



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS



Commission on Sustainable Development
Eighteenth Session
3-14 May 2010

**Five Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy
for the further implementation of
the Barbados Programme of Action**

GRENADA OUTCOME STATEMENT

Caribbean Regional Review Meeting

**18 March 2010
St George's, Grenada**

Background Paper
CSD18/2010/BP8

Introduction

1. The Caribbean MSI+5 regional review meeting was convened in St George's Grenada on 16 and 18 March 2010 hosted by the Government of Grenada. It was jointly organized by ECLAC and DESA as part of the regional preparatory process for the high-level review to be undertaken by the United Nations General Assembly (GA) at its sixty-fifth session in September 2010. According to GA resolutions 63/213 and 64/199, the regional review meetings should provide an opportunity to conduct a thorough assessment of progress made, lessons learnt and constraints encountered in implementation of the MSI and to agree on what needs to be done to further address the vulnerabilities of the SIDS. Furthermore, the outcomes of the review meetings should highlight any emerging issues encountered, while identifying priority actions for the region to fill the gaps in the way forward.
2. The Caribbean region is prone to frequent and increasingly intense natural disasters and other extreme weather events due to climate variability, including hurricanes, drought, floods and tsunamis. Of particular significance is the catastrophic earthquake that struck Haiti on 12 January 2010, accounting for the loss of over 200,000 lives and resulting in the devastating destruction to its physical infrastructure and productive capacity. The pervasive damage to social institutions and infrastructure, including education and health, have undoubtedly reversed the hard-won development gains for this country, including the achievement of sustained political, social and economic stability, and has further eroded its efforts towards attainment of the IADGs, inclusive of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In addition, to the international response, Caribbean Governments continue to support Haiti's post-disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts.
3. The Caribbean region has historically demonstrated its resilience in the face of multiple crises. The region has made notable progress in development and operationalization of institutional and policy frameworks for sustainable development both at the national and regional levels. A number of regional institutions have been established to promote regional cooperation and coordination to support the development agenda. Many countries have mainstreamed sustainable development principles into their respective national development plans, policies and strategies. In addition, many countries are well on target to achieving the MDGs.
4. Despite such progress made, the continuing global economic and financial crisis has had dire consequences for our economies. It has placed additional pressure on already strained capacity to respond to the situation with appropriate policy measures that would stimulate growth and employment, while maintaining the investments needed to ensure adequate social safety net coverage and environmental conservation.

5. Compounding these challenges, are the global food and energy crises, the negative impacts of climate change and the uneven and uncertain pace of our full insertion into global trade and development processes and persistent structural vulnerabilities.
6. The Caribbean region remains concerned about the inability to arrive at a far-reaching consensus agreement in the Copenhagen meeting of the fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the UNFCCC in December 2009. The region supports a process of negotiation within the context of the two-track approach of the UNFCCC to obtain a favorable outcome for SIDS at COP 16 in Mexico in December 2010, with legally binding commitments for developed countries.

Progress achieved

7. Significant progress has been made in strengthening the regional enabling institutional framework over the past five years, including the establishment of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), as the world's first pooled risk insurance system; the formal establishment of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) for the Mauritius Strategy and the completion in December 2009 of the Treaty for Economic Union of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The expansion of the scope of work of the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) is a step towards building resilience, response and emergency management capabilities for our countries. In the area of energy, the region has successfully developed a draft regional energy policy and many countries have formulated national energy policies.
8. Many existing national planning frameworks and the emerging institutions and policies, have taken into account key principles of sustainable development as set out in the MSI, despite the fact that the majority of countries in the region do not explicitly have national sustainable development strategies. The importance of stakeholder participation has been recognized in the design and implementation of sustainable development programmes.
9. Achievements have also been made in establishing protected areas including marine, coastal protected areas, which assume added importance in view of the celebrating of the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010.

Challenges Faced

10. The limited capacities to systematically collect, analyze and apply data and indicators has hampered informed decision-making, effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.
11. Access to finance has been a significant constraint for many countries in the region. The dramatic decline in ODA and FDI to the region has failed to take into account the high level of vulnerability to economic shocks and natural disasters faced by the region. This situation is further compounded by the liberalization process in the region that has led to the decline in public sector revenues. In addition, the economies of the region have been confronted by high levels of unsustainable foreign and domestic debt.
12. Limited and restricted access and the high cost of environmentally sound technologies continue to create bottlenecks in promoting sustainable development.
13. As a result of brain drain from the region, shortage of qualified human resources and limited range of expertise available in the region has been a serious handicap. Despite the existence of excellent tertiary educational institutions in the region, they have not been sufficiently mobilized to contribute to national and regional capacity building efforts.
14. Food, energy and water securities have been major challenges for the region which have been aggravated by the current global economic downturn and El Nino and Climate Change. Health issues, including HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases, also continue to pose challenges to sustainable development.
15. The region continues to face a number of environmental challenges including coral bleaching due to climate change including sea level rise and coastal erosion, as well as rising energy costs and non-integrated water resources management and unsustainable waste management practices.
16. Most Caribbean SIDS are categorized as middle income countries based on their level of per capita income, which therefore precludes them from accessing concessionary financing. They are therefore dependent on expensive financing from the international financial institutions, leading to unsustainable levels of foreign debts.

Lessons learned

17. There is an increasing need for the development of an integrated and strategic approach for SIDS rather than the implementation of discrete projects to ensure the sustainability of the development path in the region. This should be complemented by enhanced coordination and cooperation among institutional focal points at

18. The vulnerability of the economic performance of the Caribbean and the increasing intensity of natural disasters pose significant threats. The current measures of vulnerability are inadequate and therefore do not represent the special circumstances of the Caribbean SIDS. In this regard, it would be expedient to develop specific indicators that would reflect the social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS.

Recent trends and emerging issues

19. The issue of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns is of particular importance to the region. Given their small markets, SIDS could potentially have comparative advantage if proper national or regional frameworks for SCP are put in place to ensure cleaner production and resource efficiency. As the 10 year framework for SCP is to be launched in 2012, the region needs to advance its efforts for sustainable waste management, pollution control, life cycle analysis and consumer education.
20. Vulnerability, weak resilience, extreme events, natural, disasters, and also the search for better opportunities can lead to increasing pressures for intra- and extra-regional migration that could significantly exacerbate social problems for the region
21. In recent years the region has been affected by invasive alien species as a result of trans-boundary movements. This has the potential to threaten biodiversity with resulting economic and social impacts on Caribbean economies. Therefore, there is a need for regional coordinated approach to address the issue of invasive alien species.
22. While acknowledging the work being undertaken by ACS and ECLAC, there is a need to develop a regional strategy for sustainable oceans resources management, including designating the Caribbean Sea as special area in the context of sustainable development.

Way forward

23. It is important to identify and assess adaptation needs and to build on the work already begun in **adaptation to climate change** and to mainstream climate change adaptation concerns into national sustainable development strategies. Access to low carbon technologies and enhanced technology transfer has to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
24. **Energy efficiency** needs to be further promoted which could yield immediate results, while **renewable energy resources** and related services require continuous

enhancement and sustained investment. This requires the formulation of the appropriate policies so as attract the necessary scale of investment.

25. **Greening of the economies** is considered a priority for Caribbean SIDS. It is therefore necessary to expand the current initiatives in transforming existing economies into more environmentally-friendly ones by for example, building capacity for trade and export in environmental goods and services, especially through providing incentives for small and medium enterprises; promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, building capacity in valuation and costing of ecosystem resources and ecosystem services.
26. In enhancing capacities for **natural disaster management**, the region needs to strengthen the early warning systems. Concomitant with this would be the expansion of a risk management framework that would be complemented by insurance and re-insurance schemes. The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility serves as a model in this regard but its scope of coverage for disasters needs to be urgently reviewed.
27. **Functional cooperation and partnerships** at regional and international levels remain key to advance MSI implementation. The promotion of greater regional cooperation in research and development for SIDS-appropriate applications for improved knowledge management through mechanisms such as SIDSNET and the University Consortium for Small Island States (UCSIS) is necessary. This may be considered as one important platform for information sharing, capacity building and exchange of best practices and should be supported.
28. The full operationalization of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), which functions as a coordinating and monitoring mechanism for MSI implementation in the Caribbean, is stymied by limited financing. It would be expedient for the international community to support its full operationalisation and evaluation, in order to allow Caribbean SIDS to adopt a stronger regional approach for the implementation of the MSI.
29. The development of the regulatory framework that would support the strengthening of public-public and public-private partnerships for sustainable development is needed. This could take the form of cooperation among Caribbean SIDS, south-south cooperation, including SIDS-SIDS, and the building of alliances with the multilateral and bilateral donor communities. An appropriate technical cooperation programme for the region has to be designed.
30. There is need for significant increase in financing for Caribbean SIDS, specifically targeted to the priority areas identified above, in light of the continued decline in ODA and lack of access to concessionary financing. The need for partners to fulfill all long-standing development assistance commitments must be underlined.