high-level review and to provide an opportunity for members to discuss the outcome document of the high-level review, so as to inform the new programme of activities for the TAC. A second such teleconference of the TAC of the RCM was convened to solicit information to further inform the programme of activities of the TAC. (1st TAC teleconference, 3 April 2008; and 2nd TAC teleconference, 12 February 2010)

The secretariat has been deepening relations with the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) through participation in the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG) SIDS. The Secretariat of the TAC, together with other members of the TAC, such as the CARICOM Secretariat, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission and UNDP, has participated in eight such teleconferences. Such a relationship should allow for Caribbean SIDS to be kept informed of views and actions of SIDS from other regions of the world.

During the period under review the CARICOM Secretariat, through its Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre and the transformed Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, together with the OECS Secretariat, now the OECS Commission, and the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility have been recognized as best practices for other SIDS in their efforts at implementing aspects of the MSI.

D. Public awareness and communication

The secretariat submitted two proposals for funding through the ECLAC system to the Development Account. Both were favourably received but none received final approval.

E. Effective management of deliverables and follow-up as outlined in the programme of activities

The secretariat has engaged in a preliminary review and update of the Regional Implementation Matrix, taking into consideration the findings of the MSI+5 review.

4. Proposed activities for May to December 2011

1. The TAC may wish to support the effective participation of the members of the RCM in the Rio+20 process through the following:

- (a) Provision of technical assistance to countries that request such in the preparation of technical reviews;
- (b) Support to the Caribbean preparatory committee meeting, the regional preparatory meeting and the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development, Brazil; and
- (c) Continued liaising with UNDESA in sharing special concerns of SIDS as they may develop.

2. The TAC may wish to continue the process of receiving feedback for the updating of the Regional Implementation Matrix prior to submission to the IGC of the RCM.