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CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES: YEAR-END UPDATE

Although the resumed session of the Preparatory Committee for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States will not take place until March 1994, there is much to report upon the conclusion of the 48th session of the United Nations General Assembly. This special year-end issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* will review relevant activities that have taken place since the substantive session of the PrepCom in September 1993, summarize the results of the General Assembly's consideration of the Conference, and highlight upcoming events. This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* is published as part of a series of year-end issues intended to summarize the current state of play in the various UNCED-follow-up conferences and negotiations reported on by the *Bulletin* in 1993.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SMALL ISLAND STATES CONFERENCE

The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States has its roots in Chapter 17 of Agenda 21. UN General Assembly resolution 47/189, which established the Conference set the following objectives: review current trends in the socio-economic development of small island developing States (SIDS); examine the nature and magnitude of the specific vulnerabilities of SIDS; define a number of specific actions and policies relating to environmental and development planning to be undertaken by these States, with help from the international community; identify elements that these States need to include in medium- and long-term sustainable development plans; recommend measures for enhancing the endogenous capacity of these States; and review whether institutional arrangements at the international level enable these States to give effect to the relevant provisions of Agenda 21. The Conference is to be held in Barbados from 25 April - 6 May 1994.

The Preparatory Committee for the Conference held its organizational session in New York on 15-16 April 1993. Penelope Wensley, Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva and Ambassador for the Environment, was elected Chair of the PrepCom. The PrepCom adopted guidelines suggesting that the its consideration of the role of

small island developing States should include actions at the micro level aimed at environment and development planning, measures for enhancing local skills and expertise, and medium- and long-term planning for sustainable development.

As part of the preparatory process, two regional technical meetings were held. The first meeting for the Indian and Pacific Oceans was coordinated by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and was held from 31 May - 4 June 1993 in Vanuatu. The second regional technical meeting for the Atlantic/Caribbean/Mediterranean region was held in Trinidad and Tobago from 28 June - 2 July 1993. The meeting was coordinated by the Caribbean Community (Caricom) with the assistance of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The substantive session of the PrepCom was held in New York from 30 August - 10 September 1993. By the conclusion of the two-week meeting, the PrepCom had set the process in motion for the adoption of a programme of action for the sustainable development of SIDS. The draft programme of action contains chapters on the following: climate change and sea level rise; natural and environmental disasters; management of wastes; coastal and marine resources; freshwater resources; land resources; energy resources; tourism resources; biodiversity resources; national institutions and administrative capacity; regional institutions and technical cooperation; transport and communication; science and technology; human resource development; and implementation, monitoring and review. While delegates were able to reach agreement on the majority of the chapters in the programme of action, the preamble and the chapter on implementation, monitoring and review remained largely in brackets. As a result, delegates called for a resumed session of the PrepCom to be convened so that negotiations could continue on these sections.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

WORLD COAST CONFERENCE

The World Coast Conference 1993, which was held from 1-5 November 1993 in the Netherlands, examined actions to strengthen capabilities for progressive sustainable development and integrated coastal zone management (ICZM). Participants at the Conference from more than 90 nations, 19 international organizations and 23 NGOs discussed actions for coastal States to undertake ICZM toward the year 2000. The Conference Statement and the Conference Report noted the following:

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- There is an urgent need for coastal States to strengthen their capabilities for ICZM, working towards the development of appropriate strategies and programmes by the year 2000.
- ICZM is the most appropriate process to anticipate and respond to long-term concerns and needs while addressing present day challenges and opportunities.
- ICZM involves the comprehensive assessment, setting of objectives, planning and management of coastal systems and resources, taking into account traditional, cultural and historical perspectives and conflicting interests and uses; it is a continuous and evolutionary process for achieving sustainable development.
- Coastal States that are in the process of defining and implementing a national programme for ICZM have encountered obstacles that constrain the effective development of national programmes. These include: limited understanding and experience in ICZM; limited understanding of coastal and marine resources; fragmented institutional arrangements; single-sector oriented bureaucracies; competing interests and lack of priorities; inadequate legislation and/or lack of enforcement; land-tenure regimes and other social factors; and lack of information and resources.
- Coastal States are urged to identify their priorities for ICZM, to identify their most pressing needs to improve their capabilities for ICZM, to undertake national measures to increase their capabilities, and to identify their special needs for assistance.
- Effective ICZM can be achieved by coordination between national, regional and international organizations and institutions. This will help to avoid unnecessary duplication and to develop the concepts, tools and networks needed to facilitate the development and implementation of national programmes. Support for ICZM capacity building could be in the following areas: information; education and training; concepts and tools; research, monitoring and evaluation; and funding.

REPORT ON DONOR ACTIVITIES

At its session in September, the PrepCom requested the Secretariat to prepare a report containing relevant information on current donor activities in support of sustainable development of SIDS. This report is supposed to include information on a sectoral level provided by UN and other intergovernmental agencies, donor countries and NGOs. The report has been organized to follow the progression of chapters in the programme of action. For each subject, such as transport, communications, human resource development, freshwater resources, etc., the report will list the UN organizations and agencies, non-UN intergovernmental organizations and NGOs that are funding relevant projects. Although the Secretariat had hoped to receive information from NGOs that are funding or coordinating projects relevant to the sustainable development of SIDS, only two NGOs sent in reports: the Solomon Islands Development Trust and the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development. Overall, the Secretariat has received approximately 40 submissions. The Secretariat's report is supposed to be completed by the end of January 1994.

SECRETARIAT PLANNING MISSION TO BARBADOS

In preparation for the Conference itself, the Secretariat conducted a second planning mission to Barbados in mid-November. Members of the Secretariat met with the National Planning Committee in Barbados to discuss elements of the host-country agreement and related issues such as security, accreditation of delegations, transportation, staffing requirements, and the parallel NGO activities.

The Secretariat and the National Planning Committee hope to distribute hotel and other information regarding conference logistics at the resumed session of the Preparatory Committee in March.

MEDIA OUTREACH

Ted Turner, the head of Turner Broadcasting System (TBS) has approved a proposal for the coverage of major United Nations Conferences, beginning with the Global Conference for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The idea is to treat all major UN conferences not as isolated events but as part of a wider continuum stretching from the 1992 Earth Summit, through the 1995 Social Summit, to the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations. TBS/CNN has committed to producing TV coverage of the SIDS Conference, including the production of full-length documentaries and the production of short items on small island States by TBS affiliate stations worldwide for inclusion in broadcasts immediately prior to and during the Conference. This is not an exclusive arrangement with TBS/CNN, rather it is hoped that this development will encourage other international media houses to follow suit.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS

The Second Committee of the 48th session of the UN General Assembly considered the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and other environmental matters on Friday, 19 November, Tuesday, 23 November and Wednesday, 24 November 1993. During the three days of debate, all governments supported the post-UNCED conferences and negotiations, including the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Most delegates who intervened on this subject, including **Austria, Bahrain, Canada, China, Indonesia, the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tanzania**, supported recommendations to hold a resumed session of the PrepCom in March 1994.

The highlights of the debate on the Conference included the following statements. **Belgium**, on behalf of the European Union, said the Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States should not renegotiate Agenda 21. The chapter on finance should be drafted in a balanced manner and the document should place more emphasis on cross-sectoral issues. He urged that the time allotted to the future work programme be used for real negotiation. The draft of the Barbados Declaration, a work method and agenda are essential for compromise on the future work programme.

On behalf of the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS), **Vanuatu** strongly supported the resumption of the PrepCom and assured other delegates that the resumed session will start where the September session left off -- no formal debates or speeches. The objective would be to clear up as much of the outstanding issues as possible prior to the Barbados Conference. In addition, AOSIS wants to begin work on the Barbados Declaration and incorporate views of the recently held World Coast Conference into the final document. He also added that AOSIS members would like to have informal consultations with interested delegations to accelerate the work of the PrepCom.

The representative from the **Maldives** said that the Conference is the first opportunity to address these issues at the international level and the Maldives attaches a high priority to its success. The constraints to sustainable development are well-documented -- a narrow resource base, limited human resources, distances, the availability of resource information, and transboundary issues like climate change, sea level rise, trade and political stability. Financing is a concern and if the world community can mobilize

trillions of dollars for defense, the necessary resources should be able to be mobilized for more constructive processes. The Maldives is encouraged by the progress made so far by the PrepCom for the SIDS Conference and supports the need for its resumption. Moreover, it is not premature to start addressing the post-Conference process. There is a need for a mechanism to monitor implementation and a Secretariat in the UN with the necessary expertise could provide an effective facility for this purpose.

The **Caribbean Community** is pleased to see the level of interest in support for the Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and hopes this translates into the highest possible level of participation at the Conference itself. Although much work was done at the PrepCom in September, many challenges in the document remain to be resolved. In addition, informal contacts will shortly begin on the possible Declaration of Barbados. This will allow for a preliminary exchange of views to facilitate the actual negotiations of the text at the Conference itself. Caricom urged that the General Assembly decide to convene a resumed session of the PrepCom from 7-11 March 1994.

The **Republic of Korea** noted that only parts of the text were agreed upon at the PrepCom and future deliberations should focus on the most crucial themes, such as preservation of precious resources unique to SIDS and their capacity building. The final document of the Conference should be based on Agenda 21 and be completed at the upcoming resumed session of the PrepCom.

Australia is committed to the success of the Conference, encouraged other governments to consider the benefit of high-level political attendance in Barbados, and supported the AOSIS proposal for a one-week resumed session of the PrepCom to address outstanding issues. **Japan** also supported the Conference and the proposal to convene a resumed PrepCom. Japan announced that it is making the necessary preparations to contribute US\$100,000 to the voluntary fund.

Second Committee Resolution A/C.2/48/L.78, adopted on 10 December, decides to convene the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Barbados from 25 April to 6 May 1994, including a high-level segment on 5-6 May. The resolution urges that representation at the Conference be at the highest possible level and decides to convene one day of pre-Conference consultations at the venue of the Conference on 24 April 1994. The General Assembly also decided that the first session of the Preparatory Committee should be resumed for a period of five working days, from 7-11 March 1994, to complete the preparatory work assigned to it, including the draft programme of action for the sustainable development of small island developing States. Adequate facilities should be made available for this purpose within the approved budget limit set for the biennium 1994-1995. The resolution also: endorses the decisions of the PrepCom regarding the participation of associate members of regional commissions and NGOs in the Conference and its preparatory process; endorses the PrepCom's decisions regarding the provisional rules of procedure and the provisional agenda for the Conference; requests the Secretary-General to ensure the timely submission of the report of donor activities requested in decision 11 of the PrepCom; requests the Secretary-General, through the Department of Public Information, to widely disseminate the goals and purposes of the Conference; and invites all Member States and organizations in a position to do so to contribute to the voluntary fund for the Conference.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN 1994

RESUMED SESSION OF THE PREPCOM: The PrepCom for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States is scheduled to resume from 7-11 March 1994 at UN Headquarters in New York. The five-day session will focus exclusively on negotiations. There will be no general debate or opportunity for government delegates, UN agencies or NGOs to present formal statements. The negotiations are expected to focus on the unresolved areas of the programme of action (primarily the preamble and Chapter XV, "Implementation, Monitoring and Review") and the Barbados Declaration. Delegates are hopeful that they will be able to forward an "unbracketed" text to Barbados in April.

With regard to the preamble of the programme of action, delegates still must reach agreement on its structure and length. Some delegates called for a more balanced preamble, while the AOSIS saw it as a means to present all the difficulties and constraints to the sustainable development of SIDS. Chapter XV focuses on the means of implementation for most of the activities in the fourteen previous chapters of the programme of action. Some of the issues that need to be resolved are: national reporting by SIDS on the progress in implementing the outcomes of the Barbados Conference; the need for more detailed paragraphs within the national implementation section in order to better balance the three sections (national, regional and international) within this chapter; coordination of the roles of regional agencies; the bulk of the finance text; and the suggestion that the international donor community should only supplement national efforts for sustainable development. Other issues to be resolved include suggestions on the need to diversify exports and reduce SIDS dependence on single commodities, references to the need to protect intellectual property rights, and the nature of a focal point within the UN Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) to oversee and coordinate UN system implementation of the outcomes of the Conference.

BARBADOS DECLARATION: The Government of Barbados is working on the draft of the Barbados Declaration, which will be adopted at the Conference. Barbados is expected to present a draft text for the declaration or a paper containing elements to be included in the declaration at the resumed session of the PrepCom in March. Formal negotiations on the Declaration are set to begin at that time. It is likely that the Government of Barbados will look at both the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the AOSIS Heads of Government Declaration (10 June 1992) for elements to be included in the Barbados Declaration.

JOURNALISTS WORKSHOP: An Eco-Journalism Workshop for Caribbean and other Commonwealth Small Island Developing States will be held from 20-22 January 1994 in Kingston, Jamaica. The purpose of the workshop is to enhance the ability of journalists to cover the Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and to raise media awareness about both the Conference and the issues. The Workshop will first give journalists background about the Rio Conference and its follow-up. The next session will focus on the sustainable development of SIDS, including: ecological sustainability, economics of sustainable development in small countries; resource management; coastal zone management; marine environment; and disaster preparedness and management. Finally, there will be a session on the preparatory work for the Conference. For more information, contact Professor Bishnodat Persaud, University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica; tel: 809-927-1660, ext. 2363; fax: 809-977-1658.

EMINENT PERSONS PANEL: Dame Nita Barrow, the Governor-General of Barbados, is putting together a panel of approximately 12 eminent persons on the issues related to the Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The panel will meet just prior to the Conference in Bridgetown, Barbados. The report, recommendations or declaration of the panel will be transmitted to the Conference.

NGO ACCREDITATION: Thus far 157 NGOs are accredited to the Conference. 54 accredited NGOs are from small island developing States, 50 are from developed countries and 53 are from non-island developing countries. Any NGOs that have not yet applied for accreditation to the PrepCom and the Conference should do so as soon as possible before the resumed session of the PrepCom in March.

NGOs wishing accreditation should submit the following information to the UN Secretariat: copies of the latest annual report and the most recent budget; copy of constitution and/or by-laws and information on governing body composition; proof of the non-profit nature of the organization; a short statement of how the organization's activities relate to the Conference; a description of membership; and location of headquarters.

Non-governmental organizations in consultative or roster status with the Economic and Social Council, including those of this status that were previously accredited to UNCED, are considered to have satisfied these requirements to the extent that they have already provided such information to the United Nations. They should, however indicate their relevance to and interest in participating in the Conference and its preparatory process.

All communications from non-governmental organizations should be mailed to: United Nations Secretariat, ECOSOC/NGO Unit, Room DC-2 2340, New York, NY 10017, USA.

NGO ACTIVITIES: Collectively, NGOs are planning to integrate their perspectives and approaches to the sustainable development of SIDS into the work of the Conference. The details of the parallel NGO activities in Barbados are in the process of being finalized. The activities, under the coordination of the NGO Liaison Committee, chaired by Caribbean Conservation Association, are divided into three sections which will focus on alternate appropriate sustainable development models:

- The NGO Forum is a series of workshops and briefings which will examine special issues and challenges associated with current development patterns and models, and also develop an action plan for alternative models.
- The Village of Hope is a multi-pronged exposition of ideas and examples of sustainable development for island communities showcasing indigenous, traditional and innovative approaches.
- SUSTECH '94 is a showcase and marketplace for environmental and affordable technologies and services which can assist SIDS to achieve more sustainable patterns of development. Limited space is available, free of cost, to NGOs for display of alternative technologies.

For more information about the NGO Forum, contact Pauulu Kamarakafego - NGO Conference Coordinator, NGO Liaison Secretariat, Letchworth Complex, The Garrison, St. Michael, Barbados; Fax (809) 435-0994; Phone (809) 435-2995/2996. For more information about SUSTECH '94, contact the Barbados Manufacturing Association, Building #1, Pelican Ind. Pk, Barbados; Fax: (809) 436-5182; Phone: (809) 426-4474.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For information about the Conference and related media activities, contact:

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For information about preparations for the Conference in Barbados, contact:

The UN Global Conference Secretariat
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For information about the NGO Forum, contact:

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For more information about SUSTECH '94, contact:

Barbados Manufacturers' Association
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1994 CALENDAR OF CONFERENCE-RELATED ACTIVITIES

11-13 January, Journalists Workshop, Kingston, Jamaica

7-11 March, Resumed PrepCom, New York

21-23 April (tentative), Eminent Persons Panel, Barbados

24 April, Pre-Conference Consultations, Barbados

25 April - 6 May, Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Barbados