



General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 August, 2012
Original: English

Sixty-seventh session

Item 20 (b) the provisional agenda *

Sustainable Development: Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Towards the Sustainable Development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 65/155, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-seventh session on the status of the implementation of the said resolution, and to include a section on the possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to relevant international law, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and relevant regional organizations. A report of the Association of Caribbean States on progress made in implementation of this resolution is contained in the annex.

* A/67/150

Contents	Page
I. Introduction	3
II. Activities undertaken at the national and regional levels	3
A. Marine pollution	3
B. Coastal and marine resource management	5
C. Sustainable economic and social development	6
D. Climate change and disaster preparedness	7
E. Capacity building and access to information	8
III. Activities of the Caribbean Sea Commission	10
IV. Possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development	10
V. Conclusion	11
Annex	12
Report of the Association of Caribbean States on progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/155 entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations"	

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 63/214 of 20 December 2008, entitled “Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations”, the General Assembly called on the United Nations system and the international community to assist, as appropriate, Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to ensure the protection and sustainable management of the Caribbean Sea, and requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-fifth session on the status of the implementation of the said resolution, and to include “a section on the possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to relevant international law, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and relevant regional organizations.”

2. The report is based on inputs from the United Nations system, relevant regional organizations, and Member States¹. Pursuant to the invitation extended by the General Assembly to the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) to submit a report on its progress in implementing the above-mentioned resolution, the report of the ACS is herewith attached as an annex.

II. Activities undertaken at the national and regional levels

A. Marine Pollution

3. Following the establishment of adequate port waste reception facilities by most countries in the region, the MARPOL Special Area Designation for Annex V ship generated wastes for the Caribbean entered into force in May 2011, prohibiting disposal of all garbage into the sea.

4. The Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) entered into force in August 2010, following the accession of Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana and Bahamas. It has since also been ratified by Dominica and Grenada, and is expected to be ratified by Jamaica.

5. As a Co-Chair of the White Water to Blue Water Partnership Initiative, UNEP CEP continues to develop partnerships that enhance integrated approaches in areas such as wastewater and sanitation, sustainable agricultural practices, integrated coastal management, sustainable tourism and environmentally sound marine transport in the WCR.

6. The improvement of wastewater management capacity in countries of the WCR has been supported by the GEF-funded Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CRew) Project, of which UNEP CEP is the regional implementing agency. The final project,

¹ Inputs were received from the following organizations: DOALOS, ECLAC, FAO, ILO, IMO, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNWTO, OECS; and Member States: Australia, Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico.

approved in 2010, will benefit thirteen participating countries through sustainable financing for projects and by addressing key capacity constraints within existing legal, institutional, educational and policy frameworks.

7. Efforts to mitigate pollution caused by ballast water exchange continue to be supported by UNEP CEP, IMO and RAC-REMPEITC. Following the development of a draft regional strategy for Ballast Water Management, a Regional Training Workshop on the Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement of the Ballast Water Management Convention was held in Jamaica in November 2011.

8. Oil pollution response efforts have included the creation of a Regional Caribbean Island Oil Pollution Response and Cooperation (OPRC) Plan, led by RAC-REMPEITC Caribe, the development of a GIS-based database for Maritime Traffic in the Wider Caribbean Region, and the development of Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) Maps which will facilitate the risk assessment and planning process during an oil spill response. Additionally, the Government of Mexico convened a meeting in November 2011 with the aim of strengthening regional cooperation and exchanging information on the management of industrial security and environmental protection in the oil industry of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.

9. With the primary goal of assisting in the environmental protection and sustainable development of the WCR related to the prevention and reduction of marine litter, UNEP Regional Seas and partners developed a Regional Action Plan for the Sustainable Management of Marine Litter (RAPMaLi), which was piloted in three countries (Barbados, Guyana and Saint Lucia).

10. Two GEF projects addressing watershed management came to a close in the last biennium. The project “Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (IWCAM) for Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS)” has supported legislative and policy reform at the island states level and capacity building to implement those reforms. Demonstration projects completed in eight SIDS showed how the reduction of contaminants can address water scarcity and also improve the quality of the marine environment and coastal resources. A follow up project to GEF IWCAM entitled “Implementing Integrated Land, Water & Wastewater Management in Caribbean SIDS” was endorsed and submitted for consideration by the GEF Secretariat in April, 2012.

11. The project “Reducing Pesticide Run-off to the Caribbean Sea” (REPCar), implemented in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Colombia to protect the Caribbean marine environment by reducing pesticide runoff in the agricultural sector, is proposed to be succeeded by the project “Improved Management of Agrochemical Lifecycles in Central America and the Caribbean,” which aims to be more multi-sectoral and to include international waters and Persistent Organic Pollutants.

B. Coastal and marine resource management

12. Recognizing the role that Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) play in conserving biodiversity, enhancing fisheries, and achieving other management goals, UNEP CEP continued to take the lead in the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers (CaMPAM) Network and Forum Partnership to strengthen capacity for MPA management in the Wider Caribbean. The CEP has also supported the Caribbean Challenge Initiative through regional activities that include MPA networking and capacity building. In support of improved governance of the shared living marine resources of the Wider Caribbean, the CEP is currently implementing a pilot project on the management and conservation of reef biodiversity and reef fisheries using an ecosystem-based approach, as part of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) project.

13. The threat of alien and invasive species (such as the lionfish) to biodiversity in the region is being addressed through the regional GEF project on Invasive Species in the Insular Caribbean implemented by the Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI).

14. FAO has been fostering the implementation of ecosystem approaches to fisheries (EAF), including through the development of an EAF Toolbox in collaboration with CERMES and the University of West Indies. A case study of the shared stocks of the shrimp and groundfish fishery of the Guianas-Brazil shelf was undertaken as part of the GEF – CLME Project with the aim of mainstreaming the EAF into the management of the shrimp and groundfish resources of this area.

15. The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) adopted a resolution on strengthening the implementation of international fisheries instruments at its 14th Session in Panama in February 2012. WECAFC also established a Working Group on Recreational Fisheries, which aims to assess their socio-economic impact and importance.

16. The work of the CEP SPAW sub-programme includes conservation activities for WCR threatened and endangered species as listed in the SPAW Protocol. National Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans were completed for Panama and Grenada, a regional management plan for the conservation of marine mammals in the WCR was adopted, and the regional manatee management plan was updated. Regional efforts towards sustainable management of Queen Conch and Spiny Lobster were supported, in particular in the area of capacity building in collaboration with FAO/WECAFC.

17. UNDP has provided technical and financial support to the Caribbean countries for the integrated water management of river basin and coastal resources, as well in the ecosystem based management of transboundary living marine resources in the CLME. Through a four year project in Antigua and Barbuda, UNDP aims to develop a Sustainable Island Resource Management (SIRM) approach, which considers the whole island ecosystem and its marine and terrestrial resources as a capital asset that, with proper management and protection, will

continue to yield a flow of vital goods and services necessary for sustainable economic development.

18. The Project “Sustainable Management of the shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem and Adjacent Regions” (CLME, 2009-2013) is contributing to improving the governance and management of shared living marine resources in the WCR through an ecosystem-based approach. Three priority transboundary problems have been identified: unsustainable exploitation of fish and other living resources, habitat degradation and community modification, and pollution. A Strategic Action Programme (SAP) is being developed and will aim at mobilizing resources for the strengthening of the overarching governance framework for the CLME and adjacent areas.

19. At the national level, Colombia launched the project "Biodiversity Protection in the South West region of the Caribbean" in 2010, aiming to protect, preserve and sustainably use important ecosystems and marine and coastal biodiversity of the Southwestern Caribbean Sea. Costa Rica developed a National Strategy for the Integrated Management of Marine and Coastal Resources, which identifies three critical points that require immediate action: management of marine and coastal resources, maritime safety and spatial planning.

20. In response to requests from Caribbean countries, Australia hosted a workshop to help better manage coral reefs and respond to climate change impacts such as coral reef bleaching and loss of biodiversity. Building on this, Australia’s partnership with CARICOM is supporting further coral reef management activities to promote sustainable marine environments.

C. Sustainable economic and social development

21. The ILO’s Maritime Labour Convention, which sets out comprehensive rights and protection for seafarers while also providing a level playing field for ship-owners, has, to date, been ratified by Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

22. The ILO’s Caribbean programme on occupational safety and health and environment (OSHE) was launched in February 2011 with the aim of supporting governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations in the Caribbean in their efforts to improve OSH and contribute to environmental sustainability, including in such crucial economic sectors as the hotel, tourism and cruise ships industries.

23. The ILO promotes creation of green jobs as a strategy for minimizing the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors. The creation of green jobs and decent work is one of four priorities in the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for Guyana, which was signed in April 2012. Guyana has also been implementing a Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), launched in 2009, with the aim of fostering economic growth, and sustaining development through the adoption of a low carbon development path.

24. The UNWTO ST-EP (sustainable tourism – eliminating poverty) Initiative focuses on developing and promoting sustainable forms of tourism with activities that specifically

alleviate poverty, focusing on training of local guides and hotel employees, facilitating the involvement of local people in tourism development around natural and cultural heritage sites, establishing business linkages between poor producers and tourism enterprises, and providing business and financial services to small, medium and community based tourism enterprises. In Honduras, a project was carried out to establish linkages between the Garifuna communities and small businesses near the Bahía de Tela.

25. UNWTO is participating in the Cultural Recovery and Creative Productive Development on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, a joint programme that aims to help to reduce inequality in the human, social and economic development of indigenous and afro-descendant villages on the Caribbean Coast through cultural reclamation, productive development and the furthering of traditional knowledge.

D. Climate change and disaster preparedness

26. The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) continues to serve as the focal point for climate change issues in the Caribbean, providing clearing house and capacity building services, implementing projects and supporting joint programmes in the region. The CCCCC, together with the University of the West Indies and the Cuban Institute of Meteorology (INSMET), has completed work on climate modelling, especially in projecting temperature and precipitation changes, and is now working on projecting changes in sea level. The CCCCC has also prepared an Implementation Plan for the Regional Framework for Achieving Development Resilient to Climate Change, as mandated by the CARICOM Heads of Government. The plan defines the region's strategic approach for coping with climate change for the period 2011 – 2021.

27. UNEP implemented a pilot Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Methodology Development Project (RiVAMP), which was conceived to develop an assessment tool that takes into account ecosystems and climate change in the analysis of disaster risk and vulnerability. It specifically targets SIDS and other coastal areas that are highly vulnerable and exposed to tropical cyclones and related hazards.

28. The project "Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction in Jamaica," funded by the EU and co-managed by the UNEP CEP and the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), seeks to increase resilience and reduce risks associated with natural hazards in vulnerable areas as adaptive measures to climate change, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of Jamaica.

29. With the project "My Island My Community: Increasing Awareness and Changing Attitudes and Behaviours" UNDP aims to increase environmental awareness on Climate Change in Tobago, focusing on community participation and a bottom-up approach to conservation, improved watershed management and more controlled use of resources.

30. In Guyana, UNDP interventions at the policy level have resulted in the setting up of a national multistakeholder Disaster Risk Reduction Coordination Platform; the preparation of a

Disaster Risk Management policy and a Multi-hazard Response Plan; and the establishment of a fully equipped Emergency Operation Centre. Vulnerability studies were conducted in health, human settlement and agriculture, including scenarios of future impacts of climate change.

31. UNESCO continues to support its Caribbean Member States, in coordination with regional organizations like CDEMA and CEPREDENAC, towards the establishment of a fully-fledged Caribbean Tsunami and Sea Level related Hazards Warning and Mitigation System. The Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions has met annually since 2006. Significant improvement has been achieved in terms of sea level monitoring coverage with support of the University of Hawaii Sea Level Center (UHSLC), the Puerto Rico Seismic Network (PRSN) and UNESCO's IOC.

32. UNWTO has conducted a series of national and regional workshops to assist its Member States to assess and mitigate risks related to tourism, which include developing, planning and implementing crisis management systems that will reduce the impact of and assist in recovery from crises. UNWTO is also a key partner in the CARIBSAVE project, which addresses the impacts and challenges surrounding climate change, tourism, the environment, economic development and community livelihoods across the Caribbean Basin.

33. ECLAC conducted economic assessments to 2050 of the impact of climate change on key vulnerable sectors of several Caribbean countries, including an analysis of the coastal and marine sector in the British Virgin Islands and Saint Kitts and Nevis and the coastal and human settlements sector in Barbados and Guyana. These assessments provided quantitative information on the costs of climate change to these economies and of the various adaptation and mitigation options recommended.

34. Colombia has undertaken a National Pilot Project for Adaptation to Climate Change, the marine component of which addresses adaptation measures in the insular areas, specifically to changes in precipitation, temperature and sea level rise.

35. Australia established formal relations with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in 2009 and is investing AUD60 million in development assistance to help Caribbean countries reduce vulnerability to climate change, natural disasters and economic challenges. Of the AUD17.5 million committed to climate change and disaster risk reduction programs, most of the support goes to key regional organisations, which are helping nations and communities across the Caribbean reduce the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

E. Capacity building and access to information

36. IMO has developed a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based database on maritime traffic in the Wider Caribbean with the aim of increased access to information; improved maritime environment protection; analysis of maritime traffic; enhanced government industry partnership and co-operation; and increased implementation of IMO and relevant regional instruments. IMO has also held a series of national and regional workshops in 2011

on: the development of an Environmental Sensitivity Index and associated GIS maps; compliance, monitoring and enforcement of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention); and the implementation of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC Convention).

37. UNEP CEP continues to work in the WCR to assist countries to become parties to the Cartagena Convention and the three protocols, to meet the objectives thereto, and to facilitate their implementation through awareness raising, capacity building, data collection and ease of access to information. CEP is also the regional executing agency for the GEF International Waters: Learning Exchange and Resource Network project, which aims to enhance communications and information sharing between GEF projects.

38. Progress has been made on an Assessment of Pollutant Loads and Sources in the WCR facilitated by the LBS RAC Centre of Engineering and Environmental Management of Coasts and Bays (CIMAB), providing additional data and information regarding discharges into, or impacting, the WCR and establishing a baseline from which to measure progress under the LBS Protocol.

39. In order to enhance the capacity of the countries of the WCR to implement the LBS Protocol and to improve the knowledge about the status and quality of the marine environment and its resources, a partnership called "Regional Network in Marine Science and Technology for the Caribbean: The Know-why Network" was developed. The partnership project enabled capacity building of LBS RACs and partner regional laboratories through the provision of materials and training, development of pollutant indicators and methodologies for monitoring and analysis, and capacity building to facilitate the increased use of GIS.

40. Ongoing discussions have focused on effective regional coordination of information between partners of the Know-Why Network and the GEF sponsored Projects (IWCAM & REPCar). Existing and proposed information systems are under evaluation to develop a pollution information node and a database on the state of the marine environment of the WCR. One platform for data dissemination already established is a web-based interactive project activity map (IPAM) created in collaboration with the Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC). A similar map is planned for regional shipping data obtained by RAC REMPEITC.

41. The CCCCC project "Database Management System for Regional Integrated Observing Network for Environmental Change in the Wider Caribbean (DBS)," launched in 2011, aims to build regional capacity to respond to the challenges and adverse impact of climate change by facilitating open access to data products useful for observing environmental change in the wider Caribbean through, in support of a regional observing network.

42. The OECS Secretariat has instituted a Sustainable Oceans Governance (SOG) programme with the overall objective of promoting regional economic development through

the sustainable management of the use of ocean resources and the protection of the marine environment. The OECS SOG programme aims to build capacity at the level of the Secretariat and Member States to develop clear overarching national policies on ocean governance and strengthen the legal and administrative frameworks in support of such policies.

43. UNDP has focused on strengthening the implementation of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), as well as contributing to the implementation of Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) through the development and application of natural resource valuation tools, including through a pilot project in Jamaica.

44. UNESCO continues to support the consolidation and expansion of the Sandwatch educational programme in the Caribbean, involving students, teachers and community members. A global Sandwatch database is currently under development, allowing practitioners to share data from their projects online.

III. Activities of the Caribbean Sea Commission

45. Since its establishment in 2006 with the purpose of promoting a coordinated governance of the WCR and spearheading the initiative to designate the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) has been seeking full institutionalization in order to implement its proposed plan of action. During the past two years, efforts have continued to focus on raising awareness of the potential role of the CSC in regional ocean governance aimed at engaging countries of the WCR and garnering financial support from donors outside the WCR. While some support has been shown, both political and financial, it has not yet been enough for the CSC to establish its Secretariat and to begin its substantive work. During the next biennium, efforts will continue to focus on promoting the CSC and securing funding for its operationalization.

46. As elaborated in the report of the ACS (see annex), the Commission counts as one of its key roles the formation of a collaborative technical and policy network of all countries and organizations working toward the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea with the objective of sharing experiences and coordinating initiatives via a functional region-wide science-policy interface. Steps were taken towards the establishment of such an interface in 2011 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ACS and the University of the West Indies (UWI), followed by the establishment of the UWI Ocean Governance Network to facilitate the MOU. This interdisciplinary Network is fully operational, providing an interface between the CSC and the expertise available across the University.

IV. Possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development

47. The concept of the Caribbean Sea as a “special area in the context of sustainable development” and the definition of the legal implications thereof is expected to be taken up by

the Legal Sub-Commission of the CSC once the Secretariat is established, taking into consideration the specific meaning ascribed to “special areas” in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.²

48. As detailed in the annexed ACS Report, the financial implications for the operationalization of the CSC must be viewed as having two components: a) operationalization of the Secretariat and b) strengthening the capacity of ACS Member States and regional organizations to implement coastal and ocean governance decisions. However, since the role of the CSC is coordination and integration, rather than implementation, the costs associated with the second component are not directly related to the funding requirements of the CSC.

49. In considering the financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area, it is important to account for the value of coastal and ocean resources of the WCR both in terms of their use value as well as their non-use value. Currently, most valuation work has been directed at coral reefs, in relation to the benefits of Marine Protected Areas, but little effort has been spent on the value of coral reefs as coastal defence or the valuation of other ecosystems (continental shelf, pelagic).

V. Conclusion

50. The protection of the Caribbean Sea and the sustainable management of its resources continue to be a priority for the countries of the Wider Caribbean Region and for the greater international community. The last biennium has seen significant positive developments, particularly with regard to the entry into force of international agreements on ship generated waste and pollution from land-based sources and activities. Regional organizations have continued to work together, aided by a number of new information management and information technology initiatives that facilitate knowledge sharing.

51. The ACS continues to promote the Caribbean Sea Commission as a coordinating body for ocean governance in the WCR and to seek its operationalization. The international community has recognized the importance of a coordinated approach to the sustainable management of the Caribbean Sea and has demonstrated its support for the proposed work of the Caribbean Sea Commission. In order to pursue its programme of work, the Commission needs the financial support of the international community to allow for the establishment of a Secretariat. Once the Caribbean Sea Commission acquires the necessary funding to begin its substantive activities, the initiative to designate the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development can be further explored, and the associated legal and financial implications can be detailed.

² See A/RES/65/37: Oceans and Law of the Sea. The previous report A/65/301 covers in greater detail the potential legal implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area vis-à-vis UNCLOS and MARPOL.



Annex

Report to the United Nations Secretary-General

Progress made in the implementation of resolution A/65/155 “Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations”

Introduction

The Wider Caribbean is the most geopolitically complex and diverse region in the world. In light of this and the large numbers of countries and organisations that are involved in sustainable development at multiple geographical and institutional scale levels, it is not possible to assemble complete information on all that is being done within the region to ensure the sustainable management and development of the Caribbean Sea. The current governance structure features the maintenance of extensive inventories of projects and information. A network structure that promotes interaction among countries and partner organisations and facilitates access to their respective information and expertise is seen as a more effective and efficient means of collaboration than an approach which attempts to maintain extensive inventories of projects, expertise and information. The Caribbean Sea Commission provides this solution.

One of the key roles of the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) is to establish and maintain a technical and policy oriented network of all ACS countries and organisations mandated to conduct work in any way related to the Caribbean Sea. The network would address the critical issues facing the region’s marine systems. In this way, the CSC can serve as a body for coordination and exchange of experiences among States regarding their policies in the Caribbean, and to strengthen existing mechanisms by promoting synergies and inter-institutional cooperation while respecting each organisation’s mandate.

The partnership or networking approach described above that has been adopted as the mode of operation of the CSC will require support at the country level as well as from the full range of regional intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations that comprise the network. Ultimately, the CSC is not intended to be a body for implementation of technical projects. Local, national and regional partners are currently well placed to fulfil this role. Rather, the CSC is seen as a mechanism by which to build and enhance a network among partners with a view to establishing a functional region-wide science-policy interface.

In April 2011, the ACS and the University of the West Indies (UWI) accomplished this. The two institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in support of the

operationalisation of the CSC. This was followed in October 2011 by the Vice Chancellor of UWI establishing the UWI Ocean Governance Network to facilitate the MOU. The Network provides an interface between the expertise available on all four campuses of the University and the CSC. The network has many members from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds and is fully operational.

This report covers the activities of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and its Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) in respect of actions highlighted in Resolution A/RES/65/155 “Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations”, adopted on 25th February 2011, as well as the issues set out in paragraphs 6 and 17.

The report specifically provides updates on the issues covered in paragraphs 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16 and 17 of the said resolution. Activities dealt with are:

- Institutionalisation of the Caribbean Sea Commission
- International support for the CSC
- Progress with international agreements
- Fisheries management and marine biodiversity conservation
- Disaster preparedness
- Human capacity
- Legal implications

Institutionalisation of the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) and its Sub-Commissions

In the past two years there has been slow but steady progress to institutionalise the CSC as a key mechanism for ocean governance and sustainable development of the Wider Caribbean Region and for achieving the goals of the Caribbean Sea Initiative. Much of the effort that has been invested has been towards increasing awareness both within the Wider Caribbean Region and outside of it, regarding the potential role of the CSC in regional ocean governance. Within the Wider Caribbean this has been aimed mainly at engaging countries and partner organisations and achieving support for the CSC. Outside of the Wider Caribbean the focus has been on obtaining financial support. While some support has been forthcoming (see below) it has not been sufficient to effect the establishment of the Secretariat and to begin the substantive work of the CSC.

Throughout the biennium, the purpose and plans for the CSC have been shared in a variety of fora, including:

- The United Nations University-Fisheries Training Program/Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism/CERMES UWI stock assessment course for CARICOM fisheries officers, UWI, Cave Hill Campus, August 23rd – September 3rd, 2010.
- The 63rd Annual Meeting of the Gulf & Caribbean Fisheries Institute, San Juan,

Puerto Rico, 1-5 November 2010.

- Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism Multi-Disciplinary Workshop on the Common Fisheries Policy Georgetown, Guyana 12 – 14 April, 2011
- The 35th Scientific Conference of the Association of Marine Laboratories of the Caribbean, San José, Costa Rica, 23-27 May 2011;
- The Global Environment Facility, 6th International Waters Conference, Dubrovnik, 17-21 October 2011 ;
- The Inter-American Seas Research Consortium - Kick-Off Symposium, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, 8 December, 2011;
- The FAO Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) Fourteenth Session, Panama City, Panama, 6-9 February 2012;
- The OECS Workshop on Ocean Governance, Rodney Bay, St. Lucia, 8-9 February, 2012.
- The Conference on Sustainable Oceans and the Eradication of Poverty in the Context of the Green Economy. Principality of Monaco, 28 – 30 November 2011;
- The Ocean Sciences Meeting 2012, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, 20-24 February 2012;
- The Planet Under Pressure: New Knowledge Towards Solutions Conference, London, UK, 26-29 March 2012.

Some of these interactions were initiated by the organisation convening the meeting and reflect a growing awareness of the CSC in the region and the desire to develop partnerships with it.

The CSC and CSI were also promoted within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in two Ministerial level fora namely the 14th and 15th Meetings of the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR), the 37th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) and at the level of the Conference of Heads of Government at its 32nd Regular Meeting.

The CSC will hold a mini-symposium in 2012 with the purpose of better informing countries and international organisations about the CSC and gaining their support for its work.

These efforts to increase awareness of the role of the CSC were supported by the preparation of a Policy Perspective document entitled 'The emerging ocean governance regime in the Wider Caribbean Region' published in November 2011. This was prepared in partnership with the University of the West Indies (see below).

There were no meetings of the CSC and its bodies during the biennium. The 12th Meeting of the CSC is scheduled to be convened in 2012.

The approach to operationalise the CSC continues to be envisaged as being initiated through a first phase with a duration of four years with a focus on living marine resources of the Wider Caribbean Region, including their linkages with productive sectors such as fisheries and tourism, and with reference to the threats posed by climate change. The base amount of funding being sought from the international community to implement this start-up over a four year period is US\$1.5 M. However, despite the modest sum being sought, and the conservative approach being taken for this initial period, funds have not been available and it has not yet been possible to establish the Secretariat required in order to coordinate the proposed activities of the CSC.

Efforts to promote the CSC and acquire funding will continue in the next biennium.

The emphasis on ocean governance and marine resources at the upcoming Rio+20 Conference in June 2012 are expected to heighten awareness of the need for urgent action regarding ocean governance at the regional and global level. It is anticipated that this heightening and the gathering momentum of the UN Regular Process for the Oceans will facilitate the acquisition of the funds needed for the CSC.

International support for the CSC (Paragraphs 4 and 12)

ACS Observer Members, the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Korea have provided significant financial support for the work of the Caribbean Sea Commission in the past biennium. Turkey contributed some US\$99,990.00 to the Commission while Korea has made US\$75,725.50 available to the CSC. Both these pledges have supported the operation of the CSC and proved indispensable to its activities in regard of various projects and missions.

The inclusion of the Caribbean Sea in the Joint Caribbean-EU Strategy which is yet to be adopted by the European Union is an indication of growing recognition of the significance of marine issues in the Wider Caribbean Region.

At the Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the Caribbean Community Council of Ministers, Montego Bay, Jamaica, 3 July 2010, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC expressed that organisation's willingness to give favourable consideration to the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area.

Progress with relevant international agreements (Paragraphs 8 and 11)

The United Nations International Maritime Organization (IMO) promotes the adoption of some 15 conventions and protocols which deal with pollution prevention and marine management. On 1st May 2011, the discharge requirements for the Wider Caribbean Region Special Area under MARPOL Annex V *Regulations for the prevention of pollution by garbage from ships* took effect. This area, which includes the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, was

designated as a Special Area under MARPOL Annex V in July 1991. Most countries in the region have now given notice that adequate reception facilities are provided in most relevant ports, so that the Special Area status can now be made effective. Under Annex V, Special Areas, disposal of all garbage into the sea, including plastics, is prohibited.

In the past biennium the IMO undertook several activities in the Wider Caribbean which support the implementation of UNGA Resolution 65/155:

- Development of a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based database on maritime traffic in the Wider Caribbean;
- Sponsoring of participants from eight countries to attend the 2011 International Oil Spill Conference;
- A regional workshop on the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships (AFS Convention);
- Training on monitoring and enforcement of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention);
- A regional workshop on the implementation of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC Convention).

The activities of the UNEP Caribbean Environmental Programme have also been highly supportive of UNGA Resolution 65/155. These are carried out under the Cartagena Convention and its three protocols. All but three ACS States (Haiti, Honduras and Suriname) have become contracting parties to the Convention and the Oil Spills Protocol. The Bahamas is now the 16th State of the Wider Caribbean Region to become a Party to the SPAW Protocol. Thus of the now sixteen (16) signatories, fifteen (15) are ACS Members or Associate Members. The Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean (LBS Protocol) came into force on August 13, 2010. Two countries have become contracting parties in the past biennium making a total of 9.

No other ACS country has ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in this biennium leaving a total of 22 ratifications. Similarly there were no further ratifications of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement in the last biennium leaving the ACS total at seven ratifications.

Programmes to promote fisheries management and marine biodiversity conservation (Paragraphs 9, 10 and 12)

As previously indicated, ACS countries as well as organisations within the region have a large number of activities, many of which are at the local and national level, aimed at addressing biodiversity loss in coastal and marine ecosystems. While some of these are focused specifically on marine biodiversity, most take a broader approach to sustainability and include

aspects of livelihood and governance. A complete inventory of these is not feasible in this report, but there are some notable regional efforts which are linked to the CSC that can be highlighted.

The work of the UNEP Caribbean Environmental Programme based at the Regional Coordinating Unit in Jamaica continues to be central to progress with the sustainable use of the marine resources of the Wider Caribbean Region. Through its responsibility for oversight of the Cartagena Convention and its protocols, the CEP-RCU plays a wide ranging and critical role in biodiversity conservation, establishment of coastal and marine protected areas and reduction in marine pollution from land-based and marine sources.

Other regional organisations responsible for the sustainable use of living marine resources, such as the CARICOM Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA) Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano (OSPESCA) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States' (OECS) Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU), continue to strengthen and move towards fuller adoption and implementation of an ecosystem based approach as a WSSD target. On July 28, 2010, the CRFM Ministerial Council approved The Castries (St. Lucia) Declaration on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable fisheries. The CRFM has made progress towards finalising its Common Fisheries Policy which is to be transmitted to the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) at its 33rd Regular Meeting in July 2012 to be considered for final adoption. OSPESCA has continued to promote integrated trans-boundary governance in the Central American Region and has made good progress with lobster and shark management among other marine ecosystem issues. In February 2012, the OECS held a Consultation on Ocean Governance as part of its Sustainable Oceans Governance Programme aimed at moving its Member States towards integrated ocean governance at a trans-boundary level.

The GEF funded UNESCO-IOC-IOCARIBE and UNDP implemented initiative, the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem and Adjacent Regions (CLME) Project (2009-2013), involves 26 countries and focuses on trans-boundary living marine resource governance in the Region. This project has a suite of project components that are focused on improved ocean governance. Three of these components relate directly to supporting the CSI and the CSC. They include: developing a regional monitoring and reporting process for the oceans and the active development of a science-policy interface for the Caribbean Sea and Adjacent Areas, both of which recognise the CSC as a key regional policy body for marine affairs. The CLME Project has continued to interface with the CSC to promote more effective and sustainable ocean governance.

EU funded Future of Reefs in a Changing Environment (FORCE) Project (2010-2014, ≈ €10M) is another substantial regional activity that is also designed with the recognition that the CSC is a key regional policy body for marine affairs. This project continued in the past biennium and involves 14 European and 7 regional partners. FORCE aims to assess coral reefs at a regional level and to provide policy and management advice to countries and regional organisations. It

is structured such that its policy advice will be developed in the context of the CSC and other regional organisations.

Ecosystem-based management (EBM) is fundamental to both the sustainable use of marine resources and marine biodiversity conservation in the WCR. Significant progress towards marine EBM by 2010 was a WSSD target. The ecosystem-based approach adopted by the CLME Project is now supported by ecosystem specific Trans-boundary Diagnostic Analyses for fisheries related issue. EBM principles have been incorporated into the Common Fisheries Policy that is being developed for CARICOM Countries by the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism and are already present in the programmes and plans of the Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano (OSPESCA).

The Moored fish Aggregating Device in the Lesser Antilles (MAGDELESA) programme has been co-financed by France and the European Union and aims to develop, together with the scientific teams and fisheries managers of the Lesser Antilles and Haiti, an integrated and participative approach to the sustainable and responsible development of the blooming practice of fishing in the zone utilising Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs). To date action has been taken towards spreading systems focused on fishing and on inventories of species from Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis and Martinique.

In the area of protected marine environment support programmes, the French Fund for the Global Environment has participated in two projects. The first is the OECS Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods, (OPAAL). This is geared towards the conservation of biodiversity of global importance to the participating countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) by removing barriers to effective management of protected areas, and increasing the involvement of civil society and the private sector in the planning, management and sustainable use of these areas. The second project involves work with the UNDP on the Marine Protected Area (MPA) network in Cuba.

The Dominican Republic in association with Cuba, Jamaica (as Observer), Haiti and France and the Environment Directorate of Martinique and Guadeloupe, have promoted the Caribbean Biological Corridor Project. This is aimed at “preserving biodiversity and integrating communities into a harmonious development with Nature.”

Also in the vein of protection of marine biodiversity has been the Agoa Marine Mammal Sanctuary, which covers the French Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Caribbean Sea. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and France’s Protected Areas Agency have signed a “sister sanctuary” agreement to support the protection of endangered humpback whales that migrate more than 3000 miles annually between NOAA’s Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary off the Massachusetts Coast and the Agoa Marine Mammal Sanctuary in the Caribbean’s French Antilles. Both sanctuaries provide support for the same population of whales, which spend spring and summer in the rich feeding grounds of Stellwagen Bank before heading south to the warmer waters of the Caribbean Sea to mate and to give birth.

The GEF Funded UNEP Implemented Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Management (IWCAM) Project which focused on inland and coastal impacts on the marine environment concluded in 2011 after implementation of 16 successful pilot projects. A follow-on project to carry forward this work is being planned. The GEF funded Gulf of Honduras Project that involves Honduras, Guatemala and Belize seeks to maintain and to improve the security and efficiency of international maritime operations and to prevent marine contamination caused by ships, likewise that caused by illegal discharges in terrestrial sources that are highly dangerous and toxic for animal and human life as well as the health of marine coastal ecosystems.

In 2011, The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) completed a study on the benefits and costs of investing in municipal waste management systems in the Caribbean. The study examined two case countries, and found benefit-cost ratios of roughly 10:1 for one country in which municipal waste management systems were developed with special emphasis on the management of ship-generated wastes. The benefits were noted to be high given the high dependence of this country on the coastal and marine resources for the development of the tourism sector. This study serves to inform further policy making towards the goal of assisting Caribbean countries in their efforts to protect the Caribbean Sea from degradation.

Despite limited progress with the operationalisation of the CSC due to a lack of funds, there is a growing recognition of its key potential role as a regional ocean governance body. Increasingly, projects and programmes are being developed to support this role. The expectation is that the CSC will complement the activities of the many organisations involved in the sustainable management of oceans in the Wider Caribbean Region, by serving as a regional policy body that integrates the work of these existing bodies.

Disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, management, relief and recovery (Paragraphs 13 - 15)

Natural disasters continue to have significant social and economic impacts in ACS countries. ECLAC's sub-regional headquarters for the Caribbean based in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, is a focal organisation with regard to disaster management. Its activities include: the conduct of post-disaster assessments; capacity-building activities in addressing disasters; and the preparation of technical information on disasters.

Enabling the fulfillment of an agenda for DRR in the Caribbean requires a number of actions. Among them are formal recognition by governments and ministries of education of the importance and urgency to include DRR as a priority for the development policy of these ministries. Another is for the inclusion of DRR in school curricula, either through infusion or stand alone courses. The scaling up of DRR knowledge management, particularly research, to support decision-making is yet another area which requires attention, as both the natural and social knowledge about DRR is rapidly expanding.

ECLAC conducted economic assessments of the impact of climate change on key vulnerable sectors of several Caribbean countries projected to 2050. Of particular importance to the resolution is the analysis of the coastal and marine sector in the British Virgin Islands and Saint Kitts and Nevis. These assessments provided quantitative information on the costs of the impact of climate change and also attached a monetary value to the various adaptation and mitigation options that were put forward. This information is important in informing strategies to reduce energy use and therefore carbon dioxide emissions that are particularly harmful to marine species, specifically, coral reefs.

Development of human resource capacity (Paragraph 16)

There is a full spectrum of initiatives in the Wider Caribbean Region which contribute to building capacity for sustainable development at many levels from local to regional. These include training for persons from community-based organisations, national governments and regional organisations. This training takes the form of short courses as well as long-term programmes leading to certification. Capacity building is offered by NGOs, governments, tertiary level institutions and regional organisations throughout the region, often in partnership with extra-regional partners and donors. Some regional examples of short-term training include: Training of trainers for marine protected area (MPA) management offered by the Caribbean MPA Management network (CaMPAM); capacity building taking place under the ACP Fish II Program; and Socio-economic Monitoring by Caribbean Challenge MPA Managers training (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funded project). See also the training offered by the IMO (above).

A key point regarding building capacity for regional ocean governance is that it is a multifaceted endeavour. The networking approach that is being developed for the operation of the CSC is being designed to facilitate that approach to capacity building. While training is an essential aspect, capacity building goes far beyond training. Much of what needs to be learned for ocean governance will be best achieved in a ‘learning by doing’ mode. The CSC model is aimed at learning while implementing alongside partners and building capacity together. This builds adaptive capacity and resilience. Therefore what is critically needed to make progress with this comprehensive view of building capacity is support to move forward with the operationalisation of the CSC.

Legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development (Paragraph 18)

The financial implications for the operationalisation of the CSC must be considered at two levels: (1) the operation of the Secretariat, and (2) strengthening capacity of ACS Member Countries and partner organisations to play their role in coastal and ocean governance as conceived at the Expert Consultation. A preliminary estimate of the cost of establishing and operating the Secretariat for the first four-year phase addressing living marine resources only is in the order of US\$1.5 M. This is a minimum estimate of the funds required to get started.

The cost implications of strengthening the capacity of ACS Member Countries and partner organisations to play their role in coastal and ocean governance are far reaching in terms of acquisition of data and information, analysis and provision of advice and implementation of decisions. However, the CSC is not conceived as being responsible for implementing these activities. As emphasised at the Expert Consultation, implementation would largely be the responsibility of partner organisations. The role of the CSC would be in coordination and cross cutting integration. Its role could extend to identifying needs at a regional level and facilitating access to funding by organisations. It would network organisations when their interaction would add value to their individual activities. As such, the CSC is conceived as remaining a small and lean entity with a very specific integrating role at the regional policy level.

One important financial aspect of this resolution is the need for a full appreciation of the value of coastal and ocean resources of the WCR both in terms of their use value as well as their non-use value, which supports tourism and the recreational and cultural activities of local populations. Understanding and accounting for this value is seen as an important component in elaborating the financial implications. A review of this work in the region carried out by the CLME Project indicates that most work has been directed at coral reefs, especially the benefits of Marine Protected Areas, but that little effort has been spent on the value of coral reefs as coastal defense. The value of other ecosystems (continental shelf, pelagic) has received little or no attention.

Work on defining the legal implications of the resolution is expected to be taken up once the Secretariat is established and the Legal Sub-Commission becomes fully active.