



United Nations

ECLAC

ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN

FOCUS

Newsletter of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC)

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RIO +20

ISSUE 3 / JULY - SEPTEMBER 2012

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is one of five regional commissions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It was established in 1948 to support Latin American governments in the economic and social development of that region. Subsequently, in 1966, the Commission (ECLA, at that time) established the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain to serve all countries of the insular Caribbean, as well as Belize, Guyana and Suriname, making it the largest United Nations body in the subregion.

At its sixteenth session in 1975, the Commission agreed to create the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) as a permanent subsidiary body, which would function within the ECLA structure to promote development cooperation among Caribbean countries. Secretariat services to the CDCC would be provided by the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean. Nine years later, the Commission's widened role was officially acknowledged when the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) modified its title to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Key Areas of Activity

The ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean (ECLAC/CDCC secretariat) functions as a subregional think-tank and facilitates increased contact and cooperation among its membership. Complementing the ECLAC/CDCC work programme framework, are the broader directives issued by the United Nations General Assembly when in session, which constitute the Organization's mandate. At present, the overarching articulation of this mandate is the Millennium Declaration, which outlines the Millennium Development Goals.

Towards meeting these objectives, the Secretariat conducts research; provides technical advice to governments upon request; organizes intergovernmental and expert group meetings; helps to formulate and articulate a regional perspective within global forums; and introduces global concerns at the regional and subregional levels.

Areas of specialisation include trade, statistics, social development, science and technology, and sustainable development; while actual operational activities extend to economic and development planning, demography, economic surveys, assessment of the socio-economic impacts of natural disasters, climate change, data collection and analysis, training, and assistance with the management of national economies.

The ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean also functions as the Secretariat for coordinating the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The scope of ECLAC/CDCC activities is documented in the wide range of publications produced by the subregional headquarters in Port of Spain.

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Director's Desk

RIO+20 AND THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE CARIBBEAN: DELIVERING "THE FUTURE WE WANT"



This issue revisits the historical antecedents of Rio+20, and explores the Caribbean's preparations and participation in this momentous event. It also summarizes the conference's principal outcome actions as they relate to Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS), and possible actions that Caribbean SIDS could consider to deliver "The future we want".

Twenty years after the Earth Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development returned to Brazil, to convene a follow-up conference informally known as Rio+20. The aim of this meeting was to celebrate and take stock of the last 40 years of global commitments and discussions, but also to renew these commitments and chart the road ahead.

Rio+20 focused on two main themes; promoting a "green economy" in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development. The first addressed the need to enhance national policy development and international cooperation that intersect environment and economy to support sustainable development; the second explored the need to integrate sustainable development in the activities of not only all relevant United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, but also those organizations that comprise economic and social pillars.

In order to meaningfully engage the process, as well as to ensure that issues pertinent to Caribbean SIDS find expression in the Conference negotiations, Caribbean countries participated in a series of preparatory meetings in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). These discussions served to solidify the LAC region's position on issues such as vulnerability, financing strategies, energy security and climate change. Nevertheless, the crafting of a broader yet clearer definition



Ms. Diane Quarless, Director, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

of "green economy" to include matters related to the well being of the marine environment - the so called "blue economy" rubric - remains possibly one of the key elements advanced by the region for the negotiations. Caribbean SIDS further noted the need to give consideration to the particular risks for SIDS in the global contemplation of a "green economy" strategy.

The most notable of these was identified as the possibility of a "green economy" becoming a market driven construct in which technological and economic prospects evolve to the benefit of developed economies, excluding SIDS. The regional discussions also resulted in a call for stronger coordination of sustainable development initiatives; greater South-South cooperation; better ways of measuring countries' wealth that adequately reflect the three pillars of sustainable development; and new, stable

and predictable financing to support sustainable development.

These and a number of other emerging issues which were particular to SIDS formed part of the overall LAC position which was levied in the global negotiating process leading to Rio+20.

The resulting Rio+20 outcome document, entitled "The future we want", sets out a common vision of sustainable development with a focus on people and calls for the eradication of poverty. The document also stresses that responsibility rests with countries to take action for their respective social and economic development through the application of national policies, domestic resources and development strategies. It also articulates sixteen "green economy" principles, and a number of focused action points for advancing sustainable development in a manner which allows mankind to realize the future we want. Among these, and of specific relevance to Caribbean SIDS, is the need to take account of the special challenges faced by middle income developing countries; the imperative to close the technology gap between the developed and developing countries. The latter measure is of particular importance to Caribbean countries in pursuit of greater energy security. Similarly, the conference outcome on the future development of oceans and seas will likely resonate with the development aspirations of the Caribbean.

The challenge for the global community now remains that of transferring the vision and goals of "The future we want" into action. In this regard, the clearest priorities for the Caribbean ought to be in efforts to ratify and fully implement all relevant conventions and agreements;

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RIO+20: BACKGROUND TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



UN Photo / Mario Elisa Franco

I. The road to Rio+20

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, informally known as Rio+20, was convened in Rio de Janeiro from 20 – 22 June 2012. Although Rio+20 builds directly on the outcomes of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED or Earth Summit), also held in Rio de Janeiro twenty years earlier, it further represents a landmark contribution to forty years of global discussions and commitments on the environment and sustainable development (Figure 1).

Fernando Collor de Mello (right), former President of Brazil, addresses a special ceremony held by the "Rio+20" UN Conference on Sustainable Development to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the conference's landmark predecessor, the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, when Mr. Collor de Mello was in office. Pictured with him are Sha Zukang (left), Secretary-General of the "Rio+20" UN Conference on Sustainable Development, and Antonio de Aguiar Patriota (centre), Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil.

15 June 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The genesis of these global discussions is the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) convened in 1972, which, for the first time, put environmental issues on the international agenda. Twenty years later, at the gathering of the Earth Summit, this agenda grew to encompass the concept of sustainable development, and a blueprint to rethink economic growth, to advance social equity and to ensure environmental protection was produced – Agenda 21.

A further key outcome of the Earth Summit was the recognition of small island developing States (SIDS) as

a special case for environment and sustainable development. Specific commitments and action plans have subsequently been adopted for SIDS, starting in 1994 with the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS, which adopted the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS (BPoA). The BPoA identified priority areas and specific actions necessary for addressing the special challenges faced by SIDS in environment and development planning. In 2000 the Millennium Summit was convened to revisit and strengthen the United Nations' role in the 21st century. The leaders that attended adopted the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals were established.

In 2002, the World Summit on

Sustainable Development (WSSD) then set out further commitments in poverty eradication, health, trade, education, science and technology, regional concerns, natural resources and institutional arrangements. A 10-year review of the implementation of the BPoA was then conducted in 2005, and this resulted in the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the BPoA. The Mauritius Strategy sets forth actions and strategies in 19 priority areas and, together with the BPoA, they represent blueprints for SIDS in line with the implementation of Agenda 21. These include development clusters in five areas: natural resources and environmental threats, economic issues, social issues, governance and issues relating to implementation (UNDP Pacific Centre, 2008).

FIGURE I. KEY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCES LEADING UP TO RIO+20





UN Photo / Mark Garten

Leonel Fernández Reyna (right), President of the Dominican Republic, is shown during the official opening session of the UN Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. 20 June 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2. About the Rio+20 Conference

Taking these milestone achievements into account, the objectives of Rio+20 were thus to renew political commitment to sustainable development, assess progress and implementation gaps in meeting already agreed commitments, and address new and emerging challenges in order to establish a global sustainability agenda for the coming decade.

It was cited by the United Nations as "...a chance to move away from business-as-usual and to act to end poverty, address environmental destruction and build a bridge to the future."

Discussions at Rio+20 focussed on two themes: 1) a "green economy" in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and; 2) the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD) (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. THE TWO THEMES OF RIO+20

■ "Green economy" in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

The concept of a "green economy", defined as economic growth which results in improved human well-being and social equity, while managing natural resources sustainably and with lower negative environmental impacts, is earmarked as an important tool for achieving sustainable development. This discussion will define "green economy" policies and highlight suitable strategies for implementation.

■ Institutional framework for sustainable development

Strengthening and reforming the current institutional framework is a key task for the effective implementation of sustainable development across sectors at the local, subnational, national, regional and global levels. This discussion will explore options for enhancing the integration of sustainable development in the activities of all relevant United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, and the international financial institutions, within their mandates.

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2000

MILLENNIUM SUMMIT
6-8 September, New York, USA

Objective: to consider ways to strengthen the role of the United Nations in meeting the development challenges of the twenty-first century.

Agreement: United Nations Millennium Declaration which established the Millennium Development Goals.

2002

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
26 August – 4 September, Johannesburg, South Africa

Objective: to evaluate the obstacles to progress and the results achieved since UNCED and provide a new impetus for commitment of resources and specific action towards global sustainability.

Agreements: Johannesburg Declaration, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation

2005

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BPOA FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SIDS
10-14 January, Port Louis, Mauritius

Objective: to seek and renew political commitment from all countries by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions for further implementation of the BPoA.

Agreements: Mauritius Strategy for the further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, Mauritius Declaration

2012

RIO+20
20-22 June, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Objective: to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development, assess the progress and implementation gaps in meeting already agreed commitments, and addressing new and emerging challenges.

Agreement: "The future we want"

THE ROAD TO RIO – PREPARATIONS FOR RIO+20 IN THE CARIBBEAN



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A group photo of participants at the UNCSO Subregional Preparatory Meeting for the Caribbean. 22 June 2011, Georgetown, Guyana

A. Subregional Preparations¹

In preparation for global negotiations at Rio+20, Caribbean SIDS, with the support of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), ECLAC and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), held a meeting in Georgetown, Guyana on 20 June 2011. The preparatory meeting was attended by representatives of Member States of the Caribbean subregion, representatives of agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, as well as representatives of civil society.

The main conclusions of this consultation centred on the following topics:

i) “Green economy” in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

BOX 1. NATIONAL “GREEN ECONOMY” INITIATIVES IN THE CARIBBEAN

- Guyana’s Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) model, which was developed through extensive national consultations to build a climate-resilient economy;
- Dominica’s Organic Isle initiative to promote organic farming;
- Suriname’s “green economy” Initiative;
- Grenada’s planned Green Energy Initiative;
- Barbados’s “green economy” Initiative and Green Technologies in Tourism Development (the Harrison’s Cave);
- The Dominican Republic’s reforestation project;
- The Caribbean Biological Corridor initiative, a joint effort among several countries in the Caribbean.

The meeting indicated that the concept of a “green economy” needs to be clearly defined within the context of Caribbean SIDS and must reflect the *Principles of Sustainable Development* enshrined in the Rio Declaration. It was noted that the “green economy” should be seen as a complementary approach to existing strategies seeking to achieve a sustainable development paradigm, as well as helping to build resilience to overcome the vulnerabilities of SIDS. It should be further recognized that a “green economy” is linked to the well-being of the marine environment and as such related to the “blue economy”. It was recommended that determining national priorities for a “green economy” should be based on stocktaking exercises of current initiatives at the national level (see Box 1). Member States were also in agreement that the “green economy” has to be defined for each country especially in the context of whether it is a paradigm, a tool or an alternative path to sustainable development.

A number of risks associated with the “green economy” concept for SIDS were flagged for consideration by the meeting; particularly that the “green economy” may well become a market driven concept grounded in technological advancements and economic prospects that may only benefit developed

countries, with negative implications for trading regimes in SIDS as discriminatory standards may be imposed.

Member states further called for a clearer link to be established between the “green economy” and poverty eradication and emphasised a need for the region to discuss these issues in the context of finance, capacity building and technology transfer.

There was consensus in the meeting that the “blue economy” was not required and a call for the term “Oceans” to be retained. Further, given the importance of oceans to the region’s livelihood, it was agreed that Member States should seek to have a leadership role in drafting the oceans chapter of the Rio +20 Outcome Document.

It was further agreed that the “green economy” concept take into account SIDS-specific interests such as fisheries, ecosystems, oceans, coastal and marine resources, integrated coastal zone management, access to export markets (including the possibility of developing a regional eco-label), access and benefits sharing with respect to high seas resources, mangrove forests conservation and intellectual property rights issues. In so doing, the “blue economy” would be addressed as a critical element in implementing the “green economy” and

¹ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting for Rio+20: Consolidated Meeting Report (ECLAC/POS/SDU/2011/4/CRP.4) [online], presented at the Climate Change and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: a focus on the Caribbean, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, September 2011.

would be reflected in related policies.

ii) Institutional framework for sustainable development at the national and regional levels of SIDS

The meeting called for a strengthened Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) as it is the only inter-governmental mechanism for follow-up of Agenda 21, the BPOA, and Mauritius Strategy. It also called for the strengthening of systems of international environmental governance to ensure the implementation of the sustainable development agenda in the Caribbean.

It was further agreed that institutional coordination of sustainable development initiatives in the region should be strengthened and enhanced. This would include comprehensively mapping the regional organisations that are available to Caribbean SIDS, as well as clarifying the roles of institutions such as the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and small island developing States (OHRLLS), UN DESA, ECLAC and CARICOM in order to help states understand what resources can be drawn on, and what each organ is contributing in preparation for Rio + 20. Participants at the meeting affirmed the relevance of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) for the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in the Caribbean and called for its operations to be made more practical and effective. Ultimately, they emphasised the need for institutions supporting regional and national sustainable development initiatives to be better resourced, and that donor funding should be programmed more effectively to meet the needs of countries.

iii) Emerging issues and partnerships

While emphasizing the continued importance of issues such as climate change and disasters, coastal zone management and energy security, the following emerging issues were also listed as important for Caribbean SIDS: non communicable diseases; ecosystem services; development of the Arctic Economy²; climate change and security; and challenges to the case of SIDS for

special and differential treatment and for the recognition of the vulnerability of SIDS based on their particular circumstances.

Member States noted the need to revisit the partnerships identified in the Agenda 21, BPOA, and Mauritius Strategy processes in an effort to effectively and cohesively build on, expand and adapt to present circumstances.

The conclusions of this meeting were then used to inform the Latin America and Caribbean regional preparatory meeting.

B. Regional Preparations

Representatives from Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Lucia joined Latin American nations at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile from 7-9 September 2011 to participate in the regional meeting preparatory to Rio+20. The meeting discussed progress made to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of Agenda 21, the “green economy” and the Global Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development.

At the meeting Member States reaffirmed their commitment to continue contributing constructively to a successful outcome of Rio+20. They also recognised the progress made over the last twenty years and the gaps still remaining with respect to the achievement of the goals of sustainable development, which were flagged as more pressing in the case of Caribbean SIDS.

The meeting further highlighted the scientific and technological gap, the lack of sufficient financing, and the fragmentation in implementation as barriers to the achievement of sustainable development. They also committed to addressing the new and emerging

challenges for the achievement of sustainable development, and to adopt related decisions at the Rio+20 conference. In this light, they identified eleven areas which would require commitments as presented in Box 2.

BOX 2. ACHIEVEMENTS IDENTIFIED AS REQUIRING COMMITMENTS

- i) eradication of extreme poverty;
- ii) change in patterns of production and consumption, in which the developed countries should play a leading global role;
- iii) effective access to, and transfer of, safe and appropriate technologies, without conditionalities and on preferential terms for developing countries;
- iv) promotion of a global intellectual property rights regime that facilitates the transfer of such technologies, in keeping with the commitments undertaken by each country;
- v) full implementation of the right to access to environmental information, participation and justice enshrined in Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration;
- vi) a global institutional framework for sustainable development which is efficient and flexible and ensures the effective integration of its three pillars;
- vii) new, additional, stable and predictable financing for supporting implementation activities in developing countries;
- viii) fulfilment of mitigation and adaptation commitments in relation to climate change and the building of resilience to its impacts;
- ix) greater South-South cooperation and exchange of successful experiences;
- x) restoration of harmony with nature;
- xi) better ways of measuring countries' wealth that adequately reflect the three pillars of sustainable development.

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²Due to melting of the ice cap and opening of new shipping routes, and its potential impact on sea level rise and Caribbean economies.

OUTCOMES OF RIO+20: DELIVERING “THE FUTURE WE WANT”



UN Photo/Eskenfelder Debebe

Subsequent to the regional preparations, eight rounds of formal and informal preparatory talks on the Rio+20 draft agreement took place throughout the first half of 2012. After intense discussions and negotiations on the text, and with only 20 per cent of the zero draft document conformed to by early June, a consensus was finally reached on the eve of the Rio+20 gathering, entitled “*The future we want*”.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon speaks to journalists after briefing Member States on the outcome of the UN’s “Rio+20” summit on sustainable development, held in Rio de Janeiro last week between 20 and 22 June. On right is Mr. Ban’s Spokesperson, Martin Nesirky.

28 June 2012, United Nations, New York

The outcome document, signed by Heads of State and Government Ministers on 22 June 2012, articulates “*The future we want*”. It lays a common vision of sustainable development; one that is people centred and requires the eradication of poverty. Promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production, while protecting and managing the earth’s natural resource base, are cited as the basic requirements of achieving sustainable development.

It reaffirms the Rio Principles, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as set out in principle seven of the

Rio Declaration. It further reaffirms commitment to fully implement all international agreements on sustainable development post the 1972 Stockholm Conference, and commits to accelerating the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. It acknowledges that, globally, there has been uneven progress in sustainable development and poverty eradication in the 20 years since the UNCED, and that multiple setbacks have hampered integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The fact that, today, 1 billion people are living in extreme poverty is an impetus to increase efforts to achieve sustainable development. In the case of SIDS,

commitment to take urgent and concrete action to address their vulnerability through the sustained implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy was reaffirmed. “*The future we want*” describes the “green economy” in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as a tool which can enhance the ability of nations to manage natural resources sustainably and with lower negative environmental impacts, increase resource efficiency and reduce waste. It further details the principles of “green economy” policies (see Box 3) and also recognises that each country can choose an appropriate approach to implementation in accordance with national sustainable development plans, strategies and priorities.



Brazilian Foreign Minister Antonio de Aguiar Patriota (centre, in green tie), flanked by Luiz Alberto Figueiredo Machado (left of Mr. Patriota), Executive Secretary of the Brazilian National Commission for Rio+20, and Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Brazil’s Permanent Representative to the UN, cheers with colleagues after lengthy negotiations produced a final outcome document for the UN “Rio+20” Conference on Sustainable Development.

19 June 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

UN Photo/Maria Elisa Franco

BOX 3. PRINCIPLES OF “GREEN ECONOMY” POLICIES IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION

- a) Be consistent with international law;
- b) Respect each country’s national sovereignty over their natural resources taking into account its national circumstances, objectives, responsibilities, priorities and policy space with regard to the three dimensions of sustainable development;
- c) Be supported by an enabling environment and well-functioning institutions at all levels with a leading role for governments and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society;
- d) Promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, foster innovation and provide opportunities, benefits and empowerment for all and respect of all human rights;
- e) Take into account the needs of developing countries, particularly those in special situations;
- f) Strengthen international cooperation, including the provision of financial resources, capacity-building and technology transfer to developing countries;
- g) Effectively avoid unwarranted conditionalities on official development assistance and finance;
- h) Not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade, avoid unilateral actions to deal with environmental challenges outside the jurisdiction of the importing country, and ensure that environmental measures addressing transboundary or global environmental problems, as far as possible, are based on an international consensus;
- i) Contribute to closing technology gaps between developed and developing countries and reduce the technological dependence of developing countries using all appropriate measures;
- j) Enhance the welfare of indigenous peoples and their communities, other local and traditional communities and ethnic minorities, recognizing and supporting their identity, culture and interests, and avoid endangering their cultural heritage, practices and traditional knowledge, preserving and respecting non-market approaches that contribute to the eradication of poverty;
- k) Enhance the welfare of women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, smallholder and subsistence farmers, fisherfolk and those working in small and medium-sized enterprises, and improve the livelihoods and empowerment of the poor and vulnerable groups in particular in developing countries;
- l) Mobilize the full potential and ensure the equal contribution of both women and men;
- m) Promote productive activities in developing countries that contribute to the eradication of poverty;
- n) Address the concern about inequalities and promote social inclusion, including social protection floors;
- o) Promote sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- p) Continue efforts to strive for inclusive, equitable development approaches to overcome poverty and inequality.

With respect to strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development, it is cited as needing to be viewed, not as an end in itself, but as a means to achieving sustainable development.

The agreement highlights that an IFSD needs to respond coherently and effectively to current and future challenges and efficiently bridge the gaps in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. It should also integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner and enhance implementation by strengthening coherence, coordination,

avoiding duplication of efforts and reviewing progress in implementing sustainable development. It is crucial that the framework be inclusive, transparent and effective and that it should find common solutions related to global challenges to sustainable development. The key action points identified for this theme are summarised in Box 4. ►

BOX 4. ACTION POINTS FOR STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Intergovernmental Arrangements

- The United Nations General Assembly is to further integrate sustainable development as a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities and adequately address sustainable development in its agenda setting, including through periodic high-level dialogues;
- The Economic and Social Council within its mandate under the Charter, is to be strengthened as a principal organ in the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields;
- Establish a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum, building on strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and subsequently replacing the Commission.
- Mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system and strengthening policy coordination within key structures of the Secretariat of the United Nations so as to ensure system-wide coherence in support of sustainable development, while ensuring accountability to Member States;
- Strengthen operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the field that are well aligned with national sustainable development priorities of developing countries;
- Improvement of the management of facilities and operations across the United Nations system by taking into account sustainable development practices and building on existing efforts and promoting cost effectiveness.

The Environmental Pillar

- Strengthen and upgrade the United Nations Environment Programme to become the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment;

International Financial Institutions & United Nations Operational Activities

- Support for the reform of the governance structures, quotas and voting rights of the Bretton Woods institutions, better reflecting current realities and enhancing the voice and participation of developing countries;

Regional, National, Subnational and Local Levels

- Develop and utilize sustainable development strategies as key instruments for guiding decision-making and implementation of sustainable development at all levels;
- Promotion of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters at all levels;
- Regional and subregional organizations, including the United Nations regional commissions and their subregional offices to prioritise sustainable development through more efficient and effective capacity-building, development and implementation of regional agreements and arrangements as appropriate, an exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned;
- Strengthen national, subnational and/or local institutions, or relevant multi-stakeholder bodies and processes, dealing with sustainable development.

The outcome document then proceeds to outline a framework for action and follow-up based on twenty-six thematic areas and cross-sectoral issues. The core objective throughout is the eradication of poverty. A detailed outline of the action points stipulated in the areas of agriculture, energy, employment, oceans, disaster risk reduction, climate change and health, and identified as critical by Caribbean SIDS, are presented in detail in boxes 5 to 11.

The issue of environmental services, also flagged as an emerging topic for Caribbean SIDS, is further addressed under the thematic areas of water, forests, biodiversity, land degradation and mountains. The ultimate aim is to reduce the rate of species and ecosystem degradation and to protect and sustainably manage ecosystems. Actions include strengthening governance frameworks, establishing transnational cooperation, and urgently implementing the associated conventions and non-legally binding instruments. Additionally, the use of scientific data as a basis to guide resource management is pivotal,

as is the involvement of communities, particularly those that are marginalised, in developing resource management strategies.

Preserving the environmental integrity of Caribbean SIDS will ensure the long-term viability of tourism, one of their most important sectors. In turn, tourism activities, especially those that are sustainable, can promote environmental awareness, conserve and protect the environment, respect ecosystems and cultural diversity, and improve the welfare and livelihoods of local communities by supporting their local economies. Appropriate guidelines and regulations are required to ensure the sector is truly sustainable.

Other thematic areas include transport, cities and human settlements, sustainable consumption and production, mining, and chemicals and wastes. The agreement calls for an integrated approach to planning, designing and building sustainable cities and urban settlements. These should support: sustainable transport systems, including energy-

efficient multi-modal systems, public mass transportation systems, clean fuels and vehicles, and cycling and pedestrian infrastructure; and the sustainable management of waste through the application of the reduce, reuse, recycle (3Rs). Further, by 2020, the management of chemicals and hazardous waste that minimise adverse effects on human health and the environment are to be in effect. The phasing out of harmful and inefficient fossil fuel subsidies and other taxation strategies to enhance sustainable patterns of consumption and production are also earmarked for action.

When taking action in each thematic area the document calls to carefully identify opportunities for gender equality and empowering women, education and capacity-development, the sharing of experiences and best practices, engaging civil society and stakeholders in a meaningful manner including the business fraternity, indigenous peoples, marginalised communities, and the youth.

Lisel Alamilla, Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development of Belize, addresses the plenary session of the UN Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. 22 June 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



UN Photo/Luiz Roberto Lima

BOX 5. FOOD SECURITY, NUTRITION & SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- Revitalise agricultural and rural development sectors, notably in developing countries, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner;
- Promote sustainable agriculture, including crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture and increase production and productivity globally;
- Reduce post-harvest and other food losses and waste throughout the food supply chain;
- Enhance agricultural research, extension services, training and education to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability;
- Implementation of the Committee on World Food Security Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries & Forests in the Context of National Food Security;
- Address the root cause of excessive food price volatility.

UN Photo / Maria Elisa Franco



Freundel Stuart, Prime Minister of Barbados, briefs the press on the Secretary-General's "Sustainable Energy for All" initiative on the Conference sidelines.

21 June 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

BOX 6. ENERGY

- Support for access to energy services by 1.4 billion people worldwide who are currently without;
- Mobilize financial resources to provide modern energy services for all, particularly the poor, in a reliable, affordable, economically viable and socially and environmentally acceptable manner in developing countries;
- Increased use of renewable energy sources and other low-emission technologies, more efficient use of energy, greater reliance on advanced energy technologies and the sustainable use of traditional energy resources;
- Launch of the initiative by the Secretary-General on Sustainable Energy for All.
<http://www.sustainableenergyforall.org/>

BOX 7. EMPLOYMENT

- Implement strategies and policies that provide young people access to decent and productive work;
- Enhance infrastructure investment for sustainable development;
- Adopt forward-looking macroeconomic policies that promote sustainable development and lead to sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and increase productive employment opportunities;
- Support national efforts to provide new job opportunities to the poor in both rural and urban areas, including small and medium-sized enterprises;
- Women and men should have equal access to opportunities to acquire job skills as well as to worker protections;
- Encourage initiatives to create jobs for poor people in restoring and managing natural resources and ecosystems;
- Provide social protection to all members of society, fostering growth, resilience, social justice and cohesion, including those who are not employed in the formal economy;
- Protect, effectively, the human rights and fundamental freedom of all migrants regardless of migration status.

BOX 8. OCEANS & SEAS

- Fully implement the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);
- Completion of first global integrated assessment of the state of the environment by 2014;
- Development of an international instrument under UNCLOS which speaks to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction;
- Implementation of marine pollution conventions adopted in the framework of the International Maritime Organization, and by 2025 achieve significant reductions in marine debris;
- Prevent the introduction and manage the adverse environmental impacts of alien invasive species;
- Address sea-level rise, coastal erosion, ocean acidification and the impacts of climate change on marine and coastal ecosystems and resources;
- Meet the JPOI 2015 target to maintain or restore stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield;
- Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the FAO international plans of action and technical guidelines;
- Eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including associated subsidies;
- Eliminate subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing;
- Mainstream strategies by 2014 that further assist developing countries, in particular SIDS, in developing their national capacity to conserve, sustainably manage and realise the benefits of sustainable fisheries;
- Conservation of coral reefs and mangrove ecosystems;
- 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas conserved through marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

BOX 9. DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

- Accelerate implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters;
- Integration of early warning systems into national disaster risk reduction strategies;
- Undertake and strengthen risk assessment and disaster risk reduction instruments;
- More coordinated and comprehensive strategies that integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation considerations into decision making and planning.

BOX 10. CLIMATE CHANGE

- Implement measures for adaptation to climate change;
- Prompt operationalization of the Green Climate Fund;
- Implement commitments under the United Nations Framework on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

BOX 11. HEALTH & POPULATION

- Realization of the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;
- Strengthen health systems towards the provision of equitable universal coverage;
- Redouble efforts to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, and to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV, as well as to renewing and strengthening the fight against malaria, tuberculosis and neglected tropical diseases;
- Promote affordable access to prevention, treatment, care and support related to non-communicable diseases, especially cancer, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes;
- Use the provisions contained in the agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and related agreements to promote access to medicines for all, particularly in developing countries;
- Increase health financing, recruitment, development and training and retention of the health workforce;
- Provision of universal access to reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, and its integration into national strategies and programmes;
- Reduce maternal and child mortality and improve the health of women, youth and children.

In outlining the means of implementation of “*The future we want*”, it is emphasised that the onus lies with each country to take action for its own economic and social development and that national policies, domestic resources and development strategies are a crucial part of the process. It calls for the enhancement of financial support and the prioritization in the allocation of resources at national, regional and international levels as well as within the United Nations system, particularly the Global Environment Facility. It urges developed countries to meet the 2015 targets for Overseas Development Aid to the least developed countries, encourages South-South cooperation, and welcomes the creation of new partnerships and innovative sources of funding.

Supporting developing countries access to technology and capacity-building, while achieving a non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system are also identified as key to the implementation of sustainable development. Last, but not least, the 747 voluntary commitments that were entered into by various stakeholders are to be compiled in an Internet-based registry. In the case of Caribbean SIDS, a total of eight countries including Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, submitted voluntary commitments in relation to energy and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

“*The future we want*” notes that the establishment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) should not hinder the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). But rather, should serve as a tool to enhance the achievement of SDGs. It was agreed that such be action oriented and also address the priority areas outlined in the outcome document (Box 12). ■

BOX 12. POST 2015 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Establishment of an open working group, comprised of 30 representatives, nominated by Member States from the five United Nations regional groups;
- Working group¹ to submit a proposal for sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action;
- Secretary-General to ensure all necessary input and support to this work is provided from the United Nations system, including

through establishing an inter-agency technical support team and expert panels, as needed;

- Relevant bodies of the United Nations system are to support the regional economic commissions in collecting and compiling national inputs in order to inform this global effort;
- Mobilizing financial resources and capacity-building to achieve this endeavour.

¹ The open working group should be formed before the convening of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly and will constitute 30 representatives nominated by Member States from each of the five United Nations regional groups.

FROM VISION TO ACTION: WHAT NEXT FOR CARIBBEAN SIDS?

In spite of the lengthy and painstaking negotiation process leading up to the creation of the outcome document, much arduous work still lies ahead in actually implementing commitments and agreements. *“The future we want”* clearly outlines aspirations for a sustainable future for our planet, for present and future generations, but it fails to provide concrete action and remains a non-binding agreement. A quick scan of the language used in the text points to this air of vagueness and non-commitment: there are roughly 50 uses of the word “encourage”, 99 “supports”, 59 things that governments “reaffirmed” but only six examples of “we will”.

In the case of SIDS, the outcome text recognises their vulnerabilities, as well as the necessity to enhance efforts to support them in the implementation of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy, and strengthen the United Nations support system. It also calls for a third international conference on SIDS to be convened in order to build on the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy. However, what it fails to do is meaningfully address the needs of the Caribbean region and SIDS worldwide. This can be attributed, in part, to the weaknesses which characterize SIDS at such negotiations. Either they are under-represented or un-represented at the negotiations and therefore do not have the voice to be heard above those nations with the political muscle. Developed countries often take the position that small countries are dispensable as they contribute negligibly to the global economy while the costs of addressing their problems are high and they suffer the most from the impact of actions by developed nations.

The Caribbean region, like the rest of the world, is therefore now at a juncture. In the absence of a binding agreement nations need to decide, either to continue with the status quo, or to take genuine responsibility for safeguarding their future. Those leaders who want to protect their nation’s interests will act, and in so doing, will need to make the following actions a priority:

1. Ratify and fully implement all relevant conventions and agreements, whether legally binding or otherwise, related to economic development, social protection and environmental conservation as captured in *“The future we want”* and preceding agreements;
2. Identify national and regional priorities and prepare a plan of implementation, setting timetables and targets. Ambitious targets based on the philosophy of what is needed and not on what can easily be reached should be set;
3. Establish systems for monitoring and measuring progress of implementation activities and targets;
4. Create a coherent and integrated institutional framework to coordinate and avoid duplication of efforts across the various sustainable development related activities, and in reviewing their progress;
5. Identify and create sources of funding and technical support mechanisms both from within and outside of the United Nations system;
6. Invest resources and build capacity in the process of developing negotiation positions;
7. Establish local and regional networks of cooperation to support and enhance efforts and pool resources, engaging civil society;
8. Strengthen coordination of initiatives in meeting the target of the BPoA and Mauritius Strategy;
9. Access support from developed

countries in achieving the sustainable development agenda.

With strong political will and leadership to guide the implementation of these action points, Caribbean SIDS will be better poised to attain the vision of sustainable development whilst contributing more substantially to the development of international agreements. There are two, international-level, events emanating from Rio+20 which the Caribbean should prepare for carefully: the third international conference on SIDS, to be held in 2014, which will involve the creation of a targeted and action oriented plan of implementation for sustainable development in SIDS; and the establishment of sustainable development goals by 2015. Caribbean SIDS must also make every effort to meet the voluntary commitments they have set.

This is also an opportune moment for the nations of the region to harness the support of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) for the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in the Caribbean. ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, the Secretariat of the RCM, is currently reviewing and seeking ways to strengthen the coordinating roles and responsibilities of the RCM to make it more effective and relevant to the needs of the region. Some of the initiatives (actions) that may support the coordinating role of the RCM are as follows:

- Assist in developing, monitoring and coordinating the work programme of the Secretariat;



UN Photo / Guillaume Costa

Sha Zukang (centre, in grey suit, Secretary-General of RIO+20), poses with participants of a press conference on "Actions for The Road Ahead: Commitments Made at Rio+20". 22 June 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

- Facilitate exchange of best practices, information sharing, transfer of experiences, knowledge-based technology and techniques among countries of the Greater Caribbean;
- Liaise with SIDS in other regions to promote joint positions in international forums;
- Assist the promotion of capacity-building efforts and strengthening the human resource base through training and education;
- Contribute to identification of development partners and funding for development activities;
- Facilitate provision of technical assistance, technical advisory and policy services to member countries;
- Build and maintain institutional memory on sustainable development activities in the Caribbean;
- Establish a regional database on sustainable development activities;
- Promote, strengthen and establish cooperative arrangements and partnerships with all relevant stakeholders; and
- Support, reinforce and assist sustainable development initiatives at the local, national and regional levels;
- Strengthen south-south cooperation.

The success of the RCM in fulfilling its functions is highly dependent on the cooperation of countries and their willingness to share data and information on their sustainable development activities, progress and achievements. ECLAC therefore urges Caribbean SIDS to actively participate in the work of the RCM and welcomes ideas to enhance its coordinating role, along with requests for technical assistance and advisory services (ECLAC, 2012).

“Recognition is not enough, we need actions and strong commitments, we need a last push so that future generations will remember this conference.”

Wendy Watson-Wright

In our quest as a region to achieve sustainable development we must step outside of our apathetic box. Instead of thinking that we are being asked to take painful, unpopular measures and avoiding action, we must identify ways in which we can cooperate with each other in positive ways. It is clear that acting and implementing are the only ways to ensure the better world we know is possible. The future is now, and has always been, in our hands.

“We don't see ourselves as small island developing States but as 'large ocean states'.”

Carma Tuiloma, Ambassador to Brazil,

RIO+20 JARGON BUSTER

The following are the explanations for some terms that are used throughout the Rio+20 outcome document:

Decent work – It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men (ILO).

Ecosystem services – the benefits people obtain from ecosystems, which the Millennium Assessment (MA) describes as provisioning, regulating, supporting, and cultural services. Such systems include food, fuel, and fibre, regulating services that include climate regulation and disease control, and non-material benefits such as spiritual or aesthetic benefits. (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment)

“Green economy” – an economy that results in the improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and social inclusive development (UNEP)

Social protection – a set of public and private policies and programmes undertaken by societies in response to various contingencies to offset the absence or substantial reduction of income from work; to provide assistance for families with children as well as provide people with health care and housing (UN ECOSOC).

► (continued from page 13)

RIO+20 JARGON BUSTER

It is an investment in people and in long-term social and economic development. It makes a critical contribution to meeting the development goals towards poverty eradication and to making a positive impact on economic growth, social cohesion and social development (Commission for Social Development)

Sustainable consumption and production – the increased efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes and reducing resource degradation, pollution and waste (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation)

Sustainable forest management - this aims to ensure that the goods and services derived from the forest meets present day needs while at the same time securing their continued availability and contribution to long-term development (FAO). ■

See references on page 18



► (continued from page 3)

Director's Desk

RIO+20 AND THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE CARIBBEAN: DELIVERING "THE FUTURE WE WANT"

to strengthen national institutional infrastructure so as to take full advantage of emerging opportunities, mitigate risks, and expand economic and social welfare for all peoples of the subregion. In this regard, Caribbean member states also have the opportunity to make more use of available structures such as the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) for the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the BPoA. Through the cooperation of States in sharing data and information on sustainable activities and progress, the RCM can better fulfill its duties and in doing so strengthen its capacity to assist the subregion.

Upcoming events, such as the Third International Conference on SIDS in 2014, will provide Caribbean states with a timely opportunity to identify practical strategies for the further implementation of sustainable development and the shaping of relevant sustainable development goals by 2015.

For more information on Rio+20 visit <http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.html> and for more information on the work of ECLAC Caribbean visit <http://www.eclac.org/id.asp?id=47383> ■

Yours in Focus,
Diane



► (continued from page 5)

RIO+20: BACKGROUND TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Seven areas were given priority attention: decent jobs, energy, sustainable cities, food security and sustainable agriculture, water, oceans and disasters (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3 THE SEVEN PRIORITY ISSUES AT RIO+20

JOBS

Jobs are critical for social stability, and green jobs contribute to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment.

CITIES

Overcoming challenges faced by cities in ways that allow them to continue to thrive and grow, while improving resource use and reducing pollution and poverty

WATER

Facilitating measures to address issues of water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation in order to ensure clean, accessible water for all.

DISASTERS

Disaster risk reduction and resilience building requires careful planning and preparation to minimise disaster impacts on people, environment and economies.

ENERGY

Ensuring universal access to modern energy services, improve efficiency and increase use of renewable sources.

FOOD

Implementing sustainable agriculture involves re-examining how we grow, share and consume our food to eradicate poverty and hunger, and thereby achieve food security.

OCEANS

Taking action on sustainable management and protection of oceans and marine resources to safeguard the goods and services provided by the sea .

► (continued from page 7)

THE ROAD TO RIO – PREPARATIONS FOR RIO+20 IN THE CARIBBEAN

In achieving the overall objective of sustainable development, the need to maintain the fundamental principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and equity was emphasised. Member States were also careful to acknowledge respect for multiculturalism and for the knowledge and traditional values of the region's indigenous peoples and local and traditional communities, as well as the importance of participation by and the contribution of, civil society to sustainable development.

The Latin America and Caribbean region expressed their firm determination to continue to work towards sustainable development, with the primordial purpose of eradicating poverty and achieving equality in societies, bearing in mind the particular characteristics of each of the States of the region.

Outcomes from the Latin American and Caribbean meeting were fed, along with other regional and national preparations, and inputs from civil society major groups and intergovernmental organisations, into the global negotiation process leading to Rio+20. ■

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UPCOMING EVENTS 4th QUARTER 2012

16 October, 2012

Final expert group meeting on development of a prototype model to assess and project the impact of climate change in the Caribbean. Castries, **Saint Lucia**.

17 October, 2012

Expert group meeting on economic and social impacts of climate change in the Caribbean. Castries, **Saint Lucia**.

18-19 October, 2012

Technical advisory meeting of the development of economic frameworks in support of an assessment of the economic and social impacts of climate change in the Caribbean. Castries, **Saint Lucia**.

LIST of Recent ECLAC Documents and Publications

Listed by Symbol Number, Date and Title

LC/CAR/L.385	April 2012	Development and Cooperation Committee: Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015.	implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the sustainable development of small island developing States (BPOA/Mauritius Strategy).
LC/W.475	April 2012	LC/CAR/L.379 May 2012 The Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the sustainable development of Small Islands Developing States.	LC/CAR/L.384 June 2012 Report of the National workshop on REDATAM+SP XPLAN and WebServer applications development.
LC/G.2538-P	April 2012	LC/CAR/L.380 May 2012 A Study on the capacity of statistical offices of the Caribbean to produce environment, social, economic and gender statistics.	LC/CAR/L.387 June 2012 Report of the third meeting of the project: Development of economic frameworks in support of an assessment of the economic and social impacts of climate change in the Caribbean
LC/G.2519-P	April 2012	LC/CAR/L.376 June 2012 Evaluation report of the national training workshop on capacity building for gender mainstreaming and the production and collection of reliable disaggregated data.	LC/L.3505 (EE.II/18)/I June 2012 Update of the report on the 2011 round of the International Comparison Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean.
LC/CAR/L.377	May 2012	LC/CAR/L.381 June 2012 Report of the fourth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) for the Mauritius Strategy for the further	LC/G.2541-P June 2012 Macroeconomic report on Latin America and the Caribbean – June 2012.
LC/CAR/L.378	May 2012		



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