



## **CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

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*Needed: Full Support*

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**Jorge E. Illueca**

*Much Achieved; Much to be Done*

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**Karen L. Eckert**

*A Voice for the Turtles*

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*The Road Travelled*

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From the desk of

ACHIM STEINER

United Nations Under Secretary General and Executive Director, UNEP

Every year over 14 million tourists arrive on cruise ships attracted by the coral reefs, coasts, breathtaking beaches, and wonderful people of the wider Caribbean. Their arrival is cause for both celebration and concern.

Tourism, sensitively and sustainably managed, can be a welcome source of foreign exchange, helping to overcome poverty and provide livelihoods and employment opportunities. But, badly managed, it can supplant cultures and communities and damage the mangroves, reefs and other ecosystems upon which local people – and tourism itself – depend.

Like many low-lying coastal areas and small island developing states, the nations of the Caribbean face many challenges. Some are common worldwide: like the impacts of climate change, increasing levels of solid waste and sewage and the impact of invasive alien species.

But some threats, like pollution from ships, are deemed greater in the Caribbean than elsewhere. A 3,000 passenger cruise ship, it is estimated, generates 400 to 1,200 cubic metres of watery wastes each day – including drainage from dishwashers, laundry and showers – and 70 litres of hazardous wastes, including photo processing chemicals, paints, solvents, printer cartridges, and dry cleaning fluid. It also produces an estimated 50 tonnes of solid waste a week. Cruise ships, it is thought, account for almost a quarter of the 900,000 tonnes dumped in the world's oceans each year.

Then there is intense oil tanker traffic in the Sea. Ninety per cent of the energy used in the region is derived from crude, and it contains many oil producing and exporting nations including Colombia, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America, and Venezuela.

Global and regional conventions – many under the aegis of the United

Nations' International Maritime Organization – require ship operators to behave in environmentally friendly ways. But significant volumes of hydrocarbons and other substances are still being discharged. Surveys indicate that coastal sediments in places like Jamaica's Kingston Harbour and Cuba's Havana Bay are suffering "lightly chronic oil pollution". And high concentrations of tar balls – from oil spills and discharges – have been found on beaches from Cuba and Curacao to Trinidad and Tobago.

Much has been done under agreements like the UNEP-brokered Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention). But clearly more is needed, including better provision of port-based waste reception facilities, and stepping up compliance and enforcement of shipping treaties.

Shipping is just one of the challenges and opportunities facing countries in the Caribbean, brought into sharp focus by recent UNEP publications: the Caribbean Environment Outlook, the Global Environment Outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean and two regional reports under the unique Global Environment Facility-funded Global International Waters Assessment.

These credit Caribbean countries for good progress towards achieving the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals by 2015, especially concerning education, health care and drinking water. But they add that these gains could be lost if environmental degradation continues to harm economies.

The region's countries are finding solutions to many of the challenges they face. UNEP can help through the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building, and I urge governments to put forward projects and proposals under this new scheme. But the international community must take responsibility for other ones, including developing a fair and equitable trade regime, and combating climate change, probably the greatest threat of all to Caribbean countries.

An estimated 70 per cent of the region's people live in low-lying areas vulnerable to rising sea levels and extreme weather. They must be supported to adapt, but there is a limit to how much they can do before they are overwhelmed by the waves, or a welter of hurricanes. Industrialized nations must meet their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol as a first step towards the even deeper cuts needed to stabilize the atmosphere ■



Andre Maslennikov/Still Pictures

# Needed:

## *Full Support*

**LEONIE BARNABY** stresses the importance of support from Governments in implementing the Caribbean Environment Programme – and calls for more

**W**hen many of the governments of the Wider Caribbean region adopted the Action Plan of the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) 25 years ago – and later became Parties to the Cartagena Convention in 1983 – they committed themselves to implementing a wide range of projects and activities to address the environmental problems of the region's marine and coastal areas.

The Government of Jamaica has had a particularly close relationship with the CEP and the Convention. It is proud of the Programme's achievements over marine pollution, wildlife and protected areas, education, training and awareness, and

information systems for the management of marine and coastal areas.

There is now no question as to the importance accorded to the Sea. Indeed, countries in the region have sought United Nations recognition of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as an area of special importance in the context of sustainable development.

### **Critical elements**

However, our reflections on the past twenty-five years will show that the CEP has had to adapt to varying levels of support and commitment. The report of the 10th Intergovernmental Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Convention in 2002 noted some

critical elements in the role of member Governments. It said they should:

1. be active partners in developing and implementing the Programme – participating throughout the year, not just at meetings.

2. continue to sharpen CEP activities to focus on the highest priority areas within the scope of its mandate, and to look toward national implementation of the Convention and Protocols, while not overextending the Programme.

3. recognize global environmental developments and initiatives in which our governments are actively involved, such as the WSSD and SIDS processes, and ensure that appropriate linkages are established with CEP, through both our national and regional agendas, and under the framework of the new Strategy for CEP.

4. address the financial situation of the Caribbean Trust Fund decisively and responsibly as the sustainability of the Programme is at stake without the regular contributions to cover the basic costs of operations and management. ►

It noted that a fully operational CEP must have the full political, programmatic and financial support of Member Governments so that it can fulfil its obligations with them. The CEP's strategy of 2004 also addressed the need to enhance its sustainability and effectiveness through:

- ◆ Increasing member state / country ownership;
- ◆ continuing to promote and facilitate translating the Cartagena Convention and its protocols into effective implementation through ratification and complementary national legislation;
- ◆ engaging and involving civil society and the private sector;
- ◆ building institutional capacities of relevant national official agencies of the parties and other stakeholders;
- ◆ ensuring viable sustainable financial arrangements; and
- ◆ developing indicators and assessment/evaluation procedures where appropriate.

We must take these exhortations into account as we look at CEP's future.

Within the next 25 years, countries should meet such global targets, as the Millennium Development Goals, the goals of the programmes of work of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation, of the

Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The effects of climate change will be more evident by then and the need for planning and adaptation even more critical.

The CEP is vibrant and responding to the needs of countries, through the several regional initiatives it has recently launched. The fullest participation of all the region's countries in the Cartagena Convention and its protocols would enhance the Action Plan's effectiveness

The Regional Coordinating Unit of the Action Plan of the Caribbean Environment Programme has worked commendably. At the national level we must acknowledge the Action Plan's achievements and see that our requirements are taken into account.

The Governments of the region have a vested interest in successfully implementing this comprehensive regional programme which they themselves created in collaboration with UNEP. CEP's effectiveness, its clear value to the people of the Caribbean and its continued contribution to our sustainable development require that all partners play their part ■

*Leonie Barnaby is Senior Director of the Environmental Management Division of the Ministry of Local Government and Environment, Jamaica.*



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# Flagship

## for the Seas

**VEERLE VANDEWEERD** describes how environmental needs can best be addressed by partnerships and integrated planning



Julio Eichardt/Still Pictures

**T**he Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) is one of UNEP's flagship Regional Seas Programme (RSP). It provides an excellent example of how countries who share a sea – together with over 40 partner organizations both in the region and worldwide - can join to address common environmental challenges.

Like many other RSPs, the CEP initially received much support from UNEP, but is now an independent, strong and vibrant entity. From its offices hosted in Kingston, Jamaica, the CEP covers 28 member states and their dependent territories, speaking three languages (English, Spanish and French). It has jurisdiction for the marine environment of the world's second largest sea covering some 2,648,000 km<sup>2</sup>, bordered both by continent and by small island states, and uniting people of different cultures and religious and political persuasions. The Wider Caribbean Region – mainly made up of countries whose economies heavily depend on tourism and fisheries – has an active hurricane season, is subject to devastating

earthquakes and volcanic activity, and prone to landslides and flooding.

The CEP has had to cope with many challenges – including changes in the development agenda, the state of the coastal and marine environment, the international policy framework, scientific knowledge and socio-economic realities and trends. The same is true in many other Regional Seas and so, 30 years after its inception in 1974, the global Regional Seas Programme coordinated by UNEP with the participation of the Chairs or representatives of the Conference of Parties and Intergovernmental Bodies of the various Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) endorsed a set of strategic directions for 2004-2007, aimed at strengthening the RSP at the global level, while continuing to implement the work programmes of the individual RSPs (<http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/About/Strategy/>).

CEP works across linguistic and political divides, encouraging key governmental and civil society partners to join in setting up regional policies and agreements. Though receiving contributions from member countries remains challenging, it has managed to attract considerable institutional support and project financing from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Foundation, and such member governments as France and the United States of America, including USAID. It shared its experience on strengthening domestic resource mobilization and on the value of partnerships, particularly for capacity building, at the last global meeting of the RSCAPs in October 2005 in Helsinki, Finland.

The CEP will seek to enhance its programmatic strategic options by (a) working with other Regional Seas Programmes; (b) integrating national and regional socio-economic development plans, including coastal and marine components, into a programme strategy; (c) working to improve and include global and regional monitoring and surveillance plans and programmes; (d) increasing the integration of work programmes and agendas for ad hoc and other groups and international initiatives; and (e) working both externally and internally to improve coordination mechanisms within and between sub-programmes.

After 25 years of service to the region's peoples, the CEP has remained true to its core mission, and provides an excellent example of a framework for regional cooperation ■

*Veerle Vandeweerd is the Head of the Regional Seas Programme (RSP) and the Coordinator of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA).*

# Much Achieved

## Much to be Done

**JORGE E. ILLUECA** surveys the last 25 years of the Caribbean Environment Programme and looks to the future



Hideyuki Iwashita/UNEP/Still Pictures

and require coordinated national implementation by diverse governmental institutions.

Two regional seas programmes were launched in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1981 the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) and the South-East Pacific Action Plan and Lima Convention.

### Learning experiences

As Executive Secretary of Panama's National Commission on the Environment at the time, I found that in many ways, CEP became a school for us on integrated environmental management. The early 1980s were a formative period in this area for most countries in the region. Few had established environmental ministries. I remember well how UNEP, through CEP, provided us with learning experiences that helped forge our environmental institutions and programmes. Regional seas programmes made us look at environmental problems in an integrated and holistic way by addressing the links between such diverse issues as oil spills, marine emergencies, land-based sources of pollution, marine and coastal biodiversity, fisheries, watershed management, coastal development, and tourism and recreation.

### Global agreements

The Caribbean Environment Programme has been one of the developing world's most successful regional seas programme: twenty-four of its 28 member nations are developing ones. While the financial contributions of the four developed country members have been substantial, several developing country parties have also made significant contributions.

An important part of UNEP's mandate is to promote coordination and collaboration among multi-lateral environmental agreements. This is much easier said than done, ►

**T**he Regional Seas Programme, initiated over 30 years ago, is one of UNEP's crowning achievements. There are now a total of 18 individual regional programmes – 13 of them with their own conventions – covering most of the world's coastal areas and involving over 150 countries. Fourteen of them were developed with UNEP's support, but all 18 regularly attend global meetings that it convenes.

The individual programmes – which began with establishing the Mediterranean Action Plan in 1975

– are building blocks supporting the “constitution of the oceans”, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Unlike other multilateral environmental agreements, they often followed a dual track approach of simultaneously negotiating and adopting both a framework convention and an action plan. This allowed participating states immediately to start addressing priority problems through the action plan, even before the convention entered into force. Unlike them, too, the programmes are cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary

but the regional seas programmes have been particularly open and disposed towards collaboration. Because of their cross-sectoral nature, regional seas programmes have established collaboration with a broad range of multilateral environmental agreements. In several cases they also have proved to be effective vehicles for supporting the implementation of global agreements.

### Environmental agreements

CEP has distinguished itself in this way, especially in the ten years since the appointment of Nelson Andrade, the Coordinator of the Regional Coordinating Unit. Three protocols have been developed under the Cartagena Convention and are being implemented in close collaboration with global multilateral environmental agreements. The Oil Spills Protocol is closely linked to several of the marine pollution conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which is involved in operating the Protocol's Regional Marine Pollution, Information and Training Centre. In 1997 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Convention on Biological Diversity, strengthening links with the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol. The Aruba Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities directly supports the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. And Memoranda of

**The past decade has seen the emergence of twinning arrangements in which more developed regional seas programmes provide technical support to those that are newer or less developed**

Understanding have been signed to strengthen collaboration with the secretariats of the Ramsar Convention on wetlands and the Secretariat of the Basel Convention on hazardous wastes.

The past decade has seen the emergence of twinning arrangements in which more developed regional seas programmes provide technical support to those that are newer or less developed. The Coordinator



J. Kassanchuk/UNEP/Still Pictures

of the Caribbean RCU provided invaluable technical support and backstopping to the negotiations of the Northeast Pacific regional seas programme, extending along the Pacific coast of Mesoamerica from Colombia to Mexico, in which I was heavily involved.

The first twenty-five years of CEP have seen such major achievements as the Cartagena Convention and its three protocols, national advances in capacity building for the integrated management of the marine and coastal environment, establishing a network of marine and coastal protected areas, assessing and managing marine pollution, developing information systems for managing marine and coastal resources, and forging stronger ties with other MEAs and international organizations. While the Caribbean Environment Programme continues to mature, strategic support from UNEP is essential.

### Sustainable development

In 1999, through Decision 20/19, its Governing Council called on UNEP to revitalize the Regional Seas Programme, which some had felt had been declining in importance in the organization's work. Much remains to be done on this. The Regional Seas Programme needs to be returned to the core of UNEP's programme – as it was from 1974 to 1997. UNEP has a leading role to play in the conservation and sustainable development of the world's oceans and coastal areas, and the future of CEP and other regional seas programmes will depend on it ■

*Jorge Illueca, a former Assistant Executive Director of UNEP and Director of UNEP's Division of Environmental Conventions. He is now the Principal Forest and Environment Policy Officer in the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests in New York.*



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Yet from the earliest days of negotiation over the priorities of the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP), sea turtles have served as a flagship for developing models of international cooperation in preventing the further decline of depleted living resources, restoring them to their former abundance, and maintaining them for sustainable use.

### Endangered species

All Caribbean sea turtles receive full protection under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (also known as the Cartagena Convention). The protocol is arguably the world's most comprehensive regional wildlife protection treaty, with provisions on environmental impact assessment, planning and management regimes and buffer zones, as well as a range of protection measures, including species recovery plans. It recognises that "protection of threatened and endangered species will enhance the cultural heritage and values of the countries and territories in the

# A Voice for *the Turtles*

**KAREN L. ECKERT** describes how an initiative, which brings together science and policy, is helping to save critically endangered species

**S**ea turtles were once abundant in the Caribbean region. Indeed, they are thought to have been integral keystone species for coral reefs and seagrass beds in pre-

There have long been regulated, but largely unmanaged, sea turtle fisheries. Tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of turtles also die every year after being accidentally caught

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