



# Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment

Nairobi, Kenya, 4 February 2003

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Provisional Agenda Item 4

CCGE(03)2

## **Commonwealth Support to the Review and International Meeting on Implementation of the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States**

### **Introduction**

1. Through the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, finalised in September 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, governments agreed to "undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 2004", with the 57th Session of the UN General Assembly to consider convening an international meeting in this regard. (As this paper goes to press, the UN General Assembly is scheduled to consider draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.64 on further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.)

2. This paper presents some preliminary ideas on a programme of work by the Commonwealth to support member states' involvement in the review and international meeting and invites the CCGE to provide further guidance. The Commonwealth's work to date in support of negotiations related to the Barbados Programme of Action is as follows:

#### *Barbados Conference, 1994*

3. The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados, 25 April-6 May, 1994) agreed a framework – the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) – to address the special challenges and constraints faced by small island developing states in their implementation of sustainable development. The Global Conference had its origins in Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, the action programme that had been adopted in Rio at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and recognises that small island developing states (SIDS) face special challenges in planning for sustainable development. Agreement on Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 was the result of effective work undertaken by small island states in the run-up to Rio. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) provided technical assistance to small states during the Rio negotiations, and in many ways this support came to fruition with the convening of the Barbados Conference in 1994. The Commonwealth was also

involved in the work of a Group of Eminent Persons which made recommendations on a wide range of issues of concern to SIDS in advance of the Barbados Conference. The Group, which was convened by Dame Nita Barrow, the Governor-General of Barbados, included President Gayoom of the Maldives; the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku; and Mr Maurice Strong, who had served as the Secretary-General of UNCED.

#### *Barbados+5*

4. In 1999, a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (New York, 27-28 September) reviewed and appraised the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. The General Assembly adopted a Declaration and a review document entitled 'State of Progress and Initiatives for the Future Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States'. It also forwarded a draft resolution on the Caribbean Sea to the regular session of the General Assembly for its consideration.

5. In preparation for Barbados+5, Commonwealth Environment Ministers examined approaches to 'overcoming vulnerability and accelerating the sustainable development of small states', when they met in April 1999. Their discussions were based on a paper by the Commonwealth Secretariat that reviewed progress in the implementation of the 1994 BPOA and provided an overview of the many ways in which the Commonwealth Secretariat had helped to promote the sustainable development of small states between 1994-1999.

#### **The 2004 Review**

6. To prepare for the 2004 review and international meeting on implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Commonwealth Secretariat, in close collaboration with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), international organisations and regional inter-governmental organisations, will help to:

- raise awareness of the vulnerability of small states and least developed countries, which impacts on their ability to bring about sustainable development;
- advocate for international commitment to actions that will further promote sustainable development of small states and implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;
- promote an effective review process and international meeting on implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action on the sustainable development of small island developing states. The Secretariat will focus especially on building capacity and facilitating discussions at the inter-regional and international levels; and
- promote implementation of the outcomes of WSSD in such a way as to benefit least developed and small states of the Commonwealth, for example through effective

collaboration and partnerships between governments, NGOs, local authorities and business.

7. The Secretariat is in the early planning stages for this programme of work. The full scope of activities will depend on the availability of funding and other resources, but elements that might be included are as follows:

- research/analysis in support of preparatory work at the inter-regional and international levels;
- technical assistance to Commonwealth Small States to help co-ordinate its preparations at the inter-regional and international levels;
- collaboration between inter-governmental organisations, including through the development of a joint plan-of-action and joint-meetings in the wings of negotiations/other meetings. Close liaison will also be developed between the Commonwealth Secretariat and other relevant international institutions;
- facilitate consensus building, including through deliberations by Commonwealth Finance Ministers, Commonwealth Environment Ministers, and the Ministerial Group on Small States. Strategies for promoting inter-disciplinary dialogue involving all three pillars of sustainable development will be considered; and
- building the negotiating capacity of small island developing states by supporting the participation of policy professionals in the process.

#### ***Collaboration with Small States' Intergovernmental Organisations***

8. In the wings of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Heads and Senior Officials of Inter-governmental Organisations (Caricom, Forum Secretariat, Indian Ocean Commission, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Commonwealth Secretariat) met and agreed to collaborate in the development of a co-ordinated programme of assistance to Small Island States in their preparations for the Barbados+10 review and international meeting. The first steps towards collaboration have been taken by sharing preliminary thinking on approaches to the review and exploring mechanisms for on-going consultations and information exchange.

#### ***Technical Assistance***

9. Technical Assistance may be provided to Commonwealth small states and IGOs in support of the review and preparations for the international meeting. Depending on resources, this could include:

- A Senior Policy Adviser based at SPREP to assist PICs and the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies through the CROP Sustainable

Development Working Group during the run-up to the international meeting, and in post Barbados+10 period.

- A Senior Policy Adviser attached to the Joint Office for Commonwealth Permanent Missions to the United Nations, to support Commonwealth Small States in their preparations for the review and international meeting.

### ***Research and Analysis***

10. The Secretariat plans to commission three substantive papers on issues of concern to the review and international meeting. The timing of these inputs will be determined in consultation with AOSIS and IGOs, bearing in mind that the key intervention points are likely to be as follows:

- regional preparatory meetings for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific regions;
- the inter-regional preparatory meeting;
- CSD-12 (April 2004).

### ***Consultations***

11. As part of its contribution to the political process at the inter-regional and international levels, the Secretariat could help to convene consultations in collaboration with other IGOs. Where possible, consultations will be held in the wings of other meetings.

12. Consultations by Commonwealth Environment Ministers on Barbados+10 could be facilitated through CCGE-9 (Nairobi, 4 February 2003) and CCGE-10, depending on the view of Ministers.

13. The Secretariat is also exploring the development of a close working relationship on these issues with other relevant international institutions.

14. Reporting and information flow will be facilitated through the Commonwealth Small States web site (<http://commonwealthsmallstates.org>).

### ***Capacity Building for Commonwealth Officials***

15. Depending on the availability of external programme resources, the Secretariat could implement a capacity building initiative for Commonwealth officials by supporting the participation of Commonwealth officials from governments in the Caribbean, South Pacific, and Indian Ocean regions (6 in total) in regional and international preparatory sessions and the international meeting itself. Priority assistance would be provided to governments that would not otherwise be able to participate fully.

### **Issues for Ministers**

16. Ministers are invited to consider these preliminary proposals and give further guidance on any other ways that the Secretariat could provide support to Commonwealth small states in the review process and preparations for an international meeting in 2004.