



UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(64th Session)

STATEMENT

by

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ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY
(CARICOM)

at the

**18th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development,
Economic and Social Council**

3 May, 2010

Please check against deliveryDistinguished Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM wishes to associate itself with the statements made by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). We wish to join others in congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to guide the work of the Commission at its 18th Session.

This 18th session of the Commission is of particular significance for CARICOM as it will serve as the Preparatory Committee for the high-level review of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI). The BPOA and MSI remain the essential blueprints for addressing the sustainable development needs of SIDS and their implementation remains a high priority for CARICOM. Unfortunately we are not convinced that our development partners attach the same degree of priority to the implementation of their commitments under the BPOA and MSI given our experience over the past decade and a half.

As the outcomes of the regional meetings and the report of the Secretary General clearly illustrate, SIDS have made good progress at the national and regional levels in integrating and operationalizing many elements of the BPOA and MSI. However plans and strategies are useless without the means to implement them and it is only in partnership with the international community that we can find meaningful solutions. We therefore invite all members of the international community to join with us as we embark on a new era of cooperation in addressing the sustainable development of SIDS - one of renewed responsibility, strengthened commitment, deeper partnership and more effective implementation.

Despite the notable progress made by CARICOM in the development of national and regional institutional and policy frameworks for sustainable development, the continuing global economic and financial crisis, the global food and energy crises, the negative impacts of climate change, frequent and increasingly intense natural disasters and extreme weather events, the uneven and uncertain pace of our full insertion into global trade and development processes, and persistent structural vulnerabilities, all threaten to undermine decades of development.

The upcoming Review must therefore provide tangible solutions to these problems. CARICOM is not prepared to engage in an exercise that simply reaffirms the status quo and focuses solely on a negotiating text. We expect our development partners to come to table with concrete plans on how they will fulfill their commitments on finance, technology, capacity building and on ensuring a conducive international environment which supports the development efforts of SIDS.

For example, most Caribbean SIDS are categorized as middle income countries based on their level of per capita income, which therefore precludes them from accessing concessionary financing. They are therefore dependent on expensive financing from the international financial institutions, exacerbating already unsustainable levels of foreign debts and thus increasing their vulnerability. If this matter is not urgently addressed by the international community CARICOM SIDS will not be able to meet their sustainable development goals.

Permit me to address some of the issues under consideration during this thematic cycle. On waste management and chemicals, CARICOM remains committed to the efficient management of waste. Most CARICOM member states have established solid waste entities, increased waste collection, converted dumps into sanitary landfills and have had some success in the implementation of MARPOL and other relevant conventions. Recycling has been constrained by economies of scale, and a regional approach to recycling should be considered.

Regional mechanisms to protect the oceans and coastal areas from ship-generated wastes, oil spills and the transboundary movement of toxic and hazardous material must be developed, taking into account need to implement the international maritime instruments relating thereto.

There is a need to develop regional and national capacity to manage the generation and disposal of hazardous and special waste in SIDS. In this regard we call on the international community to support SIDS in their efforts to:

- 1 Promote information sharing;
- 2 Establish indicators and implement a system of monitoring at the national level;
- 3 Undertake an evaluation of existing waste management systems in order to identify more SIDS-appropriate systems and models and where necessary seek international assistance to develop SIDS-appropriate systems for recycling, waste minimisation and treatment, reuse and management;
- 4 Mobilize resources;
- 5 Raise public awareness including the promotion and implementation of community based management programmes

The issue of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns is of particular importance to the region. Given their small markets, SIDS could potentially achieve comparative advantage in trade if proper national or regional frameworks for SCP are put in place to ensure cleaner production and resource efficiency. As the 10 year framework for SCP is to be launched in 2012, the region needs to advance its efforts for sustainable waste management, pollution control, life cycle analysis and consumer education.

CARICOM is highly dependent on air and maritime transport as they represent the only forms of international transport available to island states. Factors related to our small size constrain our ability to reap economies of scale and therefore makes the cost of air and maritime transport costly compared to other countries. This significantly impacts on our international competitiveness and food security. We also experience constraints in our productive sectors due to inadequate international and domestic transport facilities and services. In this context, development partners must provide the necessary support, both financial and technical, for the development and management of the airports and ports in SIDS, including assistance in meeting the international requirements imposed as a consequence of new security issues. There is also a further need for consideration of improved land and sea transport policies for SIDS. International and regional organizations must support these activities.

Our development partners must also be sensitive to the impact of their domestic measures on sectors critical to our economic survival. The imposition by an Air Passenger Duty by one of our major tourism centers serves as a prime example. Our Leaders recently reiterated their collective concern over the deleterious effect of the Air Passenger Duty on tourism, the Community's most important economic sector, and its related service industries, and pointed out that the 'band' in which CARICOM Member States had been placed was unfair, discriminatory and placed the region at a competitive disadvantage.

Distinguished Chair,

You can be assured that CARICOM will continue to engage constructively in this session.