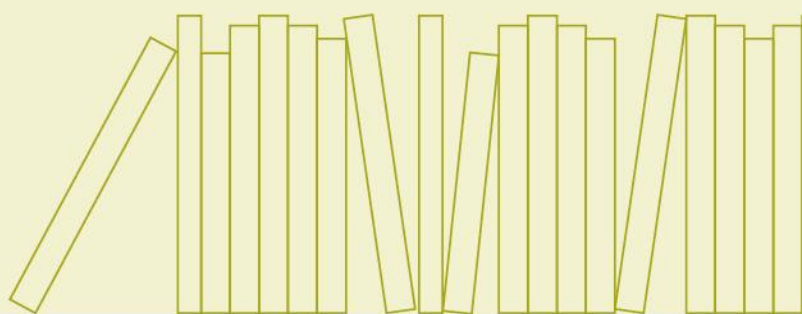


Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

**ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS
FOR THE CARIBBEAN**



Report of the seminar on ocean-based climate action in support of blue economy advancement in Trinidad and Tobago



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC



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

Seminar on ocean-based climate action in support of
blue economy advancement in Trinidad and Tobago
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**REPORT OF THE SEMINAR ON OCEAN-BASED CLIMATE ACTION
IN SUPPORT OF BLUE ECONOMY ADVANCEMENT
IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date

1. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, in partnership with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) under the Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development of Trinidad and Tobago, convened a seminar titled “Ocean-based climate action in support of blue economy advancement in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean region”. The seminar was convened in a hybrid format on Tuesday 30 September 2025, from 8.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Arthur Lok Jack School of Business, Mount Hope, Trinidad and Tobago. The programme and concept note are provided in annexes I and II.

2. Attendance

2. A total of 96 participants attended the seminar. Member States of the Commission were represented by Australia, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Germany, Mexico, Panama, Peru and the Republic of Korea, as well as Trinidad and Tobago through several ministries and agencies. Associate members were represented by Guadeloupe and Member States of the United Nations not members of the Commission included the People's Republic of China.

3. Attending from the United Nations Secretariat were representatives of the Resident Coordinator Office for Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, as well as for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

4. The following entities of the United Nations system were represented: United Nations Development Programme, UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, United Nations Environment Programme and Food and Agriculture Organization.

5. The meeting also included participation from intergovernmental organizations such as the Association of Caribbean States. Also in attendance were representatives of non-governmental organizations, including the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, Climate Analytics Caribbean and the Cropper Foundation, as well as financial institutions, namely the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Inter-American Development Bank and Republic Bank Limited. Academic institutions were represented by the University of the West Indies and the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

3. Meeting agenda

1. Opening remarks delivered by Seijoong Kwon, Ambassador, Republic of Korea to Trinidad and Tobago and Miosotis Rivas-Peña, Director, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean.
2. Key address delivered by Kennedy Swaratsingh, Minister, Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development, Trinidad and Tobago.
3. The ocean economy in Latin America and the Caribbean: Outlook and Perspectives.
4. United Nations recent meetings and implications to sustainable ocean resources management in Caribbean small island developing States.

5. Sharing policies and practices on climate change and the blue economy: Seijoong Kwon, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Trinidad and Tobago.
6. Launch of IMA Blue Technologies Awareness Project: ceremonial signing between the IMA and Republic Bank Limited.
7. Presentations and panel discussions on practical response measures:
 - Panel A: Climate change and economic diversification
 - Panel B: Climate change and technologies
 - Panel C: Climate change and conservation
8. Conclusion and vote of thanks.

B. REPORTING THE PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of the meeting

6. The seminar on ocean-based climate action in Trinidad and Tobago emphasized reframing Caribbean small island developing States as "large ocean States," highlighting their extensive marine resources and significant opportunities for sustainable development. Seijoong Kwon, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, underscored the ocean's vital role in climate regulation, economic livelihoods and global ecosystem interconnectedness. He stressed the urgent need for collaborative actions and regional cooperation against threats such as sea-level rise, coral degradation and marine pollution. As an example, the Ambassador cited the Sandy Shoreline project, as a government-supported initiative addressing coastal erosion and reducing the vulnerability of the Caribbean region's coasts and enhancing social resilience to the impacts of climate change.

7. The Director of IMA welcomed participants and underscored the Caribbean's dependence on marine ecosystems for food security, tourism and economic growth. She emphasized the blue economy's potential to drive employment and sustainable development, calling for equitable, science-based and traditional knowledge-rooted solutions through partnerships across governments, private sector, academia, youth and civil society.

8. The Minister of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development of Trinidad and Tobago articulated his personal and national ties to the sea, emphasizing that the blue economy is key to socioeconomic stability and environmental protection. He outlined the country's commitment to coral reef and mangrove restoration, ocean governance advancements and innovative scientific research, such as deep-sea exploration expeditions supported by philanthropic agencies and local scientists. The Minister also lauded international cooperation, highlighting the Republic of Korea Blue Action Plan and the climate resilience projects spearheaded by the Association of Caribbean States.

9. The Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean detailed the critical state of Caribbean marine biodiversity and the heavy economic losses endured due to extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change and other anthropogenic activities. The Director highlighted the responsibilities of member States in fulfilling multilateral commitments, including the imminent entry into force of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction. Her remarks concluded with a strong emphasis on the necessity for SIDS relevant applied research, regional cooperation and equitable resource management to foster climate resilience and safeguard ocean economies.

10. The opening segment of the seminar effectively highlighted the Caribbean SIDS extensive marine resources and the blue economy's potential as a driver for sustainable development. Discussions underscored significant challenges, including climate change impacts, pollution, restricted fiscal space and existing capacity gaps. Towards the management of these priorities and fostering resilient, prosperous ocean-based economies, the segment emphasized the crucial role of regional cooperation, innovative financing mechanisms, digital technologies and digitalization, science-based management, inclusive governance and robust international partnerships. In the following segments a number of these priority areas was presented.

2. The ocean economy in Latin America and the Caribbean: Outlook and Perspectives

11. The Chief, Water and Biodiversity Unit, ECLAC, delivered a presentation outlining the significance of the marine environment and including the blue economy. The presentation highlighted the triple global crisis of climate change: (i) increasing pollution, (ii) biodiversity loss and (iii) how these threats impact the livelihoods and sustainable development of Caribbean countries. The presentation highlighted the marine economy's potential, noting its faster growth compared to land-based economies, offering a new path for nations to achieve sustainable development. Emphasis was placed on tourism and small-scale fisheries sectors in the Caribbean as avenues through which the region could enhance food security and sustain economic growth. However, considerations must be made to address existing challenges to this region's marine economies.

12. The recommendations put forward included the transformation into blue economies that promote the sustainable use of ocean resources. Furthermore, guidelines were provided for developing public policies to transition to blue, sustainable and inclusive economies in the Caribbean region. She concluded by mentioning the objectives and purpose of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, which was ratified by over 60 countries and is expected to enter into force in January 2026. The other notable event was the World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, which entered into force on 15 September 2025.

3. United Nations recent meeting and implications to sustainable ocean resources management in the Caribbean SIDS

13. Focusing on sustainable utilization of ocean resources in Caribbean SIDS, the following presentations provided on the key issues and outcomes of four recent United Nations meetings.

14. The Head of the Regional Secretariat Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE) presented on the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and its implications for SIDS. This seminar was informed that a regional Steering Committee for the implementation of the Ocean Decade has been established through IOCARIBE. The Ocean Decade has endorsed the programme CoastPredict for cost effective coastal and ocean observation, utilizing technology, artificial intelligence and citizen science. A project proposal has been submitted to the Adaptation Fund. The Ocean Decade is also seeking to build capacity in the region with task teams on marine spatial planning and deep-sea research, training of the Early Career Ocean Professional, provision of access to research vessels, sensors and observation vehicles. Ocean literacy was being promoted through the blue schools' network as well as integrating ocean literacy into national education policies. Linking to the recently concluded third United Nations Ocean Conference, this presentation shared on outcomes which include new commitments for financing as it pertains to mangrove restoration, sustainable fishing, climate resilient reef protection, building capacity for the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, as well as the Ocean Tourism Pact, for the inclusion of science-based recommendations in the tourism sector for example, multi-hazard Early Warning and Assessment for coastal regions.

15. The representative of UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) concluded her presentation highlighting that the Ocean Decade supported Agenda 2030 for the “The future we want” and the work of the IOC provided the science needed for “The ocean we want”.

16. The Coordinator, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, presented on the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States and its outcomes supporting sustainable ocean management in the Caribbean SIDS. She provided a brief history of the SIDS programme of work which spanned over 30 years of implementation. At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, SIDS were recognized as a special case for sustainable development. The first SIDS programme of work – the Barbados Programme of Action spanned the period (1994–2004), this was followed by the second SIDS programme of work – the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (2004–2014), then the third SIDS programme of work – SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014–2024) and the current fourth SIDS programme of work – Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States (ABAS 2024–2034). Each of these programme of work sustained that SIDS are a special case for sustainable development and detailed the negotiated SIDS economic, social and environmental priorities.

17. She further highlighted that the main thematic action areas of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States are in alignment with the objectives of this seminar. This presentation highlighted major outcomes supporting conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources. The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda placed a strong focus on addressing biodiversity loss and marine pollution, strengthening partnerships and ocean governance as well as building human and institutional capacities. It also recognized that the sustainable management of the ocean is necessary for economic stability, social well-being and long-term resilient prosperity of SIDS and that they are ocean stewards, responsible for the sustainable management of large ocean spaces for current and future generations.

18. The third presentation titled “The ocean as our collective destiny: financing a resilient, innovative and inclusive blue prosperity for Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean” was delivered by an Economist at the United Nations Resident Coordination Office in Trinidad and Tobago. It highlighted the major outcomes from the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and as a direct response to the US\$ 4 trillion annual Sustainable Development Goals investment gap. It bundled over 130 initiatives to move from pledge to practice. Some of the key instruments for action identified were domestic resource mobilization and tax cooperation; debt sustainability and innovation; Global Hub for Debt Swaps for Development; mainstreaming the multidimensional vulnerability index, multilateral development bank, reform and blended finance. Overall, these were aimed at moving the region from the development of instruments to actionable initiatives such as strengthening readiness with bankable projects, engaging in platforms for catalytic finance, ensuring transparency and public benefit and anchoring regionally and domestically for scale.

19. The Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters concluded the session by presenting on the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. She informed the seminar that the high-level political forum on sustainable development, established in 2012, is an annual forum mandated to review progress on the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. As part of this process, selected countries present voluntary national reviews on their progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. In 2025, the five main SDGs under in-depth review were SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17. Countries in the region have consistently included SDG 14 in their voluntary national reviews, with Belize in 2017; Dominica, Grenada and Suriname in 2022; and Saint Lucia and Suriname in 2025.

20. She added that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was established in 2016 to be an intergovernmental regional platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the SDGs and with ECLAC as the Secretariat to this regional Forum. In keeping with the rules of the Forum, ECLAC annually produced a report on the progress on SDG implementation. According to the 2025 ECLAC report, indicators for SDG 14 showed mixed progress. SDG 14.2 trended away from its target, while targets 14.1 and 14b were moving in the right direction, albeit slowly. Targets 14.5, 14.6 and 14.7 were either achieved or likely to be achieved. For the remaining SDG 14 targets, insufficient data was available. SDG 14 was also one of the SDGs under review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development held in 2025 and ahead of the third United Nations Ocean Conference. These successive high-level events underscored the need for accelerated implementation actions to support SDG 14 targets. The Director concluded that with only five years remaining until the 2030 Agenda deadline, there is an urgent need for acceleration of actions to meet the targets of SDG 14. This will call for the implementation of policies including those requiring multi-stakeholder engagements.

4. Sharing policies and practices on climate change and the blue economy

21. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea presented on his country's ocean-focused policies, emphasizing the ocean's vital role as a global climate regulator. He expressed confidence that science-based strategies and international cooperation are resources towards management of sea-level rise, warming seas and acidification, steering the world toward carbon neutrality and eventually negativity. The seminar was informed that this country is also a maritime nation transporting 99% of its cargo by sea, boasts a strong fishing industry and global leadership in shipping and shipbuilding.

22. The Ambassador outlined that the Republic of Korea has a thriving blue economy, driven by technology and innovation, with four key initiatives: (i) science-based marine management, (ii) sustainable growth through renewable energy and ecotourism, (iii) digital transformation and (iv) marine education and culture. The Carbon Policy of the Republic of Korea aligns with the blue economy by integrating carbon sequestration with economic growth. Efforts to address marine litter include the implementation of the Marine Waste Act and the establishment of comprehensive monitoring systems. He noted the leadership of the Republic of Korea in advancing the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, its ongoing cooperation with Caribbean nations under the Sandy Shorelines Project and its role in hosting major global ocean conferences.

5. Launch of the Institute of Marine Affairs Blue Technologies Awareness Project

23. The Institute of Marine Affairs and Republic Bank Limited hosted a joint launch project titled: "Empowering the Blue Economy with Smart Technologies". This public-private sector project featured a video aiming to enhance public education and awareness using digital tools. This initiative addressed fisheries management, marine aquaculture powered by renewable energy, smart tourism via augmented reality and digital platforms, and sustainable shipping through artificial intelligence and real-time monitoring, reflecting a public-private partnership model which supported blue economy growth in Trinidad and Tobago.

6. Presentations and panel discussions on practical response measures

Panel A: Climate change and economic diversification

24. This panel delivered two presentations which addressed the thematic areas of climate change and economic diversification. The first presentation, "Unlocking blue finance in Caribbean SIDS: Ocean-based climate action", was presented by a Senior Fellow, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. The focus of this presentation was the blue economy

in SIDS; these nations could be more appropriately referred to as large maritime nations. These economies make significant contributions both regionally and internationally. It has proven to be a good source of livelihoods, income and employment.

25. Some emerging sectors were highlighted, renewable energy and biotechnology. When measuring the contribution of the blue economy, some of the metrics noted and the nations which stood out were the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), for example countries of the Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname had extensive EEZ. Some countries with notable mangroves acreage were Guyana, Saint Lucia and the Bahamas. Significant tourism arrivals were recorded in the Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados, Belize and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Lastly, there was also considerable fisheries production in Belize and Guyana.

26. This presentation also offered some of the key challenges which hinder the achievements and full potential of the blue economy, including high vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change and disasters, marine pollution, insufficient research and data, and limited access to investment and financial resources. Although there were challenges associated with financing, the Senior Fellow highlighted several examples of innovative blue finance in which several Caribbean States were involved.

27. The second presentation on this panel was delivered by the Deputy Director and Greenhouse Gas Adviser, Centre for Maritime and Oceans Studies, University of Trinidad and Tobago, on blue policy development for maritime industries. He noted the economic significance of maritime sector for Caribbean trade and connectivity. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is working towards transitioning from fossil fuels to a plethora of greener fuels, inclusive of green hydrogen and ammonia which will call for substantial investment in infrastructure and alternative fuel production. This will require fuel monitoring, reporting and strict enforcement of IMO frameworks. The sector offers opportunities for renewable energy development, specifically wind and hydrogen production. These potential prospects will only materialize with strong programmes that build the necessary capacity, develop appropriate governance policies and secure financial backing to enable the decarbonization of the maritime sector.

28. The chair of the session opened the floor for questions. The first question was based on the maritime sector's timeline to transition to alternative fuels by 2028 and whether the region would have the strategies in place to monitor ships and ensure adherence to these rules and regulations. The second question was focused on the potential business opportunity for the region to benefit from the refuelling requirements from ships moving through the region. Regarding the first question the presenter explained that IMO has modernized its operations and is well equipped to work with member States on the required enforcement rules. Responding to the second question, he explained that several countries were undertaking costly infrastructure development projects to provide essential refuelling services for ships, including cruise ships, traveling through the region.

Panel B: Climate change and technologies

29. This panel explored how technologies could be utilized to minimize the effects of climate change. Four presentations were delivered for this panel. The first presenter, Senior Analyst a.i., Senior Petroleum Engineer and Head of Department, Renewable Energy Division, Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, explored the potential of renewable energy in Caribbean SIDS and the extensive resources that were available in their EEZ compared to land resources. He provided examples throughout the region and then focused on the goals and opportunities in the marine space for Trinidad and Tobago. He outlined the status of various renewable energy options for the country, including wind resources and the long-term plan to decarbonize the country in support of a just transition that promotes equitable growth.

30. The second presenter was a Remote Sensing Research Officer in the Geomatics Unit at the Institute of Marine Affairs. Her presentation focused on how remote sensing could be utilized to harness the potential of the blue economy. Notably, this technology would cover issues critical to the region, particularly fisheries and tourism. Some of the examples she shared were inputs into assessing the economic impacts of oil spills, coastline change and predictions, mapping the natural capital for economic valuation of marine resources, sargassum forecasting, and valorization and mariculture site selection.

31. The following presenter was the Chief in Charge of the Digital Technologies and Artificial Intelligence Transformation Unit, Division of Production Productivity and Management, ECLAC, who made a presentation on digitizing in the content of the blue economy and ocean-based resources management. He covered the three development traps the Latin America and the Caribbean community face: (i) low, volatile exclusion and unsustainable economic growth with little formal job creation; (ii) high inequality and low mobility and social cohesion and (iii) weak institutional capacities and ineffective governance. The Caribbean nations were further compounded by climate vulnerability, debt burdens and challenges of small scale. He cited the use of digital technologies as a medium through which the region can find alleviation from these traps.

32. He shared that the ocean-dependent economies were at a crossroads, highlighting that digital technologies could function as a catalyst in the powerful transformation of the blue economy, which is sustainable, productive and inclusive. He shared with the participants the five pillars of the digital blue economy innovation: (i) sustainable fisheries, (ii) resilient tourism, (iii) smart ports of shipping, (iv) climate resilience and (v) blue innovation. To build a foundation of success it was necessary to have the following: meaningful connectivity, marine data infrastructure, digital skills development, regional cooperation and strategic finance. He ended by providing insights into the four strategic actions the Caribbean leaders should engage in: (i) development of Caribbean blue-digital strategies, (ii) launch of smart coastal living labs, (iii) establishment of regional marine data hub and (iv) the creation of a blue innovation fund.

33. The last panellist, a Tourism and Sustainability Specialist at the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, offered a presentation on the digitalization of Caribbean hotels and tourism sector from a private sector perspective. She provided context and defined key digital terms, then demonstrated how the private sector is using these technologies in areas such as online bookings, contactless guest services, mobile check-in, digital keys, revenue management and analytics, digital marketing and blue economy specific products, such as digital marine tours and e-commerce for local ocean products. The floor was opened for comments; however, none were raised.

Panel C: Climate change and conservation

34. Three presentations were delivered during this section, all centred on the impacts of climate change and natural resource conservation. The first presentation was delivered by the Senior Research Officer, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Research Programme, IMA. The Officer underscored the critical importance of Caribbean fisheries highlighting their essential role in providing livelihood and sustenance, supporting food security, reducing poverty, generating employment and foreign exchange, and contributing to culture, recreation, tourism, and the development and stability of rural, particularly coastal communities. She then detailed the wide-ranging impacts of climate change, including loss and damage to coastal and near-coastal infrastructures, fishing vessels, negative impacts to important fish habitats and sargassum influx events. Key climatic stressors affecting Caribbean SIDS include increasing sea surface temperatures, ocean acidification, sea level rise and increased frequencies of extreme weather events. The presenter emphasized the urgent need to build climate resilience to mitigate the multidimensional shocks of these climatic events on the marine fisheries sector.

35. The second presentation was delivered by the IMA Deputy Director of Research, who recognized the importance of engaging communities to boost conservation efforts and economic resilience. There were several initiatives and a project in which the IMA played a major role in engaging communities. Based on the Integrated Coastal Zone Management policy framework, her presentation outlined the policy goals and objectives. In demonstrating priority areas, emphasis was placed on the rehabilitation of damaged and degraded coastal ecosystems and habitats, while establishing and effectively managing a system of coastal zone protected areas. In highlighting the progress of this project, priority subject examples were presented on several initiatives engaged in mangrove rehabilitation, such as piloting a blue carbon credit scheme for Trinidad and Tobago, implementing multisectoral adaptation measures to climate change in the South Oropouche River Basin for flood relief and the sargassum management project.

36. The third presenter on this panel was the Coral Reef Ecologies and Senior Research Officer, IMA. Her presentation focused on three aspects of resilience-based management to develop a resilient community and a resilient maritime ecosystem. The Coral Reef Ecologist and Senior Research Officer provided an overview on the Marine Resilience Initiative (MARIN) Tobago project, outlining its goal to conserve the island's marine biodiversity within coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangrove forests through restoration, conservation and stewardship effort. She elaborated on the complex ecological connectivity of the reefs in Tobago and the requirements for understanding larval dispersal patterns. This data is required to inform and make decisions on effective marine spatial planning for habitat management and restoration. A key point emphasized was the essential function of a marine resilience network in this process, alongside the central roles of local communities in fostering a deeper understanding of the marine environment in Tobago. The presentation also acknowledged the existence of remaining management gaps within the system, emphasizing the necessity of greater collaborative efforts to address these outstanding challenges.

37. The floor was open for comments and questions and the panel received three questions. In the first instance, a participant enquired about the length of time it took to formulate the coastal restoration programme. In response, the IMA Deputy Director of Research explained that there were difficulties in securing an ecological assessment, therefore leading to the project taking one year to be completed. This process of restoration of coastal zones could be accelerated through mangrove cultivation, conservation and including the need to designate mangroves as a protected species. Regarding the management of sargassum, the seminar was informed that a draft sargassum management policy is being drafted.

38. The second question was posed to the last panellist, the Coral Reef Ecologist and Senior Research Officer, IMA. The participant enquired on possible solutions for ocean acidification and coral bleaching and whether there are aligned with modernized options. She responded stating that although these initiatives may not successfully address coral bleaching, it is possible to create an environment which will foster restoration.

7. Conclusion: action plan on the way forward

39. The Director of IMA presented the main conclusions and guided actions for sustained ocean actions in keeping with the objectives of this seminar. She highlighted that the global ocean economy was valued at over US\$ 2.2 trillion, which comprised of shipping and port industries, coastal tourism, advanced marine technologies, aquaculture and processing, fisheries and ocean energy. Key stakeholders are now emphasizing that SIDS are more appropriately defined as large maritime nations or large ocean nations. However, these nations were yet to realize the full potential of their ocean space and inclusive of blue economies. Furthermore, these were curtailed by many factors: climate change, marine pollution, limited fiscal space and rising debt burdens. Nonetheless, innovative blue financing mechanisms and the sustainable expansion of maritime sectors – particularly through low-carbon fuels and digital transformation – offered viable pathways forward. Digitalization was identified as a main driver of growth and innovation by improving operational efficiency and providing tools for climate resilience and sustainability.

40. Marine renewable energy on the other hand, should be harnessed to secure clean power and industrial resilience, while the Caribbean's fisheries – an essential socioeconomic sector – required urgent adaptation to counter climate impacts, overfishing, habitat degradation, pollution, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and invasive species. But active community engagement remained centralized to both conservation and economic resilience.

41. She categorized the region's priorities into short, medium and long term. Short-term priorities included the integration of ambitious ocean-related targets into Nationally Determined Contributions, which can be accomplished through conducting blue-economy valuations, promoting equitable access to marine resources (especially for women and marginalized groups) and accelerating ratification of multilateral ocean governance frameworks such as the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction. Caribbean nations should leverage technologies, including remote sensing, strengthen capacity-building in digital and ecotourism, and implement adaptation strategies such as marine protected areas and integrated coastal zone management.

42. Medium-term actions involved advancing sustainable fuels in shipping, scaling up regional blue financing with transparency, enhancing data sharing and adopting circular economy approaches in fisheries, tourism and transport. Strengthened fisheries management, sustainable aquaculture and public-private partnerships for monitoring and connectivity are also key. Long-term goals focused on expanding marine renewable energy, restoring mangroves and coral reefs, diversifying livelihoods, reducing pollution through ecosystem-based solutions, and reinforcing governance and institutional frameworks for a sustainable and inclusive blue economy.

8. Vote of thanks

43. The vote of thanks was delivered by the Coordinator of the Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean. She thanked all speakers and presenters for their contribution and expertise, all of whom guided the participants through the seminar, noting, however, more discussion was needed. She thanked the Minister for this intervention, the Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean and colleagues, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, the Director of IMA, Republic Bank, UNDP, the Youth representative, the Ministry of Agriculture for providing the decorative plants, the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs for their cooperation, the information-technology personnel, notetakers and rapporteurs. The Director of ECLAC also thanked the participants, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, the Institute of Marine Affairs and her team from ECLAC. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea thanked all participants and called for action on this priority subject for the Caribbean region.

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Annex II**CONCEPT NOTE**

The Caribbean Sea and its bordering oceans define the historical, geopolitical, cultural, economic, social, environmental, and future identities of the Caribbean Small Island and Low-Lying Coastal Developing States. With approximately 70% of the Caribbean population residing in coastal areas, the region's economies significantly rely on the Caribbean Sea's resources and ecosystem services. Climate change is further impacting these ocean systems through rising temperatures and sea levels, as well as changes in ocean currents, acidification, coral reef bleaching, salination of freshwater systems, and irreversible loss of biodiversity and ecosystem productivity. These climatic shifts exacerbate extreme weather events, leading to more severe storms, increased flooding, drought, and more frequent and extreme heat waves. The annually recurring influxes of massive Sargassum blooms are also linked to these changes, driven by the complex interactions of altered ocean currents, sea-surface warming temperatures, and increased nutrient availability.

In alignment with global sustainable development imperatives for Small Island Developing States, Caribbean SIDS are strategically prioritizing the evolution of a sustainable ocean-based economy. This paradigm, commonly referred to as the 'Blue Economy', is garnering significant focus across local, regional, and international governance tiers. The Caribbean region has identified and is actively cultivating key opportunities within several new and emerging ocean-based industries, including sustainable mariculture, carbon sequestration, marine biotechnology, and ocean-based renewable energy. These key sectors collectively hold substantial potential to transform traditional ocean-based industries, enhance food and energy security, build greater resilience to the impacts of climate change, promote environmental conservation, and further localize coastal and ocean resources management as an integral component of national sustainable development. This progress is demonstrated in the recently signed Trinidad and Tobago–United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (MSDCF). The objectives and purpose of the MSDCF are to support Trinidad and Tobago in the further fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. This encompasses enhancing climate change and economic resilience, fostering peace, shared prosperity, and equality.

Building on the outcomes of the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States and its outcome document -The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity (May 2024), the Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) (June 2025), Financing for Sustainable Development (July 2025) and High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (July 2025) there is both a responsibility and a unique opportunity to leverage these platforms for advancing sustainable ocean resources management. This leveraging will require further strengthening regional cooperation with a focus on driving impactful ocean-based climate actions. Caribbean governments can unlock the full potential of these actions by leveraging strategic investments, innovative financing, the availability of SIDS-appropriate technologies, robust institutional and human capacity, and strong partnerships with the private and civil society sectors.

The expected outcomes of this seminar are as follows:

- **Enhanced Regional Cooperation:** The seminar will support the strengthening of partnerships and collaborative initiatives among Caribbean SIDS and relevant organizations to advance climate-related actions for sustainable ocean resource management.
- **Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Building:** Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of best practices, emerging technologies, and effective marine conservation strategies relevant to the blue economy, through presentations and panel discussions. This exchange will directly contribute to building local and regional capacity in these critical areas.
- **Identification of SIDS-Appropriate Sustainable Solutions:** The seminar will identify, and articulate concrete, sustainable solutions and climate action strategies specifically tailored to the challenges and opportunities facing ocean and ocean resources management in Caribbean SIDS. This will include exploring opportunities in sustainable fisheries, marine and coastal tourism, and ocean-based renewable energy, aligning with the objectives of the SIDS sustainable development priorities.
- **Actionable Recommendations:** The seminar will provide actionable recommendations that can further be integrated into national and regional policies for blue economy advancements and ocean-based climate action.

Annex III**PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME**

- 8.30 – 8.45 a.m. **Registration**
- 8.45 – 9 a.m. **Moderation & Facilitation**
Safety Briefing, National Anthems, Welcome Remarks
 Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA)
- 9 – 9.10 a.m. **Opening remarks**
- His Excellency Seijoong Kwon, Ambassador, Republic of Korea to Trinidad and Tobago
 - Miosotis Rivas-Peña, Director, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, subregional headquarters for the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- 9.10 – 9.25 a.m. **Key Address**
 His Excellency Senator Dr. the Honourable Kennedy Swaratsingh, Minister, Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development, Trinidad and Tobago
- 9.25 – 9.45 a.m. **The ocean economy in Latin America and the Caribbean: Outlook and Perspectives**
 Rayén Quiroga-Martínez, Chief, Water and Biodiversity Unit, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (*virtual*)
- 9.45 – 10.35 a.m. **United Nations Recent Meetings and implications to Sustainable Ocean Resources management in the Caribbean SIDS**
 Chair: Miosotis Rivas-Peña, Director, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, subregional headquarters for the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- United Nation Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development implications for the Caribbean SIDS region
 Lorna Innis Head of Regional Secretariat Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE)
 UNESCO-Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO) (*virtual*)
 - The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity: 27-30, May 2024
 Artie Dubrie, Coordinator, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean
 - The Ocean as Our Collective Destiny, Financing a Resilient, Innovative, and Inclusive Blue Prosperity for Trinidad & Tobago and the Caribbean
 Joanna Kazana, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten
 - 2025 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: 14-23, July 2025
 Miosotis Rivas-Peña, Director, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean (ECLAC)

- 10.35 – 11 a.m. **Sharing Policies and Practices on Climate Change and the Blue Economy**
His Excellency Seijoong Kwon, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Korea,
Trinidad and Tobago
- 11 – 11.15 a.m. **Coffee Break**
- 11.15 – 11.30 a.m. **Launch of IMA Blue Technologies Awareness Project:
Ceremonial Signing between the IMA and Republic Bank Limited (RBL)**
Lorraine Barrow, Officer-in-Charge/Librarian, Institute of Marine Affairs,
Information Centre
Kimberly Erriah-Ali, General Manager, Legal Services and Corporate Affairs of
Republic Bank Limited
- 11.30 – 12.30 p.m. **Presentations & Panel Discussions on Practical Response Measures**
- Panel A: Climate change & economic diversification:**
Chair: Dr. Ava Maxam, Director, Institute of Marine Affairs
Co-Chair: Ambassador, His Excellency Seijoong Kwon, Ambassador, Republic of
Korea to Trinidad and Tobago
- Unlocking Blue Finance in Caribbean SIDS: Ocean-Based Climate Action
Preeya Mohan, Senior Fellow, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic
Studies, University of the West Indies, St Augustine (*virtual*)
 - Blue Policy Development for Maritime Industries
Stephan Nanan: Deputy Director and Greenhouse Gas Adviser, Centre for
Maritime and Ocean Studies, The University of Trinidad and Tobago
 - Panel Discussion and Feedback
Chair: Dr. Ava Maxam, Director, Institute of Marine Affairs
Co-Chair: Ambassador, His Excellency Seijoong Kwon, Ambassador, Republic of
Korea to Trinidad and Tobago
 - Summary and Recommendations
Michael Hendrickson, Economic Affairs Officer, ECLAC subregional
headquarters for the Caribbean
- 12.30 – 1.20 p.m. **Lunch break and Networking**
- 1.20 – 1.30 p.m. **Entertainment in the Auditorium**
- Ms. Atiya Lynch to perform ‘Footprints’
- 1.30 – 2.30 p.m. **Panel B: Climate change & technologies**
Chair: Dr. Ava Maxam, Director, Institute of Marine Affairs
Co-Chair: Miosotis Rivas-Peña, Director, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the
Caribbean
- Marine Renewable Energy in the Caribbean SIDS
Craig Boodoo, Senior Energy Analyst (Ag), Senior Petroleum Engineer,
Renewable Energy Division of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries
 - Remote Sensing for Blue Economies
Nikia Gooding, Remote Sensing Research Officer, Geomatics Unit,
Institute of Marine Affairs

- Digitalization in the context of the Blue Economy and Ocean-based resource management:
 - Overcoming Development Traps in LAC: The Transformative Potential of Digital Technologies and Artificial Intelligence
Sebastián Rovira, Chief in Charge, Digital Transformation Unit, Division of Production, Productivity and Management Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) *(virtual)*
 - Digitalization in the Caribbean hotel and tourism sector-private sector perspectives
Loreto Duffy-Mayers, Tourism and Sustainability Specialist *(virtual)*

- Panel Discussion and feedback

Chair: Dr. Ava Maxam, Director, Institute of Marine Affairs.

Co-Chair: Miosotis Rivas-Peña, Director, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

- Summary and Recommendations

Tamara Persaud, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

2.30 – 3.30 p.m.

Panel C: Climate Change & Conservation

Chair: Dr. Ava Maxam, Director, Institute of Marine Affairs

Co-Chair: Artie Dubrie, Coordinator, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

- Building Climate Resilience in Caribbean Fisheries

Dr. Farahnaz Solomon, Senior Research Officer, Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Programme, Institute of Marine Affairs

- Engaging Communities for Conservation and Economic Resilience
Rahanna Juman, Deputy Director of Research, Institute of Marine Affairs
- Marine Conservation Strategies for Climate Resilience
Anjani Ganase, Coral Reef Ecologist and Senior Research Officer, Biodiversity and Ecology Research Programme, Institute of Marine Affairs

- Panel discussion and feedback

Chair: Dr. Ava Maxam, Director, Institute of Marine Affairs.

Co-Chair: Artie Dubrie, Coordinator, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

- Summary and Recommendations

Mark Thomas, Partnerships and Development Finance Officer, United Nations Resident Coordinator Office Trinidad and Tobago

3.30 – 3.45 p.m.

Conclusion – Action Plan on the Way Forward

Dr. Ava Maxam, Director, Institute of Marine Affairs

3.45 – 4 p.m.

Vote of Thanks

Artie Dubrie, Coordinator, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean



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