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Sustainable development: follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution [67/205](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-ninth session on the implementation of the resolution. The report covers the period since the issuance of the previous report ([A/67/313](#)), from August 2012 to August 2014. It describes a range of activities undertaken at the national and regional levels to advance the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea as well as the possible legal and financial implications of designating the Caribbean Sea a special area within the context of sustainable development. Inputs from member States, United Nations entities and relevant regional organizations have been incorporated. A report of the Association of Caribbean States on progress made in the implementation of the resolution is contained in the annex.

* [A/69/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [67/205](#) entitled “Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations”, the General Assembly recognized that the Caribbean Sea was an area of unique biodiversity and a highly fragile ecosystem. The Assembly called upon the United Nations system and the international community to assist, as appropriate, Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to ensure the protection of the Caribbean Sea from degradation and recognized the work required of relevant regional and international development partners towards promoting the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, including through the consideration of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development.

2. For consideration at its sixty-ninth session, the General Assembly invited the Association of Caribbean States to submit to the Secretary-General a report on the progress made in the implementation of resolution [67/205](#) and also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it on the implementation of the same resolution, including a section on the possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to relevant international law.

3. The present report covers the period since the issuance of the previous report ([A/67/313](#)), from August 2012 to August 2014. It is based on inputs from the United Nations system, relevant regional organizations and Member States.¹ The report of the Association of Caribbean States is contained in the annex to the report.

II. Possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development

4. By calling for designation as a “special area within the context of sustainable development”, Caribbean Member States are seeking to establish a new concept, and the legal and financial implications have not been elaborated to date. Caribbean Member States first made the call at a 1997 Caribbean ministerial meeting on the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and since then, the international community has continued to consider the particular characteristics of the Caribbean Sea that might justify this type of designation. But a full analysis of the possible effects of this new designation has not yet taken place.

¹ Inputs were received from the following Member States and bodies and organizations of the United Nations system: Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Association of Caribbean States, Global Island Partnership, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, International Labour Organization, International Maritime Organization, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, and Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.

5. There are other examples of “special areas”, notably in the context of marine pollution. Article 211 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea establishes that States, acting through the competent international organization or general diplomatic conference, can set rules and standards to “prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment from vessels”. The Convention further states there are cases where these rules and standards are not adequate because of the “special circumstances” of a “particular, clearly defined area” within a State’s exclusive economic zone. In those cases, “the adoption of special mandatory measures for the prevention of pollution from vessels” may be required.

6. For ship-borne pollution, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention) addresses marine pollution from operational or accidental causes and also contains the concept of “special areas”. The MARPOL Convention includes six annexes that address pollution by oil; noxious liquid substances; harmful substances in packaged form; sewage; garbage; and air pollution. In the context of each annex, regions have been designated “special areas” and granted a higher level of protection than that given to other ocean areas.² The wider Caribbean region received the designation under annex V of the Convention, entitled “Prevention of pollution by garbage from ships”, with entry into force in May 2011.

7. In resolution 61/197, the General Assembly took note of the creation of the Commission on the Caribbean Sea by the Association of Caribbean States. In subsequent relevant resolutions, most recently 67/205, the Assembly welcomed the work of the Commission, including the development of the concept of the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development, and invited the international community to support its efforts.

8. As is noted in the annex to the present report, the Association of Caribbean States has engaged a consultant to carry out a thorough analysis of the legal and financial implications of the aforementioned designation, and the results of the analysis, expected in the second half of 2014, will inform further consideration of the concept.

III. Activities undertaken at the national and regional levels

A. Marine pollution

9. The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (“Cartagena Convention”), which entered into force in 1986 and has been ratified by 25 States Members of the United Nations to date, provides the legal framework for national and regional actions to protect and sustainably develop the Caribbean Sea. The Convention addresses pollution from ships, dumping, seabed activities, airborne sources, and land-based sources and activities.

10. The Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region entered into force in August 2010, and 11 countries

² To date no special areas have been named in the context of annex III, on harmful substances carried in packaged form.

have ratified it to date: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guyana, Panama, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and United States of America. The Caribbean Environment Programme has worked to promote the Protocol at the national and regional levels, developing and distributing information and awareness-raising materials, including promotional DVDs, brochures, public service announcements for television and radio, photo slide shows and animations, and a quarterly newsletter of its assessment and management of environmental pollution subprogramme for implementing the Protocol. In addition, the Programme is bolstering its web presence and social media efforts on the subject, creating a variety of social media materials, available through the its website, for children and adults.

11. Pesticides constitute a major source of land-based pollution, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has funded projects addressing the issue, including on reducing pesticide run-off to the Caribbean Sea, which was implemented in Colombia, Costa Rica and Nicaragua and ended in December 2011. A follow-up project on improved management of agrochemical lifecycles in Central America and the Caribbean will aim to expand the original focus to incorporate international waters and persistent organic pollutants. The GEF secretariat will consider that project, which has been endorsed by eight countries, for the period 2015-2016.

12. Other measures to address land-based pollution include a project undertaken by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)³ on supporting the Eastern Caribbean States in improving land policies and management. The project, made possible by the Government of Australia, has been implemented jointly with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); the Global Land Tool Network; the Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management, University of West Indies; national land agencies and other national ministries; civil society organizations; and professional bodies. The objective is to formulate, adopt and implement comprehensive land policies, including to reduce land-based sources of pollution. The project was completed in July 2014 and assessment reports are forthcoming.

13. Wastewater management is a critical component of sustainable development, particularly in a fragile ecosystem like that of the Caribbean region. In that regard, the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association, an organization of national and regional experts in the field of wastewater management, has continued to provide useful support and partnership to the projects implemented in the region. The Inter-American Development Bank and the Caribbean Environment Programme carried out a project funded by GEF on testing a prototype Caribbean regional fund for wastewater management. The project aims to improve the capacity for wastewater management in countries of the wider Caribbean region through sustainable project financing, while also addressing constraints within existing legal, institutional, educational and policy frameworks for wastewater management. The project produced, among other outputs, a regional wastewater management policy template and toolkit, a video entitled “Caribbean wastewater report” and a regional baseline assessment study.

³ The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States comprises six members (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and three associate members (Virgin Islands, Anguilla and Montserrat). It operates under the Revised Treaty of Basseterre establishing the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union.

14. The Government of Jamaica and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) co-organized the second Global Conference on Land-Ocean Connections in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from 2 to 4 October 2013. The meeting, which gathered approximately 230 scientists, policymakers, civil society representative and other experts from 55 countries, addressed a range of topics, with particular attention given to the management of marine litter, wastewater and nutrients.

15. A multi-stakeholder process in the period 2013-2014 yielded an updated regional action Plan for marine litter management in the wider Caribbean region. The Caribbean Environment Programme and the Caribbean Youth Environment Network took the lead in the process and incorporated insights from the recently elaborated Honolulu Strategy, the Global Partnership on Marine Litter and the Global Partnership on Waste Management.

16. In 2013, the Caribbean Environment Programme, with the assistance of the Institute of Marine Affairs and the UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities convened a meeting of the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management-Caribbean Platform in Trinidad and Tobago. The regional meeting formed the basis for the launch of a Caribbean platform for nutrient management.

17. The Regional Activity Centre for Oil Spills, with the support of the subprogramme of the Caribbean Environment Programme on assessment and management of environmental pollution, led the efforts to secure and promote the designation of the Caribbean as a “special area” in the context of the MARPOL Convention annex addressing garbage pollution dumped at sea.

18. In respect of efforts to address ship-borne pollution, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in partnership with the Regional Activity Center for Oil Spills, completed a study in 2012 on the feasibility of liquefied natural gas-fuelled short sea and coastal shipping in the wider Caribbean region. Following a competitive tender process, a contract was awarded in June 2013 for a pilot study on the potential use of liquefied natural gas as fuel for a fast passenger-ship service operating between the Port of Spain ferry terminal and Scarborough, Trinidad and Tobago. Using funds donated by the Government of Norway under the IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Partnership, the study looked at a “cradle-to-grave” project for the start-up of the passenger-ship service and provided guidance and encouragement for the consideration of other projects on similarly fuelled ship services in the wider Caribbean region.

B. Coastal and marine resources management

19. The large marine ecosystem of the Caribbean Sea is a complex and vital shared resource of the countries of the Caribbean region, and Governments and international and regional organizations have implemented a number of projects and programmes to safeguard it since 2012. The project on the sustainable management of the shared marine resources of the Caribbean large marine ecosystem and adjacent regions (2009-2014) is jointly managed by GEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Caribbean regional subsidiary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO-IOCARIBE). The Caribbean Environment Programme implemented a pilot subproject on the management and

conservation of reef biodiversity and reef fisheries. The subproject takes an ecosystem approach to conservation and aims to demonstrate the feasibility of maintaining the functional and structural integrity and biodiversity of targeted coral reef ecosystems while promoting economic and social benefits for local communities. The subproject was implemented in the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve, Colombia; Pedro Bank, Jamaica; and Montecristi National Park, Dominican Republic, with linkages to the transboundary site, Caracol Bay, in Haiti.

20. As part of the project, stakeholders developed a 10-year strategic action programme, which received broad political endorsement in 2013 by over 30 Ministers from more than 20 countries. The ministers called for international and regional support to implement the action programme, which advocates the full adoption of the ecosystem approach and the strengthening and consolidating of oceans-related regional, subregional and national organizations and institutions. To support the implementation of the action programme, GEF has approved the concept note for a follow-up five-year full-sized project, which is expected to commence in 2015.

21. With the rise of ecosystem-based approaches for marine resources management, Governments and regional organizations are using marine protected areas as one important aspect of their overall strategies. Marine protected areas are subject to varying degrees of protection, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has developed seven categories to classify protected areas, ranging from the designation “Strict nature reserve”, under category Ia, to and “Protected area with sustainable use of resources”, under category VI. For areas where fish stocks have been severely depleted, the establishment of “no-take zones” has proved to offer great benefits both for the zone itself and the surrounding waters. A 2014 study commissioned by the Wildlife Conservation Society found that the no-take zone off the coast of Belize, for instance, has led to improvements in queen conch, Caribbean spiny lobster and fish populations in as little as one to six years.

22. The Caribbean Challenge Initiative, launched in 2008 by The Nature Conservancy, currently involves Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Puerto Rico. Those countries/areas have committed to (a) conserving at least 20 per cent of their near-shore marine and coastal environments in national marine protected areas systems by 2020; and (b) creating national conservation trust funds, endowed by new tourism fees and other sustainable financing sources, to fund park management.

23. Together with the Government of Italy and the Global Island Partnership,⁴ the Caribbean Environment Programme supported the Caribbean Challenge Initiative with targeted workshops and training courses and by assisting with the development of 15 management plans for new marine protected areas. In all, more than 280 managers and stakeholders involved with marine protected areas were trained; together, they were responsible for more than 100,000 kms² of protected areas. An additional 50,000 kms² of protected areas with marine and coastal components were also designated under the Caribbean Environment Programme project. Furthermore, the Programme has, with its Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine

⁴ In August 2012, Grenada became the third co-chair of the Global Island Partnership, joining Seychelles and Palau.

Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, continued to support national efforts to strengthen the management of marine protected areas, using training and exchanges through its Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum and through its regional marine protected areas database containing over 300 such areas.

24. With funding from the Government of France, the Regional Activity Centre for the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region in Guadeloupe has supported regular assessments on the status of coral reefs in the region in collaboration with the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network of the International Coral Reef Initiative. As a result, UNEP, IUCN and the Network jointly produced a report entitled “Status and trends of Caribbean coral reefs: 1970-2012”.

25. LifeWeb, an initiative advancing partnerships to finance biodiversity, has supported many projects in the wider Caribbean region. The Government of Spain, for example, funded a project on broad-scale marine spatial planning of marine mammal corridors and protected areas in the wider Caribbean and South-East and North-East Pacific, which assisted countries in applying cross-sectoral ecosystem approaches to management of areas and the protection of marine mammals in both regions. Partners produced maps of marine mammal species richness, distribution, threats and socioeconomic aspects in the wider Caribbean region as well as a database of over 25 species of marine mammals. In April 2014, a regional meeting completed the conceptualization process in areas selected by government experts for the transboundary management of marine mammals. Additionally, project participants completed the management plan for the marine mammal sanctuary of the Dominican Republic in the Silver and Navidad Banks.

26. The approved regional management plan for the conservation of marine mammals in the wider Caribbean region has advanced marine mammal data compilation, analysis and training. The Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife has developed an overarching code of conduct for whale-watching in the region and trained government staff and whale watching operators on those issues. In addition, the Protocol has carried out workshops to address the stranding of marine mammals, for Dutch-, English-, French- and Spanish-speaking countries, as well as a workshop in June 2014 on vessel strike issues in collaboration with the International Whaling Committee.

27. The work of the subprogramme on the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife also includes conservation activities for threatened and endangered species, such as national sea turtle recovery action plans and plans to promote the sustainability of other species identified by the parties to the Protocol.

28. Invasive and alien species constitute an emerging threat to biodiversity in the Caribbean region. The Caribbean Environment Programme supported the regional UNEP/GEF project on invasive species in the insular Caribbean, which concluded in 2013. The Programme has led, together with other partners, efforts to assess and control the lionfish invasion. A regional strategy and a manual for lionfish control have been produced and three workshops have been organized involving local fisherman and other stakeholders from more than 20 countries.

29. The ballast water of ships is a significant means by which invasive species are introduced into a marine ecosystem. IMO has worked to advance the implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, including through the IMO/GEF/UNDP GloBallast Partnerships project, which was initiated in 2009 to raise awareness and spur action on the management of ballast water. With successful resource mobilization, the project has been extended to September 2016 in order to continue to support the efforts of the lead partnering countries. The Caribbean lead partnering countries are Bahamas, Colombia, Jamaica, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). As at April 2013, all lead partnering countries had named lead agencies and established national task forces that included members from the private and public sectors. In addition, GloBallast Partnerships has developed, jointly with the World Maritime University, a guidance document on identifying and managing risks from organisms carried in ships' ballast water.

30. Within GloBallast Partnerships, the Global Industry Alliance for Marine Biosecurity is a public-private sector partnership that aims to catalyse innovative solutions for issues related to ballast water. Currently, the Alliance is co-financing the conversion of the existing advance training course on the management of ship ballast water to an e-learning package, which will be completed in the second half of 2014 and will facilitate the engagement of the shipping industry in the endeavour.

C. Climate change and disaster risk reduction

31. A project on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in Jamaica, funded by the European Union and completed in December 2013, sought to increase resilience and reduce risks associated with natural hazards in vulnerable areas of Jamaica. The project was co-managed by the Planning Institute of Jamaica and the Caribbean Environment Programme and accomplished a number of important conservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, including planting 405 hectares of forest, installing data loggers for gathering sea surface temperatures in marine protected areas, restoring five hectares of mangroves, installing two artificial reefs and planting seagrass beds.

32. A project on reducing risks to human and natural assets resulting from climate change, initiated with support from the Government of the United States of America in 2011, focuses on building the technical and institutional capacity within member States of the OECS to undertake and sustain climate change adaptation efforts. Conceived with a five-year projected timespan, those implementing the project are currently working to build up the enabling environment in support of policies and laws to reduce vulnerability, address information gaps, make interventions in freshwater and coastal management to build resilience in the tourism and agriculture sectors, and increase awareness on issues related to climate change. Future efforts of particular relevance include a subproject on invasive species awareness and management. Another OECS initiative, the Global Climate Change Alliance project on climate change adaptation and sustainable land management, aims to improve the region's natural resource base resilience to the impacts of climate change.

33. In the Eastern Caribbean, the Government of Germany is supporting OECS member States in establishing a climate resilient Eastern Caribbean marine managed areas network. The project, implemented by The Nature Conservancy, together with

a range of national and regional agencies, will advance the conservation of national biodiversity and the development of climate change strategies.

34. The University of West Indies Disaster Risk Reduction Centre, in partnership with the Government of Canada, is undertaking a project to advance knowledge-sharing for comprehensive disaster management. The project is expected to create a regional network to manage and disseminate knowledge on disaster risk management, for use in government, community and private sector decision-making.

35. The tsunami programme of the International Oceanographic Commission, in partnership with the Global Foundation for Defense, held training workshops and drill exercises in the Dominican Republic and Haiti in 2014 to promote disaster prevention measures in schools, police forces, and hotels, among others.

36. Recognizing the importance of bolstering the science-policy interface, Jamaica hosted a workshop in December 2013 on the use of satellite data to inform climate change related policymaking in the Caribbean. UNESCO and the University of Ghent co-organized the workshop.

D. Social and economic development

37. The maritime sector is central to economic development in the Caribbean, and Governments and organizations are therefore working to enhance both the container and pleasure craft portions of the sector. Under the International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea, all parties must have electronic charts on board by 2018. OECS, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Hydrographic Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have partnered to update the navigation charts of the OECS, and in 2014 commenced a hydrographic scoping study to identify the navigational needs, priorities and existing capacity in OECS member States. The study is expected to be completed at the end of 2014, and the findings will be used to seek funding to undertake a full-scale collection of bathymetry and hydrography data. The data will assist in fisheries management and marine spatial planning among other uses.

38. In respect of other efforts to advance the maritime sector, senior maritime administrators met in Jamaica in February 2013 and agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the Code of Safety for Small Commercial Vessels operating in the Caribbean in order to bring the Code up to date with current environment protection standards.

39. Five Caribbean states, Antigua and Barbuda (August 2011), the Bahamas (February 2008), Barbados (June 2013), Saint Kitts and Nevis (February 2012), and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (November 2010), have ratified the Maritime Labour Convention, which came into force in August 2013. The Convention provides a comprehensive set of global standards that consolidate and revise existing international law on maritime matters, with the objective of ensuring comprehensive worldwide protection of the rights of seafarers and of establishing a level playing field for countries and shipowners committed to providing decent working and living conditions for seafarers. Ratification by Barbados in 2013 was significant because the Bridgetown Port is vital to the national economy and offers berthing services to some of the largest cruise ships in the world, as well as to container-handling services to the Caribbean region.

40. In October 2012, the International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned two studies on port infrastructure in the Caribbean region. The studies focused on ports in Trinidad and Tobago and in Jamaica, with the objective of collecting data on employment and skills development. The studies also considered ongoing programmes on the implementation of relevant ILO instruments, as well as some of the labour-related challenges and opportunities in Caribbean ports.

41. Social and economic development in the Caribbean is also shaped by the reality of coastal zone urbanization, which puts additional stress on the environment by increasing the amount of impermeable surfaces and the demands on urban solid waste and wastewater management. In that context, UN-Habitat has been advocating through events, such as Caribbean urban forums, that the process of urbanization should be seen and managed as a national priority, with compact settlements as an important goal.

42. UN-Habitat is also working together with the European Commission, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and five regional Governments to strengthen local, central and regional capacity through a participatory slum upgrading programme.

43. No development will be sustainable without the full integration of women in all aspects of social, economic and political life. The Caribbean Multi-country Office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) is supporting The Competitiveness Company in Jamaica with a project in which rural women are given access to irrigation through on-farm water harvesting systems and training in the adoption of appropriate technologies for improved irrigation and other water management strategies. The initiative provides training to women farmers in the use of equipment and overall guidance on improved general farming practices. In Dominica, UN-Women is providing support to the Dominica National Council of Women to strengthen the capacities of members of the Agricultural Women Movement so that they can become more meaningfully engaged in agricultural activities.

E. Sustainable oceans governance

44. At the fifty-seventh meeting of the OECS Authority held in 2013, the Heads of Government approved an Eastern Caribbean regional oceans policy with a three-year strategic action plan. It was agreed that boundaries among the OECS member States would be decided first, followed by the boundaries for non-OECS States. To date, a number of countries have commenced the process with the support of the Commonwealth Secretariat. OECS is also promoting a marine research strategy to provide scientific grounding for regional ocean policy and governance.

F. Human capacity development

45. In addition to the training activities outlined above, agencies and organizations have held a number of national and regional workshops and training courses to build human capacity. IMO, for instance, hosted workshops on a number of topics, including the ratification, implementation and enforcement of the MARPOL Convention, oil spill contingency planning and compensatory regimes for pollution damage. Furthermore, the Government of Guyana requested ILO to convene a

capacity-building workshop for public and private sector participants on the green economy and green jobs in Guyana. Training was also provided to over 200 persons in respect of wastewater management, as part of the GEF Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management.

46. In addition, organizations, and Caribbean and partner Governments have worked together to develop the capacity of young people through educational programmes. Morocco has granted scholarships that focus on areas such as health, agriculture, water and electricity, craft, fishing, transport, trade and tourism. The Caribbean Environment Programme has supported curriculum development for Caribbean schools through a partnership with the Caribbean Examinations Council.

IV. Activities of the Commission on the Caribbean Sea

47. The importance of the Caribbean Sea was recognized at the fifth and sixth summits of Heads of State and/or Governments of the Association of Caribbean States, held in Pétiön Ville, Haiti, in April 2013. The leaders acknowledged the work of the Commission on the Caribbean Sea and the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/205. In the agreed plan of action, the member States of the Association mandated that the Commission execute the following activities in relation to resolution 67/205 and ensure the continued work of the organization with regard to securing the sustainable management and development of the Caribbean Sea: (a) recruit an expert tasked with the examination of the legal, economic and financial implications of the Special Area concept; (b) facilitate the work of the Commission by means of greater access to the financial, human and technical resources of the region, in particular through collaboration with the University of the West Indies, and other research and development institutions in the wider Caribbean region; and (c) pursue enhanced participation by pertinent regional institutions in the work of the Commission.

48. The member States of the Association of Caribbean States have agreed that the report of the expert will be used as the basis for a symposium on the Commission on the Caribbean Sea, which will be held in the last quarter of 2014. It is anticipated that the meeting will permit stakeholders to share perspectives on the role of the Commission in ocean governance in the wider Caribbean region and assist in identifying and further developing the programme of work of the Commission in the future.

V. Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States

49. The theme of the third International Conference, “The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships”, has the potential to inform the shape of future efforts on behalf of the Caribbean Sea and the wider Caribbean region. Many of the activities described in the current report already operate with a partnership approach, and the Conference theme may serve to strengthen collaborative action in the future. The draft outcome for the Conference, known as the Samoa Pathway, has also highlighted many of the issues critical to the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea. Climate change, the sustainable use and preservation of oceans and seas, the management of

chemicals and waste, biodiversity and invasive and alien species are among the many areas addressed in the draft outcome that have critical relevance to the Caribbean Sea.

VI. Conclusion

50. Since the previous report, issued in 2012, member States of the wider Caribbean region have continued to work collaboratively on behalf of their shared resource, the Caribbean Sea. They have been supported in their efforts by the international community, including partner Governments, inter-governmental organizations and the private sector. The efforts address the economic, social and environmental aspects of development and often include capacity-building components. In addition, the ecosystem-based approach has been adopted in many cases.

51. The Association of Caribbean States and its Commission on the Caribbean Sea continue to explore and analyse the legal and financial implications of the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. With renewed attention given to this subject, concrete conclusions and recommendations are expected to be forthcoming.

Annex

Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution A/67/205 entitled “Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations”

Introduction

1. The Caribbean Sea is a fragile and complex marine area that is shared by several countries of varying sizes and stages of economic development and upon which the populations of those countries depend for their social, economic, cultural, climatic, aesthetic and other benefits. Therefore, in order to facilitate the sustainable management and development of the Caribbean Sea it is more prudent to utilize a network structure throughout the wider Caribbean region that is able to coordinate the myriad projects and policies that relate to the Caribbean Sea.
2. In that regard, the Commission on the Caribbean Sea has been identified as the mechanism that can be utilized to accomplish that goal through the establishment and maintenance of a technical and policy-oriented network comprising all member States of the Association of Caribbean States and organizations that conduct activity related in any way to the Caribbean Sea. The rationale of the initiative is to facilitate the coordination and exchange of experiences among States with regard to their policies and activities in order to strengthen existing mechanisms by promoting synergies and inter-institutional cooperation, while respecting the mandate of each State and/or organization.
3. The present report outlines the activities of the Association of Caribbean States and its Commission on the Caribbean Sea as they relate to General Assembly resolution 67/205 entitled “Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations”, which was adopted in November 2012.

Institutionalization of the Commission on the Caribbean Sea and its subcommissions

4. In the period 2010-2012, the focus of the Commission on the Caribbean Sea was on creating awareness for the potential role of the Commission within the wider Caribbean region among States and institutions. Awareness for the initiative has also been extended to territories and organizations outside of the wider Caribbean region, with a view to garnering financial support for initiatives.
5. The forums in which the Commission on the Caribbean Sea has been discussed include:
 - Ninth University of Finland-United Nations Environment Programme course on multilateral environmental agreements, Grand Anse, Grenada, from 19 August to 31 September 2012

- Regional workshop on the role of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the settlement of disputes relating to the Law of the Sea in the Caribbean region, held in Mexico City on 5 and 6 June 2013
- Regional workshop on climate vulnerability in the marine-coastal zones: Caribbean and Central America, held in San José from 23 to 25 April 2014

6. The importance of the Caribbean Sea and the role that can be played by the Commission on the Caribbean Sea and the Caribbean Sea Initiative were also recognized and endorsed at the fifth and sixth summits of Heads of State and/or Government of the Association of Caribbean States held, respectively, in Pétiön Ville, Haiti, in April 2013 and Mérida (Yucatan), Mexico, in April 2014. At the fifth Summit, the Commission was issued mandates by virtue of the Declaration of Pétiön Ville to carry out the task of examining the legal, economic and financial implications, as well as the benefits of the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area on the national and international scales, in order to advance the institutionalization of the mechanism. The mandate also included related activities to support the overarching initiative, such as:

- Recruitment of an expert tasked with the examination of the legal, economic and financial implications of the “special area” concept
- Facilitation of the work of the Commission by means of greater access to the financial, human, and technical resources of the region, in particular, through collaboration with the University of the West Indies and other research and development institutions in the wider Caribbean region
- Pursuit of enhanced participation by pertinent regional institutions in the work of the Commission

7. During the period 2012-2014 Commission on the Caribbean Sea held two meetings. The 12th meeting was held on 22 January 2013, and the 13th on 6 November 2013.

8. During the 12th meeting of the Commission on the Caribbean Sea, the Chairmanship of Barbados came to an end and Costa Rica was elected the new Chair. Barbados continues to provide support to the Commission in the capacity of Vice-Chair, along with the Dominican Republic. The member States that comprise the Commission also agreed to reinvigorate the legal and technical subcommissions of the Commission in order to strengthen the institutionalization process. In that regard, several States provided candidates who will serve on the subcommissions in order to provide support for the activities of the Commission. The meeting also agreed upon the convening of a symposium in which stakeholder will be able to share their perspectives on the critical role of the Commission in the wider Caribbean region and gain support for its operationalization. The meeting is scheduled for the third quarter of 2014.

International support for the Commission on the Caribbean Sea

9. Turkey, an observer State of the Association of Caribbean States, continues to provide substantial support to the Commission on the Caribbean Sea. During the period from August 2012 to February 2014, the Commission received contributions totalling \$149,977.50 from Turkey.

Progress with relevant international agreements

10. In the realm of regional agreements that touch and concern the Caribbean Sea, there has been advancement with the ratification of the Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region by the Dominican Republic in January 2014. The ratification brings to 11 the total number of ratifications of the Protocol. The Protocol, which was adopted in 1999, and entered into force on 13 August 2010, is the only regional agreement of its kind to address the prevention, reduction and control of marine pollution from land-based activities.

Programmes to promote fisheries management and marine biodiversity conservation

11. In the area of fisheries management there has been continued activity in the region to improve and enhance fishing operations. The Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo CentroAmericano (OSPESCA), in partnership with the Central American Integration System, continues to play a significant role in promoting sustainable development and coordination within the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the region through the definition, approval and implementation of policies, strategies, programmes and projects. Some of their noteworthy projects include:

(a) **Strengthening of interregional fish and aquaculture product markets in the countries of the Central American Integration System.** In accordance with the mandate of OSPESCA to promote interregional trade, the project addresses the growing concern of food and nutrition security particularly in rural populations, through technical assistance and the exchange of experiences, thus contributing to the strengthening of interregional markets for fish and aquaculture products;

(b) **Best practices in fisheries management in countries of the Central American Integration System.** OSPESCA, through an agreement with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has undertaken to document best practices in successful fisheries management cases. The project is based on FAO guidelines in the application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries, with the objective of highlighting positive examples that can be used to address issues relating to national and regional fishing resources and ecosystems and the socioeconomic situation of stakeholder groups;

(c) **Regional support programme for the implementation of a fishing and aquaculture policy.** The objective of the project is to consolidate policy for the integration of fisheries and aquaculture in Central America through strategies on regional governance, promotion and development that favour the sustainable management of resources and the production and consumption of high quality protein;

(d) **Professional training and sustainable productive development of small-scale fishing in Central America.** The project aims to contribute to sustainable social and economic development and food security in the Central American region by building human resources capabilities in the small-scale fisheries and aquaculture sector;

(e) **Governance and management of the by-catch from trawling in Latin America and the Caribbean.** Through public-private partnerships and the adoption of best practices, the project seeks to improve the management of by-catch resulting from shrimp trawling/long lining in order to conserve the habitats or “blue forests” in Latin America and the Caribbean;

(f) **Sustainable management of tuna fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the areas beyond national jurisdictions.** Through the application of an ecosystem approach to fisheries, the project aims to achieve the responsible, efficient and sustainable production of tuna and the conservation of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction;

(g) **Technology for the integration of small-scale fishing in OSPESCA member countries.** The aim of the project is to integrate the productivity and competitiveness of small-scale fishing through the use of clean technologies and improved navigation and capture;

(h) **Project in support of fisheries management processes in the Central American isthmus.** The objective of the project is to combine inter-institutional efforts to strengthen the application of policy integration, in particular the management strategy that drives the member States;

(i) **Programme for strategic actions for the sustainable management of living marine resources in the Caribbean Sea and north Brazilian platform.** The objective of the project is to maintain healthy reef ecosystems, continental platforms and pelagic species.

12. The mandate of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, established by the Caribbean Community, is to promote and facilitate the responsible utilization of the region’s fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future populations of the region. During the 6th meeting of the Mechanism’s Ministerial Council, held in the Bahamas on 15 June 2012, member States reiterated their commitment to regional cooperation, emphasizing that there was a need for coordinated regional action in order to control the negative impact of issues, such as the invasive lionfish on marine ecosystems and fish stocks, and the inundation of the coastlines with sargassum seaweed. They also expressed the commitment to developing an approach in relation to addressing the impact of natural disasters and climate change on marine resources and the livelihoods of fishing communities.

13. In 2012, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism held a workshop on good practices, which focused on fish quality assurance and the marketing of fish and stock products. The Japan International Cooperation Agency facilitated a meeting for fisheries officials from member countries of the Mechanism from 25 to 27 July 2012 in order to further the aim of promoting best practices in the region. At the gathering of stakeholders, the emphasis was on the sharing of experiences, success stories and lessons learned in critical areas for sustainable development. Discussions were also held on the topic of achieving profitability and sustainability by improving fisheries infrastructures and technology in the region.

14. The enhancement of the fishing industry has also been included in strategies for industry management. The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism and the fisheries training programme of the United Nations University have established a long-term partnership aimed at building national and regional capacities for

fisheries development and management. One of the initiatives was a 2014 workshop focusing on present and emerging fisheries demands. The exercise involved examining the use of data for economic analysis and fisheries management purposes; the realistic analysis of fisheries data for stock assessment purposes; and future data requirements arising from international markets.

15. The member States of the Caribbean Fisheries Mechanism restated their stance against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing with their collective written arguments, which were submitted on Case No. 21. The case, which is under review by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, was lodged by the Subregional Fisheries Commission (Africa) in 2013 and addresses issues such as the obligations of the flag State in cases where illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is perpetrated within the exclusive economic zone of third-party States, as well as the extent of the liability of the flag State. In its submission, the Mechanism noted that the most important rights of the coastal State relates to the right to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing of its resources, such as the rights to legislate and enforce its laws, to ensure sustainable development and management of fish stocks and to take all necessary steps to prevent, deter, eliminate, and prosecute perpetrators of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the coastal State's jurisdiction. That position is in line with the goal of the Mechanism to promote the sustainable use of living marine and other aquatic resources in the Caribbean by the development, efficient management and conservation of such resources.

16. On the issue of coral reefs, the Ministerial Council of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, at its eighth meeting in Roseau, Dominica, on 23 May 2014, endorsed an action plan on the regional coral reef. The plan was prepared and coordinated by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, with funding and technical assistance provided by the Government of Australia and the Australian Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. The aim of the plan is to strengthen coordinated action to protect, conserve and manage the region's ecosystems since it is recognized that healthy coral reef ecosystems are critical to both the tourism and fisheries industries and, consequently, are important to the livelihoods of Caribbean communities. It was noted at the meeting that the main intent was to ensure that the living marine resources of the region were managed and protected so that they would be able to make optimum sustainable contributions to the region's economic and social development.

17. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through its Coral Reef Conservation Programme international strategy has identified the wider Caribbean region as one with which it will work in order to strengthen the capacity to manage the coral ecosystem for the period 2010-2015. The initiative aims to:

- Work with regional initiatives to build marine protected area networks and strengthen local management capacity to improve and maintain coral reef ecosystems and the communities that depend on them
- Develop and implement tools and practices to more effectively observe, predict, communicate and manage the impacts of climate change in priority international locations
- Strengthen local and national capacities and policy frameworks to reduce the impact of fishing on coral reef ecosystems

- Strengthen policy frameworks and institutional capacities to reduce the impact of pollution resulting from land-based activities

18. In respect of the sustainability of the Caribbean Sea, another initiative addresses the sustainable management of the shared living marine resources of the Caribbean large marine ecosystem and adjacent regions. The project is intended to assist participating countries in improving the management of their shared living marine resources through an ecosystem-based management approach. The project comprises specific objectives, including:

- Identifying, analysing and agreeing upon major issues, causes and actions required to achieve sustainable management of the shared living marine resources in the Caribbean large marine ecosystem
- Improving the shared knowledge base for the sustainable use and management of transboundary living marine resources
- Implementing legal, policy and institutional reforms to achieve sustainable transboundary living marine resources management
- Developing an institutional and procedural approach to level of monitoring and evaluation of, and reporting on, living marine resources

19. The project is funded by the Global Environment Facility, with over 20 participating countries.

20. It is anticipated that the initiatives mentioned above can be accommodated as part of a network structure that promotes interaction and exchange among States, countries, territories and institutions so that information and expertise can be effectively and efficiently applied in addressing the issues that have an impact on the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea.

Disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, management, relief and recovery

21. The member States of the Association of Caribbean States continue to be affected by natural disasters that have significant and debilitating impacts on their communities. In recognition of that fact, the area of disaster risk reduction has been identified as a focal area for the Association, and various initiatives have been introduced in order to aid the territories in effectively addressing the issue. Consequently, at the fifth Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of the Association of Caribbean States, member States approved a plan of action that ensured the continued pursuit of activities in that area. Such activities have included the convening of an international workshop on disaster risk management associated with natural phenomena, held in Mexico City on 25 and 26 November 2013; and the implementation of the project on strengthening hydro-meteorological operations and services in Caribbean small island developing States in respect of an early warning system, which is now in its second phase.

22. In addition to those activities, a number of other activities are in progress in this area since the Heads of State and/or Government who met at the sixth Summit, held in Mérida pledged to promote a vision that would allow disaster risk to be managed using a comprehensive approach, consistent with the policies of the

countries of the region that would reduce risk, while transforming member States into sustainable countries and territories.

23. Accordingly, current projects include a radio programme entitled “The rough season”. The programme takes the format of a soap opera, in which the content and message include pertinent information on the safeguards and actions to be taken prior to, during and after a natural disaster. The programme is currently on the Association of Caribbean States website, Facebook and YouTube and is broadcast via radio in Trinidad and Tobago. The content is being translated for dissemination throughout the wider Caribbean region.

24. Another project addresses strengthening hydrometeorological operations and services in the Caribbean small island developing States initiative, which is in its second phase. The initiative was developed in collaboration with the Finnish Meteorological Institute and aims at improving institutional governance and early warning services in communities.

25. Along the same line, the “Green response” project was undertaken in collaboration with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies to develop and implement environmentally friendly processes for responding to disasters.

26. The vulnerability of the countries and territories of the wider Caribbean region, in particular small island developing States, has become exacerbated with the effects of global warming. It is with this in mind that the Association of Caribbean States has decided to incorporate activities that address the concern into its work programme. One such activity will be a forum on aspects of vulnerability, such as climate change and its impact, which is scheduled for the last quarter of 2014.

27. The Government of Mexico is spearheading a project on Caribbean geospatial information infrastructure strengthening, which seeks to promote the development of spatial data infrastructure in 11 countries in the Caribbean. It is anticipated that the project will contribute to effective decision-making and the formulation of public policies by understanding the positioning, location and coordinates of human settlements and their context in order to strengthen the generation, use and sharing of geospatial information. Specific aims of the project include:

- Enhancing and coordinating global geospatial information management activities by involving Member States at the highest level as key participants
- Engaging in joint decision-making and progress on the use of geospatial information within national and global policy frameworks
- Working with Governments to improve policy, institutional arrangements and legal frameworks to share information
- Addressing global issues and contributing to collective knowledge as a community with shared interests and concerns

28. The Association of Caribbean States is currently working with the National Institute for Statistics and Geography in Mexico in order to set up a baseline through the collection and analysis of questionnaires from all countries involved. The responses to the questionnaire will form the basis for a diagnostic exercise that will serve to define the project.

29. Other projects under development include the enhancement of human resources capacities through educational activities, in which participants can earn a diploma (virtual) in risk management and disaster reduction in Spanish and English and a Master's degree in regional disaster risk reduction.

Legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development

30. Pursuant to resolution 67/205, in which the General Assembly requested that the Secretary-General submit a report to the General Assembly on the possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, the Association of Caribbean States recruited an expert consultant to examine this and other related issues and to provide a report thereon. The consultancy is now in progress and will be concluded by the middle of August 2014.
