



CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK

Special Edition for the Mauritius International Meeting for the
10-year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the
Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States



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FOREWORD



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In 1995, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) launched the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) process for integrated environmental assessment and reporting at global and regional levels. GEO is based on cross-sectoral and participatory environmental assessment, facilitating dialogue between policy-makers and the scientific community.

Under the GEO framework, the first environment outlook report for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean was published in 1999 through UNEP's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP-ROLAC), and with the help of the European Commission and the University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development (UWICED). The report helped the region to identify the main environmental concerns and highlight appropriate policy priorities.

Small Island Developing States have been recognized as a special category of countries, with particularly vulnerable and delicate ecosystems due to their small size and other characteristics. The United Nations recognizes the unique situation of SIDS and actively supported the process of giving them an international political identity with the establishment in 1991 of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), which would provide a forum for small island states to have a collective voice in addressing their common problems. This recognition was reaffirmed by the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

held in Barbados in 1994, and the resulting Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (BPOA).

In 2003, UNEP initiated the preparation of environment outlook reports for the Caribbean, Pacific and the Atlantic and Indian Oceans SIDS, as a contribution to the Mauritius International Meeting for the 10-year Review of the BPOA (Barbados +10) in 2005. The major objectives of these reports are to:

- Highlight the state of the environment in the SIDS showing the trends of national, regional and global significance;
- Provide policy guidance and early warning information on environmental threats;
- Provide a basis for regional consultations and for identifying the environmental issues and priorities in preparation for Barbados +10;
- Help to catalyse and promote international cooperation and action based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available; and
- Contribute to the development of a common strategy for sustainable development in SIDS.

There was considerable effort to ensure that the assessment and evaluation builds on the preparation initiatives for the Barbados +10, to ensure consistency of reporting.

The *Caribbean Environment Outlook* assesses the state of the environment in the Caribbean SIDS and Low-Lying Coastal States in terms of the environmental concerns identified in the BPOA and the driving forces of environmental change. It emphasizes the interdependence between the quality of the environment, human well-being and sustainable development. It is intended to be a resource document for civil servants, private and public sector policy-makers, professionals in development-related areas and funding institutions. It is our hope that this report will remind decision-makers in the Caribbean of the importance of a healthy environment and intact natural resource base for sustainable development.

The *Caribbean Environment Outlook* was prepared in collaboration with many experts from the region, the partners from the 1999 report including UWICED and the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), as well as new partners such as the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the Mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change Project (MACC). UNEP considers such partnerships to be the key to the success of the GEO process.

It is my sincere hope that this report — *Caribbean Environment Outlook* — will be a useful resource during deliberations at the Barbados +10 Conference.

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