

High Level Roundtable on International Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Caribbean Small Island Developing States

Bridgetown, Barbados, 25-27 March 2008

Conclusions of the Meeting

1. During 25-27 March 2008, representatives of the Governments of sixteen small island developing States and low-lying coastal states (SIDS) in the Caribbean region, the Government of Iceland, the Caribbean Community Secretariat and other regional intergovernmental and technical institutions, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other organisations of the United Nations system, representatives of civil society, including business leaders from Iceland and the Caribbean and other invited stakeholders held a High Level Roundtable on International Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Caribbean SIDS in Bridgetown, Barbados, under the Co-Chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Christopher Sinckler, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Barbados and Mrs. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland.

Advancing Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Mauritius Strategy

2. Participants reiterated their commitment to incorporate the three pillars of sustainable development the economic, social and environmental, as outlined by the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, in their development cooperation initiatives. The meeting supported the need to strengthen the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action in the Caribbean.

Iceland's Commitment to Enhanced Development Cooperation with Caribbean SIDS

3. Participants identified mutual areas of interest to increase cooperation, namely sustainable use of natural resources, climate change, clean energy, ocean management, capacity building and the advancement of women, and in so doing welcomed the Island Growth Initiative presented by the Government of Iceland as a framework mechanism to advance Iceland's commitment to development collaboration with Caribbean SIDS partners, in support of implementation of the BPOA and the Mauritius Strategy.

Areas of Common Interest and Concern

4. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the capacity and resilience of SIDS in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. They welcomed initiatives to strengthen private sector cooperation, and reaffirmed the importance of increased investment, economic diversification, new and innovative business partnerships and greater technical and financial resources in the promotion of development cooperation. These innovations and approaches were acknowledged to be invaluable in overcoming common developmental challenges of Caribbean SIDS such as a narrow resource base, small domestic markets, high cost of energy, transportation and communication, vulnerable infrastructure, and vulnerability to natural hazards.

Renewable Energy

5. Participants identified investment in and the development of renewable energy resources as a key area of mutual interest for strengthened cooperation between Iceland and the Caribbean. They resolved to explore opportunities for renewable energy development in such areas as geothermal energy, hydropower, solar, wind, ocean energy and biomass including biofuel.

Fisheries Management

6. Participants highlighted the importance of the sustainable and responsible use of marine resources, particularly in respect of ocean management and fisheries management. They agreed to pursue strengthened cooperation and sharing of experience in this area.

Capacity Building

7. Participants appreciated the commitment of the Icelandic International Development Agency in exploring possible development cooperation for supporting sustainable development in Caribbean SIDS, including in the areas of renewable energy, climate change, disaster management, ocean management and fisheries management. Participants also recognized the importance of capacity building through training, technical assistance, appropriate transfer of technology and financial mobilization, including micro-credit.

Climate Change

8. Participants emphasized the disproportionate impact of accelerated climate change on SIDS. They resolved to continue their close collaboration in addressing the issue at all levels, including the implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies, and called on the international community and the United Nations system to support the mobilization of technical and financial resources to address the costly impact of climate change.

Advancement of Women

9. Participants underlined their commitment to continue supporting the advancement of women in society, and their commitment to giving greater attention to gender issues as a whole, recognising that these benefit society as a whole. In this context, further cooperation with UNIFEM in order to promote women's participation in sustainable development was welcomed.

Regional and International Cooperation

10. The participants welcomed ongoing collaboration between the United Nations University Fisheries Training Programme (UNU-FTP) and the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism Secretariat (CRFM), and looked forward to the future establishment of a programme of cooperation between the two organisations under an agreed Memorandum of Understanding.

11. Participants emphasized the importance of working closely with regional intergovernmental and technical organizations, the regional academic and research institutions, as well as civil society including the private sector, to achieve the objectives agreed at the High Level Roundtable.

12. Participants also welcomed in particular the key role of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Office of the High Representative of Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLSS) and the United Nations system support in this cooperative effort.

Partnership Agreements

13. Participants welcomed the efforts to work towards a partnership agreement between the Caribbean SIDS and the Government of Iceland at the earliest opportunity, and requested DESA and UNDP to follow up on implementation.

Business Cooperation

14. Participants welcomed the Business and Investment Forum on 27 March 2008. The Forum sought to identify concrete projects for possible cooperation and implementation, particularly in the fields of fisheries management and renewable energy development.