



FINAL REPORT

Regional Caribbean Workshop on National Sustainable Development Strategies and Indicators of Sustainable Development

Castries, St. Lucia

14 to 15 January 2004

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

1. Agenda 21, the main outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, called upon countries to adopt national sustainable development strategies (NSDS), which would build upon and harmonize the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans that are operating in the country. UNCED also recognized the important role that indicators can play in helping countries to make informed decisions concerning sustainable development and called upon countries and international governmental and non-governmental organizations to develop such indicators.
2. The 1997 Special Session of the UN General Assembly set a target date of 2002 for the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development (NSDS). It also reaffirmed that all sectors of society should be involved in their development and implementation.
3. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in August 2002, in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) urged states to take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development (NSDS) and begin their implementation by 2005. Furthermore, the JPOI and the 11th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), re-affirmed the importance of indicators of sustainable development and encouraged further work on those indicators by countries at the national level, in line with national conditions and priorities.
4. In November 2001 an International Forum on National Sustainable Development Strategies, was convened by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA) in Accra, Ghana. The meeting identified a list of key characteristics constituting a sound national

sustainable development strategy and provided a first international understanding of what constitutes such a strategy. A Guidance Document¹, outlining key characteristics of a NSDS, was prepared based on the recommendations of the meeting. The meeting also agreed that a NSDS is a tool for informed decision-making that provides a framework for systematic thought across sectors and territory. It should not be seen as a new plan, or as a separate planning process outside existing ones, but rather as the adaptation of existing processes, in compliance with sustainable development principles.

5. Many countries are currently endeavouring to address the challenge and reach the goal of developing national strategies for sustainable development by 2005. The Caribbean workshop on NSDS and indicators of sustainable development was organized to support countries from the region in these efforts. The Workshop was held in St. Lucia from 14-15 January 2004 and was co-organized by OECS and the Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSD/DESA).

B. Objectives

6. The objectives of the Workshop were as follows :

- a. Promote capacity building, at the regional and national levels, through exchange of national experiences in developing and implementing national sustainable development strategies (NSDSs), and indicators of sustainable development, as well as through cooperation and networking;
- b. Explore how global and regional inter-governmental institutions could further the goal for all countries to be in the process of implementing their NSDSs by 2005;
- c. Provide options for decision-making through the use of indicators of sustainable development at the national level.

C. Participants

7. A list of participants is attached as Annex I to the report.

II. WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

8. The Workshop opened with statements by the two co-organizers of the meeting, OECS and UN/DESA, and a welcoming address by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Physical Development, Environment and Housing, St. Lucia. The opening was followed by panel

¹ "Guidance in preparing a national sustainable development strategy: Managing sustainable development in the new millennium". Background Paper No. 13, Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Second preparatory session 28 January - 8 February 2002.

discussions, break-out groups, special presentations and finally, conclusions and recommendations of the Workshop.

A. Opening Session

9. Ms. Valerie Isaac-St. Hill, Programme Officer, Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU), Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), delivered remarks on behalf of the OECS. She outlined some of the economic and social development challenges confronting the OECS sub-region and the wider Caribbean and the efforts being made to address these challenges. She also expressed the hope that the workshop would generate innovative and proactive thoughts and actions necessary for the successful pursuit of sustainable development goals through the elaboration of national sustainable development strategies, which reflects the integration of economic, environmental and social objectives. She added that focus should also be placed on the extent to which progress achieved towards sustainable development for the peoples of the Caribbean Region could be measured through the development and utilization of country specific indicators of sustainable development.

10. Ms. Kirsten Rohrmann, Sustainable Development Officer, Division for Sustainable Development, UN/DESA, in her introductory remarks recognized that the coming together of fifteen countries showed a real commitment to making progress on national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) and indicators of sustainable development. She noted that the Caribbean region was faced with unique sustainable development problems and that a NSDS plays an important role in addressing these. Countries benefit directly from formulating strategies, as a result of making development more sustainable, and indirectly, through the process itself. She also noted that indicators for monitoring progress are a critical tool for sustainable development, and an integral part of the NSDS. The World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) produced a plan that, among others, includes the goal that all countries should be in the process of implementing their NSDS by 2005. She emphasized that by implementing national sustainable development strategies and sharing experiences and information throughout the region, a global goal could be transformed into reality. It was her hope that the workshop would provide important guidance on NSDS and indicators of sustainable development, seen from a regional perspective.

11. Mr. Martin Satney, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Physical Development, Environment and Housing, St. Lucia, welcomed participants and highlighted the importance of bringing together representatives from planning, environmental and finance sectors to exchange experiences and lessons learned in the development of national sustainable development strategies and indicators of sustainable development. He outlined the importance of taking multidisciplinary and inter-sectoral approaches to addressing the development challenges of SIDS. This requires integration of policies, strategies and plans and the articulation of clear visions, long-term objectives and priorities for national development. He also stated that the need to adopt and use existing guidelines for national sustainable development strategies and sustainable development indicators was important to ensuring that while advantage is taken of ongoing work in this area, the tools are developed within the socio-economic and cultural

context of the region. He concluded by making reference to the ongoing preparations for the SIDS+10 Review Meeting in Mauritius and stressed the need for the Caribbean region to showcase the innovative efforts taken to build resilience to vulnerabilities.

B. Election of officers

12. The participants elected the head of the St. Lucia delegation, Mr. Christopher Corbin, as the Chairperson of the workshop.

III. PANEL DISCUSSIONS

A. Overview of national sustainable development strategies and other relevant strategies

13. The UN/DESA representative, Ms. Kirsten Rohrmann, began the session with a presentation on national sustainable development strategies (NSDS). This comprehensive presentation covered global targets and initiatives that had been taken in this area by the United Nations and OECD and the global status of implementation of these strategies, as well as the evolution of NSDS over time, its definition, principles and characteristics. She also explained the process of participation, the reasons why NSDS required constant improvement, key processes leading to NSDS and finally, critical steps in the formulation and implementation of a NSDS.

14. Mr. Peter Norville, consultant for OECS, made a presentation based on his regional assessment of NSDS in the OECS (see Annex II for his report). This presentation outlined the experience of OECS countries in developing and implementing national sustainable development strategies. It indicated that most countries had not specifically pursued the preparation of NSDS, but several countries were pursuing the adoption of Integrated Development Planning, which involved the principles and procedures for preparing a NSDS. The efforts of the British Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Dominica and St. Lucia in integrated development planning (IDP) were presented as case studies to illustrate the various approaches employed in the OECS and wider Caribbean region. The presentation concluded with the identification of the need for intensification of national efforts by giving greater priority to the NSDS, the need to develop mechanisms for regional collaboration and for sources of international assistance to be identified.

15. The discussions which followed these presentations focused on matters relating to the importance of public consultation in the development of a NSDS, and the need for private sector involvement in the process.

B. National Implementation of NSDS

16. The panel discussion on national implementation of NSDS was moderated by the Chairperson of the workshop and the panel included representatives from Belize, Cuba, Jamaica and St. Kitts and Nevis.

17. The representative of Belize stated that while there is no national sustainable development strategy for Belize, national development is guided by various sector plans, including the Medium-Term Economic Strategy and the National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan, and the development of each strategy and plan is guided by a formal consultative process which includes the participation of relevant public, private and civil society agencies and organisations. She also stated that the lack of a clearly defined mechanism to guide the development of a national strategy inhibits the meaningful attainment of sustainable development and that in recognition of this fact, discussions on the establishment of such a mechanism have been reintroduced at the national level. She concluded that there is significant support for the development of a national sustainable development strategy and policies from the political directorate, public, private and civil society sectors.

18. The representative from Cuba explained the process for the elaboration of NSDS in Cuba, which began in 1993 with the preparation of a Cuban Agenda 21. This document was reviewed and updated in 1997 and the product of this review was the National Environmental Strategy, which was prepared after an intense participatory process. This Strategy led to the elaboration of several sectoral and provincial strategies, all of which are linked at the provincial and national levels.

19. The representative of St. Kitts and Nevis outlined the efforts of his country in addressing sustainable development issues. He indicated that sustainable development was considered a priority of the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis from 1987, with the passing of the National Conservation and Environmental Protection Act, which, addressed matters relating to the utilization of the country's natural resources in a sustainable manner. He also identified a number of emerging challenges, which could impact on the progress made in sustainable development in recent years. These include the AIDS/HIV pandemic, global security concerns and globalisation.

20. The representative from Jamaica outlined the major sustainable development initiatives undertaken in her country. She indicated that a Sustainable Development Council had been established in the late 1990s, but it became dormant, and attempts have recently been made to reactivate the Council by appointment of an Interim council. She also outlined the efforts being made towards the mainstreaming of sustainable development issues into the operations of the public sector.

21. The discussions which followed these presentations addressed matters relating to: (a) differentiating between environmental management and sustainable development; (b) whether or not sustainable development concepts should be introduced into national constitutions; (c) the need to define clear institutional arrangements for sustainable development at the national level (d) options for institutional arrangements for coordinating sustainable development initiatives at the regional level; and (e) the impacts of major international events and issues, such as globalisation, on national sustainable development initiatives.

C. The Role of International and Regional Organizations in promoting NSDS

22. Representatives of the OECS, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Regional Office of the UNDP in Trinidad made presentations.

23. The Head of Unit of the OECS-ESDU, Ms. Vasantha Chase, observed that whereas many discussions have been held on sustainable development, there still remain challenges in arriving at a common understanding of what characterizes sustainable development, and the issue becomes even more difficult as the region attempts to operationalise sustainable development. She also expressed the view that the preparation of NSDS remained elusive for many countries. She outlined some of the development policy and planning initiatives undertaken at the OECS sub-regional level, including the OECS Development Charter and Strategy while linking these to corresponding national initiatives.

24. The representative of CARICOM, Ms. Yvonne Dennis, made a presentation on the role of the CARICOM Secretariat in supporting CARICOM Member States in NSDS and she highlighted the work of the Secretariat in: (a) coordinating the development of the regional enabling mechanism recommended in the report of the Caribbean Preparatory Meeting on the Review of the Barbados POA which was held in Trinidad in October 2003; (b) coordinating the CARICOM preparatory process for the Inter-Regional Meeting of SIDS to be held in The Bahamas from January 26 to 30, 2004 and the International Meeting to review implementation of the Barbados POA to be held in Mauritius in August 2004; and (c) development and use of environmental and sustainable development indicators and statistics.

25. The representative of UNDP, Mr. Deodat Maharaj, outlined the recent changes to the ways in which UNDP operates and he explained how the programme could assist countries in addressing the challenges faced in developing and implementing a NSDS. He stated that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals form an overarching framework for the development assistance which could be provided by UNDP and he elaborated on the emphasis being placed on Knowledge Management through which global knowledge is being brought to bear on local problems.

26. The Chairman informed participants that the Organisation of American States (OAS) had sent its apologies for not being able to send a representative to the workshop. The Chairman also read out portions of a message from the OAS Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment (USDE) to the workshop organizers, which outlined the recent activities of the USDE in support of national sustainable development strategies of OAS Caribbean Member-States. These activities include: (a) serving as the executing agency for the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change (CPACC) project; (b) serving as executing agency for the Caribbean Hazard Mitigation Capacity Building Project (CHAMP); and (c) collaborating with the UN/DESA on a project entitled "Capacity-Building in Creating Information Management Systems to Improve Decision-making for Sustainable Development for Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS)".

27. The discussions which followed these presentations focused primarily on preparations for the Inter-Regional Meeting of SIDS to be held in The Bahamas from 26 to 30 January 2004, and in particular, the development of the regional position paper for that meeting.

D. Monitoring and assessment for sustainable development

28. Representatives of UN/DESA, the OECS and the Department of Statistics in St. Lucia, as well as a consultant to the workshop delivered presentations.

29. Ms. Reena Shah, Sustainable Development Officer, Division for Sustainable Development, UN/DESA, delivered a presentation on “Indicators of Sustainable Development – Principles and Practices”. The presentation reviewed the uses and policy demand for indicators as key information tools for decision-making in sustainable development coming out of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD), and World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) meetings. She reviewed the purposes and criteria for the selection of indicators, including their role in defining objectives, assessing present and future direction with respect to goals and values, evaluating specific programs, demonstrating progress, measuring changes in a specific condition or situation over time, determining the impact of programs, and conveying messages. The presentation also focused on the CSD guidelines and methodologies for selection of indicators, discussing the framework and the methodology sheets applied to this purpose. Ms. Shah identified several challenges in the use of sustainable development indicators, including a lack of data and development capacity, of international harmonization efforts, of further indicator development in “less advanced” substantive areas, and of training in integrated information management. She then examined the UN Division for Sustainable Development’s response to these challenges, in particular with regards to its work in Caribbean SIDS with regional and national indicator projects. Finally, the challenges particular to the development of environmental indicators in the region were reviewed. These challenges include the lack of coordination amongst agencies, the lack of standard definitions and classifications, duplicate data sources, and the lack of time series data.

30. Mr. Peter A. Murray, the representative from the OECS, delivered a presentation on “Are the “core set” of Environmental Sustainable Indicators relevant to Caribbean States?” The presentation noted that a core set of indicators of sustainable development (ISDs) had been proposed by the UN Division for Sustainable Development. It was pointed out that the “core” Environmental ISDs fell into five thematic areas (Atmosphere; Land; Oceans, seas and coasts; Fresh water; and Biodiversity) with thirteen sub-themes. The presentation noted a need to consider whether the core set of environmental ISDs were appropriate to the Caribbean region given that a significant number of the countries are Small Island Developing States (SIDS) characterised, *inter alia*, by limited size; a single wrap-around coast; economical, social and ecological vulnerability; limited financial and human resources. It was suggested, that both the relevance and the means of obtaining the core environmental ISDs were questionable. Examples were given to this effect, utilising one indicator from each environmental thematic area. The

presentation then referred to ten overarching principles for sustainable development assessment and noted the need to be guided by those principles, when determining the appropriateness of any environmental ISDs for the region. It was reiterated, that indicators should not be seen as final and definitive, but must be developed and adjusted over time, to fit country-specific conditions, priorities, and capabilities.

31. Mr. Cletus Springer, consultant for OECS, delivered a presentation on “Managing Tourism Vulnerability in Caribbean SIDS”. He identified some of the factors that contribute to and detract from Sustainable Tourism Development and observed that the development of indicators of Tourism Sustainability could not be done without a clear appreciation of the nature and structure of the industry, and the factors which contribute to its vulnerability. The Caribbean experience with the measurement of the economic, social and environment impacts of tourism was also addressed. Mr. Springer noted that it was critical that policymakers fully understand that in the Caribbean region, much of the apparent revenue from tourism does not remain in the local economies due to required imports and external investors (the leakage/linkage effects). One of the key factors limiting research in these areas is the lack of reliable data. In many countries, national accounts and general economic indicators do not specifically identify the totality of the tourism industry, and as such, its economic impact is often ignored or at best underrated in reports and analyses of its economic importance. The importance of tracking and assessing impacts of structural features of SIDS, such as trade, foreign exchange and labour impacts, was noted. Mr. Springer also observed that a considerable amount of work was needed on measuring the social and environmental impacts of tourism. Where research has been done, the findings have been consciously used by decision-makers, either as a means of prioritizing the appropriate policy responses, or as a means of increasing public support for tourism.

32. Mr. Edwin St. Catherine, Director of Statistics in St. Lucia delivered a presentation on “The Role of the Statistical Office in Producing Statistical Indicators with Special Reference to Sustainable Development Indicators”. He stated that the mission of the St. Lucia Statistical Department is “To provide timely access to comprehensive, accurate and reliable information on St. Lucia to anyone, anywhere, and anytime”. He stressed that special efforts were made to ensure that the UN’s fundamental principles of official statistics are respected in the process of carrying out that mission. He then expanded on the ways through which the statistical office seeks to fulfill its mission. He concluded by emphasizing that data gathering, data compilation, and the development of indicators are two-way interactions between statistical offices and data providers, and the quality of these interactions and the degree and willingness of effort of both parties is key to a properly functioning statistical system.

33. Mr. Deodat Maharaj, UNDP informed the workshop that UNDP in collaboration with CARICOM, with support from the Government of Barbados and the Caribbean Development Bank, convened a high-level regional conference on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) during the period 7 – 9 July 2003. At this conference, participants were sensitized to issues related to achieving the MDGs with particular attention given to issue of obtaining necessary data for monitoring of progress. In addition, the conference addressed the relevance to the Caribbean region of some of the MDG targets. It was further explained that

UNDP is presently supporting the preparation of a regional MDG Report which should be completed shortly.

IV. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A. Example of good practice in linking NSDS and indicators of sustainable development in the national development process

34. The representatives from Barbados jointly delivered a presentation on “The Barbados Experience with National sustainable Development Strategies and Indicators of Sustainable Development”. They described the composition and mandate of the National Commission on Sustainable Development (NCSD), and explained the participatory process leading to the development of the National Policy on Sustainable Development in 2003. They also outlined the successes of the policy development process and the anticipated challenges to the effective implementation of the policy. The presenters described the progress made in the National Indicators Programme (NIP), which is guided by the Steering Committee on Indicators of Sustainable Development and a sub-committee of the NCSD, and the challenges faced in implementing the NIP, including human resource and funding constraints.

B. Presentations on the preparatory process for the Barbados + 10 Review

35. The representative of the CARICOM Secretariat made a presentation on the preparatory process for the Barbados+10 Review Meeting to be held in Mauritius. She reminded delegates that a number of documents had been circulated at the workshop, including a draft Caribbean Regional Position Paper (CRP). She outlined the process that had led to the preparation of the draft CRP, and invited CARICOM Member States to submit comments on the document. She also outlined the strategy for CARICOM participation in the meeting to be held in The Bahamas from 26 to 30 January 2004, the Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting for Barbados+10 Meeting. The delegate from The Bahamas then made a brief presentation on the logistical arrangements for the Inter-regional Preparatory Meeting, and workshop participants were asked to encourage maximum participation by their countries at the meeting to be held in The Bahamas, and to brief their country teams as thoroughly as possible, in preparation for that meeting.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

36. The conclusions and recommendations arising from discussions in the break-out sessions on NSDS and monitoring and assessment of sustainable development are as follows:

A. National Sustainable Development Strategies

Conclusions

- a) In general, there is a lack of capacity at the national level to address the commitments arising from the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) which countries have signed onto. Further, the responsibilities to address these commitments at the national level are often scattered among several agencies and there is usually a lack of coordination among these agencies.
- b) In many countries, the level of commitment of the political directorate to sustainable development issues is lacking, and as such, these issues often do not receive high priority in government work programmes and budgets.
- c) Public education and awareness programmes are important and critical to the success of sustainable development initiatives.
- d) In some countries, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community-based Organisations (CBOs) are not adequately involved in sustainable development initiatives.
- e) In general, the data and information required to develop effective sustainable development programmes and projects are not available.
- f) In many cases, National Councils or other similar bodies do not exist, and in some instances where they do exist, there are ineffective.
- g) In some instances, during regional and international meetings, issues of concern to Caribbean countries, particularly island states, are subsumed within matters relating to Latin America. As a result, the issues of concern to Caribbean countries may not receive the level of attention which these countries may desire.
- h) There is insufficient sharing of experiences among Caribbean countries, and SIDS in general, on sustainable development issues.

Recommendations

- 1) Efforts should be made to enlist the highest level support from the political directorate for sustainable development issues and NSDS, and appropriate legislative provisions should be made to support and promote the development and implementation of the NSDS.
- 2) A national vision should be articulated to guide the development of the NSDS and priority issues for attention should be identified. Cross-sectoral coordination should be undertaken to streamline sustainable development initiatives, and appropriate mechanisms should be developed for this purpose. In that regard, NSDS should be made an integrating mechanism for the various

sectoral development plans, prepared within each country. Also, sustainable development issues should be integrated into the everyday operations of the public sector.

3) Where not existing, National Sustainable Development Councils (NSDC), or a similar body should be established to facilitate the coordination of sustainable development initiatives, including the preparation of the NSDS. The experiences of those countries where such bodies are successfully operating could be used to guide other countries wishing to pursue the establishment of such a body. Further, efforts should be made to ensure that the NSDC is sufficiently broad-based, and that the private sector is adequately represented, but the councils should not be so large as to be unwieldy and difficult to manage. Also, adequate arrangements, such as the enactment of legislation, should be implemented to ensure the permanence of these councils.

4) Extensive capacity building programmes must be implemented at all levels if NSDS is to be developed and implemented. In that regard, as far as possible, sustainable development officers should be assigned to work in key Government Ministries to promote sustainable development approaches. In addition, a baseline assessment of capacity needs should be undertaken to provide a basis for the development and implementation of these programmes. Extensive national public awareness and public education programmes should be initiated to promote greater public support and understanding of sustainable development issues.

5) In the pursuit of sustainable development, the requisite human, financial and technical resources must be allocated at the national level for NSDS preparation and implementation. In addressing financial issues, the commitments made by governments to sustainable development should be reflected in their national budget.

6) At the national level, countries should seek to identify a lead agency to coordinate local responses to the multiplicity of regional and international agreements that relate to sustainable development. In that regard, efforts should be made to streamline the reporting procedures associated with these agreements to reduce the strain being put on local agencies. Flexibility in the timelines associated with these procedures should be introduced, taking into account the established reporting timetables of national governments.

7) Increased efforts should be made at the international level to highlight the peculiar characteristics of Caribbean countries, and to promote the needs of Caribbean countries in relation to their efforts toward achieving sustainable development.

B. Monitoring and Assessment

Conclusions

a) Few countries in the Caribbean region have established national programmes of indicators of sustainable development but some sectoral indicator initiatives were noted. Not many countries have embarked on the development of an overarching set of indicators of sustainable

development, although all countries mentioned the existence of traditional statistics and indicators such as agricultural, demographic, economic, etc. However, some have developed sectoral sets of sustainability indicators that go beyond the traditional statistics and indicator fields for example sustainable fisheries. This is normally the initial starting point for countries before embarking on full-fledged programmes on indicators of sustainable development.

b) Some of the major obstacles to developing programmes on, and sets of indicators of, sustainable development included the lack of coordination, the lack of basic data and/or statistics to develop the indicators, insufficient understanding of indicators and how they are used in decision-making, not enough value placed on information, lack of political will, and the lack of financial and human resources.

c) Very few countries have established overall mechanisms for guiding the development and implementation of national indicators of sustainable development through inter-agency working groups or steering committees, however several noted sectoral level coordinating mechanisms. Some of the major challenges to the wider use of indicators of sustainable development at the national level were the need for the development of an institutional coordinating framework and legislation education of stakeholders and more technical expertise.

d) It was felt that overall indicators of sustainable development were only being used to a limited extent for policy and decision-making at the governmental level. However, although some sectoral indicators were being used, this approach was currently fragmented and not applied in a formalized way.

e) The numerous international reporting requirements and voluntary reporting requests for indicators on national efforts for implementing indicators of sustainable development have initiated dialogue and awareness of the importance of developing indicators and have in some cases been used as starting points for countries in their own development of national indicators. In some cases it has caused a strain on limited capacity and resources and created confusion by overlapping requests, while making it difficult to prioritize. It was also noted that some indicators were not always relevant to all countries.

f) In order to promote the wider use of indicators of sustainable development at the national level, the following were noted as necessary: a clearer understanding of indicators of sustainable development, the development of a national vision, the sensitization of stakeholders, the establishment of national policies, a more integrated approach, reconciliation of indicator requirements and/or demands at the international level, timely and reliable data and/or statistics, and the establishment of a coordinating mechanism.

Recommendations

1) Efforts should be made to ensure the highest level political commitment to the development and use of indicators of sustainable development.

- 2) Countries should establish a more coordinated approach towards planning so that current sectoral indicator sets are more fully integrated into the national planning process and indicator development is more closely linked to policy and decision-making. In addition, countries should also seek to develop an institutional mechanism at the national level to coordinate the process of indicator development and use.
 - 3) International reporting requirements and voluntary reporting requests should be streamlined and simplified to reduce burden on countries. External funding to respond to national needs and priorities for the development of indicators should be coordinated.
 - 4) National statistical systems for basic data collection, processing and dissemination should be strengthened. Furthermore, national and regional networks, such as integrated information management systems, should be established to facilitate exchange of information at all levels.
 - 5) The human and technical capacity of national and local government officials responsible for the collection, dissemination and analysis of data relevant for indicator development should be augmented. In addition, education and awareness raising of stakeholders at all levels on the importance of indicators of sustainable development and relevance to current development issues should be undertaken.
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ANNEX I



ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT UNIT (ESDU)

Caribbean Regional Workshop on National Sustainable Development Strategies and Indicators of Sustainable Development

Wednesday 14th to Thursday 15th January 2004
Cara Suites – St Lucia

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ANNEX II

OECS ASSESSMENT REPORT ON NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Since the adoption of Agenda 21, many countries have made effort to transform the approaches to development planning, to take greater account of the complex interrelationships between economic, social and environmental issues. Chapter 8 of Agenda 21 addresses matters relating to the integration of environment and development in decision-making, and it states that “governments should conduct a national review, and where appropriate, improve the processes of decision-making so as to achieve the progressive integration of economic, social and environmental issues in the pursuit of development that is economically efficient, socially equitable and responsible and environmentally sound”.² It also states that “Governments, in cooperation, where appropriate, with international organizations, should adopt a national strategy for sustainable development” which “should build upon and harmonize the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans operating in the country”.²

The Programme of Action of the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in 1994, went on to identify actions to be undertaken towards the development and implementation of such strategies in SIDS, and the 1997 UN General Assembly special session set a target date of 2002 for the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and reaffirmed the need for all sectors of society to be involved in their development and implementation. Further to that, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in August 2002 urges countries to take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development (NSDS) and begin their implementation by 2005.

Also, the Cotonou Agreement complements this global trend. This Agreement, which is a partnership agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of states and the European Community (EC), was signed in June 2000. Article 19 of this Agreement states that “Government and non-State actors in each ACP country shall initiate consultations on country development strategies and community support thereto”³ and Article 20

² Agenda 21, Chapter 8

³ The Cotonou Agreement

states that “The objective of ACP-EC development cooperation shall be pursued through integrated strategies that incorporate economic, social, cultural and institutional elements that must be locally owned”.

Extensive efforts are being made by governments around the world to pursue the commitments and agreements made over the past years, in relation to NSDS. However, in approaching the challenge of developing national strategies for sustainable development by 2005, many countries have been experiencing difficulties, and in the Caribbean region, in particular, only a few countries have been pursuing the development of NSDSs or related policies, strategies and plans. At the sub-regional level, the Member-States of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)⁴, through the adoption of the St. George’s Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in 2001, committed themselves to “Integrate Social Economic and Environmental Considerations into National Development Policies, Plans and Programmes” (Principle 2)⁵. However, within the OECS, only the British Virgin Islands have completed and adopted a Strategy, which could be considered to be a NSDS.

To support the efforts of Caribbean Countries to prepare NSDSs, the OECS Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) are collaborating on a Caribbean Regional Workshop on National Sustainable Development Strategies and Indicators of Sustainable Development, which is to be held in St. Lucia in January 2004. The overall goal of the workshop is to build and or strengthen capacity at the national and regional levels in the areas of NSDS and Indicators of Sustainable Development.

As part of its contribution to the workshop, the OECS is coordinating the preparation of this Assessment Report. The report essentially provides a review and assessment of the recent experiences of OECS Member-States in activities related to the preparation of NSDSs. These are done primarily through the presentation of case studies on the experiences of the British Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Dominica and St. Lucia. The experiences of these countries were selected for the case studies, as they are believed to reflect the range of NSDS experiences across the OECS. It is hoped that the presentation of the OECS Assessment Report at the workshop will provide a basis for discussions on the many issues faced in the preparation and implementation of NSDSs or other similar development strategies and plans in the OECS, the Caribbean Region and developing countries as a whole.

1.2 Structure of the Report

Section 1 of the report provides the introduction to the report. Section 2 presents an outline of the general principles and practices involved in development and implementation of NSDSs and Section 3 presents a summary and analysis of the overall status of NSDSs in the OECS. Section

⁴ The Member-States of the OECS are: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines

⁵ The St. George’s Declaration

4 provides a case study of the experience of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) in the development of their National Integrated Development Strategy (NIDS), Section 5 presents the experience of the Commonwealth of Dominica with their Integrated Development Plan and Section 6 outlines the Integrated Development Planning experience in St. Lucia. The report ends with concluding remarks and recommendations in Section 7.

2. NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

A Sustainable Development Strategy is defined as a coordinated, participatory and iterative process of thoughts and actions to achieve economic, environmental and social objectives in a balanced and integrated manner at the national and local levels. The process encompasses situation analysis, formulation of policies and action plans, implementation, monitoring and regular review. It is a cyclical and iterative process of planning, participation, and action in which the emphasis is on managing progress towards sustainability goals rather than producing a “plan” as an end product⁶.

There is no one type of approach and no single formula by which NSDSs can or should be undertaken. Every country needs to determine, for itself, how best to approach its strategy preparation and implementation depending on the prevailing political, historical, cultural and ecological circumstances. Also, a NSDS should not be seen as a new plan or as a separate planning process alongside existing ones. Rather, it constitutes the adaptation of existing processes to comply with sustainable development principles. It is also an ongoing process and not a one-off ‘project’ for producing a document.

A Sustainable Development Strategy is a tool for informed decision-making that provides a framework for systematic thought across sectors. It also helps to institutionalize processes for consultation, negotiation, mediation and consensus-building on priority societal issues where interests differ. A NSDS should therefore empower a country to address inter-related social and economic problems by helping them to build capacities, develop procedures and legislative frameworks, allocate limited resources rationally and present timetables for action.

Countries would benefit from formulating NSDS both directly, as a result of making development more sustainable and indirectly, from the process itself. The advantages presented by the formulation of NSDSs include:

- i. Facilitating decision-making and improving the effectiveness of public policy;
- ii. Enhancing the mobilization of resources
- iii. More efficient allocation of resources;
- iv. Resolving conflicts;
- v. Building human and institutional capacity.

Putting in place a strategy development process involves additional costs, including those associated with the reform of laws and institutions, engaging civil society and the private sector in the strategy process, and developing new skills. However, the absence of coordination,

⁶ Guidance in Preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy: Managing Sustainable Development in the New Millennium

contradicting policies and strategies, neglect of the environment and social sectors will entail significant costs that can span over several generations.

3. NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN THE OECS

3.1 Overview

OECS Member States in 2002 adopted the OECS Development Charter, which provides a broad framework for their sustainable development. The Charter articulates a common vision for the development of the OECS and it sets out the agendas for human development and economic growth. In addressing issues relating to environmental sustainability it commits OECS Member States to implement the St. George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability and it also specifically commits the Member States to the implementation of strategies to "integrate environmental considerations into social and economic development policies, plans and programmes at the national level"⁷.

To date, the only Member-State of the OECS that has developed and adopted a National Strategy along the lines of widely accepted principles and practices for NSDS is the British Virgin Islands (BVI). Details of the BVI experience in this regard, are provided in Section 4. However, several other OECS countries have been initiated activities, projects or programmes related to NSDSs. The Commonwealth of Dominica has, since October 2001, been implementing an Integrated Development Planning (IDP) project which has led to the preparation of an Integrated Development Plan, and this project is described in Section 5. St. Lucia is currently implementing a project which is to result, among other things, in the preparation of a draft NSDS (Section 6).

However, all independent Member-States of the OECS regularly prepare Medium Term Economic Strategies (MTEs) which outline the approaches towards development of their respective national economies. These Strategies are generally not developed along the lines prescribed for NSDSs particularly as, in most cases, they do not evolve from widespread public consultation. In addition to the MTEs, a number of sectoral plans and strategies are prepared in all countries, including those related to the productive sectors such as Agriculture and Tourism, as well as to those related to significant national issues such as Poverty Reduction and HIV/AIDS.

Further, arising out of the adoption of the St. George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the OECS, an OECS Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) was developed to outline the mechanism and actions that will be taken to give effect to the Declaration. This OECS-EMS was, in November 2001, endorsed by the OECS Environmental Policy Committee, which is made up OECS Ministers with responsibility for the Environment. Also, by signing the St. George's Declaration, OECS Member-States made commitments to "Develop a national environmental management strategy within 2 years of the date this Declaration comes into force" (Principle 19 (g) of the St. George's Declaration). These national EMSs are to define the mechanisms by which the regional policy and implementation framework that has been developed at the OECS sub-regional level will be given effect at the

⁷ OECS Development Charter

national level. The Member-States of the OECS are currently in the process of preparing their National EMSs, most of which are expected to be completed by mid-2004.

Concurrent with these various sub-regional and national initiatives, and the OECS-Environment and Sustainable Development Unit has, for several years, been promoting Integrated Development Planning (IDP) within the OECS, and several countries have proceeded to pursue the implementation of IDP. Also, in the OECS, IDP is considered as the process through which NSDS should be developed, given that the principles applied in IDP are to a large extent consistent with those applied to NSDSs. Therefore, whereas there is a distinction between IDP and NSDSs, the two are closely related, and in considering NSDSs within the OECS, it is worthwhile to also consider past, present and proposed IDP initiatives.

3.2 The OECS Integrated Development Planning Project

The efforts of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in relation to NSDSs commenced in 1998 with the execution of a project entitled “Integrated Approach to Development Planning and Land Management for Environmental Sustainability”. This project was financed through a grant from the Organisation of American states (OAS), and it was implemented in four pilot countries, namely Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St. Kitts Nevis and St. Lucia. The project was intended to expose the pilot countries to a new approach to development planning, Integrated Development Planning (IDP).

Integrated Development Planning is described in the literature as “a holistic, dynamic and fully participatory approach to development planning which seeks to integrate and coordinate the economic, cultural, social, environmental, demographic, financial and spatial dimensions into the planning process to ensure the effective and sustainable use of available human, financial and natural resources for the benefit of all”⁸. This approach incorporates social, environmental, physical and economic parameters with the direct involvement of local institutions, stakeholders and political leadership.

The OECS project was firstly developed as a five-year project, but at the conclusion of negotiations with the funding agency, its duration was reduced to one year. It was expected that through this project, each country would pilot an Integrated Approach to Development Planning, and that separate Action Plans were to be developed by each country, based on its particular circumstances. In addition, the OECS was to facilitate the provision of technical assistance in support of these Action Plans. However, it was recognized early on that the time frame for the project was a major constraint to effective implementation of any IDP initiative, given the nature of the IDP process and the nature of the local institutions and agencies to be involved in the process.

However, through the project, national consultations on Integrated Development Planning were held in each pilot country, and steps were taken to define relevant approaches to the introduction of IDP in each country. In addition, situational analyses of agencies involved in development planning were undertaken, and training workshops were conducted on Geographic Information Systems and Participatory Methods for Integrated Development Planning.

⁸ An Integrated Approach to Development in the OECS Member States: Towards a Paradigm Shift

Further, the following publications were prepared by the OECS:

1. A Policy Formulation and Administrative Framework for Development Planning in the OECS Member States;
2. An Integrated Approach to Development in the OECS Member States: Towards a Paradigm Shift;
3. A Synthesis Document of the situational analysis conducted in each pilot country;
4. A brochure on Integrated Development Planning.

While the limited time frame of the project did not allow for the production of a substantial and clearly identifiable outputs, the project served to “sow the seeds” of IDP in the OECS, to the extent that the concept continues to be pursued and promoted, several years after closure of the project. As described in Section 5, the Government of Dominica has pursued the matter to the point of preparing an Integrated Development Plan for the country and as described in Section 6, the Government of St. Lucia, has also continued to pursue the matter with less substantial results.

In addition, since the conclusion of the project, the OECS-ESDU has continued to promote the IDP process in its various programmes and projects, even in the absence of a dedicated initiative on IDP, within its work programme. During 2000/2001, the OECS-NRMU facilitated extensive discussions among the OECS Member States on the development of a common set of principles to guide environmental sustainability in the sub-region, which led to the adoption of the St. George’s Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in 2001, and within these principles the concept of IDP has been taken into account. Principle 2 is entitled “Integrate Social Economic and Environmental Considerations into National Development Policies, Plans and Programmes” and the commitments detailed under this title reflect the essential elements of IDP including agreement to “Formulate, promote and implement integrated development policies, plans and programmes to ensure that environmental management is an integral component of planning processes in pursuit of sustainable development”.

3.3 Overall Assessment of the OECS Experience in NSDS

The efforts of the OECS Member-States in developing and implementing NSDSs have generally not achieved substantial results. Most OECS Member-States have not specifically embarked on NSDS programmes, although efforts have been made to introduce IDP, which if carried to its fullest extent, will result in most NSDS objectives being met. However, efforts to introduce IDP have been constrained by a number of factors including:

- Limited technical capacities in agencies required to collaborate in IDP; In general, the human resources required to promote and pursue IDP goals have not been made available to the relevant agencies, and in instances where persons have been charged with responsibility for these matters, they have not been provided with adequate training and support to enable them to operate effectively.
- Lack of a common understanding of IDP; the various institutions, agencies and organisations involved often interpret the principles of IDP differently. This may result in difficulties in achieving a common understanding and a slowdown or stalling in implementation.
- Insufficient political support; The long-term visions and commitments normally required in developing and implementing IDP are not necessarily compatible with the nature of the political systems in the OECS. As a result, the level of political support required for

developing and implementing IDP is not easily attained. This in turn may affect allocation of the required financial and human resources.

- Lack of funding; IDP initiatives often suffer from budgetary constraints, which limit their effectiveness. Also, in instances where these are initiated through projects, inadequate provisions are made for continuation of work after completion of these projects.
- Resistance from certain key public officials; The implementing IDP often brings about changes in the structure and modes of operation of some public agencies. This is often resisted by some public official, and as a result, the change process towards IDP may be retarded.
- Limitations in current legislation; In general, at the national level, issues relating to sustainable development in the OECS are covered by a large number of laws, which often overlap and which are commonly outdated and weakly enforced. There is a therefore need to update and rationalize such legislation and to make provisions to facilitate effective implementation of IDP and NSDS.

The need for integrated approaches to development planning continues to be repeated and reinforced at international and regional levels, and the development imperatives facing the countries of the OECS, the wider Caribbean and the developing world suggest that increased emphasis will have to be placed on applying such approaches.

Also, the deliberations of the consultations on IDP also suggest that increasingly, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other interest groups are demanding more involvement in national planning activities and increased coordination of policies and programmes across sectors. Therefore demands are being made on Governments to at least pursue and apply the principles involved in IDP and NSDSs, and given the increasing economic challenges of recent years and the increasing emphasis on environmental management and social development issues, it appears that the principles of IDP and NSDSs will be more widely applied.

However, in order to ensure that NSDS procedures and practices are implemented in a sustained, structured manner across the OECS, it would be desirable for specific initiatives with an NSDS focus to be developed and implemented in countries that have not yet taken steps to pursue NSDS, and in countries already pursuing IDP and NSDS, steps should be taken to address current challenges in order to provide added momentum to IDP, NSDS and related initiatives. The resources required to pursue these initiatives, particularly the financial resources, are not likely to be available from OECS Governments or local agencies, and so the assistance of regional and international partners will most likely have to be sought if NSDS is to be pursued with increased vigour in the OECS.

4. CASE STUDY: THE NATIONAL INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

4.1 The Strategy Development Process

The National Integrated Development Strategy (NIDS) of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) arose from a project which was conceptualized following a symposium held in November 1992 to identify national planning priorities. At that symposium, a “concept Paper” entitled “National

Integrated Development Plan (NIDP), 1994-1998” was presented. At the time that the symposium was being held, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Committee on Human Settlements (UNCHS) were in the process of executing an economic planning and physical planning projects, respectively and the Government of the BVI recognizing then, the usefulness in integrating these separate planning activities, took the decision in 1994, to consolidate extensions of these two projects into an integrated development project.

The operating mechanism for the preparation of the NIDS consists of two interrelated components: the methodological framework and the institutional framework. The methodological framework outlines the approach and the processes or activities leading to the development of the strategy, while the institutional framework outlines the network of human resources necessary for the elaboration of an integrated strategy and the resulting plan. These two components interact to form the process for the development of the NIDS. Six major phases are identified and are represented in a grouping of the major activities and tasks as follows:

- Conceptualization;
- Analysis;
- Strategy Formulation;
- Approval;
- Implementation;
- Monitoring and Evaluation.

A Project Management Team (PMT) was appointed by the Chief Minister’s Office to manage the NIDS process. This team comprised of the Head of the Development Planning Unit (Chairman), Chief Physical Planning Officer, Chief Conservation and Fisheries Officer, Head of the Social Development Department, Permanent Secretary-Chief Minister’s Office; Assistance Secretary-Ministry of Health and Welfare, and the Financial Secretary. The Project Management Team in collaboration with the office of the Chief Minister set up a number of sub-committees to examine various sectors/areas of study with a view to assisting in the formulation of policies and strategies. The sub-committees formed were:

- i. Global External Sub-Committee
- ii. Global Domestic Sub-Committee
- iii. Productive or Economic Sector Sub-Committee(I); responsible for Agriculture, Fisheries, Mining and Quarrying and Construction.
- iv. Productive or Economic Sector Sub-Committee (II); responsible for Tourism
- v. Productive or Economic Sector Sub-committee (III); responsible for Financial Services
- vi. Social Service Sub-Committee;
- vii. Physical Infrastructure Sub-Committee

During the process of developing the NIDS, a number of workshops consultations and publicity campaigns were conducted. These included:

- A Public Workshop on NIDS, which was held in November 1996: This workshop was targeted at leading officials in the public and private sectors and the NGO community.

- A Training Workshop on Strategic Planning for Integrated Development Planning: This was held in January 1997 and it was conducted with assistance from the University of the West Indies. It targeted members of the PMT and officials closely associated with the project.
- A Publicity Campaign: This was undertaken between January and May 1998 to inform the public of the NIDS process, via the mass media.
- Public Consultations: These were undertaken in June and July, 1998 in a number of communities. These consultations gave the general public the opportunities to contribute to the NIDS process.

4.2 The NIDS Document

The activities described in the preceding section resulted in heightened public awareness of the issues involved in integrated planning, and they also provided the officials involved in the planning process with information on public opinions, concerns and expectations which needed to be taken into account. The process led to the preparation of a National Integrated Development Strategy document, which was completed in 1998 and initially covered the period 1999-2003. However, following some delays, the plan was approved in 2001 by the Cabinet of Ministers, and it was amended to cover the period 2003-2007.

The major purpose of the Strategy was “to establish the broad strategies, policies, and the implementation framework to promote integrated development” and its overall aim was “to improve standards of living and the general welfare of the population”. The Strategy charts the policy programme and sets out the policy agenda and the administrative and implementation framework for planning for the period. It also provides the context in which the policy framework and the development agenda and were devised, and it concludes that the planning context is “one that though benefiting greatly from two decades of progress in a number of areas, remains inherently vulnerable”. The Strategy also outlines the broad development objectives, which are:

- To reduce overall vulnerability
- To ensure balanced developments
- To enhance human capital
- To ensure environmental sustainability
- To improve the physical infrastructure
- To maintain social cohesion
- To attain global competitiveness
- To promote global connectiveness
- To preserve the cultural heritage; and
- To ensure the meaningful participation of BV Islanders in the affairs of the territory.

The Strategy then presents the broad policy framework for the integrated development strategy, and this framework outlines the major policies, objectives, and targets to be pursued by the Government during the planning period. These were presented under the following headings:

- Human Resource Development
- Population and Labour
- Environmental Management
- Physical Infrastructure and Utilities

- Physical Development
- National Economic Management
- Social Development and Welfare
- Role of the State
- Science and Technology
- Information Technology

The Strategy outlines a framework for implementation, monitoring and evaluation and it proposes the establishment of a National Planning Agency/Department of National Planning, with the following divisions:

- Economic and Social Planning;
- Physical Planning;
- Environmental Planning;
- Projects; and
- Information, Statistics and Publications.

It also proposes the establishment of a Planning Oversight Committee (POC) which will have coordinating responsibility with respect to plan implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review, and will report to the BVI Executive Council and it is suggested that the work of the POC can be undertaken through sub-committees responsible for separate areas, with technical support from the National Planning Agency.

4.3 Assessment of the BVI-NIDS

The development of the BVI-NIDS appears to be one of the earliest initiatives of its type in the OECS and the wider Caribbean, thereby making the BVI a pioneer in IDP and NSDS in the Region. As such the lessons learned through the BVI experience could prove useful to other OECS countries and SIDS that are in the early stages of developing their national IDP or NSDS initiatives. Fortunately, the BVI procedures, methods and experiences are well documented and the BVI authorities have used the Internet to publicise the work undertaken throughout the NIDS process and to make the outputs of that process available on the World Wide Web at www.dpu.gov.vg. This approach to publicising the work undertaken in IDP and NSDSs is one worth emulating.

The activities undertaken in developing the NIDS created a heightened awareness of the general public on development issues, and an unprecedented level of public involvement in the planning process in the BVI. However, it appears that the NIDS has not been put into effect to any significant extent, and the momentum generated in the earlier stages of the NIDS process may have decreased in recent months. This may be attributed to the following:

- a) The slow pace of implementation of reforms required within the public service to facilitate effective implementation of the NIDS; most of the reforms that must be made to the structure and *modus operandi* of Government Departments to ensure that the NIDS is effectively implemented, have not been put into effect. Efforts are however being made to implement the required programmes and activities to bring about the necessary reforms in the public service.

- b) A hiatus in the activities of the NIDS Project Management Team (PMT); in recent months, the PMT has not been as active as it used to be, and as a result, efforts to promote implementation of the NIDS have waned. The PMT therefore needs to be reactivated, with a focus on promoting and facilitating implementation of the NIS.

Notwithstanding these challenges, some Government Departments such as the Conservation and Fisheries Department have been using the NIDS to guide the preparation of their Work Programmes.

It is worth noting that, notwithstanding the early financial contributions to the NIDS process from the UN-funded projects, a significant proportion of the financial resources required for implementing the process was provided by Government, from local revenue sources. This is, reflective of the Government's level of commitment to the NIDS.

In conclusion, it can be said that significant efforts have been made to develop the BVI-NIDS, and the results obtained to date make the territory one of the leaders in the OECS NSDS process. However, steps should be taken to regain the momentum that has been lost in recent months so that the full effect of the NIDS could be realised.

5. CASE STUDY: THE DOMINICA INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.1 Background to the IDP Project

During 1998/1999, the Commonwealth of Dominica participated in the OECS project on Integrated Development Planning, and through this project, national consultations were held to review the policy formulation and plan preparation processes in Dominica and to develop an action plan for implementation of Integrated Development Planning (IDP). In addition, a Task Force was established to develop guidelines for IDP in Dominica, and some public awareness activities were undertaken to provide information to the general public on the concept of IDP. The OECS project lasted only about one year, but by the time it concluded, the authorities had embraced the concept of IDP and had committed themselves to pursuing the implementation of IDP in Dominica.

In an effort to continue pursuit of the goal of implementing IDP in Dominica, the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica (GOCD) made a request to the European Union (EU) to fund a national IDP project, and following successful negotiations with the EU, the "Integrated Development Planning Project" was launched in October 2001. The project was executed through a consultancy, of which the objective, purpose of the expected results, were as follows:

Objective: To promote the democratization of holistic development planning in the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Purpose: To define and establish a participatory process for Integrated Development Planning where the private sector and wider civil society play an enhanced role in the design and delivery of more transparent, accountable and decentralized development planning.

Results Expected:

- A national “Integrated Development Plan” encompassing cross-cutting and sectoral issues;
- A *new process* for development planning that will facilitate holistic decentralized planning of both cross-cutting and sectoral issues and containing provisions for approaches to consensus building on development programme policies and priorities at all stages of the Economic Management cycle;
- An *IDP Implementation Plan* showing detailed immediate actions/projects/programmes and broad medium to longer term activities, responsibility schedules and programmes of financing as well as mechanisms for co-operation and joint action;
- Integration of a validated “Carib Peoples Development Plan” into the overall IDP;
- Greater linkages between the Carib people of Dominica and regional/international Indigenous Peoples organizations.

The consultancy was undertaken by the Development Institute (TDI), which is based in Dominica, and for this assignment, the TDI used a core team of six-members, supported by administrative staff.

The consultancy assignment was launched in October 2001, and was originally scheduled to last for six (6) months. It was to be undertaken in three (3) phases, lasting two (2) months each:

Phase 1: Sensitization, Research, Analysis and Planning;

Phase2: Consolidation, Integration and Development of the IDP;

Phase 3: Programming and Project Identification.

A thirteen (13)-member Steering Committee was established to oversee the implementation of the project. That committee was made up of:

- The Minister of Finance and Planning (Chairman)
- The Minister of Tourism
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs
- The Minister of Health
- Representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations
- Representatives of the Private Sector and Civil Society
- The IDP Coordinator/ Economist in the Ministry of Finance and Planning (Secretary)

5.2 The IDP Project “Final Report”

The execution of the project took much longer than planned, and in January 2003, the Consultants submitted a “Final Report”.

According to the report, the consulting team undertook to design an approach to research, analysis and planning that also allowed for a forging of a consciousness and awareness of the IDP process among the people of Dominica, that will continuously provide inputs into the dialogue on national issues. To do this within the objectives of the project, the IDP Team:

- a) Conducted a series of sensitization exercises;
- b) Listened to the responses on issues and a vision;
- c) Formulated planning and policy concepts from these responses
- d) Developed draft IDP proposals and projects for stakeholders validation; and
- e) Presented a final report on the IDP process and Implementation plan;

Within the overall sensitization strategy undertaken by the consultants, fifteen (15) sensitization meetings were held across the island, and these involved approximately 600 persons. In addition, five (5) zonal meetings involving key community leaders and individuals were held, sensitization meetings were held with persons and groups considered to be important opinion leaders, sectoral workshops were held separately held for youth, the private sector, the public sector, civil society and joint sectors. Special “Reference Groups” were also established to comment on ideas, proposals and reports produced by the consultants. Town-hall type community meetings were broadcast on radio with the opportunity for live audience participation, and “revalidation sessions” were held to culminate the sensitization strategy and in these sessions the proposals of the consultants were provided to key groups, including the Cabinet of Ministers, for comment and further guidance.

During the consultancy, survey instruments were administered to several Government Departments and organisations in the civil society sector. The consultants also undertook an extensive document review, and during the exercise, the team produced forty (40) documents, including twenty-six (26) discussion papers.

The report provides a review of the principles and elements of integrated planning which draws from the work undertaken through the OECS in the late 1990s, and it proceeds to outline Guiding Principles for the implementation of IDP in Dominica, as well as mechanisms and measures for the IDP process in Dominica.

The report includes the Integrated Development Plan for Dominica. It outlines the general policy objectives, which are to govern the development measures to be pursued as well as the policies that are to govern the IDP process. It identifies the short-term objectives of the IDP, and proposes measures to achieve these objectives. The short-term objectives are:

- i. Fiscal Stabilization;
- ii. Economic Recovery and Growth;
- iii. Strengthening Social Services;
- iv. Building Capacity for Social Development; and
- v. Developing Quality Public Service.

The report also proposes a set of medium-term goals, objectives and measures to provide continuous impetus to the IDP process. The medium-term goals relate to:

- a. Management of the Economy
- b. Improving quality of social service; and
- c. Making the public service more accountable.

The report then identifies several “cross-cutting issues” as being critical to the recovery of the economy and the establishment of a new planning process and an Integrated Development Plan. These cross cutting issues relate to:

- Environment and Development
- Promoting equity in economic opportunities
- Improving Productivity
- Decentralization
- Human Development; and
- Managing Information Resources

The report then proposes six (6) medium-term strategies for sustainable Development. These are:

- Strategy for Debt Recovery
- Strategy for Fiscal Transparency
- Strategy for Maintaining Social Investment
- Economic Growth Strategy
- Strategy on Vulnerability
- Strategy on Governance

The report also provides an implementation plan to give effect to the policies and measures to be enacted. The Implementation Plan describes short-term measures as “those which commence immediately, with the prospects for impacts/results/outcomes becoming evident within one year”. Medium-Term measures are described as those “for which implementation commences within one year but are likely to yield results within three years” and “Long-term measures may also have commenced implementation alongside the short and medium term measures, but outcomes, results/impacts would become evident three or more years later”. It recommends a number of steps to be taken to effect the transition to full implementation of the IDP. These include the establishment of an IDP Commission, consistent with proposals made during the OECS IDP project (see Section 3.2). The composition and functions of that Commission are outlined, along with guidelines for the establishment and operation of a Secretariat to the Commission. The Implementation Plan also provides recommendations on the actions to be taken by a number of public sector and private sector agencies and civil society for implementation of IDP. Project Profiles, including implementation costs, are also provided for a number of immediate initiatives for implementation of the IDP.

A particular feature of the report is the “Carib People Development Plan”, which is provided as an Annex. The Plan is aimed at making a contribution to improving the overall quality of life of the Carib people. It focuses on poverty reduction and increasing economic growth as well as creating and sustaining a positive cultural awareness among the people. Preparation of the plan involved all sectors of the community: Public Sector, Private Sector NGOs and Civil Society. It began with an assessment of the existing situation followed by identification of the major problems and constraints faced by the Carib people. Recommendations are aimed at finding solutions to these problems. Further, it identified short, medium to long-term goals for development of the Carib people.

5.3 Assessment of the Dominica IDP Experience

At present, the status of the “Final Report” on the IDP Project is unclear. While the report has been submitted to the Government as a “Final Report”, it has not been accepted by the Steering

Committee as such. There is a difference of opinion between the Consultants and the Steering Committee on the adequacy of the report.

Also, some members of the Steering Committee have expressed concerns about the methodology adopted by the consultants, and the content of the report, and another consultant was hired to undertake an assessment of the “Final Report”. The results of that assessment were not reviewed during preparation of this report.

Notwithstanding the issues currently surrounding the “Final Report” on the Dominica IDP project, it can be concluded that the report is a substantial body of work, which places Dominica in a unique position to move ahead with IDP. There is always room for improving such reports and it is reasonable to expect that there will never be complete consensus by all interests groups. However, given the significant amount of resources have been invested into this activity, every effort should be made to speedily resolve the outstanding difficulties surrounding the status of the report, so that the process of implementing Integrated Development Planning, in Dominica may proceed.

Considering the severe economic difficulties currently facing Dominica, it is expected that implementation of the IDP framework and preparation of a NSDS would enhance the ability of the country to improve on its current situation and to place itself on a path of sustainable development. There is therefore an urgent need to satisfactorily conclude the IDP project and to immediately follow-up the project with the required IDP activities.

It is worth noting the approach taken to the development of the IDP in Dominica, in that a project was used as the mechanism to develop the IDP process, and that this project was largely financed by an external funding agency. In using such an approach, attention should be paid early on, to the programmes and activities to be implemented upon completion of the project, as there is a chance that the IDP process may stall if the appropriate follow-up activities are not implemented immediately following the completion of the project. Consideration should also be given to the fact that during the project, public interest in IDP would have been heightened and so would public expectation about the implementation of IDP. If progress cannot be maintained in developing and implementing IDP, then it may be more difficult to engender public confidence in future IDP initiatives.

6. CASE STUDY: THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS IN ST. LUCIA

6.1 Activities Undertaken To Date

Following upon the efforts of the OECS to promote implementation of the Integrated Development Planning process within the OECS sub-region, the Government of St. Lucia (GOSL), in 1998, began taking steps to introduce the process in St. Lucia. In September 1998, the Ministry of Planning, submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet of Ministers on the subject of IDP. This memorandum sought the endorsement of Cabinet for the development of plans to introduce the IDP process. Cabinet, by conclusion No. 1181 of 1998, directed that the IDP

concept be developed further. Cabinet also directed that the implementation mechanisms and cost implications of the IDP process be developed.

The Sustainable Development and Environment Unit (SD&EU) of the Ministry of Planning then proceeded to develop the IDP concept, and prepared a further submission to Cabinet in 2001 on the IDP process and its implementation. Cabinet accepted this submission, and as a result, the Unit proceeded to establish an IDP Section within its organization structure, to facilitate the expected implementation of the IDP process. The IDP Section was to be staffed by a Physical Planner, a Social Planner, an Economist, an Environmental Planner and a Research Assistant. Most of these positions were filled by between late 2001 and mid-2002. Notwithstanding the endorsement of the IDP process by Cabinet and the provisions made for staffing of the IDP Section, financial provisions for the promotion and development of the IDP process were dropped from Government's estimates of expenditure for the 2002-2003 financial year, and this significantly curtailed the ability of the SD&EU to develop the IDP process. The absence of funding for IDP then led the Ministry of Planning to seek external assistance for its work on IDP, and it also led to Ministry to make a further submission to the Cabinet of Ministers seeking re-endorsement of their earlier support for IDP.

Meanwhile, over the several years of its operations as the coordinating unit for environmental management initiatives in St. Lucia, the SD&EU, recognised that there were several deficiencies in the legal and institutional arrangements for environmental management in the country, and the Unit determined that these deficiencies should be addressed as part of the process of integrating environmental issues into development decision-making in the country. The SD&U therefore approached the OECS for assistance in addressing this matter, which led to a "Legal and Institutional Review of Environmental Management in St. Lucia being undertaken through the OECS-ESDU. This review was undertaken from late 2000 to early 2003, and it identified, among its key findings, that "There exists no framework or structure that sets out the manner in which environmental management initiatives are to be undertaken as part of the integrated development planning (IDP) process". The final report on the review makes detailed recommendations for the improvement of environmental management in St. Lucia, including one that, "A National Environmental Commission be established as an urgent priority to coordinate environmental management initiatives and policies". It also recommends that "Legal and institutional structures be established to provide for the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations in all decision-making activities".

In a further attempt to secure funding for its work in IDP, the SD&EU in 2002 developed a project aimed providing increased impetus to its efforts at promoting and implementing IDP in St. Lucia. Ministry of Planning sought the assistance of the United Nations for this project. Following discussions and negotiations between the Government of St. Lucia, the UN and the OECS, in September 2003, the UN through its Department for Economic and Social Affairs Agency and the OECS entered into an agreement to implement a project entitled "Integrated Planning for Sustainable Development and supporting National Sustainable Development Indicators for St. Lucia". This project is funded by the UN-DESA and executed through the OECS. Its goals are:

- i. To raise public awareness on IDP and undertake a baseline study on development planning in St. Lucia;
- ii. To undertake capacity building exercises for outreach, education, planning and participation and to articulate a national vision for sustainable development;
- iii. To select a first set of indicators of sustainable development for St. Lucia; and

iv. To prepare a draft national sustainable development strategy for St. Lucia

The first major activity undertaken through the project was the convening of a National Consultation and Visioning Exercise for Integrated Development Planning. This 2-day exercise was held in late November 2003 and over 60 persons from a wide range of interest groups participated in it. The consultation and visioning exercise served several purposes, in that it:

- a) Introduced IDP to several persons who hitherto had not been exposed to the concept;
- b) Provided participants with an opportunity to assess and review the current status of development planning in St. Lucia;
- c) Provided participants with the opportunity to discuss development challenges, particularly in light of regional and international trends;
- d) Provided participants with an opportunity to identify key elements of a vision for IDP in St. Lucia and to identify the key development themes which will form the basis for a National sustainable Development Strategy for St. Lucia.

Under the current project, this activity is to be followed up by capacity-building exercises aimed at enhancing the skills of Non-Governmental Organisations in participatory planning and related matters, and the preparation of a draft Sustainable Development Strategy, which follows from the discussions held during the exercise. It is expected that following these series of activities, the IDP initiative will move into its next phase, funding for which, it is hoped, will come from the Government of St. Lucia. In that regard, the Ministry of Planning has made submissions to the Ministry of Finance for the re-introduction of financial provisions for IDP and a NSDS in Government's 2004-2005 budget.

Meanwhile, the basic principles of IDP have been applied in the preparation of a Strategic Development Plans for the Laborie district, which is located in the southwestern part of the island. The Laborie Development Planning Committee (LDC), which is a Community-Based Organisation (CBO) with the broad mandate of with the mandate of promoting the development of the Laborie district, has spearheaded the preparation of this plan. The lessons learned from the preparation of the Strategic Development Plan for Laborie may not only be useful in guiding the preparation of plans for other communities and districts in St. Lucia and the OECS, but they may also be helpful to corresponding national initiatives.

6.2 Assessment of the IDP Process in St. Lucia

Whereas IDP has been pursued in St. Lucia for several years, there still is a generally low level of acceptance of IDP and it can be said that advancements made to date have been minimal, considering the time that has elapsed. This may be attributed to a number of factors including:

- a) The inadequacy of the financial resources allocated for IDP; This, which may in turn be reflective of a low level of commitment to IDP at the higher-decision making levels in Government.
- b) The reluctance of some public sector officials or departments to participate in IDP initiatives; This may be a result of fear that IDP may result in the responsibilities and powers of officials or departments being decreased.
- c) Low levels of commitment by some politicians to principles of IDP; This may in turn be attributed to a possible fear that powers or levels of influence of political officials may be decreased through IDP.

Also, up to now, IDP has been pursued by the SD&EU of the Ministry of Planning, as one of several other initiatives being undertaken by that Unit and it may be argued that this institutional arrangement is not be appropriate for effective promotion of IDP. The introduction of IDP will influence the manner in which several Government Departments operate, and the SD&EU has been and will continue to be challenged in its efforts, to introduce IDP principles and practices into Departments that generally exert more influence than it in the overall operations of Government. The IDP process is therefore more likely to take hold if it is supported and promoted by officials who have the authority to effect changes within the public service and even the wider community. It may therefore be necessary to establish an IDP Committee or Task Force of appropriate Government and NGO officials with a mandate to oversee and promote the implementation of IDP and to use the SD&EU as the executing agency to support of this committee. This arrangement is more likely to assist in pushing IDP forward than the current arrangement.

The discussions held at the November 2003 consultation and visioning exercise however suggested that there is a willingness by most sectors and interest groups to support IDP and the principles that are enshrined in it. The challenge therefore, in the short-term, is also to secure funding and allocate the required technical expertise to continue pursuance of IDP, and implementation of the NSDS. The importance of ensuring continuity in the process cannot be overemphasized, as there may be a risk that public interest in, and support for, IDP can wane if the process is pursued intermittently.

Finally, the case of St. Lucia illustrates clearly the manner in which IDP process could be applied to the preparation of NSDSs. It serves as an example for the point made in Section 3.2 that IDP is a process, which if applied to its fullest extent will result in, among other things, the fulfillment of the goals of NSDS.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past several years, the Governments of the OECS have adopted or signed a series of regional and international agreements and declarations that have committed them to pursue sustainable development goals, which among other things, involve increased integration of economic, environmental and social issues in national development planning processes. More specifically, Governments have committed themselves to developing National Sustainable Development Strategies, but in general, progress towards the development and implementation of NSDS in the OECS has been slow. Most OECS Member-States have not specifically embarked on NSDS programmes, although efforts have been made to introduce IDP, which if carried to its fullest extent, will result in most NSDS objectives being met.

The OECS through its ESDU has coordinated some activities related to NSDS, particularly in the area of Integrated Development Planning, and some benefits have been derived from these. Meanwhile, the British Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Dominica and St. Lucia have undertaken certain national initiatives related to NSDSs, and the experiences of these countries could serve to guide other OECS Member-States and developing countries as a whole, in their own NSDS initiatives.

The BVI has completed preparation of a National Integrated Development Strategy, but implementation of this Strategy had been hampered by a number of factors. The Government of Dominica has been implementing an Integrated Development Planning project, which is currently experiencing difficulties, after having passed the original project closing date. Meanwhile, after several attempts at introducing an Integrated Development Planning process, to the Government of St. Lucia has recently commenced a project to revitalise efforts in IDP, and a draft National sustainable Development Strategy is expected to be prepared as part of that project.

The experiences to date suggest that all OECS Member-States face challenges in their initiatives related to NSDSs. These include:

- The carrying out of the required institutional reforms;
- The provision of the required financial and human resources;
- The enlisting of political support;
- The attainment of acceptable levels of public support and involvement; and
- The sustained application of NSDS processes, methods and outputs.

These challenges can be best overcome by a combination of internal actions at the national level, collaboration within the OECS sub-region as has been done on numerous other initiatives in the past, and through collaboration with other developing countries and relevant international agencies.

More specifically, the following are recommended as priority actions to address these challenges:

- i. In order to provide impetus and focus to NSDS initiatives, dedicated units should be established to coordinate and promote the development and implementation of NSDSs. These Units should be adequately staffed to enable them to effectively fulfill their mandate, and they should be so positioned within the overall institutional framework of Government as to be able to command the attention of other Governmental agencies and local NGOs and CBOs.
- ii. The appropriate legislative provisions should be enacted in support of NSDS.
- iii. Adequate budgetary allocation should be made to facilitate the effective implementation of NSDS, and increased efforts should be made to obtain financial support for NSDS from regional and international donors, as appropriate.
- iv. Public Sector reform initiatives should be undertaken in close collaboration with NSDS initiatives to ensure that the institutional and organizational changes required within the public sector for effective implementation of NSDSs are undertaken.
- v. Public information, awareness and education programmes relating to NSDS should be introduced or intensified, as appropriate, to ensure continued public support for, and involvement in, NSDS initiatives.
- vi. Regional programmes should be developed to provide support to national NSDS initiatives, and to coordinate international assistance efforts, as appropriate.

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