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A strategy for cooperation in sustainable oceans management and development, Commonwealth Caribbean

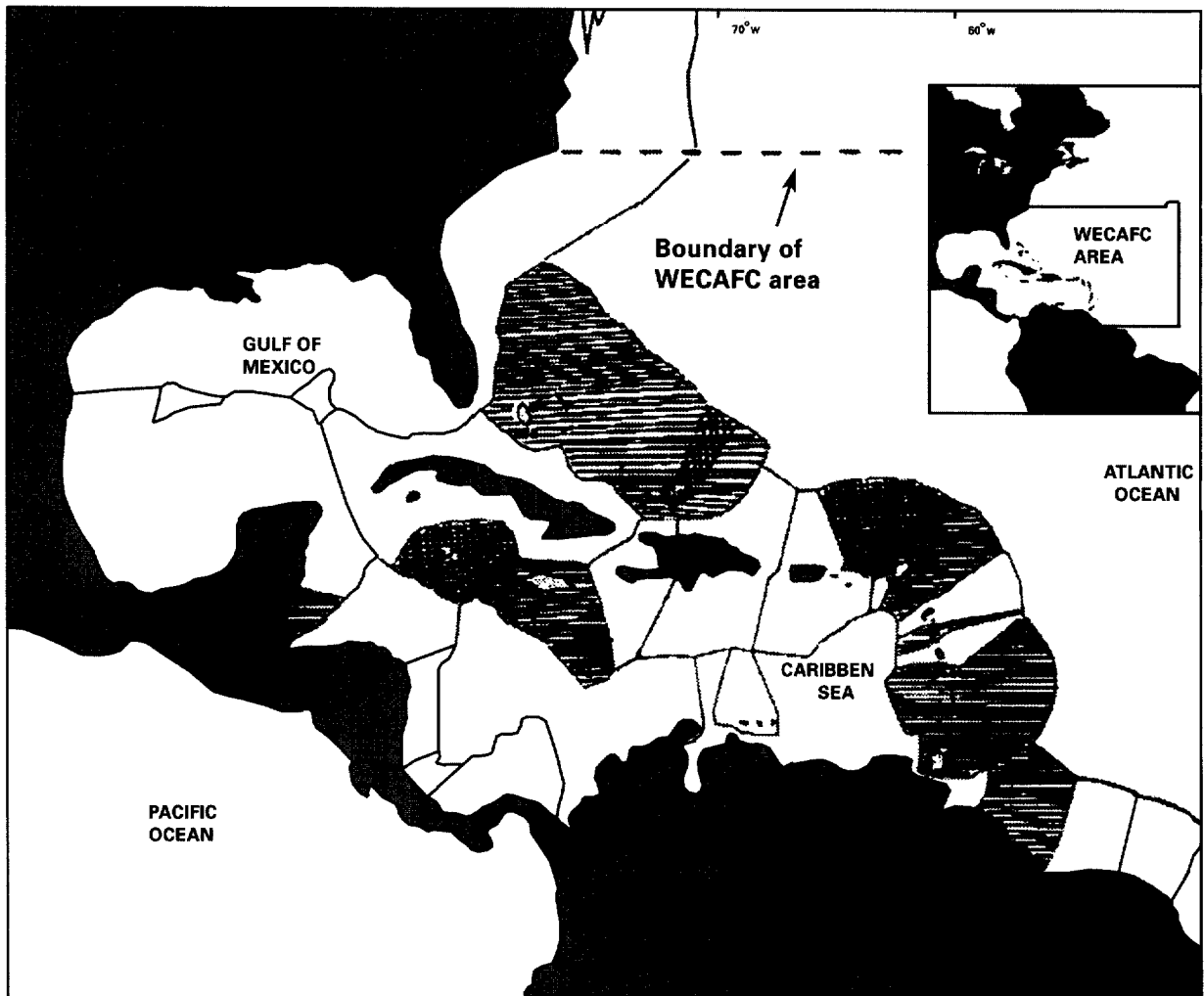
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The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has been paying considerable attention to the seas and oceans since the 1980s as a result of the Third United Nations Law of the Sea Convention (UNCOS III). With the signing of the Convention in 1982, CARICOM states began the process of demarcating Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) limits (Figure 1), negotiating these limits with neighbouring states, and developing their fisheries within their zones. It was soon realized, however, that CARICOM member states (Figure 2), particularly the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), had and would continue to have difficulties with the effective management of their EEZs; and, because of the migratory nature of fish stocks and overlapping EEZs, a regional approach to fisheries was required. This approach to fisheries is being pursued under the CARICOM Fisheries Resource Management Program (CFRAMP), one objective of which is the establishment of a Regional Fisheries Mechanism (RFM).

In 1987, Heads of Government endorsed a CARICOM regional approach to EEZ management and charged the Secretariat with developing a strategy and policy for this purpose. Further, during the 1990s a number of Conventions, namely UNCED Agenda 21 in 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), extended UNCLOS provisions by indicating that EEZ or ocean management should be conducted on a sustainable basis. The

THE APPROXIMATE EEZ's OF COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES



(For illustrative purposes only, adapted from Fenwick 1992).



-  INDEPENDENT COMMONWEALTH STATES
-  DEPENDENT TERRITORIES (U.K.)

Figure 1. The approximate EEZ's of Commonwealth countries.

Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) required UN member countries to prepare strategies and programs for sustainable development and to report regularly on actions taken in implementing these strategies. For CARICOM states already having problems with the management of their EEZs, the new responsibilities are particularly onerous given their scarce resources and expertise. A regional approach is perhaps their only option for meeting these new obligations.

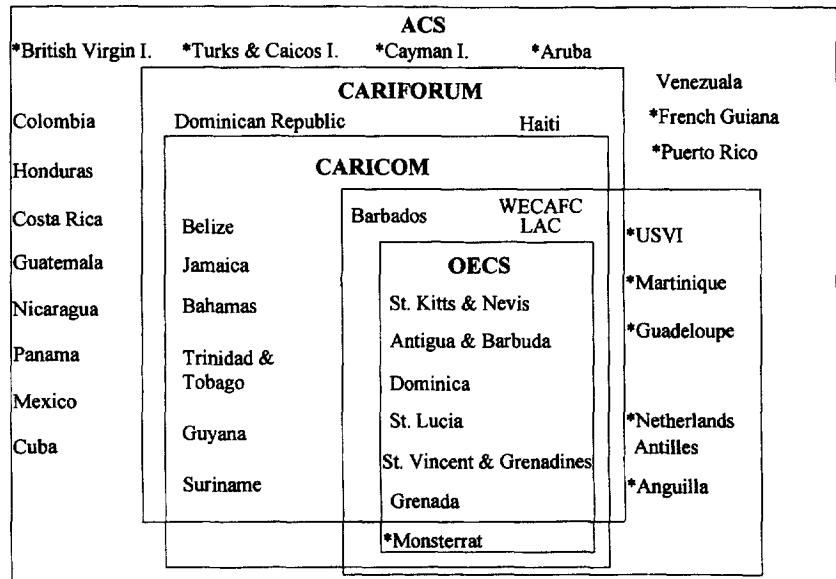


Figure 2. Membership structure of major regional organizations serving the Commonwealth Caribbean.

Source: Adapted from Mahon, Scotland and Scipio (1996)

CARICOM problems in the field of ocean management led to the preparation of a study entitled, 'A Strategy for Cooperation in Sustainable Oceans Management and Development, Commonwealth Caribbean,' under the joint sponsorship of the Commonwealth Science Council of the Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC) and CIDA. The objectives of the study were to: (1) provide an analytical framework for sustainable oceans management and development; (2) analyse the performance of the oceans sector in the Commonwealth Caribbean and the contributions made by donor agencies; (3) identify the major issues and requirements for sustainable oceans management and development; and (4) develop a strategy for cooperation in oceans management and development in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

The study indicated that for the Commonwealth Caribbean, where the small island states have sensitive ecosystems and are economically very dependent on tourism, sustainable development has to be made an operational reality. Indeed, this was recognized as an indispensable requirement for all SIDS at the global conference on Small Island Developing States held in Barbados in 1994. This Conference developed a Programme of Action for SIDS and committed the international community to assist in its implementation. Pursuant to this, a special submission was made by the SIDS to the CSD highlighting a number of recommendations for world attention.

The ocean sector is a leading growth sector in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The growth rate of this sector averaged 6 per cent per year in current terms during the period 1985–1994. The sector contributed 18% directly to the regional GDP in 1994, ranging between 13 to 47% of the GDP of individual Commonwealth Caribbean states. Indirectly, tourism, fisheries, and oil and gas all exerted influences on construction, problems with respect to destruction of the marine habitat (mangrove swamps and coral reefs in particular), and to pollution of coastal zones. Concentrated attention is only now being given to these impacts in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

The performance and management of ocean industries during the 1980s and 1990s indicate that fisheries development, despite considerable assistance by donor agencies, has not been extensive, and fisheries management leaves much to be desired in terms of the application of modern bio-economic measures.

Three of the major ocean industries in the Caribbean are oil and gas production, tourism and shipping. Oil and gas production account for about 80 percent of the GDP of Trinidad and Tobago with over three-quarters of this from marine sources. While production has declined there is considerable exploratory activity on the Trinidad and Tobago shelf. Fortunately, the industry has a good environmental record so far and consciousness is increasing. Tourism, including cruise tourism, and shipping are growth sectors.

Environmental management measures for these industries were found to be inadequate, and comprehensive legislation is lacking. Most Commonwealth Caribbean states have been unable to meet the requirements of MARPOL due to the lack of adequate facilities for ship-borne waste disposal. Several initiatives, directed at this problem, are being taken however.

International and bi-lateral donor agency activities have played a significant role in ocean management and development in the Commonwealth Caribbean. UN agencies in particular have established regional organizations, such as the West Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC) of FAO, and the Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and its sub-commission for the Caribbean (IOCARIBE), that have provided policy coordination and scientific and technical advice in fisheries and ocean matters. International donor agencies have also contributed to regional programmes designed to address major deficiencies in the ocean sector. These include the World Bank/GEF/OECS Solid Waste Management Project, The Wider Caribbean Initiative for Ship-Generated Waste (WCISW) project, the CIDA-supported Caribbean Fisheries Resource Assessment and Management Program (CFRAMP), and the UNDP State Port Control Project. However, international and bi-lateral donor agencies' activities have not generally been coordinated or well integrated, which has led to significant duplication of effort and less than optimal use of aid financing in the region as a whole.

The study indicated that, despite some improvements in managing ocean industries, the existing system in the Commonwealth Caribbean is characterized by the following:

- Marine industries are managed individually, and coordinated strategies and planning for oceans development are lacking;
- In most cases, environmental management, including that of the oceans, is carried out by many government agencies. However, coordination and planning endeavours among these agencies are not extensive or well integrated. The infrastructure and legislation required for sound environmental management and protection are inadequate;
- Although the CARICOM Secretariat has the mandate for advocating and implementing regional policies in the marine area and has taken action in this regard, there is still a lack of expertise in oceans management and a heavy reliance on external assistance and funding for this purpose; and
- There are a number of indigenous regional institutions for research and training involved with marine affairs in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

In spite of the Commonwealth Caribbean Ocean Sciences Network (CCOINET) however, there is a lack of cohesiveness with respect to their activities for sustainable oceans management and development. The perpetuation of this state of affairs can have serious consequences. These include:

- continued risk, including the risk from the transshipment of nuclear materials and water, to the ocean environment of one of the world's greatest seas;
- overexploitation of some fisheries stocks; and
- less than optimum contribution of the ocean sector development.

The study indicated that the following measures are essential for the sustainable development of the oceans sector in the Commonwealth Caribbean:

- The formulation and acceptance of a strategy for sustainable oceans development, particularly with respect to EEZ management;
- The development of the necessary infrastructure at the CARICOM, sub-regional and national levels for implementing this strategy, including the passing of appropriate marine legislation; and
- The establishment of an appropriate institutional structure for co-ordinating activities in oceans and coastal zone management, based on identified priorities. The major elements of a strategy for sustainable ocean development in the Commonwealth Caribbean would include:
 - The protection of the ocean environments (i.e., those of the Caribbean Sea, as well as marine areas off Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago) from land- and sea-based sources of pollution. This would require the integration of oceans with coastal zone management, the enforcement of pollution control regulations in the oceans, the prevention of habitat degradation (destruction of coral reefs, and mangrove swamps) and, through adherence to international codes of conduct, the assurance of environmentally friendly modes of marine transportation;
 - The management of the fishing industry on a sustainable basis. This will require regional management of the migratory pelagics, improved management by individual states of the demersal, molluscs and crustacean resources within their EEZs, and the elimination of the by-catch problem in shrimping. The management measures to be utilized should be bio-economic in nature, in order to control fishing effort and to obtain revenues from the use of fisheries resources;
 - The management of the exploitation of oil, gas and other (sand) resources and of exploratory activities under high environmental standards. At the same time, the Commonwealth Caribbean region should explore the possibilities for Ocean Thermal Energy Conservation (OTEC) as a renewable source of energy and fresh water; and
 - The integration of ocean management with coastal zone management, and the development of marine parks and other designated areas for conservation and recreational uses. Ports, marinas and hotel developments' sewerage disposal systems in the coastal zone should be subjected to high environmental standards.

The study examined how these elements can efficiently and effectively be met in the Commonwealth Caribbean. It proceeded from the reality that: (a) economic difficulties faced by the Commonwealth Caribbean economies make it virtually impossible for these economies, particularly the

SIDS, to individually meet the requirements for UNCLOS and Agenda 21; and given this, (b) the regional approach is the only meaningful approach that can enable the Commonwealth Caribbean to meet the requirements for sustainable oceans management and to plan an effective role in protecting the Caribbean Sea. For a regional CARICOM approach, two priority areas were identified: (1) maritime boundary delimitation to establish EEZs; and (2) the effective management of the EEZs on a sustainable basis.

Boundary delimitation can result in the 'balkanization' of the Caribbean Sea as countries with varying degrees of capability for negotiating and managing these zones establish their EEZs. The detrimental effects of this 'balkanization' can be minimized for Commonwealth Caribbean states if CARICOM, as it is already mandated to do, takes a regional approach to maritime boundary delimitation, both intra-regionally and inter-regionally. It is proposed that CARICOM could establish a CARICOM Maritime Boundary Technical Commission for the purpose of demarcating EEZs for CARICOM states on the basis of UNCLOS principles, and that the Commission's recommendations be ratified by the Heads of Government.

The study indicated that the effective management of EEZs on a sustainable basis can best be accomplished by building on initiatives already taken in the Caribbean with respect to arrangements for collaboration in coastal zone management, fisheries, and management of the living resources of the EEZ. Specific measures required would include:

- (a) obtaining political support at the CARICOM regional and national levels for an ocean strategy and the measures identified to attain strategic objectives;
- (b) restructuring at the CARICOM level to provide the institutional (administrative) structure required for oceans management by strengthening existing arrangements. This could involve the integration and utilization of existing CARICOM structures;
- (c) re-structuring at the national level, which will involve the greater co-ordination of government management units (including Port Authorities) in order to meet coastal and territorial sea management requirements. In this regard, the establishment of a National Ocean Policy Committee with a broad-based membership (government, NGOs and private enterprise) is to be considered;
- (d) harmonizing, at the CARICOM level, legislation for the ocean environment, and ensuring that all CARICOM member states are members of key international organizations for oceans, such as MARPOL;
- (e) establishing a CARICOM Regional Centre for Ocean Management (CARICOM-RCOM). This centre can be developed from the capacity built up by the CFRAMP and other programmes. It should incorporate the CFRAMP RFM within its structure and should establish linkages and cooperative arrangements with existing national ocean management units;
- (f) utilizing the CCOSNET, in particular, UWI, the University of Guyana, the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA), and other institutions more extensively as operational centres for training and research (scientific and technological) and for establishing relationships with universities and institutions in third countries that are centres of excellence in oceans management;
- (g) increasing the cooperation among CARICOM and international, regional and bilateral donor agencies in providing financial and aid

programmes in ocean management and development consistent with the major objectives of the strategy and measures outlined.

If these measures are carried out efficiently, the overall costs for ocean management will be reduced at the national level, while the quality and quantity of technical expertise available to each country will be considerably increased. At the regional (CARICOM) level, costs for ocean management will be minimized by the better utilization of the region's relatively scarce technical skills in the areas of ocean management and marine science, as well as by being able to take greater advantage of international and donor agencies' programmes in these areas.

The main recommendations of the study were submitted to the CARICOM Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Foreign Affairs in June, 1997. The Committee noted and accepted, in principle, the recommendation for a regional strategy and approach to the management of the EEZs of CARICOM Member States and of the Caribbean Sea. It instructed the CARICOM Secretariat to establish an appropriate Technical Group to study the Report and recommendation in detail and make recommendation to the Ninth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference early in 1998. It recommended that individual Member States put in place appropriate arrangements at the national level to consider the Report in time for the Intercessional Meeting of the Conference. It mandated the CARICOM Secretariat to request the support of bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies, including CIDA and the Commonwealth Science Council, to facilitate the consideration of the Report and implementation of the decisions in respect of its recommendations.

The decisions of the Standing Committee exemplify the importance attached to the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea. Taking action for sustainable ocean development at the highest political and policy levels is viewed as an opportunity for CARICOM Member States to contribute to the Year of the Oceans, 1998. More importantly, the longer term benefits of a CARICOM regional approach to sustainable oceans development and EEZ management are as follows:

- Delimitation problems will be minimized for the Caribbean on the whole since intra-CARICOM states' delimitation would take place within the context of regional economic integration arrangement (which includes Haiti and Suriname as CARICOM member states);
- Development of the ocean sector on the whole will be facilitated and the environmental risks associated with marine industries will be minimized;
- With a CARICOM regional commitment to sustainable development and an implementation strategy for attaining this objective, the Commonwealth Caribbean will improve its chances of increasing donor agencies' interventions in assisting with sustainable development and will facilitate regional donor co-ordination;
- With the greater integration of ocean industries in management, and the greater regionalization of management structures and measures, management costs will be minimized for the region as a whole; and
- The Caribbean as a region can become a model for SIDS development in other parts of the world and can play a leading role in tackling longer term environmental problems due to climatic changes (rise in sea levels) and economic problems that threaten SIDS.

CARICOM views the establishment of a strategy and a Regional Mechanism for Ocean Management as matters of high priority. This is not simply a response to international requirements emanating from Agenda 21 and other international conventions, but to regional and national needs. Past experience has shown that the lack of co-ordination and integration of international and bi-lateral donor activities has resulted in the inefficient use of aid resources and duplication of effort. To a great extent, this was due to CARICOM's not having had a strategy and policy that would serve as a means of integrating activities in a beneficial manner. Decisions taken at the highest levels of CARICOM indicate this is no longer the case, and the Secretariat has been mandated to adopt the role of coordinating and integrating the indigenous resources of the region as well as the resources of international institutions, since the program outlined is one which requires a combination of both.

A change is anticipated whereby international and bilateral donor agencies participate actively in the region in harmony with its strategy and its objectives. This conforms to the current restructuring of UN agencies, which are now attempting to coordinate their activities, with the strengthening and supporting of indigenous institutions as a major objective. It conforms to the restructured Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development (CGCED) which has assigned a much higher role to the Caribbean member countries in decision-making and to responding to their assessed priorities.

The costs and funding issues of the Program will be taken into consideration in the work that lies ahead. However, the Secretariat has been mandated to solicit assistance from international and bi-lateral donor agencies to assist with this work. There is confidence that a Programme can be developed that will be amenable to multilateral funding involving organizations such as the GEF in collaboration with other multilateral institutions and bilateral donor agencies. The protection and management of the Caribbean Sea is a regional and an international responsibility. CARICOM is committed to seeing that the whole Caribbean region meets its responsibilities in this area.

Workshop reactions to presentation

The presentation generated considerable interest amongst the delegates who offered suggestions for strengthening the proposed programme. Several of the suggestions were based upon planned, existing and previous project experiences of a similar nature. All of this was seen to be particular relevant to one of the themes of the Workshop, that is to promote experience-sharing and learning through South-South interactions.

The initial comments coming from the delegates can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Regional cooperation is actually essential for the implementation of all the international conventions since UNCED, including the United Nations Secretary General's Agenda for Peace. This agenda would require the integration of security concerns, which include economic and environment sustainability, with resource management concerns;
- (2) There is the dynamic concept of a joint development zone which could apply to the Caribbean as a region. This concept would provide a cost-effective means of management and minimize the number of disputes over boundaries; and

- (3) The question of technology transfer and issues relating to private and public investment and risk-taking can best be tackled under one system of technology transfer and cooperation on a regional basis. It was also noted that each convention had a separate regime for technology transfer.

It was felt that these comments specifically stressed the need for cooperation and coordination in an integrated and phased manner with both multilateral and bilateral agencies assisting as much as possible. It was noted that there is a project similar to the one proposed for CARICOM. This is a Strategic Action Plan for International Waters that was submitted to the Global Environment Facility (G.E.F.), where the definition of international waters extended from inland to the oceans and even upwards into the air. It was suggested that the methodology and approach of the Strategic Action Plan could be helpful in the development of the proposed CARICOM programme.

There were also some concerns expressed about the proposed project, and suggestions were made with respect to the steps that should be considered to ensure its success. In particular, there was concern that the project seemed to be too complicated and that it was trying to accomplish too much, given the realities of time and funding available. Consequently, it was indicated that the project may be too complex for donor agencies to support. It was suggested that it might be better to take a three-track approach, working at various speeds on these three tracks. Such an approach would require:

- (1) The identification of measures and of regional and political goals;
- (2) The establishment of priorities; and
- (3) The identification of activities that would be funded by regional sources, as well as those that would require support from donor agencies.

Suggestions were given, from the viewpoint of an executing agency, about the process. These stressed the need:

- (1) For political support for the project;
- (2) For the national coordination agencies to have a clear mandate with respect to their roles in the project; and
- (3) For the identification of the vehicle that would take the project through the process.

It was recommended that there be three main thrusts of the proposed project:

- (1) Legal, regulatory and enforcement;
- (2) Resource exploitation or extraction; and
- (3) Coastal zone and ocean zone environmental protection.

This seems to be consistent with the three-phased approach suggested earlier. A comment was made that reference in the proposed project to the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) of data for marine environment might also be helpful.