

# The Regional Training Workshop on Methodologies for Coastal Inventories & Information Management

## Appendix IV

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### **Opening Address By The Acting Minister Of Health And The Environment, The Hon. Gline Clarke.**

**To The Cpacc Regional workshop On Methodologies For Coastal Resource And Use Inventories And Information Management, May 18,1998 At 8.30 A.M. At The Accra Beach Hotel.**

Mr. Master of Ceremonies, Project Manager, Dr. Trotz, Coastal Zone Specialist, Mr. Leslie Walling, Representatives of the Organization of American States, Participants, ladies and gentlemen:

I wish to begin by extending a warm welcome to all participants and a special welcome to our friends from other Caribbean islands on behalf of the Government and people of Barbados. Let me also assure you that we are very pleased that the organizers have taken the decision to convene this workshop in our island. Permit me also to reiterate my Government's continuing commitment and support for the project "Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change," familiarly known as CPACC.

As you are all aware, following the SIDS Conference here in Barbados in 1994, this important initiative emerged out of the concerns of CARICOM states about the potential threats of global climate change and sea level rise to the region's development. With the assistance of the Organization of American States, a project proposal was prepared and submitted to the Global Environment Facility for funding. At its Council Meeting in May 1995, the GEF approved a total of US\$ 6.5 million to implement a project, the objectives of which include:

- the strengthening of regional capabilities for analyzing climate and sea level dynamics to determine potential impacts of global climate change;
- the identification of different policy options and instruments for initiating a long-term programme of adaptation to global climate change in vulnerable coastal areas; and
- the enhancing of the institutional and human resource capabilities at the regional and national level.

The preparation of coastal resources and use inventories is a priority activity identified to assist in the achievement of these objectives. I am sure that you will therefore agree that this workshop is of great significance to the Caribbean, as our region is characterized by small islands and coastal states, whose economic and social development is heavily dependent on the exploitation of our coastal and marine resources. A coastal land-use inventory for practically any Caribbean state, will reveal a plethora of economic and social activities including, housing, fishing, industry and manufacturing, petroleum

exploration and extraction, tourism and recreation. In addition, nearly all of the region's vital ports (both air and sea) have taken advantage of the many locational assets to be found at or near the coast.

Against this background, the entire Caribbean family of nations must recognize its obligations and responsibilities in managing its precious coastal and marine assets, in a manner that would ensure *sustained yields* for generations to come. Unfortunately, we must be honest and admit that our past record of managing these resources has not always been outstanding. Coastal degradation, massive fish kills, coral reef damage, deteriorating water quality in some localities, are present reminders of our poor stewardship. Moreover, unsustainable practices such as the use of inappropriate harvesting methods, overfishing, harvesting of juveniles and endangered species, inappropriate allocation of coastal space and our frequent failure to be guided by sound oceanographic and coastal engineering advice, exacerbate an already serious regional problem.

Fortunately, all is not lost. As a region we still have an excellent opportunity to repair some of the damage and reverse those negative trends that are reversible. It is for these reasons that the Government of Barbados has demonstrated a strong commitment over the last fifteen years to play its part in the regional coastal restoration effort. Since 1983, the Government of Barbados, with the assistance of the Inter-American Development Bank, has spent more than US\$ 10 million on the implementation of a phased Integrated Coastal Zone Management Programme. Phase 3 of this programme - a study of the north, east and south-east coasts, is currently in progress at a cost of approximately US\$ 5 million, and is scheduled to be completed by the end of this calendar year or early 1999.

The Government regards coastal zone management as a *process*, not a project, and remains committed to keeping our programme on the right track, in our quest to make the island's marine and coastal resources more sustainable. Happily, I am pleased to report that our investment has already begun to yield significant, positive results, and the Coastal zone Management Unit which falls under my Ministry, must share a great deal of the acclamation for these achievements.

Mr. Master of Ceremonies, ladies and gentlemen, it is our belief that the programme we have embarked on here in Barbados will also benefit the wider region. We hope that by having a positive demonstration effect, and by sharing the experiences and expertise which we have built up over the years, a healthier Caribbean Sea and adjacent coasts will emerge. We need to remind ourselves that we share a common sea, and to that extent, all of its resources should be managed as communal assets. For example, most of our fish stocks can be classified as '*straddling*' or '*migratory*', moving freely out of the territorial waters of one country into those of another. Similarly, our coastlines, for the most part, are affected by the same oceanic currents, so that an oil or other toxic spill will not only impact on the island closest to the source, but will also threaten the resources of distant coasts. In other words, there are no real boundaries separating our shores, and like so many other regional matters, most of our coastal and marine resources management

issues are transboundary in nature. Hence, actions taken in one country will ultimately prove to be beneficial or negative in other parts of the region.

In light of the above considerations, the decision by CPACC to convene this meeting is timely, and the workshop's theme - "Methodologies for Coastal Resource and Use Inventories and Information Management" - is most appropriate. Clearly, we cannot manage our coastal resources efficiently if we do not have answers to questions such as: *'How much of the resource exists?'*; *'Where is the resource located?'*; *'What is the rate of natural replenishment of the resource?'*; *'What is the present rate of extraction or harvesting of the resource?'*; *'What is the ecological status and health of the resource?'*. The reality is that for much of the Caribbean, such basic but essential information is not readily available; and in some cases where data can be accessed, its quality and quantity are often inadequate for the design of effective resource management plans.

This state of affairs is no longer acceptable in our region. For we now have access to the tools and technology required to provide up-to-date, state-of-the-art, coastal resource inventories. The region's marine and coastal assets are too valuable to delay this important process further.

Perusal of your agenda suggests that careful thought has gone into the pre-workshop planning and I am heartened to note the overall objectives of the exercise, which are "To assist participating countries in the implementation of an inventory of coastal resources and uses," and "To develop consensus on a methodological approach for inventories in participating countries."

Permit me therefore, Mr. Master of Ceremonies, to express my strong endorsement of this workshop and to congratulate Dr. Neville Trotz and his staff at the CPACC Regional Project Implementation Unit, for mounting this important training effort with such an outstanding team of resource persons.

But let me also offer a brief note of caution to you, the participants. I am reliably advised that it is not the expectation of the organizers to graduate a class of 'coastal resource inventory experts' and Geographic Information Systems specialists' after a training session lasting only three days. You should regard this workshop as the commencement of a continuing process of capacity building in this sub-specialty of coastal science. Your training will only be complete when you become fully capable of generating quality technical information on all aspects of the coastal resources of your respective countries, which can reliably guide decision-making for sustainable development. I anticipate however, that by the end of the workshop you will be far more capable of evaluating and implementing current methodologies for undertaking coastal inventories, and will return home with some new, useful tools from which your countries will benefit. I am also hopeful that on your return, you will be sufficiently motivated that you would want to share some of what you have learned with your colleagues. In this way, you too will be playing an important role in the process of national and regional capacity building.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that we owe a debt of gratitude to CARICOM, the Organization of American States and the Global Environment Facility of the World Bank, for facilitating the regional project "Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change," under whose aegis this workshop is being convened. I am advised that it is the intention of the project's Regional Implementation Unit to organize other similar workshops over the next several months, in order to extend and consolidate this initial training. Coastal and marine resources are so vital to Caribbean economic and social development, that any effort to equip regional technocrats with improved tools for managing these assets, deserves our full support.

I therefore wish to extend to you my best wishes for a successful workshop, and hope that your brief stay here in Barbados will be a pleasant and enjoyable one.

Mr. Master of Ceremonies, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.