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Eighteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Fifteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region

Roatan, Honduras, 3-6 June 2019

**PREPARATION OF REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE OCEAN-BASED  
ECONOMY IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION**

*For reasons of economy and the environment, Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies of the Working and Information documents to the Meeting, and not to request additional copies.*



## **Preamble**

During the Blue Economy Summit, held in Nairobi, Kenya, November 2018, the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and their ministers and ambassadors present, expressed the need for the Caribbean region to develop a Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy, and to host a regional summit, where Caribbean Governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector could utilize the platform to chart a course towards a regional Strategy. The government of Honduras agreed to host the 18<sup>th</sup> IGM and 15th COP meetings of the Cartagena Convention, in association with other meetings: the Sustainable Blue Economy Summit of the Wider Caribbean Region, and the celebration of World Oceans Day 2019.

The Blue Economy Summit with the theme, '**Green Solutions for a Blue Planet**', aims to address the ongoing ocean challenges through innovative solutions, at regional and national levels, including the development of sustainable models of consumption and production, and integrated policies enabling the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, recognizing the interdependence of productive sectors (tourism, fisheries, maritime transport, agriculture, energy), and valuing the natural capital of healthy and resilient marine and coastal ecosystems in the Wider Caribbean Region to underpin the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UN Environment prepared the document, and it is hoped that a successful Caribbean pilot with respect to this theme may be utilized for other regions and states moving in the same direction.

## **Recommendation**

- I. **Recommendation to the Eighteenth Intergovernmental Meeting of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Fifteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)**
  1. Member States are invited to consider the adoption of a decision to develop a regional Strategy for Sustainable Ocean-Based Economies in the Wider Caribbean Region, as well as the establishment of an intersessional Working Group to support development of such Strategy and an associated decision support and enabling framework.
  2. In preparing such a decision, Member States may consider the following aspects:
    - a. Allocation of resources to allow the establishment of the Working Group, entrusted with the development of a Regional Strategy for Sustainable Ocean-Based Economy in the Wider Caribbean Region through regional consultations.
    - b. Partnerships required, both in relation to the Working Group and the Secretariat, to ensure comprehensive review and analysis of the many complex issues and sectors related to this theme.

- c. The relative importance of this issue for the Wider Caribbean Region to other emerging issues during the next decade that may constitute a demand on the human and financial resources of the Secretariat.

## II. Context

The interconnectivity of the ocean in the global economy is vast: by 2030, ocean-based activities are expected to generate US\$3 trillion in global outputs<sup>1</sup>. The Commonwealth has estimated that between 14% and 27% of the global ocean economy comes from the Caribbean Sea<sup>2</sup>, with growth expected to continue in industries such as aquaculture, marine biotechnology, deep seabed mining, and ocean renewable energy across the Wider Caribbean Region<sup>3</sup>.

Healthy and well-functioning marine and coastal environments provide the foundation for these and other important productive sectors in the Caribbean, such as coastal tourism, maritime transport and fisheries, which support socio-economic livelihoods, contribute to nutritional human wellbeing, and help with eradicating poverty. Sustainable investments in growing economies also depend on mitigating climate-associated risks, helping to enhance coastal resilience to extreme weather events and to sustain community-driven enterprises. Yet the activities of these sectors that occur within and between nations are interdependent: the impacts of one sector—through physical alteration, destruction of habitats, or land- and marine-based sources of pollution—can directly or indirectly affect the activities of others.

‘Sustainable Ocean-Based Economies’ or ‘Sustainable Blue Economies’ are two terms that help to account for this integrated complexity, framing the global intent to deliver long-term sustainable benefits from coastal- and ocean-based economic activities in an environmentally sustainable, low-carbon, resource-efficient, cross-sectorial and socially inclusive manner.

The ‘Sustainable Ocean-Based Economies’ Strategy and enabling framework can be developed and customized to complement, build upon and harmonize existing initiatives within the Wider Caribbean Region, as one of the most interconnected and dynamic environments in the world. A ‘Regional Strategy for Sustainable Ocean-Based Economy’ would help the countries of Caribbean to mainstream environmental considerations across the Sustainable Development Goals and interrelated national and regional priorities, addressing the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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<sup>1</sup> *Commonwealth Blue Charter* (Available at:

[http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/CommonwealthBlueCharter\\_0.pdf](http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/CommonwealthBlueCharter_0.pdf)).

<sup>2</sup> *Towards a Blue Economy: A Promise for Sustainable Growth in the Caribbean* (Available at:

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25061/Demystifying0t0the0Caribbean0Region.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>).

<sup>3</sup> *Financing the Blue Economy: A Caribbean Development Opportunity*. (Available at:

<http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/446441473349079068/AMCOECC-Blue-Economy-Development-Framework.pdf>).

A sustainable ocean-based economic approach, when applied regionally, could serve as a catalyst to advance coherent ecosystem-based management approaches and harmonizing ocean governance within the Caribbean, convening and building on the achievements of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+) Strategic Action Programme and other regional, national and local initiatives. Aligning with the strategic objectives of the Caribbean Environment Programme, such an integrated Strategy would offer further opportunities to enhance coordinated progress towards the ambitions of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the CARICOM Common Fisheries Policy, and other regional and national policy frameworks, as well as ongoing activities related to 'blue growth,' ecosystem restoration, marine litter reduction, and ecosystem-based adaptation to build climate resilience.

### **III. Programme Approach**

To harness this opportunity, the proposed regional Working Group will be supported by the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention and Regional Coordination Unit of the Caribbean Environment Programme, with technical and financial support, as appropriate, from UN Environment's Global Sustainable Blue/Ocean-based Economy Initiative. The working group will develop a holistic regional Strategy and decision-support and enabling framework to support countries develop and implement sustainable ocean-based economic policies and actions that ensure sustainable, efficient and equitable use of coastal and marine resources, balancing economic, environmental and social priorities. Through shared experiences and collaborative scenario development, the Strategy and enabling framework would help Caribbean countries identify and address economic drivers of environmental degradation and policy gaps currently accelerating coastal pollution, resource overexploitation, uncoordinated coastal development and climate vulnerability at the land-sea interface. It will build coastal resilience as a prerequisite for societal progress.

By drawing from initiatives and experiences at multiple scales within and between Caribbean countries, the regional working group will combine and apply knowledge, assessment and scenario tools on natural capital and ecosystem services, coastal vulnerabilities and risks, green economic policies, coupled economic-social drivers, holistic planning of human activities, and resource-efficient green technologies, focusing on the specific character of oceans and coasts. This includes analysing trade-offs between single sector benefits vis-à-vis their cumulative environmental and social impacts and enhancing circularity in sustainable ocean-based economy policies and sector-based approaches (see Annex for further examples).

In doing so, Caribbean countries and institutions will combine expertise and efforts across national/regional programmes and activities, including the Inclusive Green Economy Initiative, environmental economics and natural capital valuation (TEEB), integrated ecosystem assessment, ecosystem-based planning and management, sustainable production and consumption, trade policies for environmental sustainability, and innovative green financing.

Such harmonization of policies, knowledge and activities can also help stimulate public and private investments in approaches that enable long-term healthy and productive oceans and coasts for human well-being and resilience in the face of environmental change.

The Caribbean Environment Programme, working in close collaboration with the UN Environment Programme and relevant sector agencies and partners, will provide a regional enabling and capacity building mechanism to customize and implement sustainable ocean-based economy solutions, and to pilot activities, knowledge-sharing, and enhanced awareness and national/regional institutional capacities across the region.

A main output to support a regional Caribbean Sustainable Ocean-Based Economy Strategy will be a proposed 'decision-support and enabling framework' to contextualise, develop and implement national and regional sustainable ocean-based economy policy pathways and strategies. The decision-support and enabling framework will customise and combine:

- (i) Knowledge and forecasting capability using mapping, integrated assessment and valuation of ecosystem health, services, vulnerabilities and risks;
- (ii) Strategic Environmental Assessment, trade-off analyses and scenario tools for integrated policy support, decision-making and spatial planning of competing marine and coastal sector objectives and pressures; and
- (iii) Macro-economic models to support integrated green economy policy-making and strategies that build economic circularity and resource efficiency into coastal development.

The resulting Caribbean Sustainable Ocean-Based Economy enabling framework will include tools and advice on effective policies, strategies, legal and economic instruments and institutional capacities for cross-sectorial policy-making and implementation, with guiding principles for financing.

On-the-ground implementation may be guided and facilitated through the 'Sustainable Blue Economy Financing Principles' and Initiative (hosted by UN Environment with the European Commission, European Investment Bank, WWF and World Resources Institute) to facilitate public and private investments in coastal conservation and greening blue sector activities that deliver good returns, while ensuring social and environmental benefits.

The Strategy's expected immediate outcomes include: national and regional environmental sustainable blue economy policies; implementation strategies; guidance on resource-efficient and circular sector approaches; and enhanced institutional capacity and financing principles, enabling more efficient and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystem services.

Within a decade, the Strategy is expected to generate behavioural change in the way Caribbean governments, the private sector and civil society engage and invest in sustainable resource use and reduced human impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems in support of climate-resilient, ocean-based sustainable development—ensuring healthy and resilient oceans and coasts as prerequisite for food security and prosperous social and economic development.

Key assumptions are that integrated policy-making, planning and economic instruments will mobilise support and engagement across government agencies, private sector and civil society stakeholders in piloting sustainable ocean-based economies at local, national and regional scales. A step-wise impact analysis approach will assist with assessing progress every 2 to 3 years.

## ANNEX I

### GUIDANCE on the Terms of Reference of the Working Group on the Regional Strategy on Sustainable Ocean-Based Economy for the Wider Caribbean Region

#### Background and context

By 2050, the planet will need to provide food, health, jobs and energy to sustain a population of 10 billion people. Realizing the full potential of oceans and coasts to contribute to these objectives will require widespread changes in how economic activity is managed in and around coastal and marine areas. This need for change is especially clear as the impacts of over-exploitation, pollution, coastal development and climate change on oceans and coasts become increasingly visible.

A Regional Strategy for Sustainable Oceans-Based Economy in Caribbean can strengthen national/regional coordination and expertise across disciplines in a concerted to assist Caribbean countries tackle complex environmental, economic and social drivers impacting coastal and marine areas and their natural capital to ensure their long-term resilience and sustainable development.

Connecting Caribbean countries and wide-ranging partners, the working group will outline such regional Strategy, a 'decision-support and enabling framework' and supporting capacity building initiative to develop and implement environmentally sustainable economy policies and strategies to unlock investments and actions ensuring the sound use of marine and coastal ecosystems and their many services. Thereby, the initiative will facilitate sustainable economic and social development within planetary boundaries of Caribbean oceans and coasts—ensuring poverty eradication, food security, health, jobs, coastal protection and carbon storage as prerequisites for human well-being and climate resilience into the future.

#### Working Group Scope and Structure

An interdisciplinary regional **Working Group** with national/regional representatives and experts from across sector and cross-sector agencies, national/regional policy-makers and practitioners in Caribbean, along with and environmental, social and economic experts from partner organizations, will be engaged in the development of specific thematic elements of the Strategy. This Working Group will also guide and oversee development and pilot-application of an underpinning Caribbean Decision-Support and Enabling Framework, which may consider *inter alia* mapping, integrated assessment and valuation of marine and coastal ecosystem services for ocean-based economy policy-making, planning and actions; circular and resource-efficient economy policy pathways for Sustainable Ocean-Based Economies; integrated governance and management for optimal use of ocean space and ecosystem services; sustainable ocean-based economy financing principles and instruments; and guidance on translating national/regional knowledge, tools and enabling environment into policy and action. Thereby Working Group will help build the needed national/transboundary/regional capacity and actions to develop and implement Sustainable Ocean-Based Economy policies and strategies.



**Timeline**

Initially, it is anticipated that the Working Group will conduct its work during the 2019-2020 biennium and submit a report of its activities to the 19<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental Meeting and 16<sup>th</sup> COP in 2020 and receive further guidance from Parties. Should the Working Group deliver a draft strategy to those meetings, Contracting Parties may then adopt the Strategy and agree to next steps, or provide amendments, with a timeline for the Working Group to submit a second draft to Parties.