



Report of the Caribbean regional preparatory meeting for  
the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States  
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**REPORT OF THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING  
FOR THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

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## **A. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

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

1. Ms. Sharon Crooks opened the meeting and welcomed participants to Jamaica and to the dialogue that would ensue. Dr. Arun Kashyap, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Jamaica, noted the purpose of the meeting in highlighting the realities, challenges and aspirations of the Caribbean subregion. He stated that climate change, natural and environmental disasters as well as the coastal and marine resources and land resources remain areas of concern to the Caribbean subregion and that there was need to strengthen human, institutional and systemic capacities.

2. Her Excellency, Marlene Moses, Chair of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS) stated that the Caribbean subregion needs to come together to ensure that its sustainable development priorities remain on the international sustainable development agenda. She also indicated that the coral reefs were in danger from global warming and ocean acidification and this, in turn, would impact fisheries and sustainable livelihoods. She indicated that attention needs to be focused on reducing carbon emissions and thereby curbing global warming.

3. Mr. Nikhil Seth, Director, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) stated that the post-2015 agenda is extremely important to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and in reporting on the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) for SIDS and Mauritius Strategy for further Implementation of the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States (MSI), it is necessary to place this in the context of that agenda.

4. The keynote address delivered by the Honourable Robert Pickersgill, Minister of State, Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change. He focused on the need for financial institutions to provide concessionary financing for SIDS to allow for, inter alia, greater investments in low carbon or green technologies. He also stated that SIDS support in creating appropriate mechanisms for fisheries management, national disaggregated data and information systems, integrated coastal zone management, waste management and disaster risk management. The Honourable Minister further stated that north-south and south-south cooperation should be encouraged as well as triangular cooperation. He expressed the need to realign official development assistance in keeping with national development plans and strategies to facilitate greater investments in job creation.

### **2. Adoption of the agenda and organisation of work**

6. The agenda was adopted without changes. All Caribbean member States comprised the drafting committee that would have responsibility for preparation of the outcome document of the meeting. The Chair of the drafting committee was Jamaica; the vice chairs were Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago; and the rapporteur was Grenada.

### **3. SIDS sustainable development agenda from a Caribbean perspective: Presentations and interactive dialogue**

7. Ms. Elizabeth Thompson focused on challenges that SIDS were facing through their small size and their vulnerability. She put forward a few questions to the meeting and these essentially addressed the thematic areas of energy, disasters, oceans, land degradation and sustainable consumption and production.

8. ECLAC presented the Caribbean regional synthesis report and indicated that only three national assessment reports (NARs) were obtained. Hence reports from the MSI+5, Caribbean Forum convened by ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean and the United Nations Development Group for LAC,

Rio+20 documents and desktop research were used in preparation of the report. In essence, Caribbean SIDS did make some progress in the implementation of the BPoA and the MSI but continued to face challenges in technology, capacity and financing. It was recommended that these countries face the challenge at the regional level in sharing of best practices, formation of partnerships and in accessing financing.

9. The representative from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat focused on mechanisms to advance sustainable development in the Caribbean. He outlined the major barriers to implementation of the SIDS/POA. In the presentation, recommendations were made for the development of a “resilience mechanism” that would build on a coherent set of instruments that effectively address the implementation of the SIDS/POA. At the national level he also recommended a holistic approach to sustainable development. A representative of the youth issued a challenge for youth inclusion. He mentioned that youth had been alienated and the pleas of this sector should be considered in planning for the future we want. He recommended that youth would benefit from investment in education, social protection, climate change, and good governance, health care, attention to the disabled, open and honest political processes. He also suggested that youth should become more involved in governance.

9. Mr. Jahisiah Benoit, Youth Delegate, presented the results of the SIDS Regional Youth Consultation, which convened from 27 June to 1 July 2013 and produced the Jamaica Youth Declaration. The declaration focuses on the following key issues for Caribbean SIDS: education, social protection, climate change, healthcare and good governance. He said that in school you are given a lesson and then take a test, while in life you are given a test that teaches a lesson. He concluded that people have learned to be resilient and how to create change rather than wait for it. He expressed hope that the Youth Declaration would have an impact on the SIDS process.

10. Ambassador Paulette Bethel on behalf of Ambassador Dr. John Ashe, President-elect of the United Nations General Assembly 68<sup>th</sup> Session mentioned that the Office of the President-elect was committed to doing its part in ensuring that the outcome of the Conference will go beyond rhetoric and that the outcomes of the 2014 Conference will translate into meaning contributions to the sustainable development of SIDS. She also stated that despite the passage of 20 years, the geophysical and socioeconomic challenges facing SIDS remain daunting, including pressures on limited resources, relatively small watersheds, threatened supplies of water, costly public administration and infrastructure and limited institutional capacities and domestic markets. SIDS have yet to recover from the financial crisis. Finally, she conveyed that this Conference offers the region an opportunity to define what outcomes are wanted from the 2014 Conference, and these outcomes should specifically be about developmental priorities for the next 20 years.

11. In the discussion, the representative from Guyana enquired as to the contents of the agenda for the Third International Conference on SIDS. He mentioned that there was need to focus on means of implementation and to identify the needs of the Caribbean and put them forth to the international community. Cuba mentioned that there was an absence of policymaking in addressing financing and as such there was need for more regional initiatives rather than pursuing those at the national level only. The representative stated that it was necessary to evaluate the accomplishments of the subregion and to identify the available resources for sustainable development. The representative from Trinidad and Tobago proposed focusing on innovation for growth and the involvement of youth in sustainable development. He indicated that there was a need for a public relations campaign to raise the rate of implementation.

12. Barbados enquired about the timeline to complete the NAR and ECLAC indicated 31 July 2013 will be the deadline. It was agreed that the road map to 2014 should be a priority and that the outcome document should reflect the implementation framework. Data and information were considered critical for sustainable development and there was a need to strengthen national statistical entities in the Caribbean, as

this is directly related to promotion for research and development and technology transfer. There was also a need to include sustainable consumption and production in the deliberations. Capacity to support implementation of the MSI was also underscored. ECLAC suggested that the member States could focus on 4 or 5 urgent thematic areas that were implementable and practical and realistic.

#### **4. Regional issues on the SIDS sustainable development agenda**

13. This session comprised five panel discussions. The first focused on climate change and natural and man-made disasters as well as sustainable energy. The representative from the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) presented the challenges that Caribbean SIDS were facing with temperature increase and changes in precipitation and the impacts on Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He also mentioned the work on climate modelling that was a collaborative effort among Cuba, the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the CCCCC. He mentioned that since 1850 the temperature in the Caribbean had risen to at least 1.5 °C. Over the past 100 years the precipitation patterns have also changed and it was necessary for the Caribbean to be aware of the changes as this will have a negative impact on the subregion for example in causing severe drought. It should be noted that by the end of the century there would be an increase of temperature if the business as usual approach is continued. He mentioned some of the impacts such as ocean acidification, and rising sea levels both of which will negatively impact on the tourist industry.

14. Discussions focused on the impact of approaches to development which have changed since 1994 to reflect modeling projections. Cuba promoted its center for natural resources capacity building, funded by Norway, which will be shared with the rest of the Caribbean in an example of triangular cooperation.

15. To a question on engagement of the insurance sector posed by the United States Virgin Islands, the representative from the CCCCC noted ongoing engagement with the insurance sector, in exploring that sector's risk assessment tools related to land management and infrastructure, through regional and international workshops. He reported the launch of a project on integrating risk management into the budgets of governments to ensure that money was not lost on bad risks.

16. Jamaica observed that there has been a shift away from hard science to policy options, especially market-based mechanisms in the climate change negotiations. Mr. Fuller responded that SIDS, least developed countries (LDCs) and other vulnerable communities needed support to enable them to participate in any market-based mechanisms. He said climate change negotiators needed to insist on an international fund that would support such mechanisms.

17. The Chair provided a summary of the session by focusing on the impact of market forces in managing the impacts of climate change and in adapting to them. The response of the Caribbean subregion to the impacts of climate change in terms of adaptation and financing for it remained a matter of concern for SIDS. It was necessary to establish new market mechanisms to improve trade and to explore new areas to improve economic performance. The meeting agreed that an international mechanism be put in place for SIDS as proposed under Green Panel Funds. The chair recommended that disaster risk reduction methods should be institutionalized into our countries.

18. The second panel focused on sustainable energy and Professor Albert Binger drew attention to SIDS DOCK and its usefulness in increasing energy efficiency, promoting energy security and to decrease conventional transportation fuel use. He stated that the present energy sector in the Caribbean was not functioning socially, economically or environmentally efficient and SIDS DOCK would save the Caribbean around US\$5 billion a year, and significantly reduce energy dependence. There was a need to find a mechanism to help climate change therefore SIDS DOCK came about.

19. Professor Binger commented on the importance of promoting and strengthening partnerships in the energy sector where many opportunities exist. He proposed the establishment of a Climate Change adaptation partnership to provide the financing mechanism for energy sector transformation in SIDS. He indicated that after 20 years it is business as usual in terms of energy and that it was time to do it differently. He also explained that this could be achieved through the accelerated development and implementation of the SIDS DOCK project pipeline. This initiative can help countries to move towards low-carbon economies.

20. He discussed a new ocean-thermal energy conversion plant installed in Japan which reduced the use of fossil fuels, and at the same time created new jobs and reduced vulnerability (including economic) and opined that this may be implementable in the Caribbean region.

21. The representative from CARICOM participated in the meeting via skype. His main message was that major challenges are affordability, overdependence and the high cost of energy. He recommended that alternative energy options should be looked into.

22. Discussions regarding the energy challenges of the subregion ensued. The use of renewable energy technologies was emphasized and it was recommended that more focus should be placed on reducing energy consumption in pursuing a low carbon economy.

23. The third panel focused on macroeconomics and trade as well as sustainable tourism. The facilitator, who represented the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) mentioned the high debt to GDP ratios in the Caribbean that resulted in high cost structures and low productivity which in turn resulted in emigration and the brain drain. He noted the need to develop indicators of sustainability and to diversify Caribbean economies as well as in accessing financing for sustainable development.

24. The representative from ECLAC identified the major trade challenges and how these impact on macroeconomic policy. Among these were high debt to GDP ratios, limited fiscal space and limited access to finance. He suggested a number of strategies to address the medium and long run challenges. First the need for an industrial policy to guide trade policy based on sustainable development; the need to reignite regional growth through the institution of agreed policies within the community; the need to leverage Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for structural transformation and the need to reignite private sector participation, through creating an enabling environment, to allow them to invest in the Caribbean.

25. The delegate from the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) addressed the key priorities for Caribbean SIDS within the tourism sector. She indicated that the organisation focused on marketing, policy, safety and security, climate change, disasters and HIV. Lack of financing and failure of governments to appreciate the value of the tourism sector were identified as barriers to development of the sector.

26. Discussion focused on diversification options for the subregion and the critical success factors that could be replicated. Diversification might be into areas of new activities involving high risk in order to develop novel instruments to create funding for new investments. Creative industries were considered one new way of diversifying and another was in pursuing integration with Latin America. It was stated that a World Bank study identified labour problems as a deterrent to FDI as investors wanted to know that there was human capital to capitalize on FDI. However, investment promotion agencies needed to work within the context of an industrial policy. It was suggested that Public/Private Partnerships (PPP) and crowdfunding may be useful for development.

27. The meeting agreed that the onus was on our regional private sector to compete while unemployment needed to be addressed. It was agreed also that domestic investment and risk management

policies of commercial banks were clashing with the development policies of the subregion. It was also stated that sustainable development should be approached regionally but regional funds were small. Commodities were produced as parts of value chains so that small firms in the Caribbean did not have the means to enter these markets.

28. The capacity challenge in climate change and trade remained, and one way of addressing this challenge is by collaborating with other regional organizations. Sustainable tourism could be viewed in terms of financing, product development and cultural tourism and it was suggested that a tourism investment fund could be developed as well as a sovereign fund. The meeting essentially suggested that other financial tools needed to be examined.

29. The fourth panel addressed social policy issues. The representative from the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO) addressed the issue of health being critical to development. It was mentioned that non-communicable diseases were a priority in the subregion and there was need for a regional health policy to reduce inequities in the education and agriculture sector and to improve universal health coverage. The representative from the Organisation of American States (OAS) recommended that consideration be given to a social resilience fund to enable SIDS to transit this challenging period in the crisis. He also recommended a disaster risk reduction fund and not necessarily one for climate change. This would address the social impacts of disasters in countries such as Haiti and post-Hurricane Ivan impacts in Grenada. Maybe the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) may be a good model to be implemented in other geographic regions. It was also recommended that the causes of failure of the Technical Cooperation for Developing Countries (TCDC) mechanism could be evaluated as this may be a good way to access the diaspora. It was also stated that social safety nets were being oversubscribed as life expectancy had been prolonged. Social cohesion was also important and many countries have developed a sustainable development index and this may be good for the Caribbean. It was stated that the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) needed to be addressed in this meeting and the private sector and civil society needed to be more engaged.

30. The final panel focused on protection, conservation and sustainable use of the region's natural resources. The representative from the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies addressed transboundary multilevel, cross scale and interdisciplinary challenges in the Caribbean. Mrs. Jacqueline DaCosta reiterated land management as being of critical importance to the Caribbean, She mentioned that data were important and more so accessibility to data. Land policies and land development plans and systems were needed and should be written by Caribbean scholars. The knowledge and experience of communities to assist with land management should be managed and resources should be allocated to them.

31. In the discussion, the delegate from the Dominican Republic mentioned that the subregion was not capturing the richness of the presentations and asking that more time be spent on these during the meeting. The representative from Saint Kitts and Nevis indicated that it was necessary to look at the fiscal implications of implementation of the MSI and also to find creative ways to raise funds. The representative suggested that the private sector be engaged in this regard and the knowledge of communities be utilized. As such, it was necessary to deepen the level of stakeholder consultations.

32. Cuba indicated that it supported the decision for the drafting group to meet during the morning of the next day. The representative from the United States Virgin islands mentioned the Social Resilience Fund for the Caribbean. He thought that civil society would need to carry more of the burden of providing social services and queried whether or not it was possible to set up a group to elaborate on this Fund ad that this will be reflected it in the final outcome document.

33. The representative from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) articulated the need to think about crime and violence especially among youth and to begin to examine it from the social dimension. He recommended that the risks and vulnerabilities that young people were facing could be addressed by using sports and culture to advance their development and the inclusion of young people in the discourse.

34. Ms. DaCosta recommended embarking on short term programmes and changing the educational systems to create the expertise that the subregion required. Utilizing creative industries as leverage for engaging youth may well result in improvement in the financial situation of the subregion and may also address the unemployment problem. She stated that it would be appropriate to start thinking in a new direction, involving communities in planning and in sharing expertise among Caribbean SIDS to enhance development. The representative from the OAS agreed with Ms. DaCosta in mentioning that the CDB first articulated this Social Resilience Fund and it could be redesigned to meet the current needs of the Caribbean.

35. The delegate from Cuba informed the meeting that they have embarked on an initiative with the Dominican Republic and Haiti to deal with certain actions and other countries were welcomed to join. Jamaica stated that waste and sanitation needed to be addressed but that this could be discussed at the inter-regional meeting. The increase was attributed to increases in populations thereby generating more waste and more hazardous waste at the technology improves.

**5. Response by regional, international and United Nations systems in the implementation and support to the Caribbean SIDS sustainable development agenda: Presentation and interactive dialogue**

36. The representative from UNDESA made a presentation on the support provided by this organization to Caribbean SIDS. He emphasized that the work of the United Nations is demand driven in that it focused on the needs of member States. The representative from UNDP outlined the support provided by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to the Caribbean and gave an account of the various initiatives at the regional level that was being supported and coordinated by UNDP through the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean. The representative from the Office of the High Representative for Land-locked and Least Developed States (OHRLLS) referred to the concessional support that the United Nations was seeking to increase to SIDS. The representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) focused on sexual and reproductive health and the issue of ageing populations within the context of the demands they made on the economies of SIDS.

37. The representative from ECLAC and the delegate from Guyana provided a synopsis of the structure of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) and the roles and functions of the three subcommittees. The Regional Implementation Matrix was introduced as well as the matrix of indicators. Finally, the need for measuring and monitoring was emphasized within the context of implementation of the BPoA and MSI. The representative from the Sustainable Development Division at the CARICOM Secretariat focused on regional coordination from an environmental as well as human and sustainable development perspective. He emphasized the need for collaborating with partners on a thematic basis and providing oversight for implementation of regional initiatives in the Caribbean.

38. The delegate from Barbados enquired of ECLAC that in supporting SIDS, what were the main challenges the RCM encountered in providing the support that it was designed to do. ECLAC responded that the main challenge was that of financial resources and that the RCM is an oversight and coordinating entity and is functioning with limited resources that need to be optimized and this could only be achieved if knowledge of all activities is known. Communication is a major challenge for the RCM. Another challenge stemmed from the need to operationalise the national focal point mechanism. Towards 2014, it was important to maintain communication after conferences so as to continue in sharing information. It

was mentioned that a sense of national ownership of the MSI agenda was needed and feedback from countries indicated that they have made no progress while this is captured in MDGs reports.

39. Barbados asked UNDP as to the way in which the Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme (SIDSTAP) could benefit the poor. Barbados also noted that Capacity 21 of the 1990s provided support to national councils for sustainable development. With the planned Capacity 2015 initiative, the question arises as to which mechanisms will be needed to operationalize national councils for sustainable development. SIDS-SIDS collaboration will be important for 2014 but the SIDS should engage the agencies. For example, Pacific SIDS among themselves had a collaborative initiative on the environment that was a success. UNDESA suggested that the National Sustainable Development Councils (NCSDs) be revitalized.

40. The representative from Dominica noted that resilience is central to the sustainable development of SIDS and enquired as to CARICOM's strategies in supporting resilience building. CARICOM responded that the focus has been on the feedback required in the science-policy interface. The science needs to consider the traditional knowledge of communities as this would feed into the policy environment. SIDS, being small in size, have strong inter-linkages between the terrestrial and the marine ecosystems and the economies are based more on the marine sector which means that challenges in environmental impact occur and we need to address these.

41. The representative from Trinidad and Tobago noted that countries were not aware of the roles of the different agencies and their functions. He recommended that a coordinating matrix be prepared and the functions of different agencies be documented. This would ensure maximum use of scarce resources. UNDESA responded that such a matrix was prepared two years ago and may need to be updated and shared with member States. This is a coordinated effort by the United Nations system which will provide this information.

42. Cuba noted the importance of coordination among agencies so as to have a clear idea of the implementation of agency mandates. They believed that it was important to find ways to ensure that the Inter-governmental processes should have enough time to process all this information so that results may be reached and would lead member states to elements that help in negotiations. Cuba also called on the Secretariat to support the process so as to avoid duplication. It was also stated that it was Important for countries to have the time to make preparations on the national level to produce quality reports and to strengthen the unity of SIDS. Cuba further called for sharing of knowledge, to communicate better and to obtain feedback. The representative also noted the projects on energy and considered it important to include all member States of the subregion in such initiatives. The establishment of bilateral agreements among SIDS was encouraged.

43. Jamaica enquired of UNFPA as to the mechanism, given the challenges, that the organisation would pursue at the regional and national levels to support SIDS in the post 2015 process. UNFPA had the mandate to build capacity to address growth and migration. They were involved in policy formulation and to bring about social transformation. They also had an advocacy role. UNFPA also facilitated south-south cooperation and technical support to the countries.

44. Jamaica mentioned that with respect to monitoring mechanisms there was need to look at the number of international plans and treaties upon which countries were asked to report. The MSI is very general and in monitoring performance under other treaties, some of the achievements of the MSI were covered and that was not, in general, noted. It seemed that focus was on the BPoA and MSI and they have not been integrated with the thematic areas of other agreements and treaties. It was stated that a national focal point mechanism was not enough for coordination. In going forward, it was necessary to assess the national processes on sustainable development. Also, it was necessary to examine how well equipped the

regional coordinating mechanism was for the function. Was there anything else Caribbean SIDS could do to improve coordination? UNDESA reported that there would not be a new mechanism but the Commission for Sustainable Development will be disbanded and reporting will be to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Guyana also mentioned that the national focal point was a mechanism drawn from across ministries and not a single individual. The representative also indicated that at the recently-convened meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), there was multi-ministerial participation. CARICOM indicated that there was need to have a co-management strategy for implementation of the MSI.

45. The representative from the Bahamas enquired as to the best mechanism to encourage south-south coordination within the context of UNDP. She articulated that there was no structured mechanism for south-south cooperation and as such it was necessary to find a mechanism using AOSIS for facilitation. Guyana mentioned that the role of the representatives in New York could enhance the work of the RCM.

46. ECLAC indicated that developing indicators for measuring impact of the MSI was a challenge. ECLAC further stated that countries needed to strengthen their own reporting mechanisms and then in turn could report progress to ECLAC. However, Dominica remarked that the subregion should not lose track of Monitoring and Evaluation and suggested that countries follow the MDGs monitoring regime in measuring progress in implementation of the MSI.

47. With respect to south-south cooperation, Barbados proposed that the SIDSTAP and SIDSNET initiative could be built on as a platform to facilitate such cooperation. UNDESA stated that SIDSNET is ongoing and is an information sharing tool.

48. The representative from the OAS stated that countries were under stress from the reporting obligations under many agreements and treaties and this process needed to be evaluated. The Capacity 21 initiative was evaluated and that report tracked the future scenario of options for Capacity 2015. He stated that the nature of coordination needed to be clarified so as to effectively facilitate this expected initiative. South-south cooperation under the Training Centre for Development Cooperation (TCDC) did conduct an evaluation of the BPoA.

49. The representative from the PAHO noted that TCDC had been institutionalized in PAHO and it is health related. She asked the meeting to recognize that the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) had been established for tourism support with respect to standards for preparation of food. She suggested that the United Nations could integrate development planning through the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) and that may well facilitate coordination. She also recommended the formation of a United Nations interagency support group for SIDS.

50. The representative from UNDESA indicated that they had been developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for SIDS in all regions. She asked the meeting to note the success of the University Consortium across SIDS that was established after the Mauritius meeting and this was referenced as a good example of coordination.

51. The representative from Cuba indicated that the country was cognisant of the middle income classification of some countries and aid effectiveness which were not being debated. She wanted to highlight that these were important matters and should be a recommendation of this meeting and that there should be agreement on this theme.

**6. Presentations and interactive dialogue with the United Nations system and regional organizations on ensuring integrated approaches regarding the emerging new United Nations institutional framework (Post Rio+20 outcomes and the Post-2015 Development Agenda) and the positioning of SIDS within it**

52. With regard to the universal membership of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council, now known as the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UNEP, following a recent resolution by the United Nations General Assembly, the representative from UNEP explained that the newly-named Assembly reflects the full and future participation of all 193 United Nations member States in UNEP's governing body. Prior to 2012, membership had been limited to 58 countries only.

53. He commented that with this, a step forward to the 'Future We Want' was put in place. The landmark resolution, aimed at increasing the role of UNEP as the leading environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, was adopted 40 years after UNEP was established by the General Assembly, following the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. The upgrading to universal membership - confirmed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2012 - implemented commitments made by world leaders at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to strengthen the ability and role of UNEP to deliver the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

54. He underlined that universal membership of UNEP Governing Council establishes a new, fully-representative platform to strengthen the environmental dimension of sustainable development, and provides all governments with an equal voice on the decisions and action needed to support the global environment. All States, including SIDS, have now a definite voice in the proceedings of UNEA, as they can all participate in its sessions at any time. Even if only one SIDS representative participates on behalf of the group, as decision-making is generally by consensus, SIDS can influence the decision-making.

55. The UNEP representative made reference to the new UNEP governance structure. He explained that UNEA replaces the Governing Council. As a follow up to this decision, the Governing Council held its first session with universal membership in February 2013.

56. He explained that the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), composed of all accredited Permanent Representatives to UNEP, became the subsidiary inter-session body of the UNEP's governing body at the first universal session of the Governing Council held in February 2013 and commented on the functions of the CPR. Reference was made to the creation of the open-ended meeting of the CPR that, while ensuring support to developing country representatives, will enable the participation of capital-based representatives as well as stakeholders for a period of five days in an even year to contribute to preparation of the agenda of its governing body, and to provide advice to its governing body on policy matters. This allows SIDS who do not have a permanent mission in Nairobi to participate in the CPR block meetings from capitals. Paragraph 10 of Governing Council decision 27/2 also calls for the support of countries to participate in those CPR block meetings. Hence SIDS have a greater chance of influencing the work of UNEP through their participation in those meetings.

57. The representative from UNEP indicated that in order to better contribute to the definition of the global agenda, undertake policy dialogue and exchange of experiences and to the consideration of SIDS challenges and priorities, SIDS could explore options to strengthen their participation in these processes, such as reinforcing their presence in Nairobi.

58. The representative of Barbados made reference to the importance of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to discuss and make contributions from the region to the UNEA. The UNEP representative concurred with the Barbados representative and made reference to Decision 27/2 of the First Universal Session of the UNEP Governing Council, stressing the importance of the regional ministerial environment forums for which UNEP serves as secretariat, and invites these forums to contribute, as appropriate, to the work of this governing body.

59. The representative from the British Virgin Islands asked as to the role of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative as it was regarded as an important challenge. UNEP responded that this was being driven by non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

60. UNEP concluded from the discussion that the subregion had three options to address the situation with respect to the fact that Cuba alone has a diplomatic mission in Nairobi and as such that country alone has a voice as follows:

- (a) SIDS can have an agreement with Cuba to represent them;
- (b) Joint representation: if member States were willing to do so the under Treaty of Chaguaramas;
- (c) Let the situation remain as is.

61. The representative from Belize drew attention to the lack of coordination in representation of the subregion. He suggested that one focal person can be the political representative in these fora. The financial needs of the RCM need to be directed to the political directorate.

62. The representative from OAS indicated that it was time for governments to look at environmental diplomacy for investment as part of the overall foreign relations as the returns will be considerable. He indicated that there needs to be common representation in Nairobi. The Chair said that the political directorate sought results from embarking on environmental diplomacy and in general they were not convinced about it since results were not easily achieved and seen.

63. The representative from UNEP then focused on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP). He recommended that this could be a key area to focus on so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations and it meant doing more with less. He stated that after Rio+20, the Secretariat for SCP was UNEP and the organisation was committed to promoting it. The representative from Barbados stated that SCP had been on the agenda of the Forum of Ministers since 2003. During the last week of June 2013 there was a meeting in Peru where a platform for a regional framework was outlined. In Africa and Asia there was a programme to promote small and medium enterprises. He further indicated that in the Caribbean there was a subregional action plan developed in 2008 and this was still in draft form. The SCP issue was considered to be cross cutting and in Barbados SCP underpinned the sustainable development policy. He continued to outline examples of successful SCP initiatives in promoting sustainable livelihoods. He stated that it was necessary to find a way to use the SCP platform to seek resources from the international community. Tourism was prominent in the Caribbean and he proposed the following to be developed:

- (a) Institutional support platform;
- (b) Subregional capacity development;
- (c) Sustainable tourism and engaging the communities;
- (d) How to get SIDS engaged in the governance for the 10 year framework.

64. The representative from UNEP then addressed the matter of the medium term strategy which looked at the governance mechanism of UNEP. Since 2013, programming for SIDS was delivered in six

programmes namely climate change, disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, harmful substances and hazardous waste and resource efficiency (SCP).

65. Ms. Karina Gerlach, Deputy Executive Secretary in the post-2015 Development Agenda Secretariat focused on the report of the High-level Panel (HLP) on Eminent Persons on the post-2015 Development Agenda. This will feed into a report of the Secretary General of the United Nations. The vision was to end extreme poverty and to put in place the building blocks for prosperity for all. It focused on doing this through a new paradigm integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development with people and the planet being the centre. Outcomes of the report were as follows:

- (a) Pursue a universal agenda;
- (b) Relevant to all and actionable by all;
- (c) Link sustainable development and poverty into a single agenda;
- (d) International system needs to work together;
- (e) Build on the foundation of peace, good governance;
- (f) Kindle solidarity.

66. They concluded that the Business as Usual approach was not an option.

67. Ms. Gerlach continued to discuss the report<sup>1</sup>.

68. The representative from UNDESA focused on emerging issues in SIDS and indicated that this was a joint initiative with UNEP. They had organized parallel expert group meetings to address these issues as well as the interlinkages among them. Emerging issues were critical to sustainable development that are important to SIDS, are evidence-based and have an element of newness. There are 21 such issues that incorporated the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and they looked at the results of inaction in addressing these issues. They continued to explore interlinkages.

69. The representative from Belize enquired as to a mechanism of getting the SIDS agenda on the HLP. UNDESA mentioned that when the draft of the report is given to them they will have an opportunity to influence the agenda. The representative from Cuba acknowledged the absence of commitment and indicated that the information and the knowledge exist but the political will to carry things through was lacking. The representative from the Bahamas mentioned the weakness of the HLP in treating with SIDS and also raised the parallel process that complements the HLP which was the ECOSOC process. In this context the SIDS needed to be addressed in term of strengthening the approach to SIDS. The RCM could be linked to the outcomes of Samoa. In response to a query as to the mechanism to best position SIDS in ECOSOC, the HLP, and the Sustainable Development Goals, UNDESA responded that this was an opportunity that could be addressed in the closed session of this meeting.

70. The representative of the Commonwealth Secretariat reflected on the following points:

- (a) Post 2015 development agenda. A report on MDG attainment had been published and this showed data gaps in gauging progress. It was therefore necessary to fill the data gaps;
- (b) They also developed a qualitative economic resilience index with the University of Malta as there were no data sets to develop a quant Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States quantitative one for small States;

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.post2015hlp.org/featured/high-level-panel-releases-recommendations-for-worlds-next-development-agenda/>

(c) It was necessary to build national capacities to support the development frameworks and for this, data are needed;

(d) Institutional frameworks for assessment of progress needed to be developed.

71. In terms of assessing progress, UNDESA indicated that the monitoring and evaluation framework that was being developed by that organisation with ECLAC. The representative from Guyana mentioned the need to engage on a path to sustainable development and that countries needed to be at a certain stage of development to be engaged in addressing development concerns.

72. Ms. Gerlach indicated that the legacy of the MDGs was addressed by the HLP. She reiterated that the MDGs were based on international averages and that although the goals were international in nature, it was recommended that national targets that were disaggregated by quintile to determine which countries were being left behind, should be developed. She mentioned that there should also be strategies for financing focused on thematic issues rather than countries. She suggested that the formation of PPP may be used to support projects.

73. The representative from UNEP agreed with the recommendation made by Cuba for a SIDS platform to address these processes and he hoped that a modality for this platform could be worked out. He also agreed with the recommendation made by Belize.

#### **7. Interactive dialogue with major groups of the region on their contribution to the implementation of the BPoA and MSI**

74. This session received interactive dialogue from SIDS Major Groups and sought to inform the framing of the outcomes for contribution to the implementation of the BPOA/MSI post-2015.

75. In her opening remarks, the facilitator summarized the historical experience which led to the crafting of the global SIDS agenda, beginning from the Earth Conference in Rio, 1992, to the formation of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 1995, and ultimately the reformulation in 2013 of the UNCSD to the proposed High Level Political Forum for sustainable development which was one of the key outcomes of the Rio+20 conference. On the basis of this development, she noted that the global forum for articulating SIDS issues was being diluted with an apparently reduced framework for focused advocacy on SIDS, and urged the meeting to seize every opportunity to present a strong and common voice by Caribbean SIDS at the upcoming Global SIDS forum in Samoa in 2014. In particular, she noted the following issues as important considerations for the meeting going forward:

- (a) The need for clear strategies for the subregion to get its concerns on the global agenda;
- (b) The importance of clearly prioritizing issues for informing the SIDS agenda;
- (c) The need to clearly communicate SIDS needs and interests to the international community;
- (d) That good governance is an importance conditionality which could give effect to the advancement of the SIDS agenda, and in this regard, noted the important role to be played by the major groups.

76. The session then received three presentations, one via skype, from civil society organizations in the Caribbean subregion. These were:

- (a) The Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) based in Barbados;
- (b) The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) based in Trinidad and Tobago;
- (c) The Caribbean Farmer's Network (CaFAN) based in Antigua and Barbuda.

77. The presentation was delivered by the representative from CPDC who noted the organization's role in the meeting to be one of coordination of civil society's role in the SIDS +20 process. She also noted the key actions undertaken by the CPDC in this regard, and emphasized tangible contributions made by the organisation. She proposed the following actions going forward to SIDS 2014:

- (a) The forging of a well-defined institutionalized mechanism for civil society participation in the SIDS+20 process;
- (b) That civil society should get an opportunity to input to the country notes being prepared for reports to ECLAC;
- (c) Noted the importance of giving consideration to the issue of non-communicable diseases in the preparatory discourse for Caribbean SIDS;
- (d) Called for strengthening of social safety nets for rural women, youth, indigenous groups, disabled and the elderly;
- (e) Called for priority in building resilience to the vulnerability of Caribbean SIDS particularly at the community level;
- (f) Called for a nexus to be drawn between trade and how SIDS are placed in the global agenda;
- (g) Noted the need for coherence in the Caribbean agenda which would go forward to the global SIDS discussions.

78. She also expressed the belief that the SIDS agenda was not as conspicuous in the global agenda, and emphasised that in that meeting Caribbean SIDS issues must signal that more resources, capacity being provided to SIDS. She concluded with the affirmation of CPDC's support to regional governments in advancing these proposals.

79. The meeting next received a presentation from the representative from the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI). She outlined CANARI's core visions for the sustainable development into the future and noted the following priorities:

- (a) Participatory governance and management;
- (b) Cross-sectoral integrated development;
- (c) Regional institutions of ocean governance of the Caribbean Sea;
- (d) Participatory development of policies and plans and development of integrating projects to address development concerns;
- (e) Integrating local and traditional knowledge as a basis for decision-making.

80. Like CPDC, CANARI also called for a strong Caribbean position going forward to the Third international conference of SIDS in Samoa in 2014, and also called for the earliest involvement of Caribbean civil society in shaping such a position.

81. The meeting finally received a presentation from Ms. Pamela Thompson from CaFAN via skype. She outlined CaFAN broad goals as poverty reduction and environmental enhancement, all through the facility of the regional small farming sector. She made the following recommendations for strengthening the role of agriculture towards this end:

- (a) Incorporate agriculture into the school curriculum;
- (b) Clustering of farmers and farmers groups;
- (c) Effective utilization of social media and all media for the promotion of the development of the agricultural sector.

82. She also noted CaFAN support to CPDC in advocating a clear Caribbean position for SIDS going forward.

83. During the discussion period Mr. David Smith of the Consortium of SIDS Universities took the opportunity to share with the meeting the evolving role of the seven consortium universities in providing capacity building courses for SIDS countries in areas related to the advancement of the SIDS agenda. He noted particularly areas such as climate change, and disaster risk management among others.

84. The representative from UNEP noted UNEP collaboration with regional NGOs in advancing its work, but wondered if there was a good mechanism at the national level for engaging the major groups in order that their views could find a place in the national position going forward to Samoa. He similarly observed that there appeared to be no clear facility for engaging the regional scientific and university community. The UNEP representative from Panama encouraged all participants to review the Principle 10 Initiative arising out of the Rio Declaration, which promotes access to information, public participation, and access to justice in environmental matters.

85. The representative from the United States Virgin Islands also noted the availability of water management technologies which were currently being assessed at the University, and indicated that this was available for access and use by regional SIDS. This further endorsed the need to formalize participation mechanism for civil society in the SIDS process.

86. The representative from Barbados made a call for Caribbean SIDS to find a mechanism for the participation of Caribbean Major Groups in informing the SIDS process going forward and this was supported by the representative from PAHO. PAHO also charged the United Nations to assist countries in building such a mechanism.

87. Dominica's representative observed that in order to build such a mechanism, there was no need to begin from first principles since there were other mechanisms already existing in the subregion which functioned to varying degrees in the past and that those mechanisms should be explored again.

88. The session concluded with a brief summary by the facilitator, who reaffirmed the importance of regional SIDS taking full advantage of the upcoming opportunities arising out of Samoa to reinforce its case in the global framework.

#### **8. Working group discussions on regional priorities for sustainable development of Caribbean SIDS, including in the elaboration of the Post-2015 UN development agenda**

89. This was a closed session and only members of the drafting committee were admitted. During this period, a draft outcome document was prepared.

#### **9. Practical and pragmatic actions for the further implementation of the BPoA and MSI – based on the means of implementation framework in the BPoA**

90. This session was also closed and recognized continuation of the deliberations of the drafting committee towards producing a final draft outcome document.

#### **10. Strengthening partnerships amongst and between SIDS and the international community and International Year of SIDS**

91. Owing to the constraints of time, this session did not take place. However, discussion on drafting of the outcome document was opened to participation by the wider meeting with participants having observer status.

## **11. Presentation and adoption of the draft regional outcome document**

92. The outcome document was presented to the meeting and was adopted.

## **12. Closing**

93. The representative of the CARICOM Secretariat thanked the Government and the people of Jamaica for their hospitality in accommodating participants over the past three days in this important event and he, on behalf of member States expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to share information on best practices and expectations as the subregion engages in preparations for the Third International Conference for SIDS.

94. In closing the meeting, the Honourable Arnaldo Brown, Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Jamaica stated that the government was pleased that the meeting was held in Kingston and that it was important to get it right so that the subregion could speak with one voice in Samoa. He thanked the member States for their dedication to the process and reiterated that each Caribbean island was important to the survival to all SIDS. He indicated that this is an important negotiating state for the subregion and all member States should speak unanimously. He urged the meeting to continue the deliberations so as to agree on an outcome document. He commended the delegates for their hard work and dedication and commitment to the people of the subregion and wished them every success as the subregion prepares for the Third International Conference on SIDS that would be held in Samoa in 2014.

Annex I**List of participants****A. Countries****Antigua and Barbuda**

Fitzmaurice Christian, Environment Division

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**Belize**

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