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Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean  
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

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Climate Change and the United Nations Conference on  
Sustainable Development: A focus on the Caribbean  
Santiago  
6 September 2011

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**REPORT OF THE MEETING ON CLIMATE CHANGE  
AND THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:  
A FOCUS ON THE CARIBBEAN**

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## **A. DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The following decisions and recommendations were adopted:
  - (a) The reports of the Review of the Economics of Climate Change (RECC) were important in planning for climate change and should be encouraged and expanded to include regional assessments
  - (b) The Caribbean subregion should examine the possibility of establishing an insurance scheme for small-scale farmers and fishers
  - (c) The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) only provided coverage for damage from hurricanes and that should be expanded to events such as floods and drought which wrought considerable damage to countries
  - (d) Countries needed to access the adaptation fund as well as the climate fund in adapting to climate change.

## **B. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

### **1. Place and date**

2. The Expert Group Meeting under the Review of the Economics of Climate Change in the Caribbean was convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean on 6 September 2011 in Santiago.

### **2. Attendance**

3. Representatives of the following Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee member States attended the meeting: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Lucia. The United Nations Secretariat was represented by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The following intergovernmental organizations were also in attendance: the Caribbean Community Secretariat and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC).

### **3. Agenda**

4. The meeting adopted the following agenda:
  1. Opening of the meeting
  2. Adoption of the agenda
  3. Review of the Economics of Climate Change in the Caribbean
  4. Conclusions and recommendations

## **C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

### **1. Opening of meeting**

5. Welcome and opening remarks were made by Joseluis Samaniego, Chief, Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division, ECLAC Headquarters, Santiago.

6. He made reference to the studies under RECC in Central America, South America and the Caribbean and noted that projections of the impact of climate change were made. He noted the degree of uncertainty involved in making projections and indicated that contrary to the information provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the high emissions impact or A2 scenario seemed to be expected to have a lower impact than the low impact emissions or B2 scenario. He reiterated the importance of those reports to the current preparations for the 20-year review of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and to the negotiations for a Kyoto Protocol. He urged countries to continue to research the impacts of climate change and suggested to the meeting the need to use other indicators of impact apart from GDP indicating that natural capital needed to be taken into consideration.

### **2. Adoption of the agenda**

7. The provisional agenda was adopted.

### **3. Review of the Economics of Climate Change in the Caribbean**

8. The representative of CCCCC provided a synopsis of RECC studies. He indicated that temperatures might increase between 2.3 – 3.4°C by 2050 and the southern Caribbean was expected to be drier than the northern Caribbean. He mentioned that climate change impacts were expected to cost the Caribbean subregion approximately US\$ 5 billion annually projected to 2050, which would amount to 5% of GDP. He continued to cite losses in the agriculture sector at approximately 2% of GDP (2008). In the coastal and marine sector, cumulative damage under the A2 scenario projected to 2050 would be in excess of US\$ 33 billion. Adaptation options included enhancement of monitoring of coastal waters to provide early warning alerts of bleaching events, development of artificial reefs and fish-aggregating devices. Introduction of alternative attractions increased recommended design wind speeds for new tourism-related structures. Development of national evacuation and rescue plans and the formation of irrigation networks that allowed for the recycling of waste water. In the health sector, costs from climate change were expected to be about US\$ 250 million. Adaptation options included improvements in building codes and enforcement of such codes; incentives to retrofit tourism facilities to limit the impact of increased impacts; retrofitting of ports to accommodate the expected impacts; catastrophe insurance for government buildings that were used by tourists; mangrove reforestation and the development of early warning systems. In discussing policy recommendations, he mentioned that countries should start with “low regrets” options.

9. During the discussion, the representative of Bahamas enquired about the impact of climate change on tourist arrivals. He was advised that the report indicated that those were expected to fall for the Caribbean subregion with significant loss in revenue. There was, therefore, the need to take into consideration the recommended adaptation options and to improve the efficiency with which energy was used so as to reduce costs to visitors, thereby still attracting a considerable part of the market.

10. One representative of Barbados enquired about risk transfer and encouraged ECLAC and CCCCC to examine that issue within the context of the RECC project. One representative of Jamaica advised that climate change would increase risks for farmers and the representative of Antigua and Barbuda commented on the risk to fisher folk. A discussion on the Wincrop insurance scheme for farmers in the

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States ensued and the meeting was informed that scheme was no longer effective. The meeting agreed that such an insurance scheme was more important to both farmers and fishers given the increased threat of climate change.

11. The representative of the Dominican Republic reiterated that such considerations should be incorporated in the countries' national communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The representative of Cuba also recommended that financial flows from developed to developing countries should be increased and technology transfer should be enhanced. The representative of Bahamas mentioned the matter of carbon taxes which had not found favour with many developed countries.

#### **4. Conclusions and recommendations**

12. The following conclusions were arrived at:

- (a) Climate change would cause considerable negative impacts on Caribbean economies and, as such, it was necessary that countries increase adaptation strategies to reduce those effects
- (b) Countries could lose, annually, about 5% of their GDP projected to 2050
- (c) Adaptation options should primarily include "low regrets" measures and should follow the precautionary principle
- (d) The time to act was now so that countries were prepared for the future

13. The key recommendations included:

- (a) The reports of RECC were important in planning for climate change and should be encouraged and expanded to include regional assessments
- (b) The Caribbean subregion should examine the possibility of establishing an insurance scheme for small-scale farmers and fishers
- (c) CCRIF only provided coverage for damage from hurricanes and that should be expanded to events, such as floods and drought, that wrought considerable damage to countries
- (d) Countries needed to access the adaptation fund as well as the climate fund in adapting to climate change.

Annex I**List of participants**

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Annex II**List of documents**

1. United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, (UNCSD) Rio+20 Subregional Preparatory Meeting for the Caribbean. 20 June 2011.
2. Policy Background Paper: A Viable Framework for a Green Economy in Caribbean Member States. Considerations for Inclusive and Green Growth (REVISED). Prepared by Leisa Perch<sup>1</sup>
3. Gaps in Implementing the MSI. June 2011.
4. The Transition to a Green Economy: Benefits, Challenges and Risks from a Sustainable Development Perspective. Report by a Panel of Experts\* to Second Preparatory Committee Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

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<sup>1</sup> This Background Paper was prepared by Leisa Perch, Team Leader of the Rural and Sustainable Development Team of the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) at the request of the Director of Sustainable Development, CARICOM Secretariat as an input to ongoing discussions on Rio +20. Research support was provided for this note by Clare Watson as well as Sonja Basic and Ange Ihirwe, all interns with the R and SD team. Clare was instrumental in collating data on disaster impacts including cumulating and cross-checking data from multiple sources as well as collated data inputs for the analysis of the structure of Caribbean economies. The initial draft benefited from the review and comments of Garfield Barnwell, Director, Sustainable Development Unit of the CARICOM Secretariat and Gail Hurley, Policy Specialist, Poverty Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP.