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Policy issues: state of the environment

Small island developing States

Report by the Executive Director

Summary

The present report is being submitted to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-fifth session for its consideration, pursuant to paragraph 5 of decision 24/6 of 9 February 2007 on small island developing States. It contains information on the progress made in the implementation of that decision.

* UNEP/GC.25/1.

Small island developing States: implementation of decision 24/6

I. Suggested action by the Governing Council

1. The Governing Council may wish to consider the adoption of a decision along the lines suggested below:

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decisions 23/5 of 25 February 2005 and 24/6 of 9 February 2007 on small island developing States,

Recalling also the United Nations Environment Programme medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013, as welcomed by decision SS.X/3 of 22 February 2008 on the medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013,

Takes note of the report of the Executive Director summarizing the activities undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme in the context of the implementation of decision 24/6.

II. Introduction

2. By its decision 24/6, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum reiterated that small island developing States were particularly vulnerable to the effects of environmental degradation and that international cooperation towards strengthening their adaptive resilience to address such vulnerability was urgently needed. By that decision, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to enhance further UNEP activities on small island developing States with a view to identifying further efforts, including any institutional arrangements, taking fully into account General Assembly resolution 61/196, to mainstream properly the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States into the work of UNEP.

3. By decision 24/6, the Governing Council recalled its previous decisions on small island developing States, particularly its decision 23/5 adopted at its twenty-third session immediately after the International Meeting for the 10-Year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. In that decision, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to continue strengthening activities related to small island developing States on a tailored and regional basis and further to rationalize delivery by UNEP in the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, the South China Seas and the Caribbean region, using the network of UNEP regional offices, regional seas programmes, conventions and action plans, and partners to the greatest extent possible. In the same decision, the Governing Council also requested the Executive Director to ensure that the activities that UNEP undertakes in relation to small island developing States contribute to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

4. The present document reports on the activities undertaken by UNEP to comply with its mandate as provided by the Governing Council decisions on small island developing States. It should be noted, however, that since the adoption of decision 23/5 UNEP has focused on the design of a coordinated programme on small island developing States to be mainstreamed into its programmes of work, including the mobilization of the necessary resources, and to be aligned with the six cross-cutting thematic priorities identified in the medium-term strategy 2010–2013. New structured programmes are underway and significant outcomes and benefits to small island developing States are anticipated in the multiple areas addressed by the Mauritius Strategy.

III. Summary of UNEP results achieved

5. Since the twenty-fourth session of the Council/Forum, UNEP has continued to undertake activities in small island developing States aimed mainly at supporting them, given their unique situation, in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy following the tailored and regional approach called for in decision 23/5.

6. In the Mauritius Strategy, small island developing States committed themselves to promoting sustainable development, eradicating poverty and improving the livelihoods of their peoples by implementing strategies that build resilience and capacities to address their unique and particular

vulnerabilities. UNEP has supported the building of resilience and the creation of capacities in a manner responsive to the particular needs of small island developing States. To that end, UNEP is implementing the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded project on coastal resilience to climate change: developing a generalizable method for assessing vulnerability and adaptation of mangroves and associated ecosystems, with the overall goal of increasing the resilience of vulnerable mangrove and coral reef ecosystems to the impacts of climate change. In addition, UNEP has organized various preparatory meetings for climate change negotiators from the Alliance of Small Island States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to articulate their national and regional positions with regard to the specific building blocks of the Bali Road Map. UNEP has also strengthened the capacity of Caribbean small island developing States to tackle issues related to integrated land management, such as through the establishment of a biological corridor between the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

7. UNEP has developed tools and provided training for building technical, institutional and human capacity on municipal wastewater management, primarily in African, Caribbean and Pacific small island developing States. To date, 925 professionals from 57 countries have been trained. In addition, the training programme comprises training for local instructors, thereby building regional capacity for replication and cost-effective upscaling.

8. UNEP efforts to promote the importance of integrated approaches to the management of watersheds and coastal areas include the successful implementation of projects on integrating management of watersheds and coastal areas in small island States in the Caribbean, which supports 13 Caribbean small island developing States, and on implementing sustainable integrated water resource and wastewater management in the Pacific Island Countries, which supports 14 Pacific small island developing States. A project on implementing integrated water resource and wastewater management in Atlantic and Indian Ocean small island developing States, which is expected to support six small island developing States in those two regions, has been submitted to GEF.

9. As a result of the activities of UNEP and its partners to address the development of regional strategies on chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), aimed at phasing out CFCs as required under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, projects related to the recovery and recycling of ozone-depleting substances are under way in all regions, benefiting nine Pacific, 14 Caribbean and six Atlantic and Indian Ocean small island developing States.

10. In line with the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNEP is supporting financially and technically the assessment of economic, social and environmental impacts of trade-related policies in the agricultural sector, with particular focus on biodiversity impacts. This UNEP initiative aims to enhance capacity in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to develop policy recommendations that safeguard biological diversity while maximizing sustainable development gains from trade liberalization in the agricultural sector.

11. Efforts to tackle land-based activities that harm rivers, estuaries and coastal waters in the Western Indian Ocean have led to the completion of the following measures and outputs:

- (a) Regional policy, legal and institutional review of the management of land-based sources and activities of marine pollution;
- (b) Status of marine litter in all small island developing States in the region;
- (c) Status of municipal wastewater in the Western Indian Ocean region;
- (d) Regional guidelines on environmental assessment in the Western Indian Ocean;
- (e) Transboundary diagnostic analysis and framework strategic action programme on land-based sources and activities management for the Western Indian Ocean region.

12. Achievements in the efforts of UNEP to support the design and implementation of national plans of action to tackle land-based sources and activities of marine pollution, in line with the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, include the development of national plans of action in Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu and support for the development of plans of action in a potential total of 15 countries of the wider Caribbean region.

13. In the area of sustainable tourism, UNEP is implementing a regional project on demonstrating and capturing best practices and technologies for the reduction of land-sourced impacts resulting from coastal tourism. The objective of the project is to tackle the negative impacts of tourism on the coastal and marine environment of sub-Saharan Africa.

14. In the area of mainstreaming coastal and marine issues into national development planning and budgetary processes, three regional workshops have been conducted in the context of the Global Programme of Action to date, in the Caribbean, Eastern Africa and South Asia, to support relevant efforts and facilitate the sharing of national-level experiences. Presentations and discussions at the workshops have helped countries to reach a new level of understanding of the mainstreaming approach and created incentives to expedite the mainstreaming process.

15. In its efforts to facilitate the production of renewable energy, UNEP is currently implementing a pilot project in Cuba on the generation and delivery of renewable energy-based modern energy services. The main objective of the project is to establish commercial business models for renewable technologies providing modern energy services on the Caribbean island of Isla de la Juventud and to facilitate their replication to other small islands both in the Caribbean and in other regions.

16. In addition to the above summary of the overall achievements of UNEP in implementing decision 24/6, the present report goes on to outline in more detail the work programmes and activities of its 2007–2008 programme of work for small island developing States in various regions. Most of the activities can be clustered under the thematic areas outlined in the Mauritius Strategy. Where appropriate, reference is made to future planned activities that have been incorporated into project proposals following the modality of the delivery of subprogrammes through projects as part of the management arrangements for the implementation of the programme of work 2010–2011.

17. UNEP staff members have devoted considerable time to the development of project proposals for potential financing sources, such as GEF, the African, Caribbean and Pacific-European Union Water Facility and national development agencies, to mobilize meaningful resources for implementing actions in the framework of the Mauritius Strategy as they relate to the mandate of UNEP and to the medium-term strategy 2010–2013. As a knowledge-based organization, UNEP is called upon to provide credible thematic leadership in each of the six cross-cutting thematic priorities of the medium-term strategy: climate change, disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, harmful substances and hazardous waste, resource efficiency – sustainable consumption and production.

18. UNEP is, moreover, developing a work plan aligned to the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building that mainstreams the Mauritius Strategy into its programme of work and sets out priority outcomes to be achieved. The work plan on small island developing States will constitute one of the components of the UNEP marine and coastal strategy and is intended to be an institution-wide planned, strategic approach to the work of UNEP on small island developing States. It is expected that the UNEP marine and coastal strategy, which is being developed by the Coastal and Marine Branch of the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, will be finalized by 2009. The strategy will assist in directing programmes for small island developing States within UNEP in a more strategic and coordinated manner. In addition, the overall coordination of UNEP activities for small island developing States has been assigned to a staff member in the Coastal and Marine Branch.

IV. UNEP activities according to the thematic areas outlined in the Mauritius Strategy

19. The present section provides a list of UNEP activities grouped in accordance with the thematic areas outlined in the Mauritius Strategy, from climate change and sea-level rise to knowledge management and information for decision-making. In pursuit of the Bali Strategic Plan and the relevant Governing Council decisions on South-South cooperation, information on South-South cooperation has been added at the end of the section. Additional information on each of the activities, such as the objective or outcome, status of the progress, impact, geographic focus and collaborators may be found in annexes I and II to document UNEP/GC.25/INF/18.

A. Climate change and sea-level rise

20. UNEP has undertaken several activities related to climate change and sea-level rise, many of which are currently under way in the Caribbean:

(a) Implementation of the global GEF-funded project on coastal resilience to climate change: developing a generalizable method for assessing vulnerability and adaptation of mangroves and associated ecosystems. The purpose of the project is to develop a generalizable method and process to develop an effective adaptation strategy that could be adapted to various sites within common ecosystems;

- (b) Project on preparing for the threat of sea level rise – climate-proofing coastal zone management is awaiting funding in 2009. It aims to prepare islands for the threat of sea-level rise through the development of climate-proofing options that can be integrated in the development and management processes of vulnerable coastal zones, particularly in small island developing States;
- (c) Project on coastal adaptation to climate change – a case study in the Pacific Islands – training and capacity-building, which will test and implement the draft guidelines on coastal adaptation to climate change and build local capacities to undertake adaptation measures;
- (d) Report on climate change in the Caribbean and the challenge of adaptation, which is being completed;
- (e) Support for the development of regional strategies on CFCs, which is being provided with the primary aim of phasing out CFCs as required under the Montreal Protocol.

B. Natural and environmental disasters

21. UNEP has undertaken a number of activities related to natural and environmental disasters, including:

- (a) Development of economic incentives for the rural sector to undertake disaster preparedness activities;
- (b) Technical assistance to Haiti and Jamaica for coastal rehabilitation, development, disaster preparedness and mitigation;
- (c) Capacity-building for marine pollution prevention and oil spill response;
- (d) Development of guiding principles for post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction.

22. The 12 principles for sustainable coastal rehabilitation, developed in 2005, have been disseminated through the Global Programme of Action, with support for implementation to the tsunami-affected countries and others.

C. Management of waste

23. UNEP has undertaken the following activities on the management of waste:

- (a) Implementation of the GEF-funded project on pollution reduction through improved municipal wastewater management in coastal cities in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries with a focus on small island developing States, by means of 20 training courses to build capacity at the national and municipal levels in wastewater management;
- (b) Project on the development of national implementation plans for the management of persistent organic pollutants, designed to strengthen national capacity to manage such pollutants and assist countries to meet their obligations under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants;
- (c) Project on enabling activities for the Stockholm Convention and national implementation plans, which aims to create sustainable capacity to fulfil national obligations under that Convention, particularly by the preparation of national implementation plans for persistent organic pollutants;
- (d) Project on supporting the persistent organic pollutant global monitoring plan, which will enable small island developing States in the Pacific and East Africa to contribute national persistent organic pollutant analyses for reporting under the Global Monitoring Plan;
- (e) Regional programme of action and demonstration of sustainable alternatives to DDT for malaria vector control in Mexico and Central America (including Belize), designed to prevent the reintroduction of DDT for vector control by promoting new integrated control techniques and implementing a coordinated regional programme to improve national capacities;
- (f) Promotion of integrated management of solid and hazardous wastes and an integrated life-cycle approach to the management of chemicals in the wider Caribbean region, with a view to supporting continued cooperation between the secretariats of the Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and the Basel

Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal in the areas of used oil and used lead acid batteries;

(g) Projects related to ozone layer protection, which also have training components on best practices in recovery and recycling of ozone-depleting substances, under way in all regions in cooperation with other implementing and bilateral agencies for the Montreal Protocol. The activities address the required action set out in the Mauritius Strategy of promoting the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and waste-management initiatives;

(h) Project on halon management, addressing a range of issues surrounding the use and management of halon substances, such as technical assistance, awareness-raising and demonstration activities, and establishing an internet-based Caribbean regional halon clearing house;

(i) Implementation of a project on methyl bromide phase-out, aimed at facilitating the phase-out of remaining non-quarantine and pre-shipment uses;

(j) Strengthening cooperation with the refrigerant sector and Customs officials for managing ozone-depleting substances in Africa;

(k) Multi-country project, which is being developed to improve waste management in the Pacific islands with the objective of supporting the application of what is known as the “3R” principle – reduce, reuse and recycle. These aim to promote very high efficiency in resource flows as a way of sustaining improvement in quality of life within natural and economic constraints, with a view to maximizing resource efficiency and to minimizing waste discharge and environmental pollution, including such that affect the coastal and marine environment. The focus of the project is on market-driven mechanisms and the involvement of the private sector;

(l) E-waste initiative, under which UNEP is assessing a programme for the environmentally sound management of electrical and electronic waste in the Pacific islands focused on minimizing waste generation.

D. Coastal and marine resources

24. The Global Programme of Action continues to provide technical and financial assistance to small island developing States in response to the specific call made in the Mauritius Strategy, which also requests that relevant initiatives address the vulnerability of small island developing States. Continuing projects and activities include:

(a) Implementation of a capacity-building programme for improving municipal wastewater management;¹

(b) Mainstreaming coastal and marine issues in national development planning and budgetary processes;

(c) Technical support to small island developing States to develop their national programmes of action to tackle land-based sources of marine pollution as case studies for the Pacific region and the Caribbean;

(d) Support to the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme to coordinate a regional project to facilitate operation of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific working groups associated with Global Programme of Action-related initiatives, and to support national Governments to develop national plans of action and align them with national sustainable development strategies;

(e) The project on land-based activities in the Western Indian Ocean aims to ensure the environmentally sustainable management and development of the West Indian Ocean region by reducing land-based activities that harm rivers, estuaries and coastal waters.

25. The project on integrated management of watersheds and coastal areas in small island States in the Caribbean will strengthen the commitment and capacity of participating countries to implement an integrated approach to the management of watersheds and coastal areas.²

1 See paragraph 23 (a) under section C.

2 See paragraph 43 under section E.

26. The project on demonstrations of innovative approaches to the rehabilitation of heavily contaminated bays in the wider Caribbean will implement a pilot project for the construction of a sewage treatment plant in the Luyano River area, identified as the main source of pollution to Havana Bay.
27. The second regional overview of land-based sources and activities in the wider Caribbean region and support to the further development of technical report No. 33³ will provide updated information on all point and non-point source discharges into, or impacting, the area of the Cartagena Convention, establish a new baseline from which to measure progress under the protocol concerning pollution from land-based sources and activities to that Convention and will confirm or reconfirm priority sources and pollutants in the wider Caribbean, including heavily contaminated bays.
28. The second phase of the programme to develop national programmes of action builds on lessons learned from earlier projects that developed national plans of action and provides coordinating support to the new regional partnerships between the UNEP Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit and the Global Programme of Action to facilitate the development of national plans of action in the wider Caribbean.
29. A workshop convened under the auspices of the Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Cartagena Convention focused on creating national awareness of the protocol and strengthening the capacity of countries to accede to, and implement, it.
30. The project on implementation of the regional action plan for the sustainable management of marine litter assisted in further environmental protection and sustainable development of the wider Caribbean region through the continuing implementation of the plan.
31. A workshop on marine litter and the implementation of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto, was held to review the draft regional action plan for the sustainable management of marine litter and the implications of the special area status of the Caribbean Sea as detailed in annex V of the Convention.
32. The International Year of the Reef 2008 was implemented through the regional Coral Reef Consultation for the Wider Caribbean, which ascertained the types of new science that are needed to improve coral reef management regionally and how existing science can best be applied to help regional managers. Support was also given to the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems, including International Coral Reef Initiative activities.⁴
33. The sixth regional training-of-trainers course in marine protected area management dealt with all aspects of management of such areas for Spanish-speaking countries.
34. The wider Caribbean region, through the development of a Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management, will help to mobilize greater investments in wastewater management, including treatment facilities. In the context of the Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Cartagena Convention, the project will provide sustainable financing for the implementation of environmentally acceptable, sustainable and cost-effective wastewater management measures.
35. Implementation of the project on reduction of environmental impacts from tropical shrimp trawling, through introduction of by-catch technologies and change of management, aims to reduce discard and by-catch.
36. The project on combating living resource depletion and coastal area degradation in the Guinea Current large marine ecosystem through ecosystem-based regional actions is focused on developing solutions to the priority problems and issues identified by the 16 countries within the Guinea Current area that have led to unsustainable fishing and use of other marine resources, together with the degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems by human activities. The project focuses on nine demonstration projects, designed to be replicable and to demonstrate how specific actions can lead to dramatic improvements.

3 *Regional Overview of Land-Based Sources of Pollution in the Wider Caribbean Region*. CEP Technical Report No. 33. Caribbean Environment Programme, Kingston, 1994.

4 See paragraph 59 under section I.

37. A project on demonstrating and capturing best practices and technologies for the reduction of land-sourced impacts resulting from coastal tourism will address the negative impacts of tourism on the coastal and marine environment of sub-Saharan Africa.⁵

38. UNEP is leading the project to implement sustainable integrated water resource and wastewater management in Pacific island countries to strengthen the enabling environment for the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for International Waters of the Pacific Islands Region to promote sustainable development.⁶

39. The UNEP Shelf Programme aims at providing small island developing States with the data necessary to make a claim to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf for an extension of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. Support to various small island developing States, mainly in Africa, is currently being provided.

40. Coral-reef related activities in small island developing States have been undertaken by the UNEP Regional Seas programmes and through the International Coral Reef Action Network. The following activities have been implemented, among others:

- (a) Coral reef initiative for the South Pacific;
- (b) South Asia marine conservation and protected areas project;
- (c) Coastal and marine management and education in the South-Eastern Caribbean.

41. The project on implementing integrated water resource and wastewater management in Atlantic and Indian Ocean small island developing States is addressing water and marine-related constraints and barriers through the development of integrated water resource management mechanisms and water use efficiency strategies.

E. Freshwater resources

42. Rainwater harvesting is currently being promoted to increase the availability of freshwater resources in small island developing States in the Caribbean. The first phase of this activity supported Pacific small island developing States.

43. The project on integrating management of watersheds and coastal areas in small island States in the Caribbean supports small island developing States to tackle issues related to the integrated management of watersheds and coastal areas.

44. The 2007–2008 project to evaluate needs assessment guidance to develop national plans for domestic wastewater pollution reduction through implementation of sewerage needs assessment pilot projects in the wider Caribbean is a follow-up to the sewage collection and treatment project, which was designed to assist Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and other Caribbean environment programme member States in meeting sewage-specific obligations contained in the protocol to that Convention.

45. A regional workshop on environmentally sound water and wastewater services at the community level in the Caribbean provided for the sharing of innovative environmentally sustainable methods of water provision and wastewater treatment primarily at the community level.

F. Land resources

46. The Partnership Initiative on Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management has been initiated to assist Caribbean small island developing States in tackling the issues of sustainable land management, rural development and alternative livelihood development.

47. Technical assistance has been provided to facilitate the implementation of the initiative to support Caribbean small island developing States in meeting their obligations under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or

5 See paragraph 54 under section H.

6 See section E on freshwater resources.

Desertification, Particularly in Africa and the land management component of the Barbados Programme of Action.

48. The Biological Corridor, located between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, will provide the framework for the rehabilitation of degraded land and ecosystems in Haiti.

49. The 10-year integrated management programme on transforming Dominica into an environmentally sound organic island will use the country's natural resources – water, forest, biodiversity and productive agriculture – as the basis for the country's transformation.

G. Energy resources

50. A project on the generation and delivery of renewable energy-based modern energy services will establish commercial business models for renewable technologies providing modern energy services on Isla de la Juventud, Cuba, for replication in other small islands, both in the Caribbean and elsewhere.

51. Technical assistance to facilitate renewable energy initiatives in the Caribbean small island developing States in the areas of biofuels aims to focus particular attention on biomass derived from the sugar industry.

52. A project on solar and wind energy resource assessment aims at facilitating investment in large-scale use of solar and wind energy technologies.

H. Tourism resources

53. A project on mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism through the development and dissemination of best practices will mainstream biodiversity conservation into the tourism industry of two of the world's most biodiverse countries: Belize and Ecuador.

54. A project on demonstrating and capturing best practices and technologies for the reduction of land-sourced impacts resulting from coastal tourism aims to demonstrate best practice strategies for sustainable tourism to reduce the degradation of marine and coastal environments of transboundary significance and to combat the negative impacts of tourism on the coastal and marine environment of sub-Saharan Africa.

I. Biodiversity resources

55. Jointly with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, work is under way to promote the island biodiversity programme of work. Examples include the campaign to celebrate Pacific island biodiversity and the production of media reports on island biodiversity to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the current status, issues and trends of biodiversity in the Pacific region.

56. A project on strengthening protected areas in the wider Caribbean region aims at strengthening the Caribbean marine protected area managers network and forum through the implementation of a five-year strategic plan for capacity-building and enhancing communication skills.

57. A project on guidelines for protected areas and species management will produce guidelines and criteria for the listing of protected areas under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife to the Cartagena Convention and the compilation of a preliminary list of protected areas under that Protocol to initiate a regional network and cooperation between the areas.

58. A project on the conservation of threatened and endangered species will implement the priority actions of the regional action plan for marine mammals for the wider Caribbean region; update the regional manatee management plan for the region; support the development of sea turtle conservation and recovery priority actions; build capacity for the management of the conch and lobster fisheries.

59. The project on conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems, including International Coral Reef Initiative activities, builds on the experiences in Mesoamerica from the International Coral Reef Action Network Mesoamerican Reef Alliance Project and will further strengthen capacity in sustainable marine recreation practices and environmental performance assessments, while forming alliances with local businesses, marine protected area managers and local communities.

60. The project on sustainable conservation of globally important Caribbean bird habitats with a view to strengthening a regional network for a shared resource aims to enhance the conservation status of globally important sites for biodiversity in the Caribbean by strengthening local and national partnerships and increasing awareness of Caribbean biodiversity and the issues affecting it.
61. A project to support the assessment of capacity-building needs and country-specific priorities in the conservation of biodiversity and participation in the national clearing-house mechanism will assist in identifying the capacity-building needs and country-specific priorities in the conservation of biodiversity and establish a national workable clearing-house mechanism.
62. A project on support to the implementation of the national biosafety framework is assisting Mauritius to meet the objective of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, ensuring an adequate level of protection in the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology.
63. A project on mitigating the threats of invasive alien species in the insular Caribbean aims at the mitigation of the threats to biodiversity and the local economy of invasive alien species in the insular Caribbean. The Global Environment Facility and the Pacific Alliance for Sustainability, in conjunction with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, are working on the joint development of the initiative on the management of invasive species, which aims at reducing the environmental and economic impacts of invasive alien species in both terrestrial and marine habitats in the Pacific.
64. The integrated assessment of trade-related policies and biological diversity in the agricultural sector in Mauritius aims to enhance capacity in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries is intended to develop policy recommendations that safeguard biological diversity while maximizing sustainable development gains from trade liberalization in the agriculture sector.
65. UNEP participates in the Global Island Partnership, which assists islands in tackling one of the world's greatest challenges: to conserve and use sustainably the invaluable island natural resources that support people, cultures, and livelihoods in their island homes around the world.
66. A project on building capacities in small island developing States on access to genetic resources and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from their use has been developed to strengthen the negotiation capacities of small island developing States both at the global and regional level, focusing mainly on the forthcoming tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Japan in 2010, at which an international regime on access to and sharing of benefits is expected to be adopted. In addition, the project aims at the national level to strengthen the legislative, policy and institutional capacity of selected small island developing States.

J. Science and technology

67. The Regional Network in Marine Science and Technology for the Caribbean: the Know-why Network project seeks to implement the protocol concerning pollution from land-based sources and activities to the Cartagena Convention, in particular, the obligations on monitoring and assessment and development of information systems and reporting. The specific objectives are to update existing information of all point and non-point sources of pollution into the Cartagena Convention area through additional scientific analysis; to enhance the capacity of the communication, education, training and awareness subprogramme of the Caribbean Environment Programme by developing the pollution information module; and to enhance countries capacity for using other technologies, such as remote sensing and mapping of pollution data and information.

K. Trade

68. The project on integrated assessment of trade-related policies and biodiversity in the agricultural sector is supporting, both financially and technically, beneficiary countries to assess the economic, social and environmental impacts of trade-related policies in the agricultural sector, with particular focus on biodiversity impacts. This initiative aims to enhance capacity in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to develop policy recommendations that safeguard biological diversity while maximizing sustainable development gains from trade liberalization in the agriculture sector.
69. Support to biotrade in the Dominican Republic is provided to promote sustainable biotrade practices in selected rural communities living on the Dominican Republic-Haiti border, contributing to the improvement of their life quality and poverty alleviation through sustainable entrepreneurial activities.

L. Sustainable capacity development and education for sustainable development

70. Environmental education and awareness activities include:

(a) Curricula review at the secondary level with the objective of recommending additional modules and resources. This exercise is being conducted in five Pacific island countries, namely, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu;

(b) In cooperation with the University of the South Pacific and the Pacific Youth Environment Network, UNEP organized a future leaders forum in April 2007, which was intended to empower young leaders with information and knowledge;⁷

(c) In cooperation with the Pacific Youth Environment Network, UNEP is preparing a youth and sustainability toolkit, which is a training toolkit for the future leaders forum to be used for training and capacity-building purposes within the Pacific small island developing States. It is expected to be widely distributed by South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

71. Human resource development initiatives include:

(a) Co-funding of scholarships for the second phase of the Pacific islands community conservation course with University of the South Pacific;

(b) Applied research and attachment programmes;

(c) Development of a conservation project management toolkit.

72. A pilot project is under way for the development of integrated legislation with a view to the incorporation into domestic law in countries of the Pacific of the chemicals conventions, namely, the Stockholm and Basel conventions, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Waigani Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region.

73. The project on enhancing synergetic implementation of biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements through the development of national multilateral environmental agreement implementation plans by selected countries in Latin America and the Caribbean is aimed at enhancing the national strategies and national action plans for the implementation of biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements by providing assistance.

74. An initiative to organize preparatory meetings for climate change negotiators from the Alliance of Small Island States is aimed at assisting member countries of the Alliance that are Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change to articulate their national and regional policy positions with regard to the specific building blocks of the Bali Road Map, particular agenda items of sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the fourteenth and fifteenth sessions of the Conference of the Parties and the fourth and fifth sessions of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol.

75. Phase II of the UNEP Organization of Eastern Caribbean States model harmonized biodiversity legislation project aims at building on the work of phase I, which included the drafting of model harmonized biodiversity legislation for the nine countries of the Organization. Phase II is aimed at developing model biodiversity legislation in three selected Organization countries.

76. The European Community programme on capacity-building related to multilateral environmental agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries is a capacity-building project to build the capacity of African, Caribbean and Pacific small island developing States to implement their respective obligations under multilateral environmental agreements and honour related commitments, thereby resulting in sound management of the environment and natural resources.

77. A Quick Start Programme trust fund was established to support activities to enable initial capacity-building and implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals

⁷ In the preamble to the Mauritius Strategy, small island developing States recognize the integral role of youth in sustainable development and the need to ensure their participation in programmes and activities related to the sustainable development of small island developing States.

Management and to give priority to the urgent needs of least developed countries and small island developing States. Since the Fund became operational in late 2006, the inter-agency trust fund implementation committee has, as of May 2008, approved projects for 13 small island developing States. The projects address the three Programme strategic priorities: developing or updating of national chemicals profiles; building on the work of chemicals-related international agreements and initiatives; and mainstreaming chemicals management in national development planning.

78. A project on capacity development in geographic information systems for the land-based sources regional activity centre at the Centre for Engineering and Environmental Management of Bays and Coasts (Centro de ingeniería y manejo ambiental de bahías y costas) in Cuba aims to develop the institutional capabilities of the centre in the use of geographic information systems.

79. Training courses on the drafting of model environmental legislation for the Caribbean small island developing States and implementation of environmental treaties are intended to support legislative drafting on environmental issues.

80. A project on expedited financing for interim capacity-building measures in priority areas is being implemented as an interim capacity-building activity for the period between the initial and the second national communications to the Framework Convention on Climate Change. It complements the activities of the first phase of the project, related to the initial communication, while forming the basis for initiation of the second national communication.

81. A project on national capacity self-assessment for global environmental management aims to identify country-level priorities and needs for capacity-building to address global environmental issues, in particular biological diversity, climate change, and land degradation, and the synergies between them, with the aim of catalysing domestic or externally assisted action to meet those needs in a coordinated and planned manner.

82. Four academics from two small island developing States, Mauritius and Seychelles, underwent training in two international training programmes on mainstreaming environment and sustainability in African university partnerships. The main objective of the training course was to provide an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences in environment and sustainable development in the higher education sector and deepen understanding of the environmental, social, cultural and economic dynamics of sustainable development.

83. Other environmental education and training activities in small island developing States include:

(a) Supporting the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Mauritius in conducting research into sustainable technologies for composting paper waste and for providing more sustainable energy resources for Mauritius. This is part of a broader eco-campus initiative that involves the development of a general environmental management module for all students, an environmental awareness campaign for students and staff and a community engagement component;

(b) Supporting the establishment of the University of Seychelles through a core module on the sustainable development of small island States, which includes issues such as climate change, management of ecosystem services, sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity and tourism.

M. Sustainable production and consumption

84. Mauritius has been selected by UNEP as one of the pilot countries for the development of a national programme and action plan on sustainable consumption and production. A memorandum of understanding was signed between UNEP and the Ministry of Environment in May 2007 for the elaboration of the programme by July 2008. The national programme on sustainable consumption and production for Mauritius is currently being finalized.

N. National and regional enabling environments⁸

85. The Third Conference of the Pacific Youth and Environment Network will take place in early 2009 at the University of the South Pacific in Suva. It is the annual network meeting of the Pacific Youth under the UNEP Global Tunza Strategy. The Conference is being organized by the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, in partnership with the University of the South Pacific.

86. The Asia-Pacific civil society meeting on international environmental governance will include an Asia-Pacific civil society statement for inputs to the Global Civil Society Forum, which is to be held in parallel with the twenty-fifth session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

87. UNEP is providing advisory services and co-organizing the Council for Trade and Economic Development as a follow-up to the Council meeting held in April 2008.

88. Support is being provided to the Government of Suriname in the preparation of a proposal for cooperation to assist the Government in formulating an environmental action plan for the country.

89. The implementation of the "Micronesia challenge" project, on sustainable finance systems for island protected area management, aims at the development and application of sustainable finance systems and policies that will provide sustainable long-term core resources for effective and adaptive conservation strategies across the three country proponents of the project, namely, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Palau.

O. Knowledge management and information for decision-making

90. The *Mauritius Environment Outlook* report, currently being finalized, will present the state and trends of the environment, outlook and scenarios and policy options of the country within the framework of the implementation of the Africa Environment Information Network to build countries' capacity to establish essential data foundation and information for decision-making.

91. There will be promotion and utilization of Global Environment Outlook tools and processes in the Pacific through the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme participation in the "Assessment of assessments" exercise to be conducted within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly resolution A/60/30 of 29 November 2005 on the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment including social and economic aspects.

92. Capacity development for integrated environmental assessment is being undertaken with emphasis on the generation of meaningful information for decision-making and the maximizing of policy impacts of environmental assessment and reporting.

93. With the aim of furthering cooperation on capacity-building in the South Pacific subregion, and in line with the Bali Strategic Plan, UNEP and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme are considering, subject to the availability of resources, the implementation of the following activities:

(a) Capacity-building in integrated environmental assessment for the South Pacific to produce a South Pacific Environment Outlook report. The assessment will focus on climate change impacts and adaptation and will complement and aim to support national and regional actions set out in the 2009 programme of work of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, particularly under component 2.3 on environmental governance, and the action plan for the implementation of the Pacific islands framework for action on climate change 2006–2015;

(b) Training courses to build the capacity of governmental and scientific institutions in mapping vulnerability to climate change and ecosystem change and risk reduction at the national and regional levels as a basis for adaptation planning, financing and cost-effective preventive actions. Beneficiary countries will be small island developing States in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean. This activity is to be implemented together with the integrated environmental assessments capacity-building described above.

94. Preparation and publication of integrated environmental assessments for Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti using the Global Environment Outlook conceptual framework.

⁸ This thematic area of the Mauritius Strategy refers also to governance and in this sense it is linked to the UNEP medium-term strategy 2010–2013 relevant subprogramme.

95. Integrated environmental assessments are also under completion for cities such as Georgetown and Santo Domingo, using the Global Environment Outlook for Cities approach. The “GEO Youth Caribbean”, which is the integrated environmental assessment of the Caribbean undertaken by young people using the Global Environment Outlook for Youth approach is to be completed in November 2008.
96. Urban environmental profiles of three cities in Cuba (Santa Clara, Holguín and Cienfuegos), using the Global Environment Outlook approach, are being undertaken and are scheduled for finalization in the third quarter of 2008.
97. UNEP is supporting the eighth annual collaborative assessment network meeting and national sustainable development strategies workshop to be held in Bangkok in November 2008 and associated follow-up activities.
98. The international waters learning exchange and resource network “IW:LEARN” has been established by UNEP to test the effectiveness of cross-focal area networking among a regional cluster of current and future GEF-funded projects in the wider Caribbean region to promote the integration of efforts, synergies, identification of gaps, conflicts and opportunities and support information resources to facilitate networking, knowledge-sharing and facilitated dialogue.
99. UNEP is supporting a regional meeting on developing a strategy for the management of data and information for the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit subprogramme on assessment and management of environmental pollution.
100. A project proposal on ecosystem services has been submitted to the GEF Council for its consideration in December 2008. The project is designed to tackle some of the remaining challenges highlighted by the independent evaluations of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which include the lack of focus on subglobal assessments within the original assessment and, more importantly, the limited impacts of the assessment findings on policy-making processes.

P. South-South cooperation

101. South-South cooperation between Caribbean small island developing States and Latin American countries is being used as an instrument for sharing experiences and transferring technologies in support of the attainment of the goals outlined in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. This modality of cooperation is currently taking place within the context of the UNEP Caribbean small island developing States 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 of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, for which the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean is the secretariat, has established a ministerial support group chaired by the Government of Chile. The Regional Office has also held a series of consultations with the ministers of environment of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti to explore the possibility of establishing South-South cooperation mechanisms that would support the three small island developing States’ capacity-building projects in common priority areas.

V. UNEP specific actions at the subregional level of the Caribbean and the Pacific

A. Caribbean small island developing States

102. In the Caribbean subregion, UNEP continues to work on the development and implementation of a regionally tailored and programmatic framework to support the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. This framework consists of the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme based in Kingston, which facilitates the implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its protocols, together with the Caribbean small island developing States programme, based at the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Panama City.

103. The sixteenth session of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was convened in Santo Domingo in January 2008. Ministers adopted a decision on small island developing States. That decision is a follow-up to its decision 4 of 2003, which established the Caribbean small island developing States programme. One of the working tools included in the strategy

for running the programme is the need for consultation with the Caribbean small island developing States, including civil society, the private sector, and regional and subregional institutions. In addition, links and partnerships with international, regional and subregional organizations have been developed. Following those two lines of action, various activities have been carried out pursuant to the mandates stipulated in the decisions of the Forum of Ministers. UNEP delivery in the Caribbean takes place in the framework of the Caribbean small island developing States programme, together with the Caribbean Environment Programme, which serves the wider Caribbean regional seas programme. An account of specific activities in the Caribbean region is set out in annex II to document UNEP/GC.25/INF/18.

B. Pacific small island developing States

104. UNEP recruited a programme officer to strengthen UNEP delivery in the Pacific region and to ensure the coordination of activities, following the example of an existing post for Caribbean small island developing States, which has as its duty station the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean. The staff member has been based at the office of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme. The position of a Programme Officer dealing with small island developing States-related issues in the Pacific has been established within the Coastal and Marine Branch in the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, with the purpose of providing coherent and efficient delivery of UNEP activities in the Pacific small island developing States and globally, in addition to coordinating UNEP activities with South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and other organizations in the region.
