



# OVERVIEW

A new and unique opportunity for regional cooperation in the Caribbean is at hand. After years of consultation and negotiation, the states and territories of the Wider Caribbean Region have joined in pursuit of a common goal—protection of the marine and coastal environment through the promotion of balanced and sustainable economic development.

Thirty-three nations and territories comprise the Wider Caribbean Region, an area characterized by great cultural diversity as well as by the diversity of its terrestrial and marine ecosystems. The Region's politics are similarly diverse, with contending ideologies, competing trade and economic alliances, and differing political traditions.

Despite these differences, there exists a strong sense of regional coherence generated by centuries of interchange and interaction. All of the nations and territories share a common resource—their regional seas—the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean—which, together with the adjacent land areas, constitute the Wider Caribbean Region.

On the Region's eastern perimeter is the insular Caribbean—the islands of the Greater and Lesser Antilles, and those of the Bahamian chain to the north. The U.S. Gulf Coast states, coastal Mexico, Central America and the northern tier states of South America complete the terrestrial perimeter which enclose its two major basins—the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

## MAP OF THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION

