

2002 WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REPORT

Barbados, 18-20 June 2001

I. Background

At its Millennium Session in 2000, the United Nations General Assembly agreed to undertake a ten-year review of progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or Rio Earth Summit. This review will take place at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa in 2002 - the Johannesburg Summit. However, an important challenge is to ensure that the outcome of the Summit is not limited to a review but leads to new visions, commitments, partnerships and plans for practical implementation to make sustainable development a greater reality at all levels.

As a unique and major feature of the preparations for the Summit, it was agreed that the main issues for the Summit would arise from participatory national and regional assessments and discussions drawing from all segments of society and regions of the world.

The global inter-governmental process, which will involve three preparatory meetings to be held in the first half of 2002, will benefit from Regional Inter-governmental Preparatory meetings ("prepcoms") to be held in all regions in the second half of 2001. In order to support this process and to take advantage of the views of experts, the United Nations is convening independent Regional Roundtables of eminent persons and leaders of civil society in the five regions of the world.

The Latin America and the Caribbean Eminent Persons Regional Roundtable was held in Barbados from 18 to 20 June

2001. This report attempts to capture the key concerns expressed and proposals for action made by the participants.

The participants attended in their personal capacities and provided their perspectives on major accomplishments and major lessons learned since Rio in 1992, on the major constraints to sustainable development, on new challenges and opportunities for the future, and on strengthening the institutional frameworks for sustainable development, both within Latin America and the Caribbean and globally.

The report is intended to help in the preparatory process leading up to the Summit with new ideas, based on the participants' practical experience and interest in sustainable development, to develop a platform which outlines key policy issues, priorities and follow up actions for the region as well as at the global level.

This report will be forwarded to all of the regional and sub-regional prepcoms. It will also be made available to the global preparatory meetings.

Furthermore, the Roundtable report will be posted on the Johannesburg Summit web site.

The Latin America and the Caribbean Roundtable was organised by the Secretariat of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in collaboration with the Government of Barbados. The Roundtable was chaired by Sir Alister McIntyre. A full list of participants is attached as an Annex to this report.

At the opening of the Roundtable, introductory statements were made by Sen. The Hon. Tyrone Barker, Acting Minister for the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources, Ms. JoAnne DiSano, Director, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations; and by Sir Alister McIntyre, the Chairman.

This report represents the thrust of the general discussion. It would be surprising if, in a diverse group such as this, there were not differences in views and emphasis among individual members. Participants however did subscribe to the overall content of the report.

II. The major challenges and opportunities for sustainable development in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

The Latin America and the Caribbean region is one of the most diverse regions in the world, both in terms of ethnicity, cultures and biodiversity. The region has the highest level of biodiversity in the world, however these global resources are under serious pressure. Each year 6 million hectares of tropical forest are lost. Coastal and marine ecosystems, including coral reefs in the Caribbean are under threat from tourism and pollution. Climate change is likely to be the most serious of all threats to the natural environment of the region. Demographic trends have led to the growth of large urban areas. The region has two of the largest mega-cities in the world, Mexico City and Sao Paulo.

Along with the exploitation of natural resources there has been long term destruction and exploitation of the original inhabitants of Latin America and the Caribbean. Since European landing in the Hemisphere in 1492, indigenous people have been continuously marginalised and impoverished.

The overriding and burning issues for the region, however are the high levels of poverty and income inequality between the developed and developing countries and within countries of the region. From 1990 to 1999, absolute poverty in the region increased from 200 million to 225 million people. The ratio of the highest 20 per cent of household incomes to the lowest 20 per cent is twenty fold, making the region the world leader in income inequality.

The increasing impacts of globalisation that have occurred since Rio have brought benefits to some countries in the region but there is widespread concern about the costs that have arisen. In many cases globalisation has meant a widening and deepening of the exploitation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, often in a non-sustainable way. This developmental pattern has introduced new pressures on the environment and on particular population groups that are not being adequately addressed. In particular, mining and oil activities have often caused the destruction or degradation of valuable ecosystems that have not taken properly into account the rights of indigenous people. The net long term impact of globalisation in the region as a whole will be adverse

unless managed within a framework of sustainable development. There is a need for the region to make a transition from a resource intensive economy to an industrial and service-based economy with a higher value added content and economy that expands employment opportunities.

Since Rio, there has been a deepening of the understanding of sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on the social, cultural and economic aspects. Nevertheless, the high expectations of Rio have not been realised, either globally or within the region. This is primarily because effective operationalisation of sustainable development has been limited.

In this context therefore, the Roundtable reaffirmed the critical and fundamental importance of sustainable development not only for the region and the world, but for the future of humanity. There is no other way but sustainable development; economic development, social development and environment protection must be undertaken in a mutually reinforcing way. The Johannesburg Summit must be a rallying cry to re-invigorate the vision of sustainable development and lead to more determined efforts globally, regionally, nationally and locally for its achievement. Sustainable development must become a central tenet of international and government policy and of the behaviour of the private sector, civil society and individuals.

The achievement of sustainable development in the region needs cohesive, coherent and long term national and regional policies that are aimed at fostering a higher quality of life in all of its aspects and at increasing opportunities, as well as providing for human rights, freedom for individuals and communities as well as for societies at large.

National strategies and policies that support sustainable development need to be internally consistent from a technical viewpoint, with sufficient political consensus to be maintained over time on the basis of concrete results and full inclusion of all members of society.

The strategies and policies may vary over time, due to political changes and shifts in emphasis, to be expected in a democratic society, but the consensus on fundamentals needs to be strong enough to make development over time sustainable.

The necessary national and regional policies require a supportive and conducive international environment.

Within the region, sustainable development must involve sufficient and more equitably shared economic growth; social and human development; environmental protection and resource renewal; participatory and stable democratic governance; viable, effective and transparent institutions, and a cultural environment that respects moral and spiritual values as well as cultural cohesiveness and diversity.

The achievement of sustainable development regionally and globally will require the absence of war and civil strife which in turn will require the enhancement of national, regional and global capacities to negotiate and reconcile differences.

In order to achieve sustainable development in the region, participants believed that the following priorities need to be addressed:

Eradication of all forms of poverty;

Robust and sustained economic growth;

Conservation and sustainable utilisation of the region's wealth in biological diversity;

Political and institutional reforms to deepen democracy and freedom, as a means of forging a better organised and empowered civil society, that vigorously advocates the improvement of the quality of life;

Greater political will of governments and stronger administrative infrastructure to implement public policies of sustainable development; and

Attainment, through international co-operation and solidarity as well as national and regional efforts, of mechanisms (for example international laws), technical and financial assistance to support the development of strategies for sustainable development. These priorities could be pursued taking into account the considerations dealt with below.

Economic factors

Magnitude and quality of growth

Robust economic growth is fundamental for the region. However, participants emphasised that the quality of growth has to improve significantly in order to ensure a sustainable long-term future. In order to improve the quality of growth, participants felt that economic growth had to address social equity, ecological sustainability and advances in human rights.

Employment has become more precarious since Rio. Redundancies and unemployment have increased and there has been unprecedented growth in the region's informal sector.

Gross domestic product (GDP) continues to be used as a measure of well being. Work is going on to develop new ways of measuring growth to reflect social and environmental costs. For example, many countries are already attempting to develop and apply green accounting and sustainability indices.

Globalisation and trade liberalisation

Although globalisation can bring benefits, it is resulting in uneven and inequitable consequences between and within countries. Its effects need to be properly evaluated and global arrangements should address ways and means of compensating for some of its unintended effects.

Notwithstanding the growth that has occurred in world trade, the continued existence of barriers in developed countries constitutes a brake on the export growth of developing countries.

It will be of great importance in the furtherance of sustainable development to address the linkages between trade, environment and core labour standards. At the same time, participants recognised that these linkages should not be used as a protectionist tool.

This Roundtable acknowledged the complexity of current negotiations regarding the relationship between trade and environmental agreements, but expressed its concern about continued resource degradation and human exposure to harmful substances under current trade regimes.

There is also a need for developed countries to increase and stabilise financial flows. In particular, it was noted that the region suffered directly and indirectly from externally generated economic and financial shocks.

Performance of macro- and micro-economies

There have been significant gains in macroeconomic stability, underpinned by increases in export earnings and growth in domestic savings and investment. This macroeconomic stability should be maintained. At the same time, microeconomic policy changes are still lagging. Bureaucratic inefficiencies persist and there is a disturbing incidence of corruption. The support for small and micro-enterprises should be increased. This includes institutional issues, such as protection and extension of property rights with special focus on women and indigenous peoples. Investment in both social and physical infrastructure remains insufficient.

Development and transfer of technology and management systems

Rapid development of information technology in recent years has brought renewed urgency in increasing the international competitiveness of the region. This could well lead to additional gaps between developed and developing countries. There is also a concern about creating technological illiteracy, causing a digital divide within countries. Training of both youth and adults and relevant education are urgently indicated.

The focus on technology should not just be on its development but also on recovering certain traditional technologies in which this region has great experience. An example is the production of coffee through agro-forestry methods that have been passed from traditional methods to modern farmers which result in significantly greater yield than that produced with green revolution technologies. There is a need to rescue traditional technologies that are in danger of being lost.

Scientific research and development need to be increased, especially with respect to agricultural technology. National science and technology policies warrant further development. The tendency in recent years has been for this research to be carried out by large multinational corporations. Increased publicly-funded

research is needed, particularly to address the needs of small- and medium-sized farmers. Similarly, ODA for research and development should be increased.

Clean technologies exist commercially, but their transfer to areas of greatest need should be accelerated. Participants reiterated the need for favourable access to, and transfer of, such technologies.

Eco-efficiency is one means to promote sustainable business practices. Although large companies may have the capacity to implement it themselves, there is a need to encourage and support the effort of small and micro-enterprises in this regard. It would also be desirable for eco-efficiency to be undertaken by governments, for example, in the area of social infrastructure, such as the health sector, including hospitals and sewerage system.

The development of environmental management systems as voluntary mechanisms is spreading with more than 500 such systems having been developed in Latin America since Rio.

Economic instruments

Economic instruments should include the creation of markets that ensure sustainability. Clear incentive mechanisms should be developed for activities that contribute to sustainable development. Similarly, disincentives should be applied for unsustainable activities, including the elimination of subsidies.

Innovative financing and debt

Mobilising capital from nationals resident abroad can be an important source of financial resources for sustainable development. There are now some experiences of this possibility, examples being in India, the Philippines and Dominican Republic.

External debt levels and balances of payments have improved in some countries, but the situation in the region remains discouraging. Debt still constitutes a heavy burden on countries' in their pursuit of economic growth and sustainable development. The issue of debt relief, including possibilities for cancellation, deserves further consideration.

Some highly indebted countries in the region have successfully carried out debt swaps, thereby saving substantial sums in interest payments. These examples could be applied by other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

It was noted that the World Business Council for Sustainable Development has developed indicators for international companies, quoted on major markets. A second stage will involve indicators for emerging markets. These should be available by the end of this year.

Participants noted that the 'Tobin tax' continues to be discussed and deserves further consideration.

The region is particularly vulnerable to increasingly frequent and often severe socio-environmental disasters, linked to the effects of climate change and global warming, such as hurricanes, floods and forest fires.

This is illustrated by the high and recurrent incidence of hurricanes, earthquakes and storms in small countries in the Caribbean and the effects of "El Nino" and "La Nina" phenomena in many Latin American countries. Countries in the region that are heavily dependent on agriculture are particularly susceptible to plant and animal disease, the negative consequences of pesticide use, and genetic contamination of endemic species, indigenous cultures and biodiversity caused by the introduction of transgenic crops. Effective policies on biosafety are, thus, urgently required and there is a strong case for instituting insurance funds to cover losses from socio-environmental disasters.

Valuation of biological diversity and environmental services

Value should be placed on biodiversity and environmental services, particularly in territories where indigenous people live, respecting the evaluation by indigenous people themselves. There is also a need to respect and protect traditional knowledge with respect to the management of biological diversity and its use, including the use of natural medicine. The financial resources thus generated could contribute to promoting sustainable development and reducing poverty. These actions should involve effective participation by indigenous people.

Intra-regional co-operation

Sustainable development in the Caribbean, Central and Latin America depends on deepening inter-relationships among these three areas. It is important to stress that sustainable development for this region is dependent upon closer integration, regionalism and a working together rather than believing that each country can achieve sustainable development on its own.

Special circumstances of small states

The special circumstances of the small states remain an important consideration for the region. Smallness of territory, narrow resource base, limited scope for social planning; vulnerability to exogenous economic and environmental events, are among the impediments to their achieving sustainable development in the context of globalisation.

For these reasons, the special needs and vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) need to be recognised and addressed.

Sectoral issues

The participants noted the importance of properly assessing the interrelated impacts of major sectoral activities on each other in the context of sustainable development. Agriculture, mining, energy, tourism and transport were considered particularly important. Concern was expressed at continued soil degradation and loss of biodiversity caused by agriculture and mining activities. The importance of developing renewable energy sources and promoting their widespread use was also underscored.

The importance of promoting programmes for energy efficiency and incorporating these in the policies of major energy consuming sectors was highlighted. Participants also underscored the contribution that increased use of renewable energy and sustainable use of traditional energy resources would make to meeting the growing need for energy services and to achieving sustainable development.

Tourism is a sector which in some countries dominates the whole economy, accounting in most Caribbean countries for the

largest proportion of foreign exchange earnings and employment. The sector also employs high proportions of women and young people. Unless carefully developed, tourism has the potential to cause substantial social, cultural and environmental damage. New and helpful developments involve attention to community concerns about such issues as land use, direct benefits and consultation of local communities about development plans. The situation of indigenous people deserves special attention. Creating sustainable tourism for the region involves addressing, *inter alia*, the establishment of appropriate regulatory frameworks and enforcement of national and regional standards, creation of innovative financial instruments and human resource development.

Furthermore, the region offers excellent opportunities for sustainable development through eco-tourism. Full advantage should be taken of this potential. It can contribute significantly to increasing income and employment creation.

Challenges

There is an urgent need to build on recent achievements of macroeconomic stability in the region. Participants recognised that trade and investment are important engines of growth. Macroeconomic policies must ensure the creation of decent work as well as more and better jobs. Gains in productivity and competitiveness are needed to increase growth rates and improve internal and external balances. The adoption of technologies and associated training should be stimulated. Transaction costs need to be reduced, especially those from bureaucratic procedures.

Encouragement and support should be given to the development of small and micro-enterprises. They should be endowed with flexibility to make them adaptable to change and new opportunities. Land reform and democratisation of property are also urgent matters to be addressed.

Social factors, human development and cultural issues

Overriding priorities for the region are to overcome poverty, racism, social and cultural exclusion and marginalisation. High rates of demographic growth continue to constitute a problem for the sustainable development of some countries in the region. These countries must make better efforts towards implementing

appropriate demographic policies. Participants felt there was currently insufficient focus on human development in the region. Half of the population is less than twenty years of age. This presents major challenges and opportunities. It will be critical for the region's future to channel sufficient resources to ensure adequate physical, nutritional and educational development of this generation, to shape talent and enhance career development. Participants stressed their concern at the low quality of education that was generally to be found in Latin America and the Caribbean in comparison with some other regions of the world. The investment in education of sufficient quality should have the highest priority in the allocation of public resources and there should be incentives to stimulate private investment in the sector. Life long learning should be a way of life. Inefficiencies in spending on educational investment need also to be addressed.

An understanding of sustainable development issues should be an important part of education and information programmes and an integral component of the curriculum at all stages of life, from early childhood to tertiary and adult education. Educational programmes should incorporate values related to personal growth, social solidarity and respect for the natural environment, with special reference to indigenous people.

A holistic approach to educational reform should also include improvements to teacher training. Reform at the tertiary level is needed for the new training of teachers and increases in teachers' compensation should be introduced. Illiteracy must be eradicated; the lack of skills in information and communication technology also requires immediate attention.

There are concerns that people, especially young people, are being drawn by global commercial television towards unsustainable lifestyles. Mass media should be used instead as an educational tool for teaching about a sustainable and consistent lifestyle.

Programmes for sustainable development education need to incorporate the objective of having a more conscious and motivated society that would advocate the improvement of the quality of life throughout sustainability. It is important, in this respect, to strengthen existing regional programmes of environmental education, intensify international co-operation and maximise the oppor-

tunities offered by the telecommunication and information technologies revolution. There must be full respect for human rights, and among them the freedom of association and other core labour standards. All people need access to such basic resources and services as energy, food, water, sanitation, the provision of healthcare and transportation. Each country needs to establish a social safety net for all as a basic human right. The concept of mentor schemes - Dominica is an example of such - where mature business people partner young people to help them look for and create jobs, should be developed and extended across the region.

Participants recognised the important contribution that the indigenous peoples of the region make through concepts and strategies for sustainable development that are based on their culture of sustainability, environmental awareness, spirituality, and self-management of their resources. The level of recognition of indigenous rights and culture and their role in decision making is increasing, but further advances are urgently required. There is a continued need to recognise collective rights.

Diverse economic and social instruments are needed to address the particular gender issues in the region. For example, Central America and the Caribbean have the largest number of female-headed households in the world. High levels of domestic violence and health issues (such as HIV/AIDS and cancer) affect women disproportionately. A positive factor has been the significant percentage of women enrolled, and graduating, in higher education.

Corporate social responsibility is becoming increasingly important. Councils for Sustainable Development for business and trade unions have developed guidelines that help companies to incorporate social and environmental issues in their activities. These guidelines should be widely disseminated and businesses should be encouraged to adopt them. Growing education of consumers could help exert pressure on companies to abide by sustainable development principles.

In a region that is multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual, there must be equity and equality of opportunity among all groups and in all areas, such as employment and access to social services. It is important to retain high quality people in employment within the region, with particular emphasis on opportunities for

women, indigenous people and other people who have been marginalised.

Natural resources and biodiversity

Latin America and the Caribbean is a region of vital importance for the global community in terms of natural resources. It is a region rich in mineral, water and marine and coastal resources. The region is the richest in biological resources on the planet with respect to its fauna, flora and micro-biota. It has a wide variety of ecosystems of particular importance: terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine, including coral reefs. In its territory are located the largest and richest natural forest ecosystems of the tropics. It is also the richest region in terms of genetic resources, some of them of global importance for food security and human health.

It is a region where important progress has been achieved in the declaration of part of its territory and territorial waters as nature reserves of different types. Since Rio, the region has made significant progress in ratifying and implementing the main multilateral environmental agreements. Despite the increasing destruction and deterioration of natural resources, Latin America and the Caribbean have a very rich endowment of natural ecosystems in sharp contrast to most developed countries where the natural systems are deeply altered, their natural forest ecosystems are sparse and their marine resources have been depleted. Because of this situation, the region has a special responsibility to play a leading international role to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources for the well being and survival of the planet.

Challenges

Natural resources and environmental management measures have improved in most countries of the region. However, efforts to avoid environmental degradation and halt deforestation, soil degradation and loss of biodiversity need to be intensified.

Issues of global warming and climate change and their effects on sustainable development are of vital importance to countries in the region and should be tackled urgently.

The use of economic instruments appropriate to the region that promote greater environmental responsibility and accountability in the utilisation of natural resources should be encouraged.

There is a need for research in all aspects of natural resources, particularly with respect to agricultural resources for enhancing food security in the region. Sharing examples of good practices in natural resources utilisation should be central.

Indigenous peoples are historically linked to the stewardship of the genetic resources of plant and domesticated native animal species and to the preservation of traditional knowledge associated with the uses and properties of many species in their natural ecosystems. There is, therefore, a need to recognise that this knowledge is part of the scientific and technological patrimony of the countries in the region. Its wider use is of importance to the local and global community in the protection and sustainable utilisation of natural resources, and also in the provision of other environmental services.

Strategies and policies for sustainable development of tourism, energy and marine resources and protection of coastal environment need to be strengthened. The international community should support in all possible ways these priorities, with the goal of conserving resources that neither the region nor humanity can do without.

Governance, institutions and international co-operation

A fundamental requirement for achieving sustainable development in the region is the need for effective governance, adequate institutions and a supportive international environment. Significant improvements are required in each of these areas in order to meet fundamental challenges of sustainable development. Governments must become more accountable for their performance in implementing sustainable development policies. On-going reform efforts are required to give greater rights to civil society through such policies as equitable access to justice and legislative action to support public participation. In the period since Rio, major efforts have been made in the region to deepen and strengthen democratic, transparent and inclusive institutional arrangements. Paradoxically, these efforts have been paralleled by a weakening in the capacity of the state to deliver public goods and services. Governmental budget cuts have had a disproportionately adverse effect on the many new environmental agencies established in the region since Rio. Continued efforts will be required to establish and strengthen democratic systems of governance, including improvements in par-

ticipation of civil society, which meet the particular needs of the people and countries of the region. Efforts to increase democratisation should particularly be addressed by the elimination of all forms of racism.

There has been a shift in emphasis away from state productive activity towards enhancing public goods, increasing social and human development, improving security and justice, and securing more stable institutions.

Trafficking in narcotics, corruption, youth unemployment, child labour, crime and drug dependency are increasingly worrying phenomena in Latin America and the Caribbean, as they are in other parts of the world. It is generally believed that only through equitable economic growth and increased democratisation will these problems become more controllable. However, strengthening open and transparent systems of justice and increased capacity of related agencies could assist in reversing these trends.

One of the adverse effects of globalisation for the region is the increased opportunity for expansion of international trade in narcotics, which has a significant effect on some countries' efforts to achieve sustainable development. It poses one of the major threats to society and the natural environment in the region. Both the demand and supply sides of this informal sector need to be tackled, both by countries in the region and by the developed countries that account for much of the consumer market. Governments should intensify efforts to combat the consumption of illicit drugs that are particularly harmful to youth at the national and international levels.

The establishment and strengthening of property rights systems and arrangements for the protection of indigenous and traditional land rights and knowledge, including through legislative mechanisms, will contribute significantly to economic development and a more equitable society in the region.

Public sector capacity needs to be enhanced in various ways in many countries of the region. There has been a decline in the notion of civil service excellence in many government systems. Better training programmes and more attractive compensation packages and deliberate programmes to attract the best and brightest entrants with special attention to attracting under-repre-

sented groups such as women, people with disabilities and indigenous persons are required.

Public agencies will in many cases act more responsibly and effectively if, with appropriate safeguards, they can be granted greater autonomy and separation from the executive arm of government. The establishment of statutory authorities in several countries in recent years are illustrative of this.

Public sector reform will not support sustainable development unless there are also political and constitutional reforms. One of the critical constraints to sustainable development in the region is the absence of political will, understanding of, or interest in, making sustainable development a central policy of the state. Similarly, there is a lack of political will and government capacity in the implementation of agreed policies. Allied with the normal short-term electoral process, which results in a lack of consistent and coherent policy making and implementation, political constraints are a key impediment to sustainable development in the region.

More inclusive and full participation of civil society and the private sector in local and national decision making and policy formulation will increase political information on sustainable development issues, promote accountability and contribute to stability and continuity of policies on sustainable development through a wider consensus on priorities, strategy and policy.

Decentralisation of public decision making to the level where these decisions take effect can often promote sustainable development through greater understanding and ownership. Progress has been made in the region towards granting more autonomy and self-government to indigenous people and others, but more needs to be done in this regard.

A feature of sustainable development governance in Latin America and the Caribbean is that responsibility for promoting sustainable development rests primarily with Environment Ministers. Sustainable development should be a central thrust of government policy. Thus all Ministers should share responsibility for applying sustainable development policies in their countries, for implementing relevant aspects of the policies and for reporting on them. As successful implementation of sustainable development requires participation of all major elements of civil society e.g. business,

indigenous people, trade unions, religious bodies, women, small farmers, political parties and scientists, mechanisms to provide for their formal and effective involvement need to be established. A number of countries in the region have established national sustainable development councils. Other countries in the region should consider establishing these or similar representative bodies and/or other mechanisms, such as sectoral strategies and national mission statements of guiding principles and values, and implementing the resultant proposals for action.

International and regional co-operation

Capacity building and the reform of governance and public and private institutions in order to promote sustainable development in the region require a supportive international environment. The Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development provide examples of co-ordinated approaches. Many of the region's sustainable development priorities need to be addressed nationally. But an environment of coherent and consistent international co-operation, equity and regional actions, would make a very significant contribution to sustainable development in Latin American and the Caribbean.

The experience of international co-operation for development, as reflected in official development assistance, needs to be reviewed in light of the regrettable decline in the accepted international target for official development assistance in order to promote greater consistency with the goals of sustainable development. The region should strengthen and speed up integration schemes to better link the small market economies to the larger ones in the hemisphere, as well as among themselves. The capacity and effectiveness of a number of sub-regional arrangements to support sustainable development are in many cases very limited. Regional institutions often have difficulty in implementing agreed actions. The capacity of regional bodies should be enhanced.

Special problems such as corruption, trafficking in narcotics and international crime, will only be effectively addressed within the context of international co-operation. International agreements and programs to eliminate narcotics trafficking require strong support from the international community. There was also a call for the reduction of military expenses and international disarmament.

Concerns were expressed that developed countries had failed to deliver on their Agenda 21 commitments and/or had applied an inappropriate redefinition of Agenda 21 principles. The Participants also called on all countries which had not already done so to ratify the Rio Conference conventions as part of the agreed international sustainable development legal regime.

III. Challenges for Johannesburg

One of the main challenges is the need for significant changes in policies and behaviour, and the urgency of effecting them. It is imperative that the Johannesburg Summit re-energises the vision of sustainable development at all levels of government and society. It should reaffirm its confidence in practical, concrete partnerships between public sector, private sector and civil society. Heads of State and Governments must also reaffirm their commitment to the principles of good governance.

As previously mentioned, the term 'sustainable development' needs to return to its original significance: that economic development, social development and environmental protection are mutually reinforcing components. The Summit must result in better understanding and acceptance by individuals, civil society, business and governments of the multi-faceted character of the concept, which should include consideration of cultural and spirituality issues. It should recognise the common and differentiated responsibilities of all governments and social partners.

The Summit should underline the reality that the issues at stake relate basically to the security of life for human beings.

The Summit should result in agreement on strategies, policies and measures designed to address rigorously poverty reduction and equity. Economic growth should be seen as a means towards that end, not as the end in itself. The process should strengthen the regional approach. The coral reef initiative in the Caribbean area could serve as an example of the partnerships between countries that need to be taken to address issues of common concern. The outcome of the Johannesburg Summit should include a vision for sustainable development that encompasses universal human rights. Sustainable development should move from rhetoric to operative reality. Well-designed and time-bound commitments are needed to take the agenda forward, with strong

mechanisms of accountability, so that achievements against the commitments made are readily identifiable. There must be focussed goals with tangible, quantifiable action.

Issues related to sustainable development that have reached a new dimension of gravity since Rio, and that should therefore be addressed at the Summit, include HIV/AIDS, depletion of the ozone layer, climate change, biosafety and ethnic conflicts. Those attending the Summit should be invited to consider how new inter-ethnic and inter-cultural relations could be constructed. The Summit process needs to be transparent. Business and civil society will continue to be key actors with governments in taking forward the sustainable development agenda and it is crucial that they should be able to speak at Johannesburg. It will be important for young people to be involved in a meaningful way. Young people of diverse cultures and backgrounds should be represented in each of the major groups and delegations. They have a critical role because of their unique situation and perspective. They should be given the opportunity to influence current decision-makers, whose actions will directly impact on them. The new generation should join the recommitment for Agenda 21.

Participants recognised the need to harmonise international trade arrangements with sustainable development and to make them mutually supportive. For example, a vibrant agriculture sector is critical to the attainment of sustainable development. At the present time, the region's agricultural trade is being negatively affected by barriers and distortions that affect its ability to compete with agricultural products in other parts of the world.

These concerns should be urgently addressed in the World Trade Organisation agreement on agriculture. There is a need to reform and democratise international financial institutions. A new vision of financing for sustainable development should emerge from the Summit process.

Financing for sustainable development remains inadequate and the development banks should pay greater attention to addressing this inadequacy in all sectors and at all levels. The global financial architecture needs to be reformed, involving issues such as the role of international financial institutions, the mobilisation of financial resources for sustainable development and financing for mitigating natural disasters.

The world's leaders should be charged to reiterate their commitment to sustainable development and to a global culture of justice, which addresses inter alia the principles of social justice, the right to development and prior informed consent.

Sustainable tourism deserves a special place on the agenda, given its crucial importance to developing economies, especially small island states.

Village of Hope was established in Barbados at the 1994 global conference of Small Island Developing States, which offered exhibition capacity for the display and dissemination of best practice. Participants supported the idea that a Village of Hope should be established for South Africa in 2002 to provide an opportunity to share good practice and role models, thereby reinforcing and encouraging people working for sustainable development at all levels.



