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**UNEP's Assistance in the Implementation of the  
Barbados Programme of Action  
For the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**



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*Contribution for the preparations of the International Meeting for the full and comprehensive review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, Mauritius, September 2004*

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## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Why Should UNEP Focus on SIDS.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 SIDS in the International Agenda.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2 Reviews of the SIDS/POA.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.3 World Summit on Sustainable Development.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2. How UNEP Responded to the Programme of Action For SIDS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1 Climate Change and Sea Level Rise.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1.1 Major Issues of Climate Change and Sea Level Rise in SIDS.....	8
2.1.2 UNEP Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Activities in SIDS.....	9
2.1.3 The Montreal Protocol: A Success Story in Capacity Building.....	11
2.1.4 Future Directions.....	12
<b>2.2 Biodiversity Resources.....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.2.1 Issues of Biodiversity in SIDS.....	14
2.2.2 UNEP Biodiversity Activities in SIDS.....	17
2.2.3 Future Directions in Biodiversity.....	19
<b>2.3 Coastal and Marine Resources.....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.3.1 UNEP and SIDS Protecting Coastal and Marine Environments.....	20
2.3.2 UNEP Coastal and Marine Activities in SIDS.....	21
2.3.3 Future Directions.....	24
<b>2.4 Coral Reefs Protection and Management.....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.4.1 Coral Reef Issues in SIDS.....	26
2.4.2 UNEP Coral Reef Activities in SIDS.....	26
2.4.3 Future Directions.....	29
<b>2.5 Natural and Environmental Disasters Management.....</b>	<b>29</b>
2.5.1 Disaster Management Issues in SIDS.....	30
2.5.2 UNEP Disaster Management Activities in SIDS.....	30
2.5.3 Future Directions.....	31
<b>2.6 Management of Waste.....</b>	<b>31</b>
2.6.1 Waste Management Issues in SIDS.....	31
2.6.2 UNEP Waste Management Activities in SIDS.....	32
2.6.3 Future Directions in Waste Management.....	34
<b>2.7 Fresh Water Resources Management.....</b>	<b>37</b>

## Table of Contents Contd

2.7.1	Freshwater Issues in SIDS.....	37
2.7.2	UNEP Freshwater Activities in SIDS.....	37
2.7.3	Future Directions in Freshwater Management.....	38
<b>2.8</b>	<b>Tourism Resources.....</b>	<b>38</b>
2.8.1	Sustainable Tourism Issues in SIDS.....	39
2.8.2	UNEP Sustainable Tourism Activities in SIDS.....	39
2.8.3	Future Directions.....	41
<b>CHAPTER 3.....</b>	<b>43</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Cross-cutting Activities in Environmental Management.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Multilateral Environmental and Non-binding Agreements.....</b>	<b>43</b>
3.1.1	UNEP Approach to Environmental Law.....	43
3.1.2	SIDS and Multilateral Environmental Agreements.....	43
3.1.3	UNEP Assistance to SIDS in MEA.....	44
3.1.4	Future Directions.....	45
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Environmental Vulnerability Index.....</b>	<b>46</b>
3.2.1	UNEP Support for Continued Development of the EVI.....	47
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Capacity Building for Sustainable Development.....</b>	<b>47</b>
3.3.1	UNEP Capacity Building Activities in SIDS.....	47
3.3.2	UNEP and the Global Environmental Facility in SIDS.....	47
3.3.3	Future Directions.....	51
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Environment Outlook of Small Island Developing States.....</b>	<b>52</b>
3.4.1	Environmental trends in SIDS.....	52
3.4.2	SIDS EO Booklets 2004.....	52
<b>CHAPTER 4.....</b>	<b>54</b>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Future Directions for SIDS and UNEP.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1.....</b>	<b>58</b>	
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>LIST OF WEBSITES.....</b>	<b>62</b>	

## Acronyms and Terms

AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
BPSP	Biodiversity Planning Support Programme (BPSP)
CAR/RCU	Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (CAR/RCU)
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CAST	Caribbean Action for Sustainable Tourism
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDI	Capacity Development Initiative
CEN	Caribbean Environmental Network
CEP	Caribbean Environmental Programme
CHA	Caribbean Hotel Association
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CORAL	Coral Reef Alliance
CPAC	Centro de Pesquis Agropecuarias dos Cerrados
DEWA	Division of Early Warning and Assessment
DFID	Department for International Development (formally ODA)
DTIE	Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (UNEP)
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zones
EO	Environment Outlook
EST	Environmentally Sound Technologies
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
GA	General Assembly
GCRMN	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
GESAMP	Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection
GIWA	Global International Water Assessment
GIWA	Global International Waters Assessment
GMA	Global Marine Assessment
GNP	Gross National Product
ICRAN	International Coral Reef Action Network
ICRI	International Coral reef Initiative
ICRIN	International Coral Reef Information Network
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPGRI	International Plant Genetic Resources Institute
IWM	Integrated Waste Management
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements

MPA	Marine Protected Area
NAPA	National Adaptation Programmes of Action
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NOU	National Ozone Unit
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PADH	Physical Alteration and Destruction of Habitats
POA	Programme of Action
POI	Plan of Implementation
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
RCU	Regional Coordinating Unit
ROA	Regional Office for Africa
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
ROLAC	Regional Office Latin America and the Caribbean
ROWA	Regional Office West Asia
SACEP	South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme
SAS	South Asian Seas
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNF	United Nations Foundation (UNF),
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UWICED	University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre
WCR	Wider Caribbean Region
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WPS	World Population Society
WRI	World Resources Institute
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WTO <sub>1</sub>	World Trade Organization
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report highlights UNEP's activities in assisting Small Island Developing States in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA), 1994, for the Sustainable Development of SIDS. As a group, SIDS share several characteristics, which make them economically, environmentally, and socially more vulnerable to factors of which they exercise little or no control. Accordingly, the combination of these shared features places SIDS at a distinct disadvantage compared to larger countries. During the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), 2002, the special sustainable development needs of SIDS were reaffirmed and the WSSD Plan of Implementation requested for a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the SIDS/Programme of Action (POA) and called for a Barbados + 10 International Meeting in 2004.

This report, among other issues, summarizes:

1. UNEP's contribution towards implementing the priority activities of the BPoA which include climate change and sea level rise, biodiversity, natural and environmental disasters management, management of wastes, freshwater resources, coastal and marine resources, and tourism resources;
  2. The contribution of UNEP towards implementing the previously mentioned priority activities of the SIDS/POA;
  3. The contribution of UNEP towards implementing cross cutting areas such as multilateral and non-binding agreements, environmental vulnerability index, and capacity building;
  4. The general policy of UNEP in each BPoA priority area, identifying the substantive issues for SIDS and outlining the response of UNEP to these issues, and considering future challenges.
- Finally the report provides an overview of future directions or challenges facing UNEP in advancing the implementation of the SIDS/POA. These include:
- **Climate change:** adaptation options needed to be evaluated in terms of benefits to cost ratio as the next logical step. This would have a high payoff to SIDS because financial constraints limit the portfolio of technically feasible options;
  - **Biodiversity:** the WSSD agreed to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity. It was also noted that UNEP-WCMC has developed a proposal to produce a Regional Plan of Action for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the WCR;
  - **Coastal and marine resources:** it was observed that UNEP had developed a comparative advantage in this area and is expected to continue to engage with national, regional and global partners on all matters concerning coastal and marine interests of SIDS;
  - **Disaster management:** an increased role was seen for the international community in terms of providing tangible assistance to SIDS to develop comprehensive and integrated land use and water management strategies capable of alleviating the impact of natural hazards, establish reliable forecasting, early warning and notification systems linking island states within the same region, increase understanding through education and raising awareness among communities on disaster prevention and preparedness strategies, and incorporate indigenous knowledge and traditional coping strategies in prevention, preparedness and response to enhance

community self-reliance in dealing with disasters among others;

- **Waste management:** it was noted that all SIDS had adopted policies and strategies for addressing the waste management problem, however these have not been fully implemented. UNEP can facilitate implementation through pilot projects in partnership with SIDS institutions and other agencies to test and demonstrate the applicability of the guidelines;
- **Water resources management:** it was emphasized that continued improvement is fundamental and requires a co-coordinated effort across many sectors such as watershed management; strategies aimed at reducing deforestation rates; raising public awareness of wise water use and management and improvements in waste disposal, especially sewage

As aforementioned, the issue of vulnerability was first raised in the context of the Global Summit on the Sustainable Development of SIDS held in Barbados in 1994, and it was perceived that these countries were at a disadvantage in relation to other countries because of their greater economic,

environmental and social vulnerability. Therefore, SIDS, with the support of the UN, expressed the desire, in paragraphs 113 and 114 of the SIDS/POA, of having a vulnerability index integrating ecological fragility and economic vulnerability developed to reflect the status of their countries. UNEP has concentrated on providing support to the development of Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI) that is robust, operational and provides a relatively quick and inexpensive way of characterizing the vulnerability of natural systems. Despite the efforts in developing vulnerability indexes, at the present time there is no agreement on a simple, robust and widely accepted composite index that comprises the following:

1. An operational tool in helping SIDS to make the case differential treatment by the international development community and the WTO;
2. Basis for determining which countries are granted graduation from LDC status;
3. Assist in distinguishing vulnerability from poverty or economic backwardness.

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