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Fourth Meeting of the Interim Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee (ISTAC) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) in the Wider Caribbean

Petén, Guatemala, 30 October to 1 November 2007

REPORT OF THE MEETING



*Promoting regional co-operation for the protection and development
of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region*

ACRONYMS

AMEP.....	Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution
BMP/SGP.....	Small Grants project for the application of Best Management Practices in Agricultural Production
CAR/RCU.....	Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit
CATHALAC.....	Water Centre for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean
CEHI.....	Caribbean Environmental Health Institute
CEP.....	Caribbean Environment Programme
CIGEA.....	Environment, Management and Information Centre
Cimab.....	Centro de Ingeniería y Manejo Ambiental de Bahías y Costas
COP.....	Contracting Parties
CWWA.....	Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association
CETA.....	Communication, Education, Training and Awareness
EARTH.....	EARTH University
GEF.....	Global Environment Facility
GIS.....	Geographic information systems
GOOS.....	Global Oceanographic Observing System
GPA.....	Global Programme of Action
IAEA.....	International Atomic Energy Agency
IGM.....	Intergovernmental Meeting
INVEMAR.....	Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras
IOC.....	International Oceanographic Commission
ISTAC.....	Interim Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
IWCAM.....	Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Management
LBS.....	Land-based Sources and Activities
MARPOL.....	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MoU.....	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO.....	Non-Governmental Organization
NOAA.....	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPA.....	National Programme of Action
OECS.....	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PAHO.....	Pan American Health Organization
RACs.....	Regional Activity Centres
RAN.....	Regional Activity Network
REMPEITC...	Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre

REPCar	Reducing Pesticides Run-off to the Caribbean Sea
ROLAC.....	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
SEMARNAT...	Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
SERVIR.....	Regional Meso-American Monitoring and Visualization System
SIDA.....	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIDS.....	Small Islands Developing States
SPAW.....	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
UNEP.....	United Nations Environment Programme
US EPA.....	United States Environmental Protection Agency
WCR.....	Wider Caribbean Region
WHO.....	World Health Organization
WTO.....	World Tourism Organization
WW2BW.....	White Water to Blue Water

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Introduction

1. Decision No. 29 (b) of the Ninth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) and the Sixth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Kingston, Jamaica, 14-18 February 2000) agreed to bring into existence an Ad Hoc Group of Government-designated Experts to begin to function as an Interim Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (ISTAC) on Land-based Sources and Activities (LBS) and Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) activities as they relate to the LBS Protocol, until it enters into force.
2. In accordance with the Workplan and Budget for 2006-2007, endorsed by the Twelfth Intergovernmental Meeting, the Fourth ISTAC Meeting was held from 30 October to 1st November, 2007 in Petén, Guatemala with the following objectives:
 - Evaluate the projects and activities implemented by the Secretariat and the LBS Regional Activity Centres (RACs) within the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) sub-programme during the period 2006-2007;
 - Review the progress made in the implementation of the Recommendations of the Third LBS ISTAC Meeting and the relevant Decisions of the Twelfth Intergovernmental Meeting and Ninth Meeting of the Contracting Parties;
 - Review the status of ratification and/or implementation of the LBS Protocol in member countries;
 - Develop the AMEP Workplan and Budget for the 2008-2009 Biennium for subsequent submission to, and approval by, the Thirteenth Intergovernmental Meeting in 2008;
 - Identify partner agencies and related projects that will facilitate more effective implementation of the 2008-2009 Workplan; and
 - Identify new thematic areas for further project development as part of the AMEP Workplan.
3. The experts invited to the Meeting were nominated by the National Focal Points of the Caribbean Environment Programme. Additionally, representatives of international, regional, intergovernmental, and non-governmental

organizations were invited to attend the Meeting as Observers.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

4. The Meeting began on Tuesday, 30 October 2007 at 9:00 a.m. Seated at the head table for the opening of the Meeting were Mr. Christopher Corbin, Programme Officer of the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP), Mr. Julio Calderon, Coordinator of the Natural Resources Unit at the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP-ROLAC) and the Honorable Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment of Guatemala, Mr. Juan Mario Dary Fuentes.
5. The Chairperson of the opening ceremony, Ms. Escarlet Minera, Public Relations Officer for the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala, welcomed the participants to the Meeting. The first speaker, Mr. Julio Calderón noted the importance of this encounter and underscored the fact that the issue of marine pollution could not be treated as an isolated problem but as one requiring intersectorial agendas. He informed the Meeting that the issue of marine pollution would be discussed at the upcoming Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. He referred to the very recent launch of the Fourth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-4) report, which includes global indicators, and encouraged all countries to review these closely.
6. The Programme Officer responsible for the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) sub-programme, Mr. Christopher Corbin welcomed participants to the Fourth Interim Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (ISTAC) Meeting for the Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution (LBS) Protocol. He apologized on behalf of the Coordinator of the Caribbean Environment Programme, Mr. Nelson Andrade Colmenares, who was unavoidably absent from the Meeting due to a request from the new Executive Director of UNEP for him to participate in a meeting of Regional Seas Coordinators. Mr. Corbin indicated that it was Mr. Andrade's wish for a totally successful Meeting. He noted that despite challenges in funding and human resources at the Secretariat, the AMEP sub-programme had continued to grow as a result of the significant support and cooperation from governments, organizations, communities, civil society and donors at the national, regional and international levels. However, he recognized that donor funding was becoming more difficult to access

and, while thanking those Governments which had contributed to the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) during the biennium, he encouraged other governments to endeavour to offset their outstanding arrears and to keep their annual payments up to date, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the programme.

7. Mr. Corbin thanked the Government of Guatemala not only for hosting the 4th LBS ISTAC Meeting but also for its tremendous direct financial support to cover the overall cost of the meeting as a means of responding to its arrears. The AMEP Programme Officer highlighted some of the major achievements of the AMEP sub-programme making specific reference to the two regional projects for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Central America funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) that were in full implementation.
8. He underscored one of the most significant achievements during the last biennium which was the formal accession to the LBS Protocol by the Government of France and congratulated that Government for its leadership in this regard. Mr. Corbin noted that many governments, with support from the Secretariat and the LBS Regional Activity Centres, had successfully convened national promotional workshops and consultations. He expressed the hope that these efforts, along with strong verbal commitment for ratification and/or accession to the LBS Protocol would lead to an increased number of ratifications and/or accessions during the upcoming biennium.
9. The AMEP Programme Officer concluded by reminding all participants, that while the focus of this Meeting was on projects related specifically to AMEP and the LBS Protocol, future regional efforts must focus on a more integrated approach to meeting the obligations of the Cartagena Convention and all three Protocols – Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA), Oil Spills and LBS - and to use these and other related multilateral agreements as tools towards the achievement of sustainable development in the Wider Caribbean Region.
10. The Honorable Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment of Guatemala greeted the representatives of UNEP-ROLAC, UNEP-CEP and all participants. He stressed the importance that the Government of Guatemala placed on cultural and natural resources for the well-being of all inhabitants. He further reminded the Meeting that climate change continued to be a challenge for all countries of the Wider Caribbean Region and that all were vulnerable. He indicated that the output of the Meeting would greatly benefit the countries at the Meeting in Bali on the Kyoto Protocol in December. The full

intervention by the Minister is attached as Annex V to this report.

11. Mr. Corbin thanked the Hon. Minister and Mr. Calderón for their opening remarks which, he indicated, had set the stage for the meeting. He noted that the near 100% country representation indicated the commitment of the region to the programme and to the work of the Secretariat. The Meeting was opened at 9.45 am.

Agenda item 2: Election of Officers

12. The Meeting elected:
 - Chairperson Jose Luis Menendez, (Guatemala) and Eugenia Castro (Guatemala)
 - 1st Vice Chair: Carolina Demartini (France)
 - 2nd Vice Chair: Carlos Jose de Freitas Otamendi (Venezuela)
 - 3rd Vice Chair: Bernard Link (USA)
 - Rapporteur: Paulette Kolbusch (Jamaica)

Agenda item 3: Organization of the Meeting

13. The Chairperson outlined the procedures for the conduct of the meeting.

(a) Rules of procedure

14. The rules of procedure of the Governing Council for UNEP (UNEP/GC/3/Rev.3) were applied *mutatis mutandis*.

(b) Organization of the work

15. English, French and Spanish were the working languages of the Meeting. Simultaneous interpretation in these languages was provided for the Meeting. The working documents of the Meeting were available in all the working languages.
16. The Secretariat convened the Meeting in plenary sessions, with the assistance of working groups.

Agenda item 4: Adoption of the Agenda

17. The Agenda of the Meeting was adopted as proposed by the Secretariat in document UNEP (DEPI)/CAR WG.30/1 with a change in the timing for the presentation by the representative from Crop Life Latin on empty discarded pesticide containers. This presentation immediately preceded the presentation by the Secretariat on the Status Report for 2006/2007.

Agenda item 5: Review of project activities for the 2006/2007 Biennium including those of the LBS Regional Activity Centres (RACs)

(a) Review of Status of Ratification and Accession to the Cartagena Convention and LBS Protocol

18. Firstly, the Government of Colombia greeted the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention and the delegates from the member countries, as well as thanked the Government of Guatemala for hosting the 4th LBS/ISTAC Meeting of the LBS Protocol.
19. In addition, in its capacity as depository for the Convention and its Protocols made reference to the fifth agenda item informing the meeting that to date 27 countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention, leaving only five (5) countries and the European Community to ratify said instrument.
20. With regards to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean Region (LBS Protocol), to date six (6) countries have signed and three (3) ratified with France being the latest to ratify and deposited its instrument on 4 May 2007.
21. All member Governments were invited to comment briefly on their progress towards ratification or accession in their respective countries. The representative of the United States of America informed the Meeting that the request for consent and ratification had been sent to Congress in February 2007 and that the Protocol would be implemented with the current statutory regulations. The Government of France confirmed that they had ratified the Protocol on April 26, 2007 and expressed the hope that additional countries would follow in order for the Protocol to enter into force. The representative of the Government of Belize indicated that his country was currently drafting effluent and hazardous waste regulations in order to be in a better position for the ratification, which they hoped would be in place by March 2008. Several countries indicated that they were in the process of reviewing their respective legislations in preparation for ratification. However, due to the lengthy processes, a clear timeline could not be indicated. Notwithstanding, promotional and sensitization activities had been implemented or were being planned in the Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, Cuba, Jamaica, Venezuela, and Barbados (Colombia will provide information on list of countries).
22. The Government of Guatemala indicated that while that country had not yet ratified the Protocol, several actions had been carried out in relation to its implementation, three of which included the adoption of regulations for the discharge of wastewater, a National Plan of Action adopted in 2006, and the integrated management of the Polochic River Basin. Saint Lucia indicated that a memo was currently being presented to Cabinet regarding the ratification of the Protocol, following awareness-raising activities in the form of LBS consultations. The delegate of Honduras reiterated its commitment to ratifying the Convention and the LBS Protocol but highlighted the need to promote the two agreements. The Meeting was informed that budgetary allowances for contributions to the Caribbean Trust Fund had been requested for 2008 in order to meet these commitments. The Government of Jamaica was currently evaluating its status in relation to ratification and finalizing regulations and interventions to reduce water pollution while Venezuela informed the meeting that it has national water legislation had completed an inventory of the water quality in preparation for ratification of the Protocol..
23. It was highlighted that the signing of the Protocol by six countries, namely Colombia, Costa Rica, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, indicated their intention to ratify and formally accede to this instrument. In thanking the countries, the Chairman recognized the lengthy processes involved, depending on the institutional structure of each country. However, due to the interdependence of the countries of the region, he urged them to renew their efforts to implement the Protocol, thereby sending a clear signal to the rest of the world of the intention of the WCR to protect the marine environment.
24. The Chairman invited Dr. Dirk Epp from CropLife to make his presentation and stressed the importance of establishing linkages with the private sector, highlighting the ongoing support by CropLife to the GEF Project on Reducing Pesticide Run Off in Central America. Dr. Epp, coordinator of CropLife Latin America's empty agricultural pesticides container management programme entitled "Clean Countryside", began his presentation by explaining the CropLife LA structure within CropLife international, as well as the relationship with the national associations which constitute CropLife LA. CropLife LA represents companies involved in technological development as well as production of agro-chemical supplies for the agricultural sector. Dr. Epp remarked on the coordination of the programme with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and their code of conduct on pesticides. He stated that the Clean Countryside programme included all the countries in Latin America. He described the activities

related to problem detection, as well as funding and logistics, and made special reference to training needs and the production of technical manuals on the programme. He also cited container management in conjunction with other agencies, and on working in harmony with national regulations.

25. Dr. Epp provided technical details regarding waste management components of the programme: transforming plastic into new materials; incineration in high-temperature ovens; combustion to generate thermal energy; container re-use; recycling of metal products, and landfill waste management. Transformation is currently the route most recommended by CropLife, thereby generating new industrial products. He mentioned triple washing as a key component for all management options.
26. The representative of Guatemala remarked on including both the Ministries of the Environment and of Agriculture. Dr. Epp replied that, in addition to these ministries, the programme worked closely with the ministries of Health, Labor and Transportation. In the case of Guatemala in particular, work was carried out in conjunction with the solid waste management programme of the Comisión Centroamericana del Ambiente y Desarrollo (CCAD). For the benefit of the Venezuelan representative, Dr. Epp pointed out that the programme dealt only with containers for phyto-sanitary products but did not handle veterinary product packaging since those required totally different process. He also clarified the point that the maximum attainable recycling collection rate for Latin America was 80% of packaging material and that the wash water was combined in the mixture when it is applied. In terms of agricultural products, triple washing was beneficial for the environment, as well as for the economy.
27. Responding to a remark from the representative of Cuba, Dr. Epp mentioned that the container recycling programme was not yet self-sustainable and that the deficit was covered by the industry. For the benefit of the representative of the Cayman Islands, he also pointed out that shredding packaging material was done following the triple wash process. This enabled the product to be transported as non-hazardous material. This practice has already been approved by several countries in the region.

(b) Review of Activities

28. The AMEP Programme Officer presented the major achievements of the AMEP sub-programme during the 2006-2007 biennium as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/INF.3. It was indicated that, in

addition to the Protocol on the Control of Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities, the Programme also coordinates the Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills and the work of the LBS Regional Activity Centres –(RACs), and supports other global conventions and initiatives.

29. The Programme Officer reported that in an effort to present a more integrated summary of the vast number of projects and activities implemented under AMEP, several thematic areas had been chosen as the framework for the presentation. These included Programme Coordination, National Programmes of Action, Environmental Assessment and Monitoring, Integrated Waste Management, Sewage and Wastewater Management, and Integrated Watershed Management. The respective GEF Regional Project Managers and Directors of the LBS RACs would also provide highlights of their activities over the biennium. The presentation concluded with an analysis of the expenditure, challenges in implementation and recommendations for the future.
30. Under Programme Coordination, the Programme Officer highlighted the work of the Secretariat in promotion and awareness, partnership development, resource mobilization, and project development and implementation. He outlined the main actions taken in response to the Decisions of the Twelfth Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) held in Jamaica in 2006 and the Recommendations of the Third LBS/ISTAC held in Mexico in 2005. The expanded role of the LBS RACs was also provided. The AMEP PO reiterated the importance of the support provided from the Sida funded Junior Professional Officer (JPO) located at the RAC-Cimab (Centro de Ingenieria y Manejo de Bahias y Costas) in Cuba and the AMEP Project Assistant who was funded through the GEF IWCAM Project and was based at the Secretariat in Kingston, Jamaica.
31. The AMEP Programme Officer noted the large number of national and regional workshops conducted during the biennium that had enabled significant capacity building as well as greater awareness of the AMEP sub-programme and the LBS Protocol. He emphasized that many new collaborative relationships had been developed and/or strengthened including cooperation with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on Marine Litter and Ballast Water, Ocean Conservancy and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on the development of the Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter and with the International Atomic and Energy Agency (IAEA) for coastal and marine pollution monitoring.

32. The AMEP Programme Officer provided an overview of the expenditure, source of funding and rate of draw down for AMEP projects and activities. He pointed out that despite the slow start to the two GEF Projects, the rate of project implementation was quite high. He emphasized that over 80% of the total budget for AMEP went directly toward programme and project activities.
33. He concluded by highlighting some of the challenges facing the AMEP Programme including limited human resources at the Secretariat, reduced funding from the Trust Fund for AMEP projects and activities, impacts on the programme from internal institutional changes within UNEP and within the RAC-IMA (Institute of Marine Affairs) based in Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Corbin also pointed to the limited absorptive capacity at the national level in some countries which contributed to the slow rate of project implementation.
34. The AMEP Programme Officer recommended that the Secretariat continue to more actively engage focal points in project development, implementation and evaluation. He further recommended that the projects being implemented under AMEP be better integrated at the national level and that linkages be established with relevant ongoing activities. He urged focal points to continue to strengthen their networking and relationships with other ministries within their respective countries and to be seen as spokespersons for the LBS Protocol and for CEP in general.
35. The Chair thanked Mr. Corbin and invited to the podium the Project Manager of the GEF Reducing Pesticide Run Off to the Caribbean Sea (GEF-REPCar) Project Dr. Alexandre Cooman. Dr. Cooman summarized the project objective and finances as well as the main activities with their outcomes and actual status of implementation. He explained that the GEF-REPCar Project was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and executed by the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit of the United Nations Environment Programme's Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (UNEP-CAR/RCU) in collaboration with the Ministries of Environment of Colombia, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. He noted that the main objective of REPCar was to protect the marine environment of Caribbean region, implementing comprehensive management practices and specific measures to control the use and application of pesticides in the agricultural sector. He indicated that the total budget of the project was nearly US\$ 10 million: US\$ 4.295 million was provided by the GEF, US\$ 5.185 million was the co-financing of the participating countries (in cash and in kind), and US\$ 440,000 was provided by other partners. CropLife financially supported the REPCar project with a contribution of US\$ 100,000 in cash.
36. He stressed that demonstration projects on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) were the core activities of the REPCar project. The demo projects would develop and validate a set of guidelines for the implementation of GAP and would result in the acceptance by farmers of the convenience of implementing these new practices. Currently the countries were selecting the target crops towards which the demo project would be directed. Subsequently, protocols would be developed and 12 demonstration projects would be implemented by growers, in association with specialized agricultural institutions. Based on the acquired experience, a train-the-trainers and farmer-training program would be established.
37. A coastal monitoring program would be implemented by specialized national marine and environmental research institutes: the Centro para la Investigaciones en Recursos Acuáticos (CIRA) in Nicaragua; the Centro de Investigación en Contaminación Ambiental - Centro de Investigación en Ciencias del Mar y Limnología (CIMAR-CICA) in Costa Rica and the Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras (INVEMAR) from Colombia. This programme would establish a baseline on pesticides residues in coastal areas while the participating institutes were working on the protocols. Training and equipment would be needed to increase the capacity of the participating laboratories. As part of the monitoring program, Geographic Information System (GIS) databases would be established with a user-friendly interface to make the data available via the internet.
38. A group of activities would contribute to the institutionalization of improved pesticides management and the strengthening of the capacity for reduced pesticides run-offs. Regulatory frameworks would be reviewed, considering the need for enforcement and to eliminate incentives for the use of pesticides. Support would be given to national crop certification programmes. Information would be disseminated towards the agricultural sector and the public in general.
39. He noted that during the initial phase of the project, emphasis had been placed on project coordination. It is expected that in the future, regional and national frameworks will be consolidated for the assessment and management of agricultural pollution. He concluded by indicating that while regional coordination had been established, more ownership and commitment at the national level were needed to foster the participation of

- stakeholders and to enhance the process of project implementation.
40. The Regional Project Manager for the GEF Integrating Watersheds and Coastal Zone Management for Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS-IWCAM), Mr. Vincent Sweeney was invited to present the achievement of the project. The Regional Project Manager presented an overview of activities for the 2006-2007 biennium. Mr. Sweeney highlighted the fact that IWCAM had initiated or conducted activities under the five major components of the Programme. Achievements included the implementation of nine demonstration projects in eight of the participating countries. He further explained that demonstration projects focused on thematic issues related to Water Resources Conservation & Management; Wastewater Treatment & Management; Land-Use Planning, Zoning & Alternative Practices; and Targeted Model IWCAM. He added that while all demo projects had been initiated with the exception of one, they were at various stages of implementation. Mr. Sweeney indicated that a Legislative, Policy and Institutional Inventory had been conducted and recommendations had been made for regional improvement of the process. Other activities initiated include the development of IWCAM Indicators; support for Regional Integrated Water Resource Management Activities and for the preparation of Integrated Water Resources Management Plans in participating countries; a Capacity Assessment of GIS Capabilities; Communications, outreach and production and dissemination of Public Awareness material; and continued coordination of the management of the project, through the various Steering and Advisory Committees
 41. The two LBS Regional Activity Centres reported on their additional activities in support of the LBS Protocol.
 42. The Director of the RAC-Cimab reported that a series of activities had been carried out in support of the ratification process for the LBS Protocol. National Workshops for the ratification of the Protocol in Panama, Haiti, Dominican Republic and Nicaragua were among the most significant activities that had been carried out
 43. Activities carried out in collaboration with other agencies within the United Nations system, such as Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and IAEA, were also significant aspects during this period. The Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean had been developed in conjunction with the IAEA and approval had been granted for a project that would be implemented in the Wider Caribbean Region. Several joint activities had already been undertaken.
 44. Several activities were carried out within the framework of the Regional Network for Marine Science and Technology for the Caribbean (The Know Why Network) Project. The most significant of these activities included workshops held on processing and information exchange under the AMEP Program, as well as strengthening the GIS and equipment procurement for the RAC-IMA, for INVEMAR and for RAC-CIMAB.
 45. The representative from the RAC Institute for Marine Affairs (IMA) indicated that IMA had successfully fulfilled its responsibilities set out in the AMEP Workplan 2006–2007, despite several challenges that affected the pace of delivery of results. Those challenges arose out of the institutional and administrative changes resulting from the policy decision to integrate IMA into the new University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), as well as from the loss of key personnel through retirement and resignations. Activities implemented included a Regional Promotional Workshop for the LBS Protocol in English-speaking countries in Rodney Bay Village, St Lucia, from 24 to 26 July 2006, in which fifteen countries participated to promote the Protocol, explain its requirements and Annexes make recommendations towards its accession and implementation at the national level and develop strategies for its promotion. Participants were presented with a Model Cabinet Memorandum for Acceding to the LBS Protocol.
 46. Promotional material was produced and disseminated in English and Spanish including a brochure and a fourteen-minute DVD entitled "Our threatened Caribbean. Getting to the source and improving our future". With respect to building laboratory capacity for water quality assessment for The Regional Network for Marine Science and Technology for the Caribbean (The Know Why Network), laboratory equipment was ordered and an upgraded Remote Sensing System to enable the identification of hot spots with a resolution of up to 250 metres. The development of the National Programme of Action (NPA) for Trinidad and Tobago has not been completed. Cabinet appointed a new committee for 1 year, with RAC-IMA as the lead agency, to complete the NPA and develop a demonstration project. The final round of public consultations will take place in north and south Trinidad and in Tobago during the second half of November. Mr. Franklin informed the Meeting that a demonstration project would be undertaken in the Caura/Tacarigua catchment since this area was representative of the extent of pollution in the Caroni River Basin and the activities that cause its pollution. Consideration is also being given to linking with the

- Courland-Buccoo IWCAM project in Tobago for developing a demonstration project on that island. Other areas of RAC-IMA's contribution include participation in the Regional Workshop for the Development of the Draft Action Plan on Marine Litter in Aruba; the Workshop on Development of the GIS and Information Management Network in Cuba in September, and the International Coastal Clean-Up (ICC) 2007 – Balandra Bay. RAC-IMA was able to mobilize a considerable number of community groups and school children for this event.
47. The Chairman thanked the many presenters and opened the floor for questions or comments. The representative of Guatemala enquired about the status of coordination with SICA, and efforts to support the implementation of National Plans of Action beyond their initial development. She also requested information regarding the vision for support of wastewater management and stressed the need for cleaner production to minimize waste as well as the need for a combination of technologies when dealing with complex issues such as pollution. The delegate stated that capacity building exercises were often not focused on appropriate technologies for some countries and requested that the needs and current status of countries be taken into account when designing programmes.
 48. With regard to the activities of the GEF-REPCar Project, she requested additional information on incentives provided for producers to eliminate the use of pesticides. The delegate informed the Meeting of initiatives underway in Guatemala in this regard and wished to explore capacity-building opportunities in which Guatemala could participate, at least for training participation of laboratories responsible for the monitoring of pesticides in water quality.
 49. The representative of the United States of America congratulated the Secretariat on the vast amount of projects being executed with particular emphasis on the GEF Projects, and requested additional information on the Know Why Network as well as the expected project outputs.
 50. In responding, the Secretariat pointed to collaboration within relevant Regional Seas conventions and highlighted the importance of exchange of experiences. Mr. Corbin further indicated that he would like to see more technical exchanges at the project and programme levels, and mentioned some existing exchanges with ROLAC. He acknowledged the lack of political presence of the CEP at political environmental fora since its mandate was within the framework of the Cartagena Convention. He highlighted the fact that the coordinator of CEP, would be present at the ministers meeting in the Dominican Republic to present on ongoing activities and achievements of the CEP and to promote synergies with other projects in the region.
 51. With regard to the NPAs, the Secretariat informed the Meeting of plans by the Global Programme of Action (GPA) for several regional workshops (in Spanish and English) on strategic planning, sustainable finance and implementation of NPAs. He indicated that the English workshop would be convened in December this year, and that discussions were underway with ROLAC for the implementation of the Spanish workshop. These workshops would not focus on the development, but rather the implementation of the NPAs and how to integrate them into development plans and identify domestic as well as international funding for their implementation.
 52. With regard to training in waste management, the Secretariat outlined that while previous capacity-building exercises through the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI) were often focused more on the hotel sector, the envisaged GPA training would focus on equipping senior policy-makers with the tools for developing wastewater management proposals and wastewater plans. With regard to the GEF-REPCar Project it was highlighted that the focus was on better management practices in the use of pesticides rather than their total exclusion. Incentives referred to were various certification schemes promoting more sustainable production. The Secretariat would explore possibilities for the inclusion of Panama and Guatemala in training opportunities such as the monitoring of pesticides in theory and practice. However this was subject to availability of space as group sizes for field and laboratory exercises were limited.
 53. Responding to a query on the main objectives of the Know Why Network it was clarified that these included the strengthening of the capacity of the LBS/RACs and Regional Activity Networks (RANs) to provide support being centers of excellence and work along with relevant collaborating agencies such as INVEMAR and Universidad del Oriente as part of a Regional Action Network (RAN). Activities included support to GIS capacity building, promotional activities such as national LBS workshops, capacity building and strengthening of laboratories. The latter was implemented in close coordination with the IWCAM SIDS laboratory strengthening activities and CEHI. Regional hotspot

assessment will be done in coordination with IAEA and classification of waters according to Class 1 and 2.

54. The representative of France congratulated the Secretariat on the implementation of so many activities and the effective use of AMEP budget funds for project execution. The Secretariat concluded by thanking all collaborating offices and staff and encouraged continued input and critical analysis of the process at regional as well as national levels. The Chairman thanked the Secretariat for the detailed presentations and responses to the queries and encouraged all countries to seek the financing needed for the successful implementation of the new projects and activities in support of the LBS Protocol.
55. The representative from EARTH University, Dr. Mario Piedra, Coordinator of the "Small Grants Programme for the Application of Best Management Practices in Sustainable Farm Production" was invited to make a presentation on the school, its objectives, its activities and accomplishments to date. Dr. Piedra indicated that the general objective of Best Management Practices (BMP) is to promote the implementation of BMP in the agricultural sector to prevent, reduce and control marine pollution. In addition, it provides assistance to the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) in the development of integrated environmental planning and in BMP for coastal and marine areas.
56. Dr. Piedra summarized the project's specific objectives as follows: promote the implementation of BMP as a strategy to encourage change in traditional farming production models in order to achieve a more positive impact in integrated management of the WCR watersheds; encourage financially-profitable production based on socially fair and environmentally friendly trade; reduce risks to human health originating in the consumption of farm products and contributing to the well-being of the members of the agricultural communities; create horizontal and hands-on learning opportunities to enable the greatest possible number of participants to share experiences, and maximize the impact of the activities carried out, disseminate the results of the demonstration activities and experience at the national, as well as regional and international levels. The project activities are focussed on developing small-scale BMP pilot projects as a hands-on method for generating and disseminating new concepts.
57. Dr. Piedra reported on the progress achieved by two studies being carried out in Costa Rica and supervised by EARTH University: "Promoting cocoa crops in the Northern region of Costa Rica as a protective element in the areas influence by the Rio Frio Watershed and improvements in family finances of participating farmers", as well as "Integrated farm management as a strategy for the conservation and improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the Hone Creek-Talamanca, Costa Rican community". Both projects underscored training as well as the development of mechanisms for adding value to the environmental production and strengthening associations of local farmers. Dr. Piedra concluded his presentation by mentioning that development projects were a challenge for the future.
58. Ms. Laverne Walker of the Government of Saint Lucia was invited to present as the first country to have completed a National Programme of Action and a Sewage Needs Assessment Pilot Project. Saint Lucia participated in a number of projects related to the implementation of the Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution (LBS) Protocol. These included the National Programme of Action, the Sewage Needs Assessment and the LBS Protocol Consultation Projects. The objectives of the projects included: raising awareness of issues pertaining to land-based sources, assessment of sewage needs in a community and raising awareness of the Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution Protocol. The projects were able to increase awareness of the issues of land-based sources of pollutants and the LBS Protocol, as well as identify constraints that Saint Lucia currently faces regarding implementation of the LBS Protocol and recommendations for the way forward. Due to the fact that many of the projects were localized and undertaken at the community level, the projects also resulted in the empowerment of communities to the issue of waste management. The following lessons were also learnt from these projects: data and information gathering are essential to raising awareness; socio-economic issues cannot be ignored when addressing environmental issues; inter-sectoral co-ordination is key; and the importance of having a long-term goal.
59. The delegate from the Dominican Republic enquired about the reaction of possible tourism interests within the pilot region to the publishing of water quality information. In response, Miss Walker highlighted that the community maintained the information, which was shared internally, but that tourism was not a major activity within the project site. The Government of Belize supported the involvement of the community at the inception stage to engender ownership and foster sustainability. The Government of Panama expressed its desire to receive additional information regarding the Saint Lucia water quality classification procedure. The Blue Flag Campaign was

mentioned as an initiative related to water quality monitoring for beaches and also as a successful example of the community, tourism and media interests working successfully together in a certification scheme for beaches. The Government of Mexico informed the Meeting of its own beach certification scheme known as the Clean Beaches program managed by a multi-stakeholder committee within each province/state that involves regular water quality monitoring. The Government of France added that they too had a regular water quality monitoring programme for beaches in addition to the Blue Flag Programme and that these results were public and easily available via a website. This public access to information greatly enhanced the mobilization of local community interests towards reducing pollution and improving water quality of the beaches.

60. The AMEP Programme Officer summarized completed project activities for the regional management of marine litter during the 2006-2007 biennium and highlighted the need for an integrated strategic approach for effective management. A regional overview document on Marine Litter was compiled using annual International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) data generated during 1989-2005, and supplemented by a regional Marine Litter Survey. He emphasized that although this data was useful for an initial assessment of the problem, a more comprehensive and accurate methodology for monitoring Marine Litter would be developed. A Draft Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/4) and a Draft Marine Litter Monitoring Strategy were prepared during a series of member-states consultative workshops in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in consideration of the linkages with MARPOL and the management of ship generated waste. Regional challenges for management of Marine Litter included the absence of a singular national entity designated to address marine litter and the inadequacy of current legislation and enforcement. While Marine Litter is often viewed as a public sector issue, private sector involvement is crucial. Collaborative linkages were established with the Ocean Conservancy and would continue in order to improve the regional profile for this issue. The AMEP Programme Officer concluded by presenting planned actions for the regional management of marine litter such as the development of an accessible regional marine litter database, and the finalization of a practical regional marine litter monitoring strategy. He emphasized the need for legislation to be strengthened at the national level and indicated that general recommendations for national and regional interventions

were available in the Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter.

Agenda item 6: Presentation on Relevant Regional Initiatives for the AMEP Sub-programme.

(a) Presentation by the IAEA on opportunities to support AMEP Projects and activities

61. The Secretariat was invited to highlight the opportunities provided following the signing of an MOU between UNEP-CAR/RCU and the IAEA.
62. The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Ms. Gerardo-Abuya, provided information on the Memorandum of Understanding between UNEP and the IAEA, signed on April 2007, which identified modalities for improving cooperation and coordination of activities related to matters of common interest. She stated the goals of the IAEA regarding the environment and focussed on the progress to date and future directions of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme from 2007 to 2010, in collaboration with UNEP, France, Italy and Spain entitled Use of Nuclear Techniques to Address the Management Problems of Coastal Zones in the Caribbean Region, RLA/7/012. She indicated that 12 Member States of the Wider Caribbean were participants. She also presented the future outlook for support by the region for the forthcoming IAEA TC Cycle 2009-2011 that was currently under preparation.

(b) Update of CEP Technical Report # 33

63. The Secretariat was invited to provide a more comprehensive update of their progress in updating Technical Report # 33. The Director of LBS RAC CIMAB Sr. Antonio Villasol provided an overview of activities carried out to date, highlighting the major challenges in obtaining national data, summarizing the initial trends observed and making recommendations on the way forward.
64. The RAC-Cimab indicated that a series of activities had been carried out over the period. The most noteworthy of these were the workshops held to discuss and approve the methodologies to determine the Pollution Load from Land-Based Sources from specific as well as from generalized sources. In coordination with MARENA, financing was obtained to generate the report for Nicaragua.

65. Despite communication sent out from UNEP-CAR/RCU and from RAC-Cimab to the Technical Focal Points in each country, requesting information on pollution loads, only a very few had responded. In some cases, the information submitted did not comply with the methodologies that were approved for this task. Therefore, it was proposed that updating of the CEP #33 Technical Report be continued.
 66. Following the presentation, considerable discussions were held focusing on challenges to the submission of pollutant loading data namely, insufficient human resources to prepare the report, difficulty in compiling data for areas with a large geographic scope, inconsistency in the basic reporting requirements, lack of understanding of the methodology, as well as the severe lack of baseline data. The Government of the United States proposed that a further side meeting be held during the ISTAC to discuss and effectively summarize the concerns regarding the submission of information to support Technical Report No. 33. The Chairperson accepted the suggestion and recommended that this special meeting be held following the plenary sessions. The working group later made the following suggestions: Limit the number of parameters to those expressly mentioned in the Protocol such as BOD, Total Suspended Solids, pH, faecal coliform, total nitrogen and phosphorous as well as residual chlorine. The meeting also discussed limiting the coverage to 100 km from the coastline instead of the watersheds of influence. It was recommended that criteria be assigned to increase understanding of the status of water based on the parameter values on a local, as well as regionalized basis. Guatemala and France have submitted reports to Cimab.
 67. The representative from France indicated that data for the preparation of the Technical Report have been sent and that the draft report should be submitted to the LBS focal points before being proposed for adoption by the Contracting Parties.
 68. The Meeting was invited to comment and endorse the Report to date and provide recommendations that would assist in the successful completion of this updated report in time for submission to the Thirteenth Intergovernmental meeting in 2008.
- (c) GIS and Information Management in support of the AMEP sub programme**
69. The Secretariat was invited to make a presentation on its increased emphasis on Information Management and GIS. Mr. Jean-Nicolas Poussart, Junior Professional Officer (JPO) based at Cimab, presented GIS at LBS/RAC-Cimab and the AMEP Information Strategy. Highlights of this programme were the arrival of the JPO in March 2006, the setup of a new GIS laboratory (two workstations equipped with GIS software, a scanner/printer, office furniture), the establishment of Internet throughout Cimab and the finalization of a workplan for the GIS training for the first quarter of 2007. The GIS training commenced in January 2007, with full-day training, once a week, for approx. 15 staff members, from the period January to April. In February 2007, selected Cimab staff participated in the 5th International Congress Geomatica 2007 in Havana, Cuba, and a three-day course in field data collection with GPS took place.
 70. Two GIS workshops were organized one in April 2007 and the other in October 2007 in order to reinforce the local and regional GIS network, and discuss future workplans. A case study entitled "Sources of Pollution in the Havana Bay Basin: implementation of a GIS" was completed in September 2007 by LBS/RAC-Cimab staff. An information strategy with short (< 3 months), medium (3 months – 1 year) and long-term (> 1 year) goals was established in October 2007. The short term activities include 1) the creation of a metadata catalogue published on CEP's website describing the activities carried out by CEP, and 2) the further development and update of the websites for the AMEP RACs (available under CEP's website). The medium term goals include, 3) the creation of a regional Working Group for the management of AMEP data and information, 4) Guidelines to ensure that new and on-going CEP projects provide data according to some basic standardized criteria, 5) a mechanism to allow easy understanding of the data, derived information products and databases managed and available at existing AMEP partner institutions, 6) a pilot project to reinforce the interaction between the institutions and review currently available data and information products through key AMEP partner institutions, and 7) the use of GIS to promote the LBS Protocol (primarily for the classification of waters and estimation of non-point source of pollution). The long term goal is to set up a CEP GIS portal allowing information sharing and to include geospatial data. The AMEP information strategy should also consider the use of internet-based tools facilitating contact and exchange to improve communication and permit public participation.

Agenda item 7: Review and Endorsement of the Draft AMEP Work plan and Budget for the Biennium 2008/2009

71. The Secretariat was invited to present the Draft AMEP Workplan and Budget for the 2008/2009 Biennium. The AMEP Programme Officer presented the projects and activities within the AMEP programme as contained in the document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/3. He stated that the workplan and budget covered the activities to be developed under the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) sub-programme of CEP and the two RAC's (Centro de Ingeniería y Manejo Ambiental de Bahías y Costas-CIMAB, Cuba and Institute of Marine Affairs-IMA, Trinidad and Tobago) for the 2008-2009 biennium in support of the Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol).
 72. He outlined the fact that development and implementation of AMEP projects and activities would continue to be implemented through a more strategic approach focused on results-based management and presented an overall goal, sub-objectives and possible indicators for the next biennium. Some of the indicators included national legal and policy reforms, increased awareness of the LBS Protocol, improvements in environmental quality, reduction in pollutant loadings to the Caribbean Sea, increased number of partnerships in project development and execution and increase in the number of Protocol ratifications/accessions.
 73. He further suggested that the LBS RACs and RANs would play an even greater role in providing capacity building and technical support to member governments, in mobilizing additional resources and in the decentralizing of programme activities at the Secretariat.
 74. The AMEP Programme Officer then presented a summary of all ongoing and proposed projects and activities for the 2008/2009 biennium within the same thematic areas as presented in the status report. The geographical scope, range of partners and sources of funding for these projects were highlighted. Specific mention was made of the significant financial support being provided by Sida for several AMEP activities.
 75. Mr. Corbin outlined the new approach taken by AMEP in the development of concise project concepts and recognized the efforts of the AMEP Programme Assistant in their preparation. He mentioned that an ongoing effort to prepare a Donor Profile would assist in determining which donors could be targeted for funding new initiatives.
- He indicated that these new projects had been informed by feedback from regional partners, countries and from workshops held during the biennium. He further encouraged to that a critical technical review of these proposals be done which could enhance them and to establish an order of priority. He concluded his overview of specific projects by indicating that the grouping of new activities into the thematic areas also enabled partners to have a better overall picture of the programme and the level of activity under each thematic area.
76. The AMEP Programme Officer indicated that projects and activities carried out during the biennium would continue to represent a mix of regional capacity-building activities and small demonstration projects which produced more concrete results at the local level. He outlined the continued effort that be paid to promotion and awareness and to the dissemination of information by the Secretariat.
 77. Particular mention was made of the ongoing GEF Projects whose activities were likely to increase during the biennium and encouraged all participants to take greater ownership as well as maximize the benefits that these projects were providing at both the national and regional levels. He reflected on the difficulties in developing new GEF project proposals in the International Waters Portfolio but confirmed the strong signals of support for the initiative to develop a Caribbean Revolving Fund for Wastewater Management in the Wider Caribbean.
 78. The AMEP Programme Officer then provided an overview of the AMEP budget for 2007/2008, identifying the level of funding which had been secured for the biennium and where additional funds were still needed. He noted that with the financial support from Sida coming to an end, the Secretariat and LBS RACs would need to expand their efforts at resource mobilization. He reiterated the importance of government contributions to the CTF as well as direct contribution from Governments to specific project activities and expressed the hope that the more defined project concepts would assist in this regard.
 79. He provided a summary of the main support being provided by the Secretariat through administration and the CETA sub-programme. The success of the program, he suggested would be measured by how effectively information was packaged and disseminated.
 80. He summarized the critical cross-cutting areas in the development and implementation of the 2007/2008 AMEP Work Programme as the increased use of information management for decision-making, sustainability of the work of the AMEP Secretariat both in terms of human

resources and financing and mobilizing additional financial support for national and regional projects. He mentioned the importance of aligning new activities with the global strategic directions being taken by UNEP and agencies such as the Global Environmental Facility in areas such as Climate Change, Ecosystem Management, Payment for Ecosystem Services and improving baseline analysis especially for hot spots in the region.

81. The AMEP Programme Officer concluded his presentation by suggesting areas that member Governments may wish to consider for inclusion as Recommendations of the 4th LBS ISTAC Meeting. They included the need to continue development and application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Information Management Systems, endorse the draft Marine Litter Action Plan, review the process for completing the update of Technical Report 33, prioritize new project concepts, and to continue to strengthen partnerships with IAEA, Crop Life and other agencies.
82. The Meeting was invited to review and comment on the draft documents from the AMEP sub-programme and to formulate concrete recommendations and modifications as appropriate for the prioritization and implementation of the activities for 2008-2009. The final document on the AMEP workplan will be forwarded to the Thirteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Tenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties for approval.
83. The Chairperson thanked Mr. Corbin and welcomed the delegate of Haiti who had joined the Meeting. She highlighted the importance of GIS as a management tool and the need to harmonize information collation and methodologies, and above all, the sharing of information, for the benefit of the Caribbean, as well as the entire planet. She acknowledged that although many projects and activities in the region followed political appointment periods, deterioration of the environment did not and therefore needed to be taken into consideration. The Chairperson further stressed that while the signature of an agreement and the process involved were important, it was in the best interest of all countries to work towards the protection of the environment by continuing to move forward regardless of whether they had ratified the Protocol or not.
84. The representative of France thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and expressed the desire to participate in the development of the database and the report formats that the countries will be informed of, once the Protocol enters into force. She informed the Meeting of possible funding opportunities for some of the AMEP projects within the FFEM and urged the Secretariat to contact the FFEM at their earliest convenience, taking into account that in some cases, considerable time was needed to develop such project proposals. The delegate further proposed that for each activity mentioned in the workplan, the countries to be involved are identified as this would assist country representatives in their preparation. The Secretariat thanked the Government of France for the information regarding funding opportunities and for its input into the workplan.
85. The delegate of Aruba noted the challenges associated with the TR No. 33 and pointed out that conducting economic valuation of ecosystem services could be an even bigger challenge. He recommended that RAC-Cimab review the methodology for the economic valuation of ecosystem services, and further inquired whether the mentioned hotspot diagnostic and monitoring analysis was part of the workplan. In response, the Secretariat acknowledged the complexity and challenges of economic valuation for many governments with limited resources, but stressed the need for countries to become familiar with the relevant tools. The Secretariat mentioned the need for developing a programme for capacity building of environmental agencies responsible for provision of information on projects at the national level and their impacts. A component dealing with hotspots exists under the IWCAM project for the Caribbean SIDS and it is hoped that through collaboration with the Know Why Network Project, additional relevant hotspots could be identified within Central America and South America, thereby allowing the development of broadly regional hotspots maps.
86. The delegation of the United States of America commended the Secretariat for the useful changes in the format of the Draft Budget and Workplan, noting that it now clearly distinguished between projects with funding and those that required funding, providing a prioritization to indicate what projects could achieve with additional funding, and including a timetable annex. These changes made it easier for countries to consider and respond to the project descriptions. The delegation requested clarification of certain budget items and recommended that the Draft Budget and Workplan refer to the broad vision outlined in the Millennium Declaration instead of cherry-picking particular Millennium Development Goals. The delegation believed that U.S. technical and policy expertise, human or other resources permitting, could benefit countries participating in the Integrating Management of Watersheds and Coastal Areas in Small

Island States project. It was pleased that the Secretariat was aware of SERVIR and hoped that the GIS project would take into account other GIS tools and platforms. The delegation expressed its disappointment that the GEF did not foresee support for a follow-on contaminated bays project, and highlighted the Matson Shipping Company Zero Solid Waste Discharge project, which could provide a model for a component to the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter. Additional comments on the track plan of the Marine Litter project would be submitted to the Secretariat. Following the delegation's request for information on the Needs Assessments for Panama and Tobago, the delegation was informed that these would be completed by mid-2008 and made available on the website. The delegation considered the solid waste project interesting and encouraged the Secretariat to reach out to the Basel Convention in their search for additional resources. The delegation sought clarification on the links between ongoing and future projects involving Sewage Needs Assessments. The Secretariat responded that activities were the same but implemented on a case-by-case basis, depending on availability of resources and interest from countries. CEHI and OECS as a grouping would be able to do a more complete project involving all member states but if not major funding became available, the Secretariat would continue on a case-by-case basis.

87. The delegate of Guatemala inquired about access to the new projects presented and requested that assistance be given to access funding for implementation of certain projects within the NPA folder presented to the CEP. Areas of priority for this delegation included watershed management, strengthening of laboratories and capacity-building. The Secretariat welcomed the interest shown by Guatemala, however, until additional funding had been secured to facilitate implementation of additional activities, they would have to continue to work with countries that had already identified funding for parts of their NPAs. With regard to capacity-building, the Secretariat would explore opportunities within the GEF-REPCar, and Know Why Network projects. Following a request for clarification on the donors forum mentioned in the workplan, the Secretariat indicated that this might not be the most effective approach and that instead, holding regional workshops for sustainable financing for the implementation of the NPAs, would be of greater priority, thereby providing the countries themselves with tools for a country-driven fundraising process for mobilization of resources. The Secretariat also highlighted the fact that specific requests arising from NPA development or sewage needs assessments could only be considered if additional funds or opportunities could be identified.
88. The delegate of the Cayman Islands mentioned a Small Islands Toolkit for Economic Valuation produced by the UK, and indicated that they might be able to offer some in-kind assistance within the area of GIS, as they were currently undertaking an internal GIS marine waters and habitat classification activity.
89. The delegate of Saint Lucia stressed the importance of recreational water quality and informed the Meeting that St. Lucia has recently submitted a request to CrosQ for the development of standards for recreational water quality in the region. She also supported the revolving funds project for wastewater management and requested that this project be prioritized as well.
90. Mr Steve Morrison representative for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration made a presentation on the Implementation of the UNEP Global Program of Action: National Programmes of Action in the Wider Caribbean. He informed the Meeting that The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Secretariat of the Global Program of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (UNEP/GPA) had entered into an umbrella Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in March 2004 at the White Water to Blue Water Conference to on activities related to coastal and marine pollution originating from land and coastal degradation, within the Wider Caribbean Region. NOAA's role was to provide direct technical assistance and advice to governments in the Wider Caribbean Region in the development of their National Programs of Action to prevent, reduce, control and/or eliminate marine degradation from land-based activities and to use National Programs of Action as a vehicle to promote the LBS protocol and raise environmental awareness. To date, Mexico has completed and published a Regional Program of Action for the Yucatan Peninsula in September 2006; and NOAA is currently collaborating with Belize, Trinidad & Tobago, Dominican Republic, Panama, Dominica, and Guyana to develop National or Regional Programs of Action. He concluded by referring to the NOAA website for additional information www.nosinternational.noaa.gov/gpa/.
91. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago thanked the NOAA for the support provided which would assist them in moving further towards the finalization of the NPA. She further informed the Meeting that a stakeholder consultation for the NPA would be conducted shortly.

Agenda item 8: Panel Discussion on LBS Protocol Ratification and Implementation

92. The Secretariat suggested that a Panel of Member Countries which had conducted National Promotional Workshops on the LBS Protocol during the 2006-2007 biennium be formed. As an introduction to the Panel Discussions, the Secretariat will highlight the main findings from a survey questionnaire on the main barriers to the ratification/accession and/or implementation of the LBS Protocol as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/INF.4.
93. The Secretariat invited the Governments of Panama and Trinidad and Tobago to co-chair the Panel and the Government of France to be a Panel Responder, since this country was to have acceded to the Protocol joining Panama and Trinidad and Tobago. The Panel consisted of the Governments of Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua and Saint Lucia. Panelists were expected in seven-minute presentations to highlight their main findings during their respective national consultations, and to provide concrete recommendations to improve ratification and implementation of the LBS Protocol.
94. The AMEP Assistant Programme Officer, Nadia-Deen Ferguson, briefly presented the findings of the LBS questionnaire conducted in July-September 2007 as an introduction to the Panel discussion. Ms. Ferguson highlighted the major barriers to the ratification of the protocol and recommendations for the way forward made by the seven participating countries.
95. The panel discussion included updates on the status of the ratification and implementation of the LBS Protocol. Trinidad and Tobago as well as Panama, having ratified the Protocol in 2003, expressed similar challenges in the implementation process, namely the difficulties with interagency cooperation and information sharing, which is further compounded by gaps in human resources, lack of institutional framework, and legislative capacity. Trinidad and Tobago also mentioned a challenge in terms of water quality monitoring and coastal surveillance. Governments of St. Lucia, Haiti and the Dominican Republic reiterated their commitment to pursue ratification of the Protocol. The Government of St. Lucia had submitted a draft memorandum to Cabinet recommending the ratification. Inter-ministerial support was also considered critical to the process thus far.
96. The delegate from Haiti highlighted existing initiatives in support of the Protocol, which included a national promotional LBS workshop in May 2007. It was considered successful in generating interest within a dynamic stakeholder group involving actors within fisheries, tourism, and environment. Related documentation was submitted to Cabinet and is under review in consideration for possible signing of the Convention and the LBS Protocol.
97. The delegate from the Dominican Republic highlighted activities implemented in support of the Protocol, including a national promotional workshop convened in August 2007 in which all related institutions in her country in the water sector participated. A challenge to the ratification process was considered to be the inability to maintain a consistent water quality monitoring programme. She stated that a letter was sent to the Ministry of Environment regarding the ratification of the Protocol. Related documentation will be re-submitted to the Minister of Environment and it was noted that optimism regarding ratification was expected due to the fact that the new Minister is a technical person who has always been interested in the environment. She expressed her concern for the lack of economic resources to provide continuity for beach monitoring.
98. The delegate of Nicaragua highlighted the national activities related to the ratification of the LBS Protocol. Among the challenges highlighted were the change in Government as of January 2007; change in Ministers; delay in giving approval to the North and South Atlantic Autonomous Regions to continue the process with the National Assembly. These obstacles were magnified by the recent succession of severe natural disasters that have re-aligned national priorities towards disaster management and recovery. Recommendations to move forward included high-level consultations between the CEP Secretariat and ministerial officials, and assistance with the development of required legal documentation.
99. The delegate of France described the process leading to the ratification of the Protocol in May, namely the implementation of the European water management framework in Martinique. She underscored the challenges inherent in integrating European environmental laws and regulations in a Caribbean context and recommended that information exchange be strengthened at the regional level. Following presentations by other countries, it was recommended that inter-ministerial cooperation be improved with a view to better management and follow-up to the process. The need for competent persons who are knowledgeable in both the technical and legal domains was emphasized. She also highlighted the importance of public and political participation at the highest levels.

100. The Delegation of the United States of America congratulated France for its recent ratification of the LBS Protocol and encouraged other states of the Wider Caribbean Region to do likewise and to also become members of the Cartagena Convention. The delegate of Venezuela stated that research institutions and universities could be used to assist in baseline data collection and underscored the importance of continued public awareness. The Bahamian delegate enquired whether it was possible to extend water quality kit used in Saint Lucia to include the rating index presented and used by the United States of America. Trinidad and Tobago and the United States briefly discussed the opportunities and existing projects involving the use of school and volunteer groups in the water quality monitoring programmes (projects GLOBE and Surf Rider). The critical factor of sustainable financing was discussed with the conclusion that more creative ways were needed to deal with the issue.

101. The Meeting was invited to provide additional comments and recommendations for national and regional actions to promote the ratification and implementation of the LBS Protocol.

Agenda item 9: Other Business

102. The participants of the Meeting were invited to raise other issues not covered by the preceding agenda items, but relevant to the scope of the Meeting.

103. The AMEP Programme Office invited the Chair of the Working Group, Dr. Klaus Essig to present the work of the Working Group on the "Operational Guidelines of the Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and Regional Activity Networks (RANs) of the Caribbean Environment Programme". Dr. Essig summarized the process and highlighted the structure of the document UNEP(DEC)/CAR IG.24/CRP.9 Rev.1. Following the 12th IGM, comments were included and the revised version of the document was circulated by the Secretariat to the countries. Additional comments were received by France and included in the document. The Delegation of the United States of America thanked Dr. Essig and asked for comments to be submitted and taken into account. The Delegation of Venezuela requested the secretariat to make necessary documentation available prior to the IGM for the possible adoption of the final document.

104. The Chair invited the representative of the Cropper Foundation, Dr. Asha Singh, who initiated her presentation "The Caribbean Sea: Governance for Sustainability" by summarizing some of the many services provided by the

Caribbean Sea. She emphasized how fundamental the Caribbean Sea is to the development and sustainability of the Caribbean people, sustaining among others, the economic well-being of the region, and how this is compromised by the combination of pressures being exerted upon it. Dr. Singh made reference to the Reef at Risks report of the World Resource Institute and the substantial economic loss that is anticipated by 2015 should degradation of Caribbean reefs continue in its current pace. Dr. Singh proceeded with highlighted the urgent need for a new paradigm of governance of the Caribbean Sea in the form of adaptive, integrated sustainable management. Among other aspects, sustainable governance requires participation of all major stakeholders in the process in order to move the region towards sustainable management as set out in the UN resolution 61/268 "promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea in the context of sustainable development". Sustainable governance would also require integrated policies for tourism, fisheries, waste, agriculture, sewerage and other forms of pollution. Existing programmes must overcome barriers that are not compatible with integrated management.

105. Mr. Jose Luis Menendez began his presentation by summarizing the political mechanisms undertaken by Guatemala with regard to the environment. He mentioned that the national environmental policy had been published recently and was aimed at restoring the Guatemalan environment, and highlighted its national policy in a regional and international framework.

106. Ms. Nadia Mijangos presented the progress achieved by Guatemala in relation to the implementation of the LBS Protocol, based on the recommendations of the Third LBS/ISTAC Meeting.

107. She outlined some of the actions undertaken and progress made to date. She noted further the advances made in relation to the Oil Spills Protocol of the Wider Caribbean Region. In concluding, she presented the promotional video on integrated management of water resources, prepared by the Ministry of the Environment of Guatemala. A hard copy report was also provided.

108. In a third presentation on Guatemala, Mr. Jose Robledo of the Guatemalan Authority for the management of the waters of the Izabel and Rio Dulce basins, summarized the objectives of his organization and provided details of the action plan for integrated management of the basin.

109. Mr. Corbin thanked the delegation from Guatemala for the excellent presentation and noted that some interesting

lessons could be extracted from the information shared in this meeting.

110. The Delegation of the United States of America encouraged countries to provide ocean dumping statistics. Information should be submitted to Edward Kleverlaan, Technical Officer, Marine Environment Division, International Maritime Organization, 4 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SR, United Kingdom, email: ekleverlaan@imo.org, tel: +44(0)20 7587 3122, Fax: +44(0)20 7587 3210/3261. They also encourage delegates from those countries not party to the London Convention and London Protocol to consider becoming members of the London Protocol.

Agenda item 10: Adoption of the Report of the Meeting

111. The Rapporteur of the Meeting presented the Draft Report of the Meeting. The Meeting adopted the Report, with amendments and corrections to be introduced in the draft by the Secretariat, as appropriate, and circulated to the participants by the 15 November for review. Comments were to be forwarded to the Secretariat within an additional 2 weeks.

Agenda item 11: Closure of the Meeting

112. The Secretariat thanked the Government of Guatemala for generously hosting the Meeting and for the extensive support and time provided by the staff of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment. The high number of Governments and NGOs present for the Meeting was highlighted, showing a strong sign of commitment for the preservation of a healthy marine and coastal environment. The Government of Guatemala thanked all the participants, the staff of the Ministry and the Secretariat for their hard work and active participation in the Meeting. The Meeting was closed on Thursday, 1 November 2007 at 5:00 p.m. by the Chairperson of the Meeting.

Annex I: Agenda

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Election of Officers
3. Organisation of the Meeting
 - a. Rules of Procedure
 - b. Organisation of Work
4. Adoption of Agenda
5. Review of project activities for the 2006/2007 Biennium including those of the LBS Regional Activity Centres (RACs).
6. Presentation on Relevant Regional Initiatives for the AMEP Sub-programme
7. Review and Endorsement of the Draft AMEP Work plan and Budget for the Biennium 2008/2009
8. Panel Discussion on LBS Protocol Ratification and Implementation
9. Any Other Business
10. Adoption of the Report of the Meeting
11. Closure of the Meeting

Annex II: Recommendations of the Meeting

The Meeting:

Having convened the Fourth Meeting of the Interim Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (ISTAC /LBS) in the Wider Caribbean Region, Peten, Guatemala, 30 October – 1 November 2007;

Making reference to the Third Meeting of the ISTAC/LBS, Mexico City, Mexico, 22-26 August 2005;

Recommends to the Thirteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Tenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region the following:

RECOMMENDATION I

Taking into consideration the activities of the Sub-programme of Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) for the period 2006-2007, as appears in the document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/INF.3;

Taking note of the progress made by a number of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention concerning ratification and implementation of the LBS Protocol;

Welcoming the ratification of the LBS Protocol by the Government of France during the last biennium;

Having made note of the importance of the promotion and dissemination of the Cartagena Convention and the LBS Protocol to various stakeholders of the Wider Caribbean Region.

Recommends that:

1. The Secretariat continue its efforts at sensitizing parties, and in particular, high level Government Officials and the general public to the importance of the LBS Protocol and the need for its ratification and implementation;
2. Contracting Parties renew their efforts to ratify and implement the Cartagena Convention and its three Protocols, in particular the LBS Protocol, thereby sending a clear signal of the commitment of the Governments of the WCR to protect the marine environment.

RECOMMENDATION II

Having taken note of the work conducted by AMEP and the financial constraints under which the AMEP programme has had to operate,

Noting also the work of the various GEF Projects and RACs presented by Project Managers and RAC Directors,

Recommends that:

1. Capacity building opportunities for laboratory training and environmental monitoring be identified and pursued;

2. Countries seek the financing required for the successful implementation of the new projects and activities in support of the LBS Protocol;
3. The Secretariat consider existing National Programmes of Action and other related strategies when sourcing financial support for project activities at the national level;
4. The Secretariat expand its level of cooperation with the IAEA and other relevant agencies to ensure greater synergies among regional projects and activities.

RECOMMENDATION III

Having reviewed the work conducted to date on the update to Technical Report #33;

Taking into account the difficulties being faced by some countries in providing the relevant information in a timely manner for the completion of the report;

Recommends that:

- 1) Further technical assistance be provided at the national and regional levels in relation to application of the methodology for calculating pollution loads. This assistance would be coordinated by the Secretariat with the support of the LBS RACs.
- 2) Realistic deadlines be set for finalizing the national reports for the update and that countries adhere to the agreed deadlines.
- 3) For the partners that have not yet provided the information, the number of parameters to be reported should include, if available, those parameters listed in Annex III of the LBS Protocol, paragraphs c.2 and c.3, including Total Suspended Solids, Biochemical Oxygen Demand, pH, fats, oils and grease, faecal coliform, floatables, total nitrogen, total phosphorous and residual chlorine.
- 4) The area of coverage should be equal to or less than 100km from the coastline, unless parties desire to submit data for additional area.
- 5) The Secretariat assist countries in the development and guidance on monitoring programmes including ensuring that they benefit as much as possible from ongoing projects that provide capacity building for coastal and marine monitoring activities.

RECOMMENDATION IV

Having heard the information on the Sewage Needs Assessment conducted by St. Lucia and presented by its delegate;

Taking into account the various initiatives concerning the "Blue Flag" and other certification programmes for beaches; as well as the observations and remarks made by the countries concerning their programmes to evaluate the quality of recreational waters;

Considering the concern expressed by delegations about the potential negative impact on the economies of the countries of the Wider Caribbean Region caused by deterioration of recreational water quality and degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems, particularly for those countries where tourism is the major economic activity,

Recommends that:

1. New Project activities related to recreational water quality in the Wider Caribbean Region be given high priority when the Secretariat is sourcing financial support;
2. The Secretariat pursue the wastewater revolving fund projects in the Wider Caribbean Region;
3. A technical working group be established to determine how to establish criteria.

RECOMMENDATION V

Taking into consideration the importance of baseline data collection and information dissemination among the countries of the Wider Caribbean Regions;

Understanding the need for information products to assist in decision-making processes related to environmental management;

Noting the efforts of the Secretariat in the development of an information strategy for the AMEP sub-programme including the greater application of GIS and other spatial decision making tools;

Recommends that:

1. The Secretariat, jointly with the LBS/RACs, continue to promote the development of information and technology systems in the Wider Caribbean Region by sharing of experiences, best management practices, and engaging with existing GIS resources; include ref to data sharing.

RECOMMENDATION VI

Having reviewed the draft of the Workplan and the Budget for the activities of the AMEP sub-programme for the biennium 2008-2009, as shown in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/3;

Noting the effort by the Secretariat to distinguish between projects where funding was secured and those which required additional funding;

Welcoming the preparation of new project concepts that will assist the Secretariat in mobilizing funds;

Recommends that:

1. Based on the discussions and specific recommendations of the ISTAC on the Work Plan, and those presented in the body of this report, the Workplan and Budget combined for the biennium 2008-2009 be sent to the Thirteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Ninth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region for approval.
2. Countries provide technical input for improving new project proposals presented as part of the 2008-2009 work plan and budget, and assist the Secretariat in identifying potential partners and sources of funding for these and other ongoing projects.
3. Countries and the Secretariat build upon existing successful projects when developing additional new projects.

4. The Secretariat continues to develop marine litter projects and activities within the framework of the draft regional action plan for marine litter in the Wider Caribbean Region.

RECOMMENDATION VII

Taking note of

(1) the report made at the meeting by the Chairman of the Open Intersessional Working Group developing the draft "Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Regional Activity Centres and Regional Activity Networks for the Cartagena Convention;"

(2) the developmental stage of the Draft;

(3) the importance of these Guidelines in relation to the implementation of the Protocol on Marine Pollution from Land Based Sources;

(4) the support it will provide to the relevant CEP work plans and projects, the meeting strongly endorses the comments made by the Chairperson of the 12th IGM one year ago which highlighted the need for the document "RAC/RAN Guidelines draft" to be finalized by the next IGM [Paragraph 87, Report of the Meeting, page 9, UNEP (DEPI) CAR IG.26/4]

Recommends that:

The Secretariat, in coordination with the Working Group, receive comments and continue its work to produce the final draft by the 13th IGM for possible approval at that meeting.

Annex III: List of Documents

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Working Documents

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/1	Provisional agenda
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/2	Provisional annotated agenda
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/3	Draft Workplan and Budget for sub-programme on the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) 2008-2009
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/4	Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Interim Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee (ISTAC) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) in the Wider Caribbean Region (to be prepared during the meeting)

Information Documents

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/INF.1	Provisional list of documents
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/INF.2	List of participants
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/INF.3	Status of Activities for the sub-programme on the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) for 2006-2007
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/INF.4	Summary of Responses to UNEP Questionnaire on Protocol Concerning Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/INF.5	Draft Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter Management in the Wider Caribbean Region
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.26/3	Workplan and budget for the Caribbean Environment Programme for the biennium 2006-2007
UNEP(DEC)/CAR WG.28/INF.6	Report of the Promotion of the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) for English Speaking Countries, Castries, Saint Lucia, 24-26 July, 2006 (English only)
UNEP(DEC)/CAR WG.28/INF.7	Report of the Promotion of the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) for Spanish Speaking Countries, San José, Costa Rica, 7-10 December 2004 (English and Spanish only)
UNEP(DEC)/CAR WG.28/5	Report of the Third Meeting of the Interim Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee (ISTAC) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities, Mexico City, Mexico, 22-26 August 2005
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.26/4	Report of the Twelfth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Eighth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, Montego Bay, Jamaica, 29 November – 2 December 2006

Reference Documents

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.30/Ref.1	Article IV of the LBS Protocol / Article IV du Protocole LBS / Artículo IV del Protocolo FTCM
UNEP, September 2007	Directory of Focal Points of the Caribbean Environment Programme. CEP Information Paper (English only)
UNEP, 2001/2004	Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills, Protocol

	Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife and the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (English, Spanish (2001) and French (2004))
UNEP,GPA, The Hague	UNEP Handbook on the Development and Implementation of a National programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
UNEP, 1999	Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries to Adopt the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean Region
UNEP(OCA)/LBA/IG.2/7	Global Programme of Action to Protect the Marine Environment from land-based Sources and Activities, Washington, D.C., 23 October – 3 November, 1995
CEP Technical Report No. 33	Regional Overview of Land-Based Sources of Pollution in the Wider Caribbean Region, 1994
UNEP/GC/3/Rev.3, 1988	Rules of Procedure of the Governing Council of UNEP
UNEP BASEL Sep. 2006	Regional Strategy for the Environmentally Sound Management of Used Lead Acid Batteries in Central America, Colombia, Venezuela and Caribbean Island States (English and Spanish)
UNEP BASEL Dec. 2006	Draft Regional Strategy for the Environmentally Sound management of Used Oils in the Caribbean Island States (English only)
UNEP 2007, ROP	Draft Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)
UNEP 2007, FR	Proposed Financial Rules for the Cartagena Convention, its Caribbean Environment Programme and Terms of Reference for the Caribbean Trust Fund
UNEP 2007, RACs	Proposed Guidelines for Establishment and Operation of Regional Activity Centres and Regional Activity Networks for the Cartagena Convention (Spanish and English)
UNEP 2007, PIF	Project Identification Form (PIF) for Caribbean Revolving Fund for Wastewater Management in the Caribbean (English only)
Globallast-IMO	GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Project (English and French)

Annex IV: List of Participants

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Annex V: Speech of the Guatemalan Minister of Environment

PRESENTATION BY MR. JUAN MARIO DARY FUENTES
MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
FOURTH MEETING OF THE INTERIM SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ISTAC)
TO THE PROTOCOL CONCERNING POLLUTION FROM LAND-BASED SOURCES AND ACTIVITIES (LBS) IN THE
WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION

Camino Real Hotel, El Petén, Republic of Guatemala
October 30, 2007

Mr. Julio Calderon, representing Mr. Ricardo Sanchez, UNEP Regional Coordinator, Regional Organization for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP-ROLAC) based in Panama City, Panama,

Mr. Christopher Corbin, representing Mr. Nelson Andrade Colmenares, Coordinator, Caribbean Environmental Program, Caribbean Region Coordinating Unit (UNEP/RCU/CAR) based in Kingston, Jamaica,

Delegates and representatives of member states, guests and participating observers,

Representatives of organizations and donor agencies

Honorable members of the Secretariat

Special guests

Members of the press

Ladies and Gentlemen

As we acknowledge the importance of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, of the Protocol on Cooperation in Combatting Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region; of the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife and of the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities, Guatemala enthusiastically welcomes the Fourth Meeting of the Interim Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee (ISTAC) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) in the Wider Caribbean Region to one of the planet's well-known sites, considered as a paradise of natural beauty, harmony with nature and located in the heart of the Mayan Biosphere in Petén, Guatemala, the "Soul of the Earth".

Our participation in this meeting is based on our commitment to the principles of the earth summit...to planetary security, to the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development, to PARCA and to acknowledging the important role played by our heritage and our natural resources for the inhabitants of our planet.

We express our desire to share the progress achieved in complying with the commitments we have undertaken and with the principles that, as a nation, we are in the process of ratifying, of understanding and learning from experience, of adding and multiplying efforts of goodwill, as well as supporting and encouraging joint efforts that are specific to achieving the goals of the Wider Caribbean Region in terms of the protection and sustainable use of our environment and natural resources, of developing strategic and effective initiatives to identify specific needs among our countries which will, in turn, enable us to creatively address economic and social demands in the face of environmental threats and challenges within the framework of the inevitable interdependence and interrelationships of our geopolitical, environmental and natural region.

As this meeting takes place in these particular surroundings, it highlights Guatemala's commitment to protecting both its cultural, as well as its environmental resources. The National System of Protected Areas covers 32% of our territory on behalf of a global cause and of the common good. It highlights the importance of the issue in terms of our national policy, particularly in the Protection, Conservation and Improvement of the Environment and Natural Resources that was recently approved, of biodiversity, and of the efforts made in sub-regional strategies such as the Biological Corridor and Mesoamerican Reef System, as well as domestic strategies such as the Guatemalan System of Protected Areas and the National Program of Micro Watersheds to strengthen integration and the continent's territorial and natural interconnections.

Our efforts at gathering here today, in the heart of the Mayan world, represents our sterling support of the efforts of each of our nations represented here to strengthen environmental institutions throughout the region.

On behalf of the Government of Guatemala, of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, and on my personal behalf as Minister, it is a great honour to welcome you within the framework I've described. I am confident that, as the meeting progresses surrounded by unique beauty offered by this natural setting and our country's amazing cultural heritage, you will continue to feel at home. I hope you will acknowledge the intrinsic integration between culture and natural resources, of maximizing natural capital and the environmental service that our coastal marine resources provide to our population's well-being, to the economy of our nations and to the importance of developing mechanisms and instruments for environmental and economic management, as well as for cooperation, while we all strive to make them more efficient and effective. We continue to work with limited resources at both the local and regional levels to identify potential alliances and synergies for sustainable development that can be encouraged, strengthen and developed from here on.

I wish you all much success throughout the meeting in achieving your objectives and throughout your deliberations. We greatly appreciate the institutional, personal and family time that has contributed to making the Meeting a success. I reiterate our commitment to continue to support the joint initiatives within the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development, from the Interim Chairperson of the Central American Commission for the Environment and Development (CCAD) and from the Mesoamerican Committee of the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

I particularly wish to express my appreciation and recognition for the coordination and efforts of the Secretariat staff, of the Follow-up Programmes for National Action Plans and the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala, which has made this event possible.

Thank you.