



ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
Inter-American Council for Integral Development
(CIDI)



**SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE
SECOND MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH
AUTHORITIES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
IN THE FRAMEWORK OF CIDI**

September 6 and 7, 2010
Mexico City, Mexico

OEA/ Ser.K/XLIII.2
CIDI/RIMDS-II/RP-II/INF.2/10
30 August 2010
Original: English

**REPORT OF THE CARIBBEAN CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM
“TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAS”**

(Castries, Saint Lucia - July 5, 2010)

(Document prepared by the Technical Secretariat)

CARIBBEAN CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM
“TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAS”

Castries, Saint Lucia ° July 5, 2010

Meeting Report

CARIBBEAN CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM
“TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAS”

Saint Lucia ° July 5, 2010

Introduction:

As part of preparations for the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development to be held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 6-8, 2010, the Department of Sustainable Development in collaboration with the Department of International Affairs of the General Secretariat of the OAS organized and conducted the Caribbean Civil Society Forum “Towards Sustainable Development in the Americas” in Saint Lucia on July 5, 2010.

The opening of the Forum was addressed by Ms. Ann Marie Blackman, OAS Country Representative in Saint Lucia; Mr. Cletus Springer, Director of the Department of Sustainable Development of the OAS and Mr. Donovan Williams Permanent Secretary in Saint Lucia’s Ministry of Social transformation, Youth and Sports.

Mrs. Blackman welcomed the participants to the forum, and highlighted the importance of sustainable development and the significant contribution and role that NGOs play in this area. Mr. Springer indicated that the role of the Civil Society Forum was to elicit feedback from civil society groups on various sustainable development related themes, which would then be shared with the Heads of Delegations of OAS’ Member States as they negotiate declarations and seek consensus at high level encounters on sustainable development. He further indicated that as part of the Ministerial’s preparatory process additional encounters with civil society are planned for Central and South America as well as a Virtual Forum. Mr. Springer encouraged the civil society representatives to contact their relevant government officials to share with them the outcomes and recommendations from the Caribbean Forum.

In his remarks, Mr. Williams expressed the view that to be successful social transformation and sustainable development must be strongly driven from within. He maintained that the quality of development that is achieved in any country is largely dependent on the strength and confidence of the voice of civil society. Mr. Williams closed by commending the participants in advance for focusing on the meeting’s priorities and being concise, and encouraged them to be proactive in dealing with the issue of sustainable development, and information and experience sharing.

I. Objectives of the Forum

The objectives of the Caribbean Civil Society Forum were to:

- a. Offer a space for civil society organizations to share experiences and ideas related to national and regional programs and policies in the areas of sustainable development, climate change and risk management;

- b. develop recommendations to be presented for the consideration of Member States and the OAS General Secretariat prior to the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development that will take place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic from October 6-8, 2010;
- c. Advance implementation of the actions agreed at the Fifth Summit of the Americas as they relate to energy and environmental sustainability;
- d. Facilitate dialogue on new and emerging threats to environmental sustainability, and measures to overcome such threats within the context of risk management;
- e. promote best practices efforts, including advocacy of civil society and work on the ministerial theme to be analyzed during the meeting

II. Issues Discussed and Recommendations:

1. **Plenary Session One: Follow up to the Declaration of Santa Cruz +10 and Implementation of the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (Moderator: Charlene Solozano):**

During this Plenary Session, presentations were made by Mr. Nicholas Fields from the Barbados Marine Trust (Barbados) and Ms Gia Gaspard-Taylor from the International Education and Resource Network (Trinidad and Tobago).

Issues Discussed

During this session participants identified the following issues:

- weak enforcement of legislation and implementation of policy on sustainable agriculture and management of forests, water resources, land and health, natural hazard risk management and sustainable use of biodiversity, effective enforcement is a challenge.
- absence of technical assistance for the promotion of fisheries and aqua-culture management.
- the incorporation of agriculture and agricultural science at the primary school level.
- limited involvement of the youth at their community level especially in dealing with coastal erosion and the effects of climate change.
- the continuing heavy dependence on fossil fuels;
- the absence of energy legislation and policy;
- economic opportunities for the sustainable use of natural resources in communities;
- the absence of gender-sensitive approaches to sustainable development;
- limited participation of women, and youth in all sectors, especially in disaster management training, community mapping and in the design and implementation of early warning systems;
- limited availability and use databases and GIS datasets;
- absence of coral reef monitoring networks and programmes;

- technical assistance to streamline disaster preparedness and risk management in all sectors

Recommendations

The meeting recommended that OAS Member States should consider the following actions:

- Ensure equity in concessions and incentives granted for local and foreign development projects;
- If development projects should involve state-owned property or require concessions Governments should consider such inputs as equity in such projects;
- strengthen the development planning process generally but more especially as it relates to tourism;
- Assess the potential impact of climate change (especially sea level rise) on tourism as many tourism properties and activities are located on the coasts of Caribbean countries;
- Take effective steps to preserve ecosystems for the benefit of future generations
- Dedicate resources to acquiring and utilizing technical applications and equipment for the purposes of mapping and developing datasets which can then be made available for use in research and planning by government, civil society and academia
- Promote and strongly focus on the advancement and implementation where feasible, of renewable energy through research, testing and pilot projects, to move away from our detrimental dependence on fossil fuels.
- Establish a more participatory approach in developing and implementing energy policies
- Ensure greater involvement and representation of civil society in decision making processes, and effectively implement the rule of law, policies and good governance at all levels
- Follow through with and develop implementation strategies to fulfill the promises made in the Santa Cruz +10 Declaration
- Carefully identify and nurture the capabilities of women who can be potential leaders within the community, in order to create a critical mass of able female leaders who will address the differential needs of men and women in broader development processes.
- Understand the root causes that hinder women from participating in search and rescue Disaster Management Training;
- In the Disaster Management Training course, work closely with project’s gender advisor in the training of facilitators and speakers to ensure that all modules have a clear gender perspective and that the sessions are delivered in a gender-sensitive way. To further ensure the integration of gender in the training, the local gender focal points of the countries of the hemisphere should participate in the course.
- Establish a Gender Constituency on Climate Change within the hemisphere
- Place greater focus on and mainstream cross-cutting issues in all sectors and programs to reduce or avoid the duplication of work and efforts; and reduce unnecessary spending, so that all stakeholders are aware of each others roles, plans and activities.
- Stimulate development in rural cottage industries throughout the hemisphere

- Bring national attention to food systems development
- Highlight the contribution of rural communities to national economic development
- Promote economic opportunities through the sustainable use of local fruit and produce
- Value the input of local communities and indigenous knowledge in all planning and policy development processes, and strengthen the capacity of these communities to contribute to these processes.
- Ensure effective public education on sustainable development issues by dedicating adequate resources to ensure dissemination through various media (live, print, social networks)

2. **Plenary Session Two: Vulnerability in the Context of Sustainable Development**
(Moderator: Michelle-Ann Williams)

During this Plenary Session presentations were made by Mr. Duane Rowe, CARILEC, Mr. Gregor Williams, Saint Lucia National Trust (Saint Lucia), and Ms Lia Nicholson, Environmental Awareness Group (Antigua and Barbuda).

Issues Discussed:

During this session participants identified the following issues:

- Barriers and threats to renewable energy development including those posed to endogenous energy supplier by monopolies created by large fossil fuel energy companies
- Address and understand the challenge between affordable and accessible renewable energy. The conflict often is that the cheapest technology is not often the most environmentally friendly
- Ensuring energy security must involve efforts at reducing the vulnerability of energy related equipment to climatic events
- Climate change will exacerbate the energy security problem in most Small Island Developing States. For example, the cost of running wires underground, and distributing the energy is significantly more expensive than running lines on poles, which are more susceptible to damage from strong winds especially during the hurricane season. Sea level rise also poses a threat to power stations on the coast. Some plants use sea water for cooling purposes but are being affected by higher temperatures
- legislative protection for endangered and sensitive species is weak
- Insufficient consideration is being given to the potential for eco-tourism
- Many coastal zones are not planned to include the protection of natural resources

Recommendations:

The meeting recommended that OAS Member States should consider the following actions:

- Adopt a balanced approach to the development of tourism and agriculture, as there seems to be a heavier focus on the development of tourism in the region while the agriculture sector is experiencing decline;
- Ensure that physical development does not encroach on the natural environment and coastal bays and that archeological sites and ecosystems are preserved;
- Reduce the timeline between research, and the use of its findings in the implementation of policy;
- Require all developers to include in their development plans adequate measures to mitigate land-based pollution, and generally to reduce adverse impacts of tier development projects on human health and the health of the environment

3. Plenary Session Three: Risk Management and Planning (Moderator: Carolina Peña)

During this Plenary Session presentations were made by Ms Aurelia Jacqueline Armony from the St. Christopher National Trust (St. Kitts and Nevis) and Mr. Joseph Antoine from the Friends of the Earth (Grenada).

Issues Discussed:

During this session participants identified the following issues:

- community level responsibility towards risk management and planning;
- the organizational capacity of local groups to deal with disasters, training and education;
- Implement emergency communication strategies.
- Continually assess the big picture, the overall outcome of our actions.
- Apply indigenous knowledge in disaster management and planning
- Government and non-government sectors should be exposed to more training in disaster risk reduction and management;
- Research and development centres should translate scientific and technical information in a way that it easily assimilated by decision-makers, and community adoption
- Community involvement must be at the forefront of risk management and planning.
- A holistic approach should be employed towards the conservation and protection of the natural, cultural and built environments. “We need to educate people about systems thinking and help them understand how all these activities are interdependent and affect each other”.

Recommendations:

The meeting recommended that OAS Member States should consider the following actions:

- Implement mechanisms that allow communities to contribute to disaster prevention (for example communicating information about deteriorating bridges which would result in timely repairs).

- Require National Disaster/Emergency Management offices to meet with community leaders to exchange ideas about best practices on risk management. The outcome of these discussions should then be presented to the community and stored in central database.
- Establish a plan that addresses the re-allocation of Earth moving equipment to strategic positions around the country for use in emergency situations;
- Facilitate the establishment of emergency action groups in each community to manage pre and post disaster response.
- Continually assess the big picture,.
- Apply indigenous knowledge in disaster management and planning.
- Provide training in disaster risk reduction and management for government and non-government sectors.
- Require research and development centres to translate scientific and technical information for understanding by decision-makers, and community adoption

4. Plenary Session Four: Institutional Aspects in Climate Change Management (Moderator: Cletus Springer)

During this Plenary Session presentations were made by Ms Yoland London from the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (St. Vincent and the Grenadines)

Issues Discussed:

During this session participants identified the following issues:

- The need for urgent action to adapt to climate change by looking at development planning, building standards, land zoning;
- Greater recognition of the potential contribution of the youth and include them in the decision-making process as it relates to climate change and
- The potential use social networking media (Twitter, Facebook) to share information on climate change, and invite media personnel to meetings and encourage them to promote environmental issues.
- Recognition of the ways in which climate change will affect the quality of life of citizens
- The need for more information on sea-level rise, more intense and frequent hurricanes, depletion of fish stocks, and scarcity of fresh water

Recommendations:

The meeting recommended that OAS Member States should consider the following actions:

- Communicate to constituents, the threat of climate change on their livelihoods by disseminating information via print and electronic media
- Increase public education and awareness by ensuring that concepts are understood by all. Focus on issues such as sea level rise, more intense and frequent hurricanes, depletion of fish stocks, scarcity of fresh water as opposed to focusing on climate change

- Pay closer attention to the policy development process of government, and advocate for the inclusion of community or civil society groups.

Conclusion

The meeting ended with remarks by Mr. Cletus Springer and Mrs. Anne Marie Blackman both of whom warmly commended the participants for their enthusiasm and for their lively participation in the meeting. In his response on behalf of participants, Mr. Gregor Williams thanked the OAS for seeking the input of civil society in identifying matters to be placed before the Ministerial on Sustainable Development. Mr. Williams expressed the hope that this policy of engagement would continue.

The meeting closed at approximately 6:15 p.m

Annexes:

List of Participants

Meeting Agenda