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Programme and the Seventh Meeting of the
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Protection and Development of the Marine
Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region

Montego Bay, Jamaica, 28 September to 2 October 2004

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE MONITORING
COMMITTEE AND PRESIDENT OF THE BUREAU OF CONTRACTING
PARTIES**

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Introduction

This report covers the period 2002-2004 (up to September 2004) since the Tenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Seventh Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Montego Bay, 7 – 11 May 2002). The Tenth Intergovernmental Meeting and Seventh Contracting Parties Meeting elected the members of the Bureau of Contracting Parties as follows: Panama (President), St. Lucia (First Vice-Chairperson), France (Second Vice-Chairperson), Cuba (Third Vice-Chairperson) and the United Kingdom (Rapporteur).

As the President of the Bureau of Contracting Parties and Chairman of the Monitoring Committee for this past biennium, I had the privilege of presiding over the Tenth Intergovernmental and Contracting Parties Meetings in May 2002. Although at this Meeting, I am passing on the Presidency to another, I take this opportunity to highlight a few of the accomplishments of the Programme over the past biennium, and to offer some observations for the 2004-2005 biennium.

As we review the documents for this Meeting, we will agree that the Programme has made considerable progress with project fundraising and delivery, despite the limited resources of the secretariat (only two Programme Officers and the Coordinator were present for 16 months of the period under review), and the irregular contributions from most governments to the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF). It is important to note, however, the important contributions made in the biennium to the CTF by the Governments of France and the USA, as well as the extraordinary contributions from these governments and the Government of Sweden for specific projects which have greatly assisted with Programme delivery.

On this occasion, I would also like to underscore international events and initiatives which have taken place since our last Meetings, with the involvement and support of our respective CEP governments, which must be taken into consideration as we develop the Workplan for the upcoming biennium, and finalize the Strategy for the Programme for the next five years. In this regard, we must note the important outcomes of the WSSD and SIDS Action Plan review processes.

Legal Status

The legal framework of the CEP continues to advance as some governments have completed or initiated the process of ratifications/accessions to the Convention and its Protocols. While there are still seven governments and the European Union which have not yet ratified the Convention, we understand the Governments of Honduras and Nicaragua have initiated the process.

During the 2002-2003 biennium, two additional governments became Contracting Parties the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA Protocol): the Governments of Barbados and the USA respectively. Additionally, the Government of Guatemala advanced in the process of ratification of the SPA Protocol.

The Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities was ratified by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Government of Panama, while the Governments of the USA and France have initiated the ratification process.

Understandably, we would like to see all member governments participate in the Convention and its Protocols as Contracting Parties, so I urge governments to work toward this objective. The Convention and its Protocols are key for the economic sustainability of the Wider Caribbean Region, given the specific linkages it provides between the environment, health and development.

Financial Status

As noted above, contributions to the Caribbean Trust Fund have not improved during the biennium and in fact, some countries which had maintained their payments up-to-date in the past, are now in arrears. Additionally, there are still a number of member countries who have never made payments, and only about 1/3 of the countries are up-to-date with their contributions. However, the contributions from the Governments of France and the USA to the CTF have assisted with the basic core costs of the secretariat and these meetings.

With extraordinary contributions and support received from the Government of Nicaragua, the secretariat was able to convene the Second Meeting of the Interim Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee of the LBS Protocol (Managua, 12-16 May 2003) and from the Governments of the Netherlands Antilles and the USA, for the Second Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee for the SPA Protocol (Curaçao, 3-6 June 2003).

Additional financial support received from the Government of France and through the Regional Activity Center (RAC) for SPA, enabled the secretariat to convene in the SPA workshop on the guidelines for protected area listing May 2004, as well as implement other planned activities of the sub-programme.

An important achievement during the biennium was also the Memorandum of Cooperation negotiated in 2003 by the secretariat with SIDA of the Government of Sweden, for the next four years for approximately US \$1 million. This includes support to core costs and two Junior Programme Officers (JPOs) for the SPA and LBS Programmes respectively, as well as funding for specific activities of the sub-programmes.

In regard to the future of the Caribbean Trust Fund, I encourage all CEP member governments to keep their contributions current and their arrears paid, as this is the only way to maintain viable a Programme, which is not only benefiting the region as a whole, but our individual countries,

also. It is ironic that the secretariat has been resourceful and proactive in raising funds for its activities, but that the level of resources needed to maintain the basic operations of the secretariat is hardly being met. I encourage the secretariat to continue their work to bring the issue of contributions and the payment of arrears to the governments' attention at the highest level.

Development of projects

The secretariat has been actively involved in the development of a portfolio of different projects within the three sub-programmes: AMEP, SPAW and CEPNET. While they have also implemented activities in the area of Education, Training and Awareness (ETA), the lack of funding for a Programme Officer in this area continues to hinder full implementation.

I would like to recognize funding support for the 2002-2003 workplan from the Global Environment Facility, the UN Foundation, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Governments of the France and the USA, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), among others.

An outstanding accomplishment was the award of US \$12 million in May 2004, from the GEF for the CEP project on Integrated Management of Coastal Areas and Watersheds in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States, to be implemented in coordination with CEHI. This is a comprehensive project, unique to the region, which will be of great assistance to the CEP countries. The project brief for Reducing Pesticide Run-off to the Caribbean Sea was approved by GEF for US \$4.5 million, but co-funding and letters of commitment from the participating countries have not been forthcoming and this is a requirement for funding to be released from the GEF. I would like to encourage those countries to address this requirement as soon as possible to avoid losing the funding for this project.

Rehabilitation of coastal areas and coastal planning activities are underway with funding from the GEF and from the Government of Sweden, and during the meeting we will receive an update.

In the area of biodiversity, the secretariat successfully negotiated a grant for US \$3 million from USAID and the UN Foundation under the framework of ICRAN, for the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef. In addition to governments, this alliance will involve several key players from that sub region, in particular the World Bank/GEF/MBRS and PROARCA projects, the CCAD, and NGOs who will be working closely and who will seek to actively involve the private sector. Attention has also been given to the strengthening of marine parks and protected areas, capacity building and the monitoring and evaluation of coral reefs. During this meeting a special event is planned to highlight the results of one of these activities, which assesses the land-based threats to coral reefs in the Wider Caribbean Region.

The secretariat, member governments and relevant organisations were involved in the Type II initiative launched at WSSD in 2003, known as White Water to Blue Water, which seeks to encourage coordination, synergies and partnerships among all those participating and interested in the sustainable development of the Wider Caribbean Region. WW2BW is currently promoting partnerships, which are expected to generate projects and activities for the region.

The CEPNET Sub-programme is contributing with the maintenance of the website for WW2BW partnerships which aims at facilitating their development by creating a forum and a medium for exchange of information and experiences. CEPNET is also supporting other CEP programmes with the design, development and maintenance of databases and by stimulating better communications and exchanges between governments, for example supporting SPAW with the CaMPAM database and AMEP with the GPA Clearinghouse for the National Programmes of Action.

Governance

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the Basel Convention for cooperation on the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, and the secretariat participated in the Global Meeting of the UNEP Regional Seas Conventions where the new Strategy for the Regional Seas was discussed. Several activities were co-ordinated with the Global Programme of Action (GPA), in particular with regard to the National Programmes of Action (NPAs). I had the privilege of participating in the Regional Consultative Meeting on the GPA Programme of Work in the Wider Caribbean, held in Colón, Panama, in February 2004.

A number of activities were undertaken in collaboration and/or coordination with different organisations, in particular the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI), Escuela Agricultura de la Región Tropical Humeda (EARTH College), International Fund for the Animal Welfare (IFAW), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST), Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System Project (MBRS), World Resources Institute (WRI), Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and ReefCheck, to name a few.

Co-ordination with other UNEP and UN agencies such as UNDP, IOCARIBE, GIWA, ROLAC, UNEP-Division of Technology, Industry and Environment, UNEP-World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), and GOOS (Global Ocean observing system) has also taken place.

We have added two new CEP Regional Activity Centres for land-based sources of marine pollution in Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago, which became operational in 2003 through Memoranda of Understanding signed with the respective governments. During the biennium, and through allocations of additional resources and new staff from the Government of France, we also saw the re-activation of the Regional Activity Centre for SPAW in Guadeloupe, which has been extremely supportive of the SPAW Programme and the secretariat in general.

Conclusion

Challenges lie ahead of us for the next biennium and beyond. As I pass on the leadership of the CEP to the newly elected President, I would like to call your attention to a number of key issues:

1. The issue of the Rules of Procedure is overdue and must be addressed. Though this may seem bureaucratic to some, as our governing structure continues to grow and develop as more countries ratify, new protocols enter into force and new Regional Activity Centres are established, we must be clear about the linkages of all these separate entities. As the greater global arena struggles with the issue of international environmental governance, we too must deal with it at the regional level. It is to our collective advantage to have these bodies clearly defined.
2. Member governments should be active partners in the development and implementation of the Programme (i.e. participation throughout the year, not just at meetings). This is particularly true for the Bureau of Contracting Parties and the Monitoring Committee as they are elected by the full CEP membership to represent them and guide the secretariat in the interim years between the Intergovernmental Meetings.
3. We must continue to sharpen CEP activities to focus on the highest priority areas within the scope of its mandate, and continue to look toward national implementation of the Convention and Protocols and not overextend the Programme.
4. We must also recognize global environmental developments and initiatives in which our governments are actively involved, such as the WSSD and SIDS processes, and ensure that appropriate linkages are established with CEP, through both our national and regional agendas, and under the framework of the new Strategy for CEP for 2005-2009.
5. The financial situation of the Caribbean Trust Fund must be addressed decisively and responsibly by all member governments as the sustainability of the Programme is at stake without the regular contributions to cover the basic costs of operations and management.
6. In order to have a CEP that is fully operational, it must have the full political, programmatic and financial support of Member Governments so that it can fulfil its obligations with the governments. I urge you to continue to strengthen your support.

CEP was established to provide a mechanism whereby the diverse States and Territories of the region could collectively address the protection and development of the marine and coastal resources of the Wider Caribbean, the base for the economic development of the region. The achievement of this goal is dependent upon the commitment of the Governments to provide support to UNEP-CAR/RCU as the working secretariat of the Cartagena Convention. In the Cartagena Convention we have a unique regional tool for addressing the deteriorating health of our marine environment. We need to commit ourselves to support the Caribbean Environment Programme if we want to fulfill the objective set out by us in the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

Thank you for your support over the last biennium and all the best to the new President.