



**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES**  
AT ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD



## **CARIBBEAN ROUNDTABLE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FIRST INTER-AMERICAN MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH LEVEL AUTHORITIES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago • September 19, 2006

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The *Caribbean Roundtable with Civil Society in the Framework of the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development* was held on September 19, 2006 at the Conference Room at the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) located on the St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

The Summits of the Americas Secretariat, with the support of the Department of Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Economic Development Unit (SEDU) for Small and Island Developing States (SIDS) of the Department of Economics of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, organized the *Caribbean Roundtable with Civil Society*. The objective of the *Roundtable*, one in a series of six consultation forums leading up to the *First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development*, to be held in December, 2006 in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, was to provide an opportunity for civil society organizations from the English-speaking Caribbean to present their recommendations and suggestions on the principal themes of the ministerial meeting for the consideration of the OAS Member States as they draft the *Declaration of Santa Cruz*.

The Summits of the Americas Secretariat and the Department of Sustainable Development covered the costs of airfare tickets and hotel accommodation of eleven (11) representatives from civil society organizations from countries of the English-speaking Caribbean to participate in the *Caribbean Roundtable with Civil Society*. As selection criteria, the selection committee considered the requests for participation from interested civil society organizations based on equitable geographic representation, equitable gender representation, relevant experience and background in the subject areas in question, and the organization's association and affiliation with other resources and organizations in the hemisphere such as networks of civil society groups.

Twenty-three (23) representatives of civil society organizations from nine (9) countries of the English-speaking Caribbean participated in the *Caribbean Roundtable with Civil Society*, including representatives of non-governmental organizations from Trinidad and Tobago, and in addition to academics from the University of the West Indies and officers of the Organization of American States (OAS). Likewise, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was represented by its National Summit Coordinator, Ms. Laura-Marie West.

Dr. Luis Alberto Rodríguez, Director of the Summits of the Americas Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) Chaired the Caribbean Roundtable with Civil Society.

Professor Gurmohan Kochar, Deputy Campus Principal of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus offered a welcoming address during the opening session of the Roundtable.

Dr. Dennis Pantin, Head of the Department of Economics of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus delivered a special guest presentation orienting the themes and issues to be discussed in the *First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development* in the regional context of the Caribbean and the situation and challenges with regards to sustainable development and the environment in the region, and explained the work carried out by the Sustainable Economic Development Unit (SEDU) for Small and Island Developing States (SIDS).

Richard Huber of the OAS Department of Sustainable Development then offered a presentation on the *First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development* to provide insight into the Santa Cruz meeting and the process of civil society participation taking place within the framework of the Ministerial Meeting, and how the recommendations elaborated in this Caribbean Roundtable will contribute to the Declaration that the Ministers will adopt in Santa Cruz.

The *Roundtable* consisted of a total of three working sessions relating to the three principal themes of the *First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development*: integrated water-resource management, risk sharing and risk transfer arrangements of natural disasters, and sustainable agriculture, sustainable forestry and tourism.

Each of the three working sessions began with a brief presentation by Mr. Huber of the OAS Department of Sustainable Development of the results of each of the three technical workshops held by the OAS on the principal themes of the Ministerial Meeting.

Following this intervention, a Discussion Moderator from the faculty of the University of the West Indies made a brief presentation to stimulate debate around each of themes in the Caribbean context.

- Session I Moderator: Dr. Everson J. Peters, Faculty of Engineering, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus
- Session II Moderator: Dr. Marlene Attzs, Sustainable Economic Development Unit (SEDU), Department of Economics, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus
- Session III Moderator: Dr. Gregory Gouveia, School of Agriculture, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

After the presentation by the Discussion Moderator, civil society representatives had the opportunity to discuss the issues among themselves contributing their points of view as well as reconciling their differences of opinion in order to formulate the recommendations to be presented to the OAS Member States.

At the end of each working session, the Discussion Moderator presented a summary of the principal recommendations emanated from each session.

The Roundtable was closed with a farewell address delivered by Mr. Joseph Campbell, Representative of the OAS Country Office of Trinidad and Tobago.

## II. CIVIL SOCIETY RECOMMENDATIONS

### SESSION I – INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

1. Governments must recognize that civil society plays an instrumental role in educating and raising awareness on the issue of integrated water resources management and can have the greatest impact in this area.
2. Governments must move beyond consultations with civil society that take place after the planning stages of integrated water resources management and sustainable development, developing strategies that include civil society participation and input at all stages.
3. School curricula should be developed by the Member States that includes environmental issues, particularly sustainable water resource management, in recognition that education and awareness on the issue is more effective at an early age. This curricula should use an activity-based approach.
4. Education and awareness-raising on issues related to integrated water resources management must focus on all sectors, including the community, educational institutions, as well as government.
5. Education and awareness-raising should adopt an activity-based approach and must also be directed toward those social sectors most likely to engage in development activities and lifestyles that impact negatively on the development of sustainable integrated water resources management.
6. Member states must recognize the important role of youth in processes to develop awareness, education and capacity in terms of water resources management and take measures to reach out to this social sector.
7. Governments and civil society have the responsibility to develop mechanisms to dialogue among themselves in order to encourage governments to consider the long-term impact of decisions related to the proper management of water resources.
8. Governments, while often willing to sign international agreements related to integrated water resources management, must make greater efforts to follow-up on these agreements by insisting on their implementation, enacting adequate regulations, enforcing water resources management regulations, and consolidating existing legislation.
9. Member states must call upon the media must to promote integrated water resources management by sensitizing citizens of existing regulations.
10. Governments must utilize existing best practices in addressing integrated water resource management. This should include re-evaluating traditional community approaches, such as the implementation of more and improved rainwater storage facilities, developing means to exchange experiences and best practices locally, sub-regionally, and regionally, and the developing mechanisms tailored to unique local communities.
11. Technological advances in sustainable water resources management must also be utilized and provided to the larger community. Relevant research must be carried out on issues of integrated water resource management and sustainable development.

12. The role of civil society must be defined and formalized in integrated water resource management. This should include developing strategies to make civil society paid contributors to and implementers of activities associated with integrated water resources management, thereby developing a relationship between governments and civil society organizations based on mutual responsibility. Governments and the OAS must direct efforts to the strengthening and capacity-building of civil society organizations in the region to allow this sector to participate fully in the process. To this end, governments should also provide the OAS with a mandate to develop strategies and means to more directly support civil society organizations to implement integrated water resources management projects.
13. Adequate land management policies must be developed in coordination with the development and implementation of sound integrated water resources management strategies.
14. Governments must make efforts to strengthen civil society and develop capacity among citizen groups to allow civil society to participate more actively in the ongoing dialogue regarding integrated water resources management. These efforts should be directed toward developing a regional network or council comprised of civil society organizations to enable the development of the means to provide recommendations to governments regarding integrated water resources management with a common voice. Likewise, intergovernmental organizations, including the OAS, the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and CARICOM, should develop mechanisms to include the contributions of civil society on issues related to integrated water resources management policies and programs.
15. Governments should consider coastal waters when developing integrated water resources management policies and programs with specific emphasis on the vulnerability of coastal aquifers.
16. The particular physical, human, and social conditions of Caribbean nations must be taken into account in all aspects of integrated water resources management.

## SESSION II – MANAGING RISKS OF NATURAL HAZARDS

1. Civil society must be included in the decision-making process as representatives of the citizens and in order to facilitate the dissemination of information to the community.
1. Stronger linkages are required between civil society organizations, academic institutions, and governments in order that research be used to inform government policy.
2. Governments should establish relationships with civil society organizations based on their pivotal role in the establishment and implementation of disaster risk management initiatives and their ability to cooperate with government agencies to provide emergency services and education.
3. Governments must improve the level of natural hazard preparedness in all countries of the region through increased investment in education and infrastructure.

4. Government policies that seek to address natural hazards must also take into account hazards that the result of human activities.
5. Civil society takes responsibility for educating itself and increasing community awareness on disaster risk management by using language appropriate to the constituents. To this end, governments should provide technical and financial support to civil society organizations and support using a bottom-up approach.
6. Governments should support civil society efforts to develop national or regional entities capable of negotiating directly with governments, multi-governmental organizations, and the private sector to acquire financing to implement disaster risk management strategies.
7. External national and international support is necessary to ensure that civil society in the region has the capacity to share experiences and best practices on disaster risk management among themselves. Likewise, it is necessary to establish economic incentives for civil society in order to ensure that capacity exists to support the disaster risk management process.
8. Education and awareness-raising on natural hazards must be broad based, utilize a comprehensive communication strategy, involve the development and distribution of a disaster preparation kit, and be developed and disseminated by governments in coordination with civil society.
9. Advanced and traditional information and communication media must be further developed and strengthened in the countries to provide emergency information for citizens in the event of natural disasters.

### SESSION III – SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

1. It is essential to provide civil society with the capacity to develop and implement sustainable agriculture, forestry, and tourism. For this purpose, governments should establish training facilities for civil society, particularly using information and communications technologies.
2. It is necessary for governments to reach out to traditional, existing civil society groups and provide necessary financial and technical resources for capacity-building in order to develop sustainable agriculture, forestry, and tourism strategies.
3. Tourism activities must involve community participation in all areas of planning and implementation. Governments must invest greater resources on developing innovative and sustainable forms of tourism.
4. Governments must implement modern information and communications technology systems to provide the means for broad exchange of information and best practices on sustainable agriculture, forestry, and tourism strategies.
5. More meaningful forms of civil society participation must be created in the process of developing sustainable agriculture, forestry, and tourism strategies. Civil society participation in the process must be institutionalized, with a clear shift away from consultation and a focus on capacity-building to involve civil society in directing and

- planning strategies. Such initiatives must take into account the cultural diversity that exists within civil society.
6. Sustainable agriculture, forestry, and tourism programs and projects must take into account traditional land rights and land knowledge, particularly when governments are considering relocating communities due to development or agricultural pursuits. Opportunities exist in the sustainable agriculture, forestry and tourism sectors for civil society to take control and develop projects with or without the assistance of member states.
  7. Governments should consider sustainable agriculture strategies that promote indigenous and locally-grown agricultural products to develop community capacity and stimulate local economic growth.
  8. Governments, in cooperation with regional and local development banks, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) should make available resources and financing for civil society organizations in the development of sustainable agriculture, forestry, and tourism projects.