

HOW DOES THE CARIBBEAN ACTION PLAN WORK?

From Concept to Reality: The Legal Framework

With the adoption of the Action Plan for the Wider Caribbean in 1981, the participating Governments also approved supporting resolutions dealing with programme implementation, financing, and institutional arrangements

Two major legal instruments were subsequently adopted, two years later, at the Intergovernmental Meeting held at Cartagena, Colombia, in March, 1983:

- The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region.
- A Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region.

The Cartagena Convention has been signed or acceded to by 16 countries and the European Economic Community and entered into force on October 11, 1986. The Regional Co-ordinating Unit has been operational since September, 1986, financed by a Trust Fund that has received initial contributions from most of the member nations, as well as from the UNEP Environment Fund.

Ratification of the Convention itself and the establishment of the Regional Co-ordinating Unit are just the beginning. Although the framework is in place and the legal and political foundations are secure, the Regional Co-ordinating Unit is now faced with the formidable task of implementing the programme and creating a dynamic and productive catalyst for realizing the objectives of the Caribbean Action Plan.

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
NAIROBI

Convention for
the Protection and Development
of the Marine Environment
of the Wider Caribbean Region

Protocol concerning Co-operation
in Combating Oil Spills in the
Wider Caribbean Region



UNITED NATIONS
New York, 1983

Success of the Regional Seas Programme

In 1972, as a result of the U.S. Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, the United Nations General Assembly established the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as a focal point for environmental action and co-ordination within the United Nations system.

Two years later, UNEP initiated the Regional Seas Programme, an action-oriented programme for the control of marine pollution and protection and management of the marine and coastal environment. The first region addressed was the Mediterranean. The Regional Seas Programme has since expanded to cover twelve regions of the world, including the Wider Caribbean.

In spite of political and financial obstacles, the Regional Seas Programme has met with great success in those regions of the world where governments have determined to confront pressing environmental and development issues. In the last few years, the Action Plan for the Wider Caribbean Region has matured from inception to become an effective instrument for regional co-operation on a wide range of environmental problems.

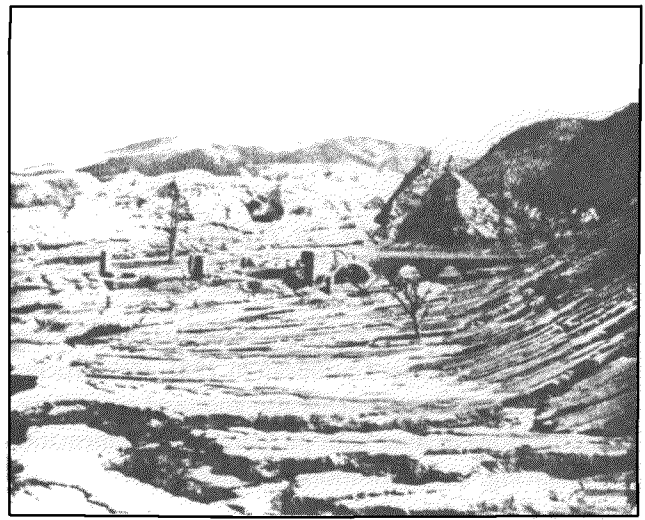
■ *Promotion of Regional Self-Reliance through the Sharing of Experience on Common Problems*

The countries of the Region are neighbors within a common physical environment. One of the major problems facing all of the countries is vulnerability to natural disasters. The Caribbean is often referred to as the nursery area for hurricanes and severe weather disturbances. Many of the islands and mainland states are subject to volcanic eruptions, and the entire Region is within a major earthquake zone

Natural disaster preparedness and mitigation is a striking example of a shared interest for which a regional approach is particularly appropriate. The University of the West Indies maintains an earthquake monitoring centre in Trinidad; Martinique operates a major volcanology research centre supported by the Government of France, the US National Hurricane Center in Miami tracks and issues warnings on severe weather disturbances, maintaining contact with meteorological offices throughout the Region, the Jamaica Office of Disaster Preparedness has published educational material that it has readily shared with other nations; and numerous regional conferences on natural disasters have been convened by national and international agencies



Volcanic Eruption—Martinique



Volcanic Eruption—St. Vincent



Earthquake—Jamaica



Hurricane—Dominica

The Caribbean Action Plan and its Regional Co-ordinating Unit will never become a substitute for existing institutions now successfully operating in the Region. Nor will it simply be another layer of bureaucracy in an area which may already seem crowded with regional and subregional groupings. Its purpose is to support, not supplant the Region's scientific research, educational and related institutions.

■ *Increasing Public Interest and Awareness of Environmental and Development Issues*

The Caribbean Action Plan gives high priority to education and training activities, including development of a regional manpower base, environmental education at all levels, support for strengthening of non-governmental environmental organization, and promotion of media seminars and campaigns to increase public awareness of environmental issues.

Overall Authority and Co-ordination

The overall authority to determine the content of the Action Plan, review its progress and direct its course is to be found in the Intergovernmental Meetings (at the ministerial/plenipotentiary level) of the participating states and territories. These Governments have assigned responsibility for overall co-ordination and implementation of the Action Plan to UNEP, which answers to the member Governments.

Monitoring Committee. A Monitoring Committee, formed by representatives from nine member countries, meets at least once a year, and oversees financial arrangements. The Committee is responsible for supervising the progress of specific projects and for ensuring that continuous contacts of a technical nature are maintained among the involved experts and institutions during the period between Intergovernmental Meetings.

The Monitoring Committee also prepares the agenda for the Intergovernmental Meetings, reviews project requests, and is responsible for follow-up and evaluation of the Plan, as well as for providing the Regional Co-ordinating Unit with operational and policy guidelines for implementing the Action Plan.

Regional Co-ordinating Unit. The Regional Co-ordinating Unit (RCU) was created to ensure regional

co-operation and the timely implementation of the Action Plan. The RCU, which operates under the joint authority of the Monitoring Committee and UNEP, is staffed by nationals recruited from the states and territories participating in the Action Plan.

The principal function of the RCU is to provide policy consistency, administrative oversight, technical guidance, and co-ordination to national and international institutions participating in the Action Plan. Another important function of the RCU is to organize the government expert and Intergovernmental Meetings that monitor the Action Plan and make recommendations on its future implementation.

The RCU does not itself conduct research, but serves as a focus for the collection, review, and dissemination of information on the results of work performed under the aegis of the Action Plan.

National Focal Points. Active participation and co-operation of the states and territories is the basic prerequisite for successful plan implementation. In order to ensure such co-operation, National Focal Points may be designated in each of the participating states and territories to deal with all matters relating to the Action Plan. Their role is to co-ordinate the inputs of national institutions to the Action Plan, and to maintain links with the Regional Co-ordinating Unit.

Scientific and Academic Institutions. These institutions conduct the specific activities agreed upon among the Governments as components of the Action Plan.

Subregional and Regional Institutions. Existing subregional and regional institutions, including NGOs, are used to the maximum extent possible for implementing specific activities or for co-ordinating specific Plan-related activities.

How Is the Action Plan Financed?

Sources of Funding. Funding for the Plan's implementation originates from the following sources

- Caribbean Trust Fund
- Environment Fund of UNEP
- National, bilateral and multilateral contributions
- Other sources of support.

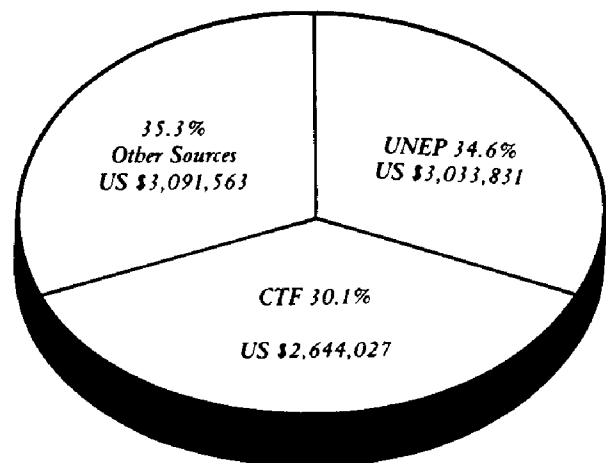
The Caribbean Trust Fund. A Trust Fund was established to cover common expenses (administration, co-ordination, meetings, etc.), and to implement projects of common regional concern. Contributions to the Trust Fund are predominantly from Governments participating in the Action Plan. Levels of contributions are determined by the Intergovernmental Meeting. The Monitoring Committee prepares biennial budgets. These are approved by the Intergovernmental Meeting and are administered by UNEP through the Regional Co-ordinating Unit.

Environmental Fund of UNEP. UNEP has provided support to the Caribbean Action Plan through contributions from the Environment Fund. Monies have been allocated to specific projects as well as for the establishment and support of the RCU.

National, Bilateral and Multilateral Contributions. Contributions in cash or in-kind (facilities, training, personnel, etc.) have been channeled to projects of particular regional, subregional or national interest. These contributions may come from states and territories of the Region or from other states which do not belong to the Action Plan, from international, regional or subregional organizations, and, from the United Nations system.

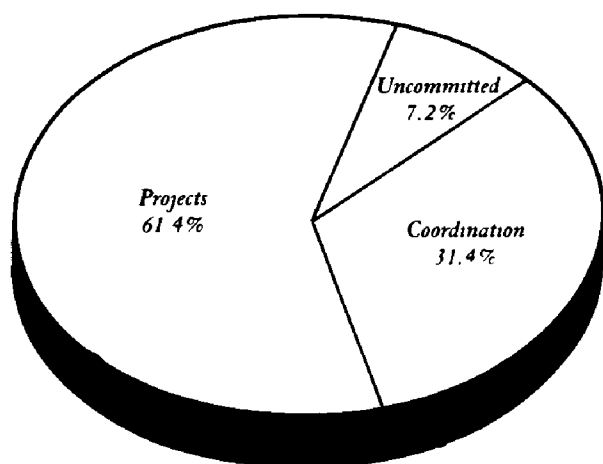
Other Sources of Support. Other sources of financial support include universities, corporations, private foundations, and non-governmental organizations with interests in the Caribbean Region. Funding from these sponsors is to be encouraged in order to supplement governmental contributions to the Trust Fund, and to initiate a greater number and variety of specific projects.

*Sources of Funding for CAP
(1981-1987)*



At the time of the adoption of the Action Plan three sources of funding were contemplated: the Caribbean Trust Fund, the Environment Fund of UNEP, and other multilateral and bilateral sources. The total budget estimated for the initial three year period (1981-83) amounted to US \$8,200,000 (1.5 million from CTF, 1.38 million from UNEP and \$3.2 million from other sources).

Utilization of CAP Funds



Magnitude of Financial Assistance

Since the adoption of the Caribbean Action Plan in 1981, over eight million dollars have been committed from all sources. Of this amount, 30.1 percent represents the contribution from the Trust Fund, 34.6 percent from UNEP, and 35.3 percent represents contributions from other sources. To date the following states and territories have contributed to the Trust Fund: Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Colombia, Cuba, France, Grenada, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles, Panama, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Suriname,

Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and Venezuela.

Ultimately, the participating Governments will assume full financial responsibility for the co-ordination of the Action Plan. Accordingly, financial support from the United Nations would be redirected to projects of regional significance.

Major Milestones In The Evolution Of The Caribbean Action Plan

- UNEP initiated the development of the Action Plan by appointing a co-ordinator for this activity (April 1976).
- The marine pollution problems of the Caribbean Region were reviewed by UNEP-sponsored IOC/FAO/UNEP International Workshop on Marine Pollution in the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (Trinidad, 13-17 December 1976).
- Agreement reached between ECLA and UNEP to develop the Action Plan as a joint activity, with ECLA playing a leading role (February 1977).
- Sectorial overviews on environmental problems of the Caribbean prepared by FAO, UNIDO, WHO/PAHO, UN/DIESA, IUCN, IOC, IMO, ECLA (November 1978—July 1979).
- The draft Action Plan and supporting documentation reviewed by an advisory panel of regional experts (Port of Spain, November 1979).
- The draft Action Plan reviewed by meetings of Governmental nominated experts (Caracas, January 1980, Managua, February 1981).
- The First Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme (Montego Bay, 6-8 April 1981) adopted the Action Plan.
- The draft legal agreements reviewed by meetings of regional experts (New York, December 1981, New York, July 1982).
- The implementation of selected priority projects initiated (mid-1982), in the field of environmental education, oil spill contingency planning and environmental health in co-operation with CCA, IMO, CARICOM and WHO/PAHO.
- The Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena, 21-24 March 1983) adopted the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region (UNEP Regional Seas Conventions, 1983).
- The Convention and its related Protocol entered into force October 11, 1986.

WHAT HAS THE CARIBBEAN ACTION PLAN ACCOMPLISHED?

Undoubtedly, the most significant accomplishment of the programme for the Wider Caribbean has been the creation of an effective forum for a continuing dialogue among the nations of the Region. An increased awareness has been generated among policy makers and planners of the need for integrated development and regional resource management. An Action Plan has been formulated, and agreement has been reached on program directions and priorities.

Projects Undertaken

Many project proposals have been submitted by Governments and organizations for implementation as part of the Action Plan. All of them have specific objectives and cover different regional environmental concerns.

The following are some of the priority projects that are now underway or have already been implemented. They are grouped below according to major subject area.

Oil Spill Contingency Planning. There have been two projects for oil spill contingency planning conducted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO)—one for the Eastern Caribbean islands and another for the South American subregion. Under the islands project, a plan for co-operating in the event of a major oil spill has already been developed. The plan deals with policy and responsibility of each participating state; response operations, including requests for assistance, mutual cooperation, and, the use of dispersants.

Marine Pollution. Three projects deal with marine pollution. One project conducted by CARICOM's Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI) is for the protection of the marine and coastal environment of the Caribbean islands. Complete country reports have been prepared on land-based sources of water and land pollution and, since 1983, monitoring of coastal microbiological and chemical pollution has been conducted around St. Lucia and other Eastern Caribbean states.

Another pilot project, conducted by UNESCO, for research and control of pollution in Havana Bay, has

been used to train scientists in research and control of marine pollution in embayments.

A third project, conducted by the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC), trained regional scientists on intercalibration of analytical techniques for monitoring dissolved and dispersed petroleum hydrocarbons.

Environmental Education and Public Awareness.

Several programmes and projects on environmental education and public awareness are underway or completed. One project, conducted by the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA) in Barbados, has developed radio programmes focusing on Caribbean environmental issues, promoted the establishment of an informal network of media personnel, and compiled a regional directory of environmental institutions, resources, and people.

Another on-going project, conducted by UNEP's Environmental Training Network (UCORED) identified the Region's training facilities and training needs in the areas of marine pollution and environmental health.

Environment and Development. This project, conducted by ECLAC, dealt with environmental management and tourism development.

Environmental Impact Assessment. This project coordinated by Mexico's Ministry of Urban Development and Ecology (SEDUE), is intended to devise methodologies for the preparation of environmental impact assessments adapted to the needs of developing countries.

Conservation and Protection of Natural Areas. This project involves the development of a methodology for the identification and assessment of fragile coastal ecosystem having touristic potential or scientific interest.

Other Accomplishments

Of particular importance, in addition to the foregoing activities, is the continual work of the Action Plan in raising the level of awareness among the general public of the linkages between sustained economic development and wise resource use.