



UNITED NATIONS



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

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Third meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee of the  
Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the Implementation  
of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation of the  
Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development  
of Small Island Developing States  
13 April 2011  
Port of Spain

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**REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE  
REGIONAL COORDINATING MECHANISM FOR THE  
MAURITIUS STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

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## **A. DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. In light of the pivotal role of the Government of Barbados and its Prime Minister in the Rio+20 process, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) would recommend that the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) seek the support of the Barbados Prime Minister as a champion for the issues of the sustainable development of Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
2. The regional implementation matrix for the monitoring of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (MSI) for the sustainable development of SIDS should be utilized as a monitoring tool, and its review and updating be undertaken on a regular basis.
3. The RCM should strengthen its advocacy for increased support from the international community for SIDS in the area of reducing vulnerability.
4. The RCM should increase its attention to coordinating research for funding common strategies for the implementation of the MSI.
5. The RCM should take note of the initiative of the Government of Spain in regard to the establishment of a website for the purpose of building partnerships, and the allocation challenges within the Latin America and Caribbean group should be addressed through increased cooperation, trust and information sharing.
6. The RCM should encourage increased sharing of information by United Nations agencies engaged in special projects in the area of MSI implementation.
7. The RCM should encourage Caribbean SIDS to formulate a strategy for increased access to the Global Environmental Facility (GEF).
8. Partnerships should be strengthened between Caribbean SIDS and their global counterparts.
9. The Paris Declaration should be further considered by the RCM to support efficient and effective data management.
10. The RCM should encourage Caribbean SIDS to explore the synergies and cost efficiencies to be gained through greater collaboration in data management.
11. The RCM should encourage Caribbean SIDS to strengthen processes between regional and national approaches to building resilience, and support should be given to the notion that building resilience is considered a regional public good.
12. The RCM should continue to support the evidenced-based model of decision-making within Caribbean SIDS.
13. The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) should examine the work programme of the SIDS Pacific region for its treatment of ocean governance as a priority, particularly in its work with regard to issues of governance of the Caribbean Sea.
14. In the debate on climate change, sea level rise should be given more prominence as it impacts Caribbean SIDS.

15. The ACS should report its activities with regards to the Caribbean Sea Initiative to the RCM.

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

### **Place and date**

16. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean convened the third meeting of the TAC of the RCM in Port of Spain, on 13 April 2011.

### **Attendance**

17. Representatives of four member States of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) attended the third meeting of the TAC: Belize, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.
18. One associate member was represented at the third meeting: Cayman Islands
19. The United Nations Secretariat was represented by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)
20. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended the meeting: the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).
21. Representatives of the following regional and international institutions attended the meeting: the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), the University of the West Indies (UWI), and the University Consortium for Small Island States (UCSIS).

### **Organization of work**

22. The meeting adopted the Provisional Programme setting out the organization of work.
23. A list of working documents submitted by the secretariat is attached as Annex II to the present report.

## **C. AGENDA**

1. Opening remarks
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Report on the work of the Technical Advisory Committee 2010- 2011
4. Resilience and vulnerability of Small Island Developing States
5. Consideration of the draft work programme of Technical Advisory Committee 2012-2013
6. Any other matters
7. Close

## **D. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

24. At the opening of the third meeting of the TAC, remarks were made by the following speakers: Ms. Caroline Eugene, Sustainable Development Division, Ministry of Physical Development and Environment, Government of Saint Lucia and Mr. Hirohito Toda, Officer-in-Charge, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean.

25. Mr. Hirohito Toda, Officer-in-Charge, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, welcomed participants and reminded the meeting that the RCM was designed to promote awareness of issues relating to sustainable development, to assist in mobilization of new and additional resources for Caribbean SIDS, to facilitate the exchange of best practices and transfer of knowledge and to promote joint positions among SIDS at international forums. Mr. Toda highlighted the development of the third biennium of activities, substantive issues and mandates that determined the day's deliberations.

26. Ms. Caroline Eugene, representative of Saint Lucia, in her opening remarks as Chair, noted that the third meeting of the TAC of the RCM was being held amidst catastrophic natural disasters and turbulent political and civil environments but, nonetheless, it was necessary to forge ahead. She thanked the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean for its commitment to the important meeting, despite the limited resources devoted to the programme area. She further expressed gratitude to the subregional headquarters for playing a pivotal role in assisting countries in their fulfilment of reporting for the MSI+5. Speaking on behalf of the Government of Saint Lucia, she expressed appreciation for the financial resources received which had enabled Saint Lucia to complete its report in a timely manner.

27. The Chair informed the meeting that MSI and the RCM could not be discussed in isolation from the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 2012. She noted that the Caribbean appeared to be lagging in its preparation and that efforts must be made to ensure that the voice of SIDS and low-lying coastal States were not lost during that Rio +20 process.

28. She expressed interest in the CARICOM secretariat's presentation scheduled as agenda item 5 (b) on the Rio + 20 process and hoped that that presentation would provide the insight and guidance required to better prepare member States to take full advantage of the process. She urged all participants to act to ensure that the region had a voice during that important time.

### **1. Adoption of the agenda**

29. The Provisional Agenda was adopted without any amendments.

### **2. Procedural matters and organization of work**

30. The session was chaired by Ms. Caroline Eugene, representative of Saint Lucia.

### **3. Report on the work of the Technical Advisory Committee, 2010- 2011**

31. The third meeting of the TAC was being held before the fifteenth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of CDCC (scheduled for September 2011) partly to ensure a handover of responsibility within the secretariat due to the impending retirement in June 2011, of the Officer with responsibility for the work of the TAC of the RCM.

32. The secretariat referred participants to paragraph 5 of the document “Report of the Secretariat to the Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the period January 2010 – April 2011” and highlighted ECLAC support for the implementation of the MSI for the period 2000-2005. The following activities were underscored: (a) the development of the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) for SIDS; (b) the paper “Caribbean priorities in implementation of the SIDS/PoA”; and (c) the study “Challenges in the implementation of the MSI in the Caribbean”.

33. The secretariat raised the importance of sharing the MSI+5 review information and progress reports, despite passing of the deadline, and suggested that where institutional reviews were undertaken those reports should also be forwarded to the secretariat. In reporting on activities to support institutional strengthening and capacity-building for the period under review, the secretariat noted that participation in the review process was galvanized not only through the preparation of national reports but through the dissemination of questionnaires. The responses to the questionnaires were utilized in the preparation of 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. The secretariat noted that participation by Caribbean SIDS in the preparatory meetings and the high-level review was fulsome.

34. With regard to the scaling up, gathering and dissemination of information with special attention to best practices, the secretariat reported that a portal had been produced on the ECLAC website and all information and documents received were uploaded. The website received significant increase in hits during the review process and had been under reconstruction to ensure easier access to information.

35. In regard to encouraging the development/strengthening of partnerships, the secretariat acknowledged that a joint approach in the work of Caribbean SIDS was envisaged. In seeking to support that aim, the secretariat reported that teleconferences of the TAC of the RCM were convened before and 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 the TAC members and additional teleconferences were convened to assist TAC members in the development of the programme of activities of the TAC for the period 2012- 2013.

36. With respect to public awareness and communication, the secretariat reported that two proposals were submitted, both were favorably received but none received final approval.

37. The secretariat noted that the Regional Implementation Matrix for monitoring of the implementation of the MSI was reviewed and updated.

38. In response to the presentation by the secretariat, the representative of CARICOM suggested that usually regional activities were more successful than national activities and, therefore, the RCM should be encouraged to seek new strategies for resource mobilization.

39. In regard to the issue of national consultations as part of the preparatory process, the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines indicated that countries were required to consult on many items on the sustainable development agenda and that donors required evidence of a democratic process. The representative raised the concern, however, that too often development was broken into pockets and, when each activity required consultation, the process was burdensome and often there were missed opportunities for synergies.

40. The representative of UNEP thanked the secretariat for its work and stated that he concurred with the Chair’s opening remarks. He expressed the view that the secretariat had undersold itself in its report as

it had gone to great lengths to ensure that regional organizations had been mobilized to provide inputs to the MSI+5 review process and such mobilization efforts were not fully reflected in the report. He agreed with the views of the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and commented that there were too many requests for documents and consultations by donors. It was advised that countries and institutions should liaise with United Nations agencies that were involved in doing some form of preparatory work for Rio+20 to ensure that the degree of burden in the reporting process was not repeated.

41. The representative of UCSIS indicated that Caribbean States, acting together, would have more support and such action should reduce the difficulty for SIDS to access GEF funds.

42. The representative of CARICOM suggested that the Paris Declaration be examined by the TAC and noted that when it came to resources, pledges and disbursement were often different and not aligned.

#### **4. Resilience and vulnerability of Small Island Developing States**

43. A presentation on the preliminary report of the findings of an ECLAC-commissioned UWI/Sustainable Economic Development Unit (SEDU) study on measuring the resilience of Caribbean SIDS was delivered to the TAC members.

44. The objectives of the study were to review current literature on resilience and vulnerability and show why its indicators could be useful. SEDU was also required to explore, present and recommend country-specific indicators to measure resilience in the Caribbean. A final objective of the study was to identify adaptation measures to hydro-meteorological events that had been used in the Caribbean. The study found that the concept of vulnerability was multidimensional evolving from an internal risk factor to encompassing physical, social, economic, environmental and institutional factors. The study further explored the vulnerabilities of the Caribbean in the context of the global financial crisis and natural hazard events.

45. The study concluded that more detailed studies on natural environmental impacts, specifically in terms of biophysical and socio economic impacts, were needed along with a review of best practices, to date, in terms of preparedness, resilience building and climate change adaptation. Best practices could be drawn from Cuba, in that regard. Furthermore, SEDU noted that addressing vulnerability and building resilience required appropriate information and data and urged that one of the region's priorities should be to address data gaps. Finally, efforts at building resilience should be viewed as a regional public good, resulting in one country's benefit not compromising another country's ability to benefit.

46. The Chair thanked the presenter and expressed her appreciation for the data. She enquired as to how policymakers could be encouraged to appreciate the same.

47. The secretariat informed the meeting that the UWI-SEDU study was designed to increase the information of the TAC and the policymakers in Caribbean SIDS on the importance of resilience indices, and those most applicable, in light of the available data.

48. Participants agreed with the need to further explore an analysis of data in Caribbean SIDS and to encourage an increased use of evidence-based policy formulation. They also called for the development of more efficient data management systems.

49. The representative of UNEP questioned the readiness and willingness of governments to expend resources on effective data management and raised concerns about how policymakers might respond to another index.

50. The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines noted that there was often a disconnect between the research that was taking place at the regional level and what was known about such research at the national level. She made an appeal for greater connection between regional and national information sharing and planning.

51. The representative of CARICOM noted Uruguay's questioning of the SIDS definition of vulnerability and also that SIDS had been challenged by the United States and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), because of data not being available to support positions on vulnerability. That, he said, should encourage SIDS to make greater efforts at producing more reliable data.

52. The secretariat noted that between 2000 and 2005, ECLAC had engaged in studies to strengthen evidenced-based planning in the region. Studies suggested that governments were using evidence-based decision-making in economic policymaking, but not always in the social sectors. Through activities with the Caribbean Development Bank the region saw much improvement in the use of evidenced-based policymaking in the social sectors, though gaps still existed.

53. The representative of UCSIS sought to ascertain the extent to which the ECLAC Damage and Loss Assessment methodology had made progress in its environmental assessment. The secretariat responded that although the methodology had advanced, the problem of little or spotty environmental baseline data at the national level still existed.

54. The representative of Belize congratulated UWI on the presentation of the research findings. She stated that funding for environmental issues sought from GEF had met with limited success and noted that poor collection and use of data still existed. She expressed the view that the region should see some improvement in data collection following the ECLAC 2010 workshop on data collection.

55. The representative of the Cayman Islands added that a lack of data seemed to be a persistent issue across the region. He noted also that overseas territories were more disadvantaged where funding was concerned. On the matter of evidenced-based policymaking, he noted that the challenge was for the technocrat to convince the policymaker.

56. The secretariat informed the meeting that the SEDU report would be widely circulated to all TAC members and uploaded to the ECLAC website.

## **5. Consideration of the draft programme of activities of the Technical Advisory Committee for the period 2012-2013**

57. The secretariat referred to the Regional Implementation Matrix, formerly called the CARICOM Matrix, and explained that the review and updating process involved not only incorporating new information resulting from the MSI reporting process but any additional activities that were reported to the secretariat from country focal points.

58. The secretariat led the meeting through the proposed structure and activities of the detailed programme for 2012-2013.

59. Following the presentation, the Chair sought the secretariat's advice as to whether member States were fully aware of the extent of their duties and responsibilities regarding feedback to the TAC and regarding the updating of the matrix. The secretariat indicated that although countries were quite willing to support the process, they often faced challenges such as those emanating from the changes in national focal points which might hinder the feedback mechanisms.

60. The representative of the ACS noted that United Nations resolution 65/2 showed advancement of Caribbean SIDS in a number of areas. He commended Caribbean SIDS on those excellent results and suggested that that should be used as a good bargaining tool. He suggested that the Prime Minister of Barbados could be a champion for sustainable development and for ocean governance with regards to the Caribbean Sea. The representative of CARICOM, speaking on ocean governance, noted the issue was a priority in the work programme of the SIDS Pacific region and the ACS might wish to examine those activities and see how they could inform the process in the Caribbean. The ACS noted that the issue was that member States might need to address governance of the Caribbean Sea in a more coherent manner.

### **5(b). Presentation on the Rio + 20 process**

61. The Chair invited two presentations on the Rio+20 process, one from the CARICOM Secretariat and the other from CANARI.

62. The presentation by the representative of CARICOM noted that, given the significance of sustainable development for the region, in reality the region might not have performed well over the past 10 years. He noted that most countries showed only a 2% growth based on an ECLAC study, where only three countries exceeded this performance. He suggested that the missing link might be the emphasis on relevant technology. The representative further expressed the region's ongoing challenges in reporting under the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA), and stated that a case could still be made for securing special attention for the Caribbean in that area. He stressed that sea level rise was not as cogently discussed as global warming and climate change, as such, the policy responses focused more on mitigation rather than adaptation. However, he highlighted specific progress made within the region, for example, in Guyana, President Jagdeo had made strides with the low carbon initiative.

63. The representative of CANARI posited that the region had not wished to adopt a northern perspective on the green economy and, through consultations facilitated by CANARI, a Caribbean interpretation to the issue within the notions of sustainable development evolved. In making a case for shifting to a green economy, she suggested issues such as poverty and social inequality, disaster risk, public indebtedness and diminishing sectoral benefits. On the other hand, political disincentives, weak bottom-up demand, declining human resource base and outdated and inadequate regulatory frameworks were presented as key factors which kept the region locked in its current paradigm. Several characteristics of a green economy were noted, such as equitable distribution of economic benefits and effective management of ecological resources, economically viable and resilient to both external and internal shocks, self-directed and self-reliant economy, pro-poor and an economy which generated decent jobs and working conditions for local people.

64. The representative of UNEP thanked both presenters. He noted that the green economy was the new mantra and could be used to foster sustainable development. He drew the meeting's attention to information on the UNEP website and noted that the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute had undertaken a great deal of activities in that area, specifically on water resource management and water quality. In regard to the presentation from the CARICOM Secretariat, he agreed that there were still challenges, but noted the benefits of MEAs and the ratification of the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land Based Sources and Activities. He noted also, that the region had benefited from GEF projects, it would be important to review the impact of those in the region.

65. The representative of UCSIS indicated that attention should be placed on air transportation and that, too, should be included in the Matrix. He further noted that rationalizing air transport in the Caribbean was a key issue of the green economy. In regard to the issue of sea level rise, he agreed that it should be treated separately from climate change. He stated that consideration needed to be made for the region's airports that were 50ft below sea level.

66. The representative of CANARI stated that the region needed to move beyond the focus on implementing sustainable development, and concentrate on specific aspects of sustainable development. The representative of ACS commented that better technology should be applied to green economies.

67. The representative of the Cayman Islands noted that placing sustainable development units in ministries of environment might have caused an imbalance, as not all pillars of sustainable development were able to be addressed through such ministries.

68. The representative of CANARI added that the green economy concept would ensure that sustainable development occurred and at the same time focus attention on issues of social justice, equity and the environment.

**5(a)ii. Consideration of the draft work programme for the  
Technical Advisory Committee, 2012-2013**

69. The secretariat guided the meeting through the amendments of the proposed work programme for the TAC for the period 2012- 2013 following which inputs from the floor were encouraged.

70. The representative of UCSIS suggested that the language used in section 2, Objectives of the activities and expected accomplishments point (c), should suggest a mechanism for resource mobilization. He advocated the design of mechanisms to coordinate research for funding common strategy and mechanisms for funding. The secretariat explained, however, that member countries should be allowed autonomy to source their own funding and the TAC would give technical assistance to strengthen the process. The secretariat also suggested that the TAC should facilitate resource mobilization and expressed support for the efficiency of south-south partnerships. The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines agreed with the general approach.

71. The representative of ACS noted that an established link should be made to strengthen partnerships and regional bodies could partner in areas that were in line with their organization's agenda. He further suggested that the ACS could report to the RCM on activities currently advanced under the Caribbean Sea Commission as this would facilitate updating of the matrix. He further noted that donors reacted to projects with broad impacts and the ACS would be willing to support CARICOM projects by partnering with and subscribing to them, where appropriate.

72. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago noted that all information sharing and awareness activities should be executed early in the work plan.

73. Other amendments to the draft work programme 2012-2013 were offered and included the following: focal points were advised to liaise with relevant bodies for information which should be disseminated to the member States; a statement should be included to encourage the collection of data by governments to enhance future reporting; other regional bodies should be mentioned, for example, ACS and CANARI; activities to increase public awareness and communication should be scheduled early in executing the work programme and identified as a priority area for attention, and, that information produced by partner agencies should be made available to member States.

74. The meeting agreed that sequencing of the events would be left to the secretariat and that the redrafted document would be circulated for approval with the report of the meeting.

## **6. Any other matters**

75. The Officer-in-Charge of ECLAC indicated that the sustainability of the TAC would be addressed as follows:(a) TAC work programme incorporated into the work programme of ECLAC; (b) the role of the secretariat of the TAC would be vested in the Sustainable Development Unit; and (c) specialized versions of the newsletter, Focus, of the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, would be devoted to reporting on the progress of the TAC. He called for commitment from the TAC members to assist in the dissemination of the issues of the TAC. He also alerted the TAC to the tentative dates for the fifteenth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee scheduled for September 2011 and the twenty-fourth Session of the CDCC which would take place in 2012.

76. The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expressed concern with the decision to integrate the work programme of the TAC into the Sustainable Development Unit of ECLAC, and felt that some part of the work might be compromised and enquired if there was any alternative solution.

77. The Officer-in-Charge responded and highlighted that maintaining continuity was a major reason for placing the TAC in the Sustainable Development Unit and was confident that, as an institution, ECLAC would be able to manage the responsibilities of the TAC and ensure continuity. The representative of CARICOM also expressed concern and referred to the possible increase in the workload of the TAC, considering the Barbados +20 meeting. He took the opportunity to express gratitude to the secretariat of the TAC, which was led by the Regional Adviser, for her hard work in bringing the TAC to its current status.

## **7. Closing**

78. The Officer-in-Charge of ECLAC confirmed that ECLAC would continue to function as the secretariat of the TAC, and hoped that the members of the TAC would direct and steer its activities even more vigorously. He suggested that those elements that were already included in the work programme of ECLAC would be addressed adequately, however, member countries could assist whenever there were additional responsibilities.

79. In closing, the Officer-in-Charge reiterated that the MSI promoted the sustainable development of SIDS and the role of the TAC was to monitor the progress made. He noted that SIDS needed to seek economies of scale in most of the projects that they pursued and to ensure that capacity-building was a major part of their activities. In building capacity, the harmonization and reduction of duplication through communication should be encouraged. He thanked the Regional Adviser for her service in the capacity as secretariat to the TAC for the last five years. He directed the TAC members to address their future queries to the Registry of ECLAC as the organization would continue to serve its members. Other members of the TAC joined in thanking the Regional Adviser for her service.

80. The secretariat expressed thanks and assured the TAC that ECLAC would continue to seek the interest of SIDS.

81. The Chair brought the meeting to a close with the usual exchange of courtesies.

## **Annex I**

### **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

#### **A. Members**

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## Annex II

### List of documents

**Third meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Negotiating Mechanism, Port of Spain  
13 April 2011**

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| TAC3 2011/1       | - Provisional agenda  |
| TAC3 2011/2Add. 1 | - Provisional annotated agenda  |
| TAC3 2011/2       | - Provisional programme   |
| LC/CAR/L.290      | - Report of the Secretariat to the Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the period January 2010-April 2011   |
| TAC3 2011/4       | - Progress Report of the Inter-Governmental Council of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the period January 2010- 2011  |
| TAC3 2011/4       | <p>- Proposed programme of activities of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States 2012-2013.</p> <p>- Regional Implementation Matrix for the Monitoring of the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States</p> <p>- Multi-year Programme of Work of the Commission on Sustainable Development SIDS Roadmap to Rio+20</p> |
| E/cn. 17/2010/12  | - Economic and Social Council: Proposed strategic framework for the period 2012-2013: subprogramme 4, Sustainable development, of programme 7, Economic and social affairs.   |
| A/res/65/2        | - General Assembly: Resolution adopted by the General Assembly  |