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**Implementation of Governing Council decision 23/5 on small
island developing States**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

In its decision 23/5, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum requested the Executive Director to prepare a progress report on the activities carried out by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in small island developing States. The present report responds to that request, following the structure of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

* UNEP/GC/24/1.

Implementation of decision 23/5 on small island developing States

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. Since the twenty-third session of the Governing Council, UNEP has continued to be involved in small island developing States and to carry out activities aimed at supporting them in their unique situation. The course taken with regard to activities in small island developing States is in line with the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the tailored approach called for in decision 23/5. Considerable time has been devoted at UNEP to putting together project proposals for potential financing sources such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the European Union's Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Water Facility, in collaboration with Governments, in order to mobilize meaningful resources for implementing actions in the framework of the Mauritius Strategy as they relate to the UNEP mandate.

2. The main challenge when servicing small island developing States is to ensure that delivery addresses their vulnerabilities. Due to their unique circumstances, diversity of economic and social structures and, in many cases, remote geographic location, generic activities that are devised for implementation in other countries cannot be used in an effective and efficient manner in small island developing States. The tailored approach, however, must be supported by the availability of necessary resources at the international and regional levels in combination with enhanced capacities in small island developing States to make efficient use of these resources.

3. Below is an extensive though non-exhaustive list of activities that were carried out by UNEP in or for small island developing States since the last report of the Executive Director in 2005. Most of the activities can be clustered under the actions outlined in the matrix of actions to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy set out in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General on the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/60/401). Where appropriate, reference is made to future activities that are planned in the current UNEP programme of work for the biennium 2006–2007. In the case of the Pacific, UNEP is currently in the process of recruiting a programme officer to strengthen UNEP delivery in the region and to ensure the coordination of activities, following the example of an existing post for Caribbean small island developing States. The staff member is expected to be based at the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). Furthermore, a Pacific subregional strategy for 2006–2010 is being implemented by the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, which focuses on four key strategic directions:

- (a) Promoting regional cooperation;
- (b) Strengthening the environment community;
- (c) Assisting to identify and address emerging environment issues; and
- (d) Leadership by example through demonstration projects.

4. A detailed plan for implementation of the strategy over 2006–2007 has also been finalized. In addition, since UNEP's delivery in the Caribbean takes place in the framework of the Caribbean SIDS Programme together with the Caribbean Environment Programme that serves the wider Caribbean regional seas programme, a more detailed account of activities in the Caribbean region is also provided.

II. Overall UNEP activities in small island developing States

A. Climate change

5. With regard to the action described in the matrix of actions to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy: "national and regional initiatives on adaptation to climate change", UNEP is supporting the development of a project entitled "Many small voices - building strategies for climate change awareness

and adaptation among vulnerable regions: the arctic and small island developing States". The project, which is an initiative of UNEP GRID-Arendal's Polar Programme, aims to bring together the Arctic and small island developing States to develop a common project in order to build strategies for climate change awareness and adaptation in their regions.

6. The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, together with the Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics and in collaboration with the SPREP, supported the following countries and projects (see also section on capacity development and education):

- (a) Kiribati, Maldives, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu: technical assistance to establish and operationalize the national ozone unit (as part of institutional strengthening project) to implement the Montreal Protocol to phase-out ozone-depleting substances;
- (b) Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu: technical assistance to establish regulations on the control of the import and export of ozone-depleting substances;
- (c) Kiribati, Maldives, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu: provision of training for refrigeration technicians on good practice to reduce emission of ozone-depleting substances;
- (d) Maldives: technical assistance to enforce regulation on the control of the import and export of ozone-depleting substances through the services of a policy and enforcement officer, and informal prior informed consent mechanism and "Project Sky Hole Patching";
- (e) Maldives: provision of training for customs officers on the monitoring and control of the import and export of ozone-depleting substances;
- (f) Maldives, Samoa: provision of technical assistance to prepare the terminal phase-out management plan for complete phase-out of ozone-depleting substances by 2010;
- (g) Timor Leste: technical assistance on the ratification of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

7. Furthermore, at the request of the Governments of Fiji and the Solomon Islands, the Division of Global Environment Facility (GEF) Coordination developed a GEF PDF-A proposal on adaptation to climate change in the tourism sector in Fiji and improving the adaptive capacity of communities in the Solomon Islands to the impacts of climate change and climate variability in the health sector.

B. Natural and environmental disasters

8. In response to the Asian tsunami of 26 December 2004 and to the action "Strengthening national capacity for natural disaster preparation, response mitigation and rehabilitation" set out in the matrix of actions to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy, the coordination office for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) developed the "Guiding Principles for Post-Tsunami Rehabilitation and Reconstruction" and organized a meeting in held in Cairo, Egypt, on 17 February 2005, to discuss these principles. The meeting was attended by senior officials from all the tsunami-affected countries (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen); representatives of the UNEP Regional Seas Programmes, international organizations and institutions (e.g., Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Bank, Islamic Development Bank, League of Arab States, World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)) and endorsed the 12 principles for sustainable coastal rehabilitation.

C. Management of waste

9. The Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics and the GPA Coordination Office, funded by the French Government through the French Development Agency, are currently developing a project on moving towards a life cycle/circular economy in the Pacific Island States, with particular emphasis on addressing the waste problem. Based on a fact-finding mission to Fiji, New Caledonia, Samoa, Tahiti and Vanuatu, pre-feasibilities studies will be elaborated as of 2007 that will prepare the ground for a comprehensive waste management project for these islands, thus addressing the action set out in the matrix of actions of "identifying cost-effective and environmentally sound waste management systems" at the national and subregional levels.

10. With regard to the required action set out in the Mauritius Strategy of “Promoting reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and waste management initiatives”, UNEP projects related to ozone layer protection have training components on best practices in recovery and recycling of ozone-depleting substances. Activities are underway in all regions, in cooperation with other implementing and bilateral agencies for the Montreal Protocol. In the Pacific, specific collaboration is taking place with SPREP, as mentioned in the section above on climate change.

11. See also the strategic partnership between the Maldives and UNEP described in paragraph 42, below.

D. Coastal and marine resources

12. The UNEP GPA Coordination Office continues to provide technical and financial assistance to small island developing States in response to the requirement contained in the Strategy that “Small island developing States and the international development partners should fully implement the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, particularly with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme, by undertaking initiatives specifically addressing the vulnerability of small island developing States”. Current and future projects include:

(a) Implementation of a capacity-building programme for improving municipal wastewater management, primarily in African, Caribbean and Pacific States, with a focus on small island developing States. The project is jointly funded by the European Union-Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Water Facility and the Global Environment Facility, with additional resources made available by the Governments of Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United States of America, and aims at improving skills and knowledge needed for project identification, planning and financing at the municipal level in the areas of water, sanitation and wastewater management. To date, a total of 430 professionals from 34 countries have been trained, including participants from the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The programme also features the training of local instructors and thereby builds regional capacity for replication and cost-effective up-scaling. The quality of the training is ensured by close collaboration with the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education. Integration with other regional initiatives and GEF projects reduces duplication and creates additional synergies;

(b) Development or adoption of national programmes of action for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities in the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, addressing national programmes of action in the framework of the projects entitled “Addressing land-based activities in the Western Indian Ocean”, which covers Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles, and “Combating Living Resource Depletion and Coastal Area Degradation in the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystems through Ecosystem-based Regional Actions”, which covers São Tomé and Príncipe, as well as providing guidance on feasible pilot projects and funding sources in Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu;

(c) Collaboration between the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and UNEP (the GPA Coordination Office, the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean) aimed at promoting the implementation of national plans of action in the framework of countries’ national environmental management strategies and at contributing to the efficient and affordable implementation of the latter. Additionally, the OECS secretariat and UNEP Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit signed a memorandum of cooperation for coordinating and harmonizing activities in pursuit of complementary interests and goals of OECS member States and the Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) in order to improve implementation and minimize duplication of programmes, projects and activities relevant to both organizations at the national, subregional and regional levels.

13. During the second Intergovernmental Review meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, two new partnerships related to small island developing States were established, i.e., a partnership on planning instruments for sustainable tourism development in small island developing States and another on the creation of an information portal on waste management for small island developing States, as requested by the Alliance of Small Island States. Two previously established partnerships were discussed in separate workshops: “White Water to Blue Water – A model for partnership building in the Wider Caribbean and

beyond” and “Cooperative Environmental Governance: Pacific SIDS Partnership on Wastewater and Recycling Initiatives”. Additionally, a side event entitled “Advancing the Oceans, Coast, SIDS, and Freshwater/Oceans Agenda in the next decade: key issues and opportunities” was held by the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands (see the following paragraph for more information on that forum).

14. UNEP, as the implementing agency of the GEF medium-sized project entitled “Fostering a global dialogue on oceans, coasts, and small island developing States, and on freshwater-coastal-marine interlinkages”, is facilitating the following objectives of the project in partnership with the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO and in cooperation with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development Coastal and Marine Secretariat, the IOC Sub-commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions, Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia, the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, various Mexican institutions and research centres and others:

- (a) Fostering cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder dialogues, policy analyses, and public outreach on oceans, coasts and small island developing States issues;
- (b) Promoting the attainment of intergovernmental commitments and agreements, including the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the GPA;
- (c) Establishing multi-sectoral dialogues, involving experts from developing countries, countries with economies in transition, and GEF large marine ecosystems projects in the policy analyses, public outreach and cross-learning between large marine ecosystems experiences and coastal and ocean management experiences;
- (d) Raising the awareness of and promote national ocean policies and ecosystem-based approaches to large marine ecosystems as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development of small island developing States;
- (e) Improving interlinkages between freshwater, coastal and oceans issues by developing a relationship between the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands and the World Water Forum and associated institutions.

15. UNEP is facilitating the implementation of the Coral Reef Initiative for the South Pacific in partnership with the French Development Agency; SPREP; the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, which hosts the coordination office; Conservation International; WWF; the United Nations Foundation; and others. This regional initiative of the French Government aims to promote the protection and sustainable management of the coral reefs of Pacific Island States and was designed as a vector of regional integration between the developed and developing countries of the Pacific.

E. Freshwater resources

16. In addressing the action “programmes to strengthen sanitation and sewerage systems” set out in the matrix of actions, UNEP and the Governments of Jamaica and Guyana are currently developing a project proposal for funding by the EU-ACP Water Facility. The project aims to support community level water and sanitation management with environmentally sound technologies in the two above-mentioned countries and focuses on improving access to drinking water and sanitation at the community level.

17. Furthermore, at the request of governments, UNEP is providing technical guidance and assistance to small island developing States in the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater, through wastewater pilot projects in the framework of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention), the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention) and the Convention for Co operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention), as well as in collaboration with the SPREP and the South Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission.

18. In line with the action “Programmes to improve infrastructure for water catchment, storage and distribution” set out in the matrix of actions, Grenada, with the support of UNEP, is promoting the use of rainwater through:

- (a) A national rainwater harvesting strategy to provide a framework for using the resource;

(b) An awareness-raising campaign for stakeholders on the importance of rainwater harvesting; and

(c) A set of GIS maps to indicate areas with high rainwater harvesting potential.

19. Moreover, as the Caribbean region is prone to natural disasters, a regional rainwater harvesting strategy and a instruction manual on the use of related technologies have been developed.

20. See also the GEF medium-sized project on “Fostering a Global Dialogue on Oceans, Coasts, and SIDS, and on Freshwater-Coastal-Marine Interlinkages” described in paragraph 14, above.

21. See also GEF integrated water resources and coastal area management projects below.

F. Land resources

22. Relating to the action “Programmes to reduce watershed and land degradation” set out in the matrix of actions, technical guidance and assistance is provided to small island developing States, including to river basin and coastal zone authorities, in the implementation of integrated coastal area and river management and in the framework of the GEF project entitled “Integrating watershed and coastal area management in small island developing States of the Caribbean”, which was initiated in January 2005 and covers 13 small island developing States. A similar project for the small island developing States in the Indian Ocean and Atlantic regions as well as one for the South Pacific region has been developed by the UNEP Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination and submitted to GEF.

G. Energy resources

23. UNEP Energy coordinates the Solar and Wind Energy Resource Assessment (SWERA) which is an international collaboration including more than 25 institutions covering major areas of 13 developing countries in Africa, Asia, Central and South America. Since its inception in 2001, SWERA has been developing a range of new information tools to stimulate renewable energy development. This project refers to the action “Programmes to enhance energy efficiency and further develop renewable energy options” with a focus on solar, wind, biomass, ocean thermal energy conversion set out in the matrix of actions to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy and brings together various organizations, such as the UNEP Risoe Centre on Energy, Climate and Sustainable Development, German Corporation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Tata Energy Research Institute, the United States National Renewable Energy Laboratory, among others.

H. Tourism resources

24. Regarding the action “Design and implementation of interdisciplinary, intersectoral partnerships in national environment management plans” contained in the matrix of actions, UNEP is supporting a sustainable tourism awareness programme in the Caribbean region, in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization, the University of the West Indies and the Caribbean Tourism Organization. In the framework of this programme, the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the University of the West Indies held the 2006 Small Island Developing States Tourism Conference in the Bahamas, to which UNEP contributed actively.

I. Biodiversity resources

25. Regarding the action “Support for the development of local capacity to protect and effectively use traditional knowledge” set out in the matrix, a project proposal on safeguarding the coastal and marine biodiversity and cultural diversity of tropical island systems in Palau, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, is being developed in collaboration with UNESCO for submission to GEF. The project aims to strengthen local and national capacities to mobilize endogenous resources for biodiversity conservation.

26. In addressing the action “educate and build community capacity to protect and conserve indigenous species and their habitats” set out in the matrix of actions, UNEP is assisting the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States in building the capacity of small island developing States to protect and conserve indigenous species and their habitats through a pilot project that aims to develop harmonized legislation for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat, the Convention

on Migratory Species, and the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife to the Cartagena Convention, in a coherent and integrated manner.

J. Capacity development and education

27. In the framework of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support Capacity-building the unique situation of small island developing States and their vulnerabilities will be taken into account while implementing specific projects.

28. In response to the action “support regional and national programmes to promote technical and vocational education” contained out in the matrix, the refrigeration management programme of the UNEP Ozone Secretariat contributes to capacity-building of refrigeration technicians and customs officers through specific training, for example in Asian and Pacific small island developing States such as Kiribati, Maldives, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Additionally, the information clearinghouse of OzonAction (<http://www.uneptie.org/ozonaction/>) provides technical and policy information as well as awareness materials which are applicable to small island developing States. The network of ozone officers facilitated by UNEP enables exchanges of experiences on compliance with the Montreal Protocol at the subregional and regional levels.

29. UNEP is a founding member of the Global Virtual University whose goal is to enhance distance learning on environment and sustainable development. Future expansion will include nodes of institutions from small island developing States.

30. UNEP continues to deliver a programme for mainstreaming environment in the university curricula of African universities, including a component for small island developing States. In addition, resource materials are being developed to enhance mainstreaming of environment in higher education globally.

31. The Division of Early Warning and Assessment provides assistance to small island developing States in the Caribbean to build their capacity to review and monitor their state of the environment through the Global Environment Outlook processes.

K. Capacity-building in environmental law, including multilateral environmental agreements¹

32. UNEP aims to provide advisory services and technical assistance for the development and implementation of the national environmental law of small island developing States through its Division of Policy Development and Law. The Division responds to requests from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to assist them with drafting and other issues relating to the implementation of their legislative and institutional frameworks.

33. A capacity-building programme has been developed to enhance compliance and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements in small island developing States. The programme includes training and the development of guidelines, manuals and tools to assist Governments to implement the multilateral environmental agreements to which they are party. Activities under the programme are carried out with local and regional partners working in the field of environmental law.

34. UNEP organizes various global, regional and national training programmes, which include participants from small island developing States. The training programmes aim, among other things, at building the capacity in environmental law of small island developing States through their participation in global and regional training programmes on environmental law and policy.

35. The implementation of the UNEP Judges Programme for the capacity-building of judges and related legal stakeholders in small island developing States covers subregional needs assessment and plans at the national level and takes place in various small island developing States.

36. In order to enhance the teaching of environmental law in institutions of higher learning in small island developing States, UNEP is responding to the need, expressed by various higher learning institutions, to enhance the teaching of environmental law by providing materials and developing curricula.

¹ This section is not specifically addressed in the Mauritius Strategy.

37. More specifically, UNEP continues to provide assistance to 13 countries in Africa, including Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe, in enhancing their national environmental legislation and related institutions under the Partnership for the Development of Environmental Law and Institutions in Africa (PADELIA). PADELIA, as phase II of the African Law Project, seeks to enhance the capacity of participating countries in the implementation of existing laws; developing legal instruments to fill gaps in existing laws; and enhancing capacity for sustained development and implementation of environmental law. This project is supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), FAO, IUCN and the World Bank.

38. In addition, UNEP has started to implement several GEF-funded projects relating to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs):

(a) “The Development of a National Implementation Plan for Cape Verde” on POPs;

(b) “Enabling Activities for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs): National Implementation Plan for The Commonwealth of The Bahamas”; and National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management” for Barbados.

39. At the request of the Government of Mauritius, the UNEP Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination developed a GEF medium-sized project proposal to assist Mauritius to strengthen its capacity to implement global environmental conventions on coastal development. The proposal is being revised in the light of comments made by the UNEP Senior Management Group prior to its submission to the GEF.

L. Governance

40. With respect to the action “support for the design and implementation of national sustainable development strategies in SIDS” contained in the matrix of actions to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy, UNEP developed a project proposal on improving water governance in ACP small island developing States: road mapping and assessing needs for the development of integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans, which was submitted to the EU-ACP Water Facility with the aim of achieving the integrated water resources management 2005 target agreed upon at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002, i.e., to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005.

41. In the case of the small island developing States grouped under the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the UNEP GPA Coordination Office is providing technical and financial advice to strengthen long-term sustainable financing for the implementation of national environmental management strategies.

42. The UNEP Regional Seas Programme organized the Seventh Global Meeting of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans in Helsinki, Finland, 18–20 October 2005, involving the Wider Caribbean, SPREP, South Asian Seas, and Western and Eastern African Regional Seas Programmes, among others, to address the challenges and processes involved in financing Regional Seas’ secretariats and programme implementation. This is related to the action “Strengthening regional mechanisms in support of sustainable development in SIDS” set out in the matrix of actions to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy.

43. A letter of intent regarding a strategic partnership has been signed between the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Water of the Maldives and UNEP. The partnership aims at enabling proactive and preventive measures towards promoting better management of ecosystems and focuses on strengthening collaboration in six areas during 2006–2008:

(a) Assessment and monitoring (e.g. national sustainable development strategy);

(b) Policy development (e.g. framework environmental laws);

(c) Training and human resource development;

(d) Awareness;

(e) Ecosystem restoration;

(f) Waste-free Maldives; and

(g) Facilitation of inputs to relevant South Asian subregional forums (South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation).

44. The action “identify/design programmes for SIDS-SIDS, South-South cooperation, particularly in sharing of best practices, capacity development and transfer of appropriate technology” is discussed in paragraph 50 of the present report, which describes cooperation between Caribbean small island developing States.

M. Trade and finance

45. Addressing the action “strengthen SIDS institutional capacity to develop trade-related policies and relevant regulatory measures”, set out in the matrix of actions, the activities in the framework of the UNEP Green Customs Initiative aim at building the capacity of customs officers to implement the Montreal Protocol in various countries, including small island developing States. The initiative also promotes common training of customs officers with several multilateral environmental agreements (Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions, and CITES) to enhance synergies between enforcement efforts.

III. Additional UNEP activities in the Caribbean

46. In the Caribbean subregion, UNEP continues to adopt a regionally-tailored and programmatic framework to the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy. This framework consists of the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme based in Kingston, Jamaica, which facilitates the implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols (Concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region; Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife and; on Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities), as well as the Caribbean SIDS Programme, based at the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Mexico City, Mexico, which was adopted at the XIV Forum of Ministers of the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Panama in November 2003.

47. The Caribbean Environment Programme is a conglomerate of legislative, programmatic and institutional frameworks and entities working together in assisting the nations and territories of the Wider Caribbean Region to protect their marine and coastal environment and promote sustainable development. It is managed by and for the diverse Caribbean nations and territories under a legal and programmatic framework they created in 1981 called the Caribbean Action Plan. The Action Plan led to the 1983 adoption of the Cartagena Convention.

48. It is worthy of note that, during the International Meeting to Review Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Mauritius in January 2005, UNEP organized a side event on compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements in small island developing States resulting in a series of recommendations, one of which was capacity-building on the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements in the context of the Caribbean Sea. As a follow-up, the Caribbean Environment Programme together with other UNEP divisions organized a capacity-building workshop to assist Caribbean small island developing States in meeting the legal obligations of the Cartagena Convention and related multilateral environmental agreements in Kingston, Jamaica, in July 2005.

49. The Caribbean SIDS Programme not only provides a comprehensive framework for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and the Barbados Programme of Action; but also a more rational approach for resource mobilization. Programme activities are grouped according to seven components:

- (a) Regional coordinating mechanism for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action;
- (b) Financial mechanism (regional sustainability fund);
- (c) Technical programme addressing a number of the thematic areas identified in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, including land resources, biodiversity, freshwater resources, energy resources and natural and environmental disasters;
- (d) Horizontal cooperation programme through South-South cooperation commencing with activities between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean small island developing States;

(e) Civil society support programme comprising two main elements : (i) development of a comprehensive regional, community-based environmental and public awareness programme in support of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (ii) and a project entitled “Your change for a better environment”;

(f) Targeted capacity development; and

(g) Specific focus initiatives, which respond to country-specific initiatives. Initiatives are currently being implemented in Dominica, Grenada and Jamaica.

50. A major strength of the framework provided by the Caribbean SIDS Programme, is that it has sought to build linkages with a range of partners, including between regional and international agencies and civil society, within a structured and coordinated framework. Partners in the implementation process vary according to activities. For example, the Partnership on Sustainable Land Management has a number of partners, including Caribbean small island developing States, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; UNEP, FAO, the secretariat of the Caribbean Community and Common Market, the University of the West Indies, civil society, GTZ, and the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development. The components and their activities relate to each other and cannot be considered as stand alone activities. Some of the activities that are underway are briefly outlined according to the thematic areas identified in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy.

N. Climate change

51. Through the Caribbean SIDS Programme, UNEP continues to provide logistical, financial and institutional support to the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre located in Belize.

O. Freshwater resources

52. The main form of work in this area is related to the sustainable management and utilization of coastal aquifers in Caribbean small island developing States. This is being developed through a partnership initiative on the management of coastal aquifers².

P. Land resources

53. The main flagship project under this thematic area is the Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management in Caribbean small island developing States. The partnership initiative has a number of components³ and is guided by a task force comprising representation from Caribbean small island developing States and regional and international organizations. The support office for the partnership initiative is provided by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago through the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development.

Q. Biodiversity resources

54. Two major initiatives are being undertaken to facilitate the implementation of the biodiversity elements of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. These are partnership initiatives on the sustainable management of non-timber forest products: creating opportunities for private sector involvement and the creation of alternative livelihoods for indigenous peoples and local communities, and the programme for the conservation and sustainable use of island biodiversity in Caribbean small island developing States.

² Components include vulnerability mapping of coastal aquifers; the development and replication of tools and methodologies for monitoring coastal aquifers; establishment of coastal aquifers in Caribbean SIDS as a basis for building capacity and strengthening technological capacity for the management of coastal aquifers and South-South Cooperation.

³ The components are the elaboration of National Action Plans; the establishment of a regional or subregional platform for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and building complementarities with other multilateral environmental agreements; the elaboration of integrated subregional action plans; development of methods and tools for monitoring and measuring land degradation; training research, capacity development and policy analysis; South-South cooperation; targeted GEF interventions and the harmonization of public policies on land degradation and land management.

R. Capacity development: education and environmental law

55. Activities in this area are aimed at strengthening and developing the capacity of Caribbean small island developing States to respond to the numerous environmental and sustainable development challenges confronting them. It is also being implemented so as to incorporate the needs identified by Caribbean small island developing States in response to the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. During the period under consideration, a number of specific activities have been undertaken, including the provision of technical and legal assistance to a number of Caribbean small island developing States (i.e. Governments of Dominica and Grenada) to facilitate the review of policies, legislation and institutional arrangements for environmental management and sustainable development from traditional knowledge; Caribbean workshop on the legal enforcement of the regional seas conventions and multilateral environmental agreements; and assessment of the needs and planning for presidents of judicial powers and high-level judges, in order to facilitate the development of national capacity-building programmes for judges and attorneys in the field of environmental law.

S. Trade and finance

56. An area of focus under this thematic area is the enhancement of capacity in Caribbean small island developing States in relation to the analysis of the inter-relationship between trade and environment and implications for the sustainable development of Caribbean small island developing States. The first in a series of activities planned to achieve this objective, was the recently concluded first intensive training course on trade and the environment, held in Barbados in May 2006. This training course was coordinated by the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat; the Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services; University of the West Indies; Cave Hill Campus and the Caribbean Development Policy Centre.

57. In response to the call from Caribbean small island developing States for the establishment of a regional financing mechanism, the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has provided technical assistance to the region in the formulation of a conceptual framework for a regional sustainability fund.

T. South-South cooperation

58. South-South cooperation between Caribbean small island developing States and Latin American countries is being used as an instrument for the sharing of experiences and the transfer of technologies in support of the attainment of the goals outlined in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. It is currently taking place within the context of the Caribbean SIDS Programme in the areas of renewable energy technologies, land degradation, water resources with special emphasis on the management of coastal aquifers, biosafety, trade and environment, climate change and disaster management. To oversee this South-South cooperation, the Forum of Ministers for Latin America and the Caribbean has established a ministerial support group chaired by the Government of Chile.

U. Other activities

59. A major initiative being undertaken within the context of the Caribbean SIDS Programme that is worthy of mention is the "Transforming of Dominica into an Environmentally Sound Organic Island" initiative. It is being led jointly by the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and the FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean and Barbados.