



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME



*The Action Plan
for the Caribbean environment programme:
evaluation of its development and achievements*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN	2
ACHIEVEMENTS	4
DIFFICULTIES	6
- General	6
- Institutional Arrangements	7
- Financial Arrangements	9
TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	15
SUMMARY	16
ANNEX I Analysis of Activities Carried out in the Framework of the Action Plan	18
ANNEX II List of Focal Points of the Caribbean Environment Programme	38
ANNEX III Meetings Convened Within the Framework of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme	49
ANNEX IV Country Participants and/or Trainees in Workshops, Meetings or Seminars of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme	55
ANNEX V Technical Publications and Reports Developed Within the Framework of the Caribbean Environment Programme	64

	<u>Page</u>
List of Figures	
1. Attendance at Intergovernmental and Monitoring Committee Meetings of the Caribbean Environment Programme 1981-1987	7
2. Pledges and Payments to Caribbean Trust Fund 1982-1987 (As of 31 December 1987)	12
3. Distribution of Support from all Sources to Different Elements of the Action Plan 1976-1987	12
4. Appropriations for Programme Implementation from Caribbean Trust Fund 1983-1987	14

List of Tables	
1. Status of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region (As of 31 December 1988)	8
2. Status of Pledges and Received Contributions to the Caribbean Trust Fund in US\$ (As of 31 December 1987)	11
3. Commitments and Expenditures from Different Sources to Support the Development and Implementation of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme (1975-1989) (As of 6 November 1989)	13
4. Appropriations of CTF Resources by Intergovernmental and Monitoring Committee Meetings	14

**THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME:
EVALUATION OF ITS DEVELOPMENT AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

INTRODUCTION

1. The development of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme was initiated in 1974, at the request of several Caribbean governments, by Decision 8(II) of the Second Session of the Governing Council of UNEP (UNEP/GC/2/6, Annex I, Section A4).

2. The geographic coverage of the Caribbean Environment Programme comprises all of the insular and coastal States and territories of the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico and their adjacent waters, from the U.S. Gulf coast states and the islands of the Bahamian chain, south to the French Department of Guiana.

3. Its development was requested since it was recognized that a regional co-operative approach was most suitable to address the growing concern for conservation, protection and development of the marine and coastal resources of the region.

4. Six years after the adoption of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme in Montego Bay, April 1981, the Fourth Intergovernmental Meeting, held in Guadeloupe from 26 to 28 October 1987, decided that an in-depth evaluation should be initiated, to assess the achievements and shortcomings of the Action Plan since its inception, and to provide the basis for the formulation of a comprehensive long-term strategy for its future development.

5. The present document constitutes an in-depth evaluation of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme. It covers the preparatory activities initiated in 1976 leading to its adoption in April 1981, and its implementation until the end of 1987.

6. In evaluating the Caribbean Action Plan, the following issues have been examined:

- (a) the influence of the Action Plan on the development and implementation of policies for the protection, conservation and development of marine resources, at national and regional levels;
- (b) the extent to which the Action Plan has favoured, directly and indirectly, a heightened awareness of the environment-development issues in both decision-makers and the general public;
- (c) the role the Action Plan has played in fostering co-operation between participating countries to develop and strengthen national environmental management capabilities;
- (d) the importance of the Action Plan in triggering the adoption by national institutions of harmonized methodologies for assessing pollution and other environmental problems; and
- (e) the level of success of the Action Plan in stimulating public interest in, and awareness of environmental matters as well as the development of training programmes in the region on matters related to environmental management and protection.

7. The accomplishments of the Caribbean Action Plan were looked at in light of the above issues, focusing on the level of success that has been achieved in the attainment of the principal objectives of the Plan, that is, "to assist the Governments of the Wider Caribbean Region in minimizing environmental problems through assessment and environmental management and to strengthen co-operation in environmental matters..." (UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 26).

8. The following specific criteria were used to ascertain the achievements of the Action Plan:
- the mobilization of financial and manpower resources of nations in the region for the support of the Action Plan;
 - the enactment, implementation and enforcement of national and international legislation and policies on environment, prompted directly or indirectly by the Action Plan;
 - the level of participation of national institutions in the development and implementation of the Action Plan;
 - the nature, magnitude and quality of training provided through the Action Plan;
 - the efficiency of technical meetings held in the framework of the Action Plan to improve exchange of scientific data and promote co-ordinated management strategies;
 - the level of participation by regional and international organizations, measured by the degree of substantive and financial support provided for the implementation of regional co-operative environmental actions within the framework of the Action Plan;
 - the level of community participation in the decision-making process with respect to resource exploitation and conservation; and
 - the amount and quality of scientific data as well as the information and educational materials generated by the Action Plan.

9. This evaluation has been prepared by the Secretariat of the Action Plan (UNEP) on the basis of information available in files supplied throughout the years by the collaborating national and international institutions.

10. The preparation of the evaluation has been co-ordinated by the Oceans and Coastal Areas Programme Activity Centre (OCA/PAC) of UNEP, with the generous assistance of UNEP's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC), and essential input of its staff (Mr. Arsenio Rodríguez), which is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

11. The development of the Action Plan was initiated by a preparatory activity, undertaken by a Project Co-ordinator, operating from UNEP's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Mexico City from April 1976 to March 1977 (CEP-1) (*).

12. In December 1976, shortly after the initiation of the preparatory activity, UNEP, FAO and IOC, co-sponsored an International Workshop on Marine Pollution in the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, to assess marine pollution problems in the region (CEP-2).

13. In February 1977, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reached an agreement with UNEP to carry out a joint project to develop an Action Programme for Sound Environmental Management in the Wider Caribbean (CEP-3).

(*) The references in parentheses relate to the projects listed in Annex I entitled "Analysis of activities carried out in the framework of the Action Plan".

14. In April of that same year a project office was established by ECLAC in Port of Spain, Trinidad.
15. Between August 1977 to July 1978, ample consultations were undertaken with governmental and non-governmental institutions to assess the environmental management priorities of the region.
16. The results of the consultations as well as the review of a preliminary programme of priorities were reviewed in August 1978 by an advisory panel of high level regional experts.
17. Sectoral technical overviews assessing the environmental problems of the Caribbean were prepared from November 1978 to July 1979 by the ECLAC/UNEP Project Unit in collaboration with FAO, UNIDO, WHO/PAHO, UN/DIESA, IUCN, IOC, IMO and OAS.
18. A synthesis of the overviews, including elements for an Action Plan was prepared by UNEP(RS/PAC) in July 1979 and was reviewed by the Advisory Panel in November 1979.
19. The draft Action Plan was reviewed by two meetings of Government-nominated experts, held in Caracas (January 1980) and Managua (February 1981) prior to its adoption by the First Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme which was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in April 1981. The meeting identified a programme of priorities for the implementation of the Action Plan, established a Trust Fund to help support its activities, and decided that a regional legal agreement should be developed.
20. The ECLAC Project Unit in Port of Spain was closed in June 1981 and UNEP, through RS/PAC, assumed total responsibility as Secretariat of the Action Plan.
21. The draft regional legal agreements were prepared by RS/PAC, in consultation with Governments of the region, and reviewed by meetings of Government-nominated legal experts in New York (December 1981 and July 1982).
22. The First Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Action Plan took place in New York, in December 1981. The meeting authorized the implementation, in co-operation with CCA, IMO, CARICOM and WHO/PAHO, of selected priority projects on: environmental education; oil spill contingency planning; and environmental health (CEP-7, 8 and 9). The projects, initiated in mid-1982, were undertaken within the context of the Action Plan and were supported by UNEP's Environment Fund, and counterpart contributions from agencies and government sources (at this time the CTF was not yet operational).
23. The Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region was held in Cartagena, 21-24 March 1983. Thirteen governments subscribed to the following agreements: (i) the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region; and (ii) the Protocol concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region. It is to be noted that the European Economic Community has only ratified the Convention and not the Protocol. In addition, the conference adopted resolutions on the relationship between the Convention, Protocol and Action Plan and on the need to elaborate additional protocols on pollution from land-based sources and specially protected areas and wildlife. Additionally, on this occasion, the Second Meeting of the Monitoring Committee and the Second Intergovernmental Meeting were held from 18-19 March and 24-26 March 1983, respectively.
24. The Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) became operational in September 1983 when it reached the minimum level of US\$ 250,000 prescribed by its terms of reference, and as a result of this, the Third Meeting of the Monitoring Committee on the Caribbean Action Plan which was held in Havana, Cuba in November 1983, allocated US\$ 636,000 from the CTF for the immediate implementation of projects on oil spill contingency, coastal pollution monitoring, environment and tourism, training and development of impact assessment methodologies (CEP-6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16).

25. In April 1985, the Third Intergovernmental Meeting on the Caribbean Action Plan held in Cancún, Mexico, allocated US\$ 627,600 for the immediate implementation of projects, and US\$ 170,000 for co-ordination activities including the establishment of the Regional Co-ordinating Unit (RCU)(CEP-GEN, CEP-7, 15, 18, 23 and 24). It also approved a priority list of projects to be implemented as funds became available. Of these, CEP-19, CEP-20, CEP-21 and CEP-22 have already been initiated. Additionally, the Fourth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee held on this occasion studied various alternatives for the establishment of the Regional Co-ordinating Unit (RCU).

26. The RCU became operational on 1 September 1986 in Kingston and formally inaugurated on 11 May 1987 by the Prime Minister of Jamaica and the Executive Director of UNEP. On this occasion, the Fifth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee was held and provided the Secretariat with guidance on the financial, institutional, legal and organizational aspects relevant to the future implementation of the Action Plan and the Cartagena Convention.

27. The Cartagena Convention and its associated Protocol entered into force on 11 October 1986 with 9 countries ratifying these instruments (Barbados, France, Mexico, Netherlands, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America and Venezuela). Subsequently, Antigua and Barbuda, Colombia, Cuba, Grenada, Jamaica and Panama ratified and/or acceded to these instruments.

28. The First Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention was held in Guadeloupe, France from 26 to 28 October 1987, together with the Fourth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme. The Fourth Intergovernmental Meeting decided inter alia: that the implementation of the Action Plan should concentrate "on activities of regional relevance addressing the common problems of the Caribbean region"; and requested an in-depth evaluation of the Action Plan and a reassessment of the region's environmental problems in order that a comprehensive long-term strategy for the future development of the Plan be formulated. The Meeting also approved activities for up to US\$ 2,103,300 to be implemented in four wide subject areas, during the 1988-1989 biennium: co-ordination, information and institutional development; environmental management of coastal and marine resources; assessment and control of marine pollution; and environmental training, education and public awareness. Prior to the Fourth Intergovernmental Meeting, the Sixth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee was held in Guadeloupe, France from 21-23 October 1987.

29. The Meeting of Experts on the Caribbean Environment Programme which was held in Mexico City, 7-9 September 1988, was convened with the following objectives: (a) to review and revise as appropriate, the draft "Regional Overview of Environmental Problems and Priorities Affecting the Coastal and Marine Resources of the Wider Caribbean" (UNEP(OCA)/CAR WG.1/3); (b) to review and comment on the draft "Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme: Evaluation of its Development and Achievements" (UNEP(OCA)/CAR WG.1/4); and (c) to propose concrete region-wide programmes which may constitute parts of a comprehensive long-term strategy for the future development of the Caribbean Environment Programme.

30. The meeting recommended that the Regional Co-ordinating Unit undertakes the finalization of document UNEP(OCA)/CAR WG.1/4 incorporating the necessary modifications in order for the document to become a major fundraising instrument for the Programme. This recommendation was adopted by the Seventh Meeting of the Monitoring Committee on the Action Plan and Special Meeting of the Bureau of Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Caribbean Environment Programme (Mexico City, 12-14 September 1988).

ACHIEVEMENTS

31. One of the most significant accomplishments of the Caribbean Environment Programme has been the creation of a framework for dialogue and co-operation on sustainable development, management and protection of the resources of the region, in spite of the striking political, cultural and socio-economic diversity that characterizes the Wider Caribbean region.

32. The adoption and ratification by a wide range of Parties, in spite of prevailing regional conflicts, of two regional legal agreements for the protection of marine resources, is an unprecedented event which vouches for the usefulness of this framework.

33. The Action Plan brought together, both in the preparatory and implementation phases, a considerable number of high level Government officials responsible for formulating and implementing policies on environment and on natural resource management.

34. During the development and implementation phases of the Action Plan, numerous national and technical focal points have become actively involved in the identification of the region's environmental priorities (see Annex II). Additionally, numerous intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations have contributed to the Action Plan's development. This concerted pioneering effort to analyze the environment of the region, constituted a very successful exercise of international co-operation that led to the formulation of the management strategies which are the basis of the Action Plan. Furthermore, it yielded important information on the state of the environment of the region.

35. By the end of 1987, twenty-four specific projects stemming directly from the Action Plan had been completed or were in progress. These have already generated significant results in terms of: baseline studies; directories; management guidelines; educational materials; training of scientific and technical personnel; and institutional build-up (see Annex I).

36. The Action Plan has been quite successful in launching wide reaching media campaigns, publishing educational materials and promoting national educational and public awareness programmes in several countries of the region (see analysis of CEP-9 in Annex I). However, it is difficult to quantify the impact of these activities in heightening public awareness of environmental issues.

37. The Caribbean Action Plan has been influential in promoting scientific and technical exchange among the national institutions of the region. In several instances, this has resulted in the adoption of common methodological approaches, for monitoring and managing environmental problems in the region. Relevant examples of the application of this approach relates to the monitoring of marine pollution and procedures for combating oil spills.

38. Approximately 600 scientific and technical personnel have been trained in various aspects of monitoring and managing environmental problems (see Annex IV). The training provided through the Action Plan has been a significant contributory factor in strengthening the capabilities of participating national institutions.

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