

**Review of the Regional
Coordinating Mechanism
for the implementation of the
sustainable development agenda
in the small island developing
States of the Caribbean**

A proposal for consideration by the Caribbean
Development and Cooperation Committee



UNITED NATIONS



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Abstract

This paper examines the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) for the implementation of the SIDS development agenda in the Caribbean¹, with a view towards determining its future articulation. The paper outlines the RCM concept and its historical context and examines the continued relevance of the RCM in light of the changing multilateral framework for SIDS development. The current status of the RCM is reviewed and the required legal and administrative context for a renewed RCM is discussed. The paper also presents recommendations for the future operation of the RCM.

¹ The RCM was first proposed by Caribbean states, as a coordinating mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the development agenda as outline under the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA). It has been retained for the coordination of all subsequent development programmes including the MSI, and SAMOA Pathway.

Introduction

This paper reviews of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) for the implementation of the SIDS development agenda in the Caribbean², with a view towards determining its future articulation. This has become necessary in light of the apparent challenges faced by the mechanism in meeting its intended objectives to date, as well as the evolving institutional and multilateral context for the implementation of the SIDS development agenda in general, and the future development of Caribbean SIDS in particular. This review is organized into 6 sections. Section 1, outlines the RCM concept and its historical context, while section 2 examines the continued relevance of the RCM in light of the changing multilateral framework for SIDS development. The current status of the RCM is reviewed in section 3, while the required legal and administrative context for a renewed RCM is discussed in section 4. Recommendations for the future operation of the RCM are presented in section 5.

² The RCM was first proposed by Caribbean states, as a coordinating mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the development agenda as outline under the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA). It has been retained for the coordination of all subsequent development programmes including the MSI, and SAMOA Pathway.

I. The RCM concept

The concept of sustainable development was introduced into the multilateral development lexicon through the Bruntland Report³ submitted in 1987 which then led to the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. This conference resulted in the adoption of several consensus positions⁴ relating to strategies for the sustainable use of the earth's natural resources, and enhanced equity for all for present and future generations.

These instruments of agreement inspired the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to advocate for a specific conference to address SIDS issues. This goal was realized at the first United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (UNGCSIDS) convened in Barbados from 25 April – 6 May, 1994.

The convening of this conference was a milestone that signalled the global recognition of specific challenges faced by SIDS in their pursuit of sustainable development. The UNGCSIDS resulted in the Barbados Declaration and the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) for sustainable development which specifically catered to the fragile environments of SIDS. It was against this background that the concept of a Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) for the implementation of the SIDS development agenda in the Caribbean was first considered. The earliest conception of the mechanism was discussed in 1995, during a Caribbean Meeting of Experts hosted by the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (ECLAC 2005), to facilitate the implementation of the BPoA at both national and subregional levels. The feasibility of a coordinating system was again discussed at the Sixth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development convened in New York 1998, where it was noted that regional and subregional institutions of SIDS were facing many constraints in carrying out their respective work programmes. Among these constraints are limited

³ The Bruntland Report was submitted by the World Commission on the Environment for consideration to the United Nations General Commission. It was on the basis on the publication that the United Nations convened the United Nations on the Environment and Development (UNCED).

⁴ The three main agreements adopted at the UNCED conference in 1987 were: Agenda 21; The Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development and the Statements of Forest Principles. The two legally binding conventions that were opened for signature at UNCED were: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

financial and human resources, as well as weak project management and implementation capacity. This was found to be especially the case in the African and Caribbean regions, and it was suggested that such an arrangement could alleviate this inadequacy by coordinating efforts to better serve these subregions (ECLAC, 2007).

However, it was not until the second SIDS Conference in 2005⁵ with the adoption of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation (MSI) of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, that the RCM was established. The low level of BPoA implementation in the Caribbean was the catalyst for the renewed interest in the development of the RCM. It was the consensus at the time that this mechanism could increase the implementation rate of multilateral environmental agreements across the region and boost the sustainable development of the Caribbean. The intent of the RCM was to encourage collaboration among Caribbean SIDS in an effort to reduce their overall vulnerability, and to secure avenues for access to financial support. It was also seen as an innovative Caribbean methodology for the implementation of the MSI, utilizing existing regional and national institutional resources that would be extended to all member States. Through the proposed RCM, the region was expected to benefit since its members often cited scarce resources as constraints to achieving sustainable development. Furthermore, with one common regional focus, notwithstanding national priorities, the RCM could advocate on its members' behalf for technical assistance while also avoiding duplication of efforts at the regional level. The RCM was officially established through a resolution made at the 21st session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) of ECLAC in January 2006.

In order to give effect to this new entity, the CDCC also agreed that an interim arrangement for the RCM was the best point of departure for the implementation of the mechanism. In this regard, an interim arrangement was proposed in which ECLAC/CDCC and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) would form the secretariat for one year with the support of other regional bodies, these being the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), and the University of the West Indies Centre for Environment Development (UWICED). The RCM was envisioned in this way in order to include SIDS in the Caribbean reaching out to cover overseas countries and territories such as the Associate Members of ECLAC and the CDCC. The inclusion of supporting agencies and institutions was essential so as to encourage collaboration among CARICOM, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), UNDP, ECLAC, UNEP, other UN agencies, civil society and the private sector (ECLAC, 2007).

The operationalisation of the RCM was set up as a project with three main components: The Establishment of the Project Implementation Unit/RCM Secretariat; The Institutional Strengthening and Capacity-Building of CDCC member countries; and the hosting of meetings of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) established to provide technical guidance in the implementation of the SIDS development agenda. Annex 1 traces the activities and timeline for delivery of each of these components, while Annex 2 itemizes the proposed budget to facilitate these activities under each of the components throughout the life of the project (ECLAC, 2007).

In its proposed configuration, the RCM was anticipated to assist in the national implementation of the BPoA by providing technical assistance and resource mobilization support. It was also seen as a potential avenue to build political support for the BPoA, through ECLAC's position as a subregional entity. Other intended functions included acting as a focal point for information and a liaison in regional and international forums. The RCM was also envisioned to provide advisory services to member countries with the responsibility for monitoring progress across the region through the Caribbean Development Cooperation Committee of ECLAC.

In this latter capacity, it was expected that countries would share with the RCM the status of implementation of the BPoA/MSI to be incorporated into a regional status report, for submission to the

⁵ This was effectively the 19-year review of the BPoA which resulted in the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation (MSI) of the BPoA.

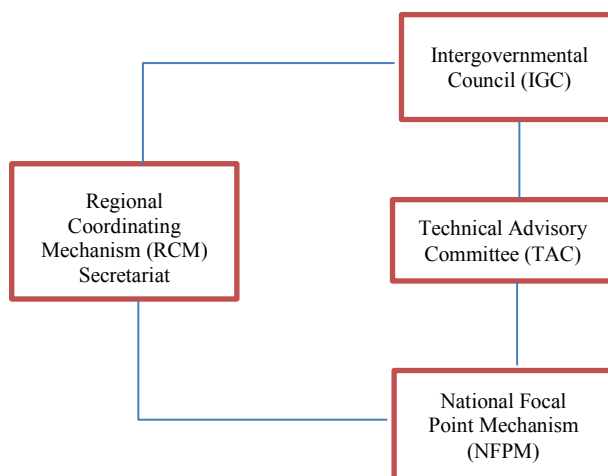
Commission on Sustainable Development⁶ (CSD). In the long term, it was anticipated that a permanent arrangement would be forthcoming subsequent to an assessment of the interim RCM arrangements.

Significantly, the proposal for the establishment of the RCM placed ECLAC in a pivotal role, both in terms of initiation and long-term operation of the mechanism. This approach sought to take advantage of ECLAC's institutional capacity as a regional commission, with its mandate by the United Nations General Assembly to support the development of its member countries (ECLAC, 2007). ECLAC provides support to facilitate the implementation of the BPoA and other subsequent instruments through the execution of its technical work programme in areas such as statistics and social development; sustainable development and disaster risk reduction; economic development; and knowledge management. It was therefore not by chance, that the technical arm of the RCM was recommended to be placed within the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean.

In this same vein, CARICOM was selected since it brought political outreach to the partnership. This arrangement was further enhanced by the envisioned interaction and support from the other organizations, to provide cooperation and coordination in order to better serve the development aspirations of the Caribbean. In this regard it was considered that the RCM would provide a central forum that member countries could lodge requests for technical assistance for sustainable development in its many forms, and together all the institutions and parties involved could collaborate towards finding a solution for each country that approached the RCM for assistance.

Ultimately, four main proposals were considered for the structure of the RCM. These are presented in Annex 3. Several iterations of these models, supported by extensive dialogue among key stakeholders eventually resulted in the following organogram as the final structure proposed and adopted for the RCM (Figure 1).

Figure 1
The final structure of the RCM



Source: Author's copilation.

In this final iteration, the proposed Intergovernmental Council (IGC) comprises comprised the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CDCC, which provides the highest level of oversight of the RCM operation. ECLAC, in its capacity as secretariat to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), would communicate with these Ministers at Ministerial as well as Monitoring Committee meetings. ECLAC would also have contact with these Ministers through country specific national focal points who would function outside the ambit of the CDCC.

⁶ The CSD was replaced by the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in September 2013.

It was proposed that the TAC be country rather than agency driven, and that it comprise four intergovernmental institutions; four member countries; one representative of civil society; three development partners – the Caribbean Development Bank and two others⁷; and three regional agencies – the University of the West Indies and two others. Together, these entities constituted the 15 members of the TAC. This membership was to be rotated to complement the thematic areas being addressed regionally on a bi-annual basis.

In this proposal, the National Focal Point within the National Focal Point Mechanism (NFPM) was designated as an institution rather than an individual to ensure continuity and consistency. In an effort to secure this commitment at the national level, it was suggested that the roles and responsibilities of the National Focal Point should be articulated in the formal duties and responsibilities of the respective institutions. However, it is not clear whether this was accomplished.

The RCM Secretariat was intended as the coordinating centre serving as a technical unit to the IGC implementing the work of the RCM. It was housed within the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean based in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and staffed by an Administrative Assistant, a Research Assistant and a Regional Coordinator (ECLAC, 2006).

However, the NFPM was never vested in any national institution/s and the rules and procedure of the IGC were never formalised. Indeed, the TAC was the only element of the overall mechanism that functioned throughout the years. Even so, its functioning was not optimal since it did not operate as intended. Given the evolving multilateral framework and the new provisions and requirements for the successful implementation of the post 2015 Development Agenda (the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs), there is a clear need to examine the future role of the RCM in supporting the future development of Caribbean SIDS. The following section begins this examination, by assessing the current and future relevance of the RCM.

⁷ The member States, as the Intergovernmental Council would recommend the other two development partners and regional agencies would be recommended by the member States.

II. Is the RCM/TAC still relevant?

As noted above, the motivation for the establishment of the RCM and the related TAC derived from the observed slowness in the implementation of proposed actions in the development of Caribbean SIDS. This low level of progress was noted for proposals under the BPoA, as well as the revised actions under the MSI (ECLAC CDCC Reports, 2006 - 2016). Since the earliest contemplation of the RCM in 1995, however, a number of developments within the multilateral sphere have conspired to reshape the development agenda with respect to SIDS. Among these are: 1) the convening of the World Summit on Sustainable Development to review progress subsequent to Agenda 21 in South Africa, 2002; 2) the hosting of the Second International Conference on SIDS in Mauritius as a ten year review of the BPoA in 2005; 3) the convening of the Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 as a 20 year review of the proposals for Agenda 21 in 2012; 4) the hosting of the Third International Conference of SIDS in Samoa in 2015; 4) the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan in 2015; 5) the elaboration and finalization of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2016; and 6) the signing in 2015 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris climate accord which deals with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in the year 2020. Arising out of these myriad developments is the question of the continued relevance of the RCM/TAC for the coordination of the implementation of the SIDS multilateral development agenda. Several multilateral initiatives which took place over the period suggest the need for the continuity of the RCM. A brief review of these is presented in the annex.

In spite of the scope of multilateral actions since the formalization of the BPoA, the consistency of the regime of proposed actions for development, along with the limited development progress to date, makes a good case for the continued existence of a regional coordination framework as intended by the RCM. It is clear that the factors which motivated the establishment of the RCM in the first instance have not been fully mitigated by the evolved development agenda.

Indeed since the crafting of the BPoA many action plans for SIDS recognize this deficiency, by their identification of the need to strengthen governance systems, enhance the partnership mechanisms for reporting and financing, and strengthen mechanisms for knowledge sharing, in order to advance SIDS development.

The need for this framework is further buttressed by the proposed monitoring exigencies specified for assessing development progress under the SDGs, as well as the recommendation that any proposed monitoring mechanisms should build on already existing initiatives. Still, the continued existence of the RCM can only be tenable or justified in the context of a revised set of goals, objectives and institutional arrangements. These are examined in the section which follows.

III. Review of the current RCM

The objectives of the RCM (ECLAC 2007) are as follows:

- To ensure the achievement of effective coordination of sustainable development initiatives of the Caribbean region with a view to enhancing coherence, complementarity and consistency of activities;
- To facilitate the implementation of the Agenda 21, the JPOI, the BPoA and MSI through the coordination and rationalization of all required technical and other inputs towards these ends
- To optimise benefits from the use of available human, financial and other resources for the achievement of sustainable development goals in the Caribbean
- To assist in the mobilization of new and additional resources, including the use of south-south collaboration, for achievement of sustainable development
- To promote awareness at all levels on sustainable development issues and activities
- The proposed functions of the RCM:
 - Facilitating the exchange of best practices, information sharing, transfer of experiences, knowledge-based technology and techniques among Caribbean SIDS and countries of the Greater Caribbean
 - Liaising with SIDS in other regions in promoting joint positions in international forums
 - Assisting in the promotion of capacity-building efforts and strengthening of the human resource base through training and education
 - Contributing to the identification of development partners and source of funding for development activities
 - Providing technical advisory and policy services to member countries in support of their sustainable development efforts
 - Facilitating the provision of technical assistance to member countries;

- Building and maintaining institutional memory on sustainable development activities in the Caribbean subregion
- Establishing a regional database on sustainable development activities;
- Promoting, strengthening and establishing cooperative arrangements and partnerships among relevant government agencies, Community Based Organizations and NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders
- Supporting, reinforcing and assisting sustainable development initiatives at the local, national and regional levels

The main responsibilities of the Intergovernmental Council are:

- To serve as the main forum for discussing relevant issues relating to programming and policy initiatives for the implementation of BPoAMSI in the region
- To monitor regional progress and approaches in the implementation of SIDS POA/MSI, the RCM's support, results of work completed or in progress, as well as financing arrangements and effectiveness and efficiency of collaboration between participating entities
- To guide inter-agency collaboration and coordination in the delivery of Technical Assistance to the CDCC member countries
- To approve the annual Caribbean regional work programme for the implementation of the SIDS POA/MSI and monitor progress and implementation
- To approve the budget, financial reports and statements of the RCM Secretariat
- To approve the terms of the respective signed collaboration agreements between and among RCM members and other agencies and institutions
- The functions of the TAC are as follows:
- To advise the Inter-Governmental Council on the rationalisation of roles, responsibilities and functions of the regional institutions/agencies involved in supporting sustainable development initiatives at the national and regional levels
- To undertake periodic review and advise on the development of the Secretariat's work programme
- To identify gaps in sustainable development policies and technical assistance support programmes for the implementation of the BOPoA/MSI and recommend remedial action

The TAC was expected to convene yearly meetings and communicate throughout the year and liaise with the Secretariat as required through various modes of communication.

The functions of the National Focal Point are as follows:

- To serve as the principal liaison person and the primary point of contact between the RCM and the national government, NGOs, private sector and other stakeholders on all BPoA/MSI issues
- To serve as a driving source behind the follow-up and implementation of the MSI at the country level, in collaboration with other relevant Departments and Ministries
- To facilitate the flow of information and to ensure adequate coordination of activities between the RCM and the national government, NGOs, private sector and other stakeholders
- To coordinate inputs at the country level and facilitate timely and regular feedback on the implementation of the MSI for submission to the RCM
- To establish regular networking with other CDCC members' National Focal Points through various means of communication

The functions of the RCM Secretariat are as follows:

- To act as the Secretariat/Technical Unit to the IGC
- To execute assigned work programme outputs comprised of activities approved by the IGC (on the advice of the TAC) dealing with areas that require work at the regional level
- To collaborate with national environmental/sustainable development agencies by serving as a source of information and as facilitator for the delivery of technical assistance on aspects of BPoA/MSI implementation, including resource mobilization
- To foster and coordinate institutional linkages nationally, regionally and internationally
- To manage the institutional network (comprised of participating States, regional agencies and sectoral interest groups) with a view to promoting optimal involvement and efficient functioning of the network
- To serve as a regional clearing house for the dissemination and exchange of information and knowledge on sustainable development strategies
- To channel all communications from the IGC to the appropriate agencies and authorities at the national, regional and international levels
- To establish and manage databases and other mechanisms for the storage and retrieval of information, as appropriate
- To convene ad hoc meetings of experts on issues related to the implementation of the SIDS

As noted before, to date the RCM has had only limited success in achieving these goals, objectives, or levels of functionality. However, the landscape has evolved with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs. This created an opportunity to rework the RCM by articulating the national SDGs framework as a foundation upon which a revised RCM could be constructed.

IV. Revised Legal and Administrative Context

In order to achieve the revised objectives as outlined above, a renewed RCM framework should also clearly articulate the specific legal and administrative arrangements necessary for efficient functionality of the Mechanism. In this regard, among the elements for which clarity and certainty would be critical are securing of mandates, reporting mechanisms, appointment of members and sub-committees, links to regional and international bodies, and financing arrangements.

A. Securing of mandates

As noted before, the mandate for the establishment of the RCM was given by the CDCC, a subsidiary body of ECLAC. However the operation of the Mechanism was intended to draw from the input of several regional agencies each with their own mandates, operational infrastructure, and geographic scope. Further, the Mechanism seeks to serve Caribbean SIDS in their capacity as sovereign States, as well as to respond to agreed multilateral development action programmes as set forth in, for example, the SAMOA Pathway and the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

The confluence of these institutional elements has made for considerable difficulty in defining the mandate of the RCM, as well as in determining how it will continually define its operational objectives, priorities, and work programmes. Given all of the above, it is imperative that a revised RCM framework provide ample opportunity for the countries to be involved in setting the priorities for work programme focus for the RCM. A key requirement to achieve this is a robust national entity which can effectively reflect and report on national policies and priorities. Although the previous incarnation of the RCM vested this role in an identified National Focal Point, this functionality was never fully actualized. The remedying of this deficiency will be a critical requirement if the RCM is to be effective in the future.

B. Reporting mechanisms

The RCM currently reports to the CDCC, at its regular biannual meetings. As a subsidiary body of ECLAC, the RCM reports are transmitted via ECLAC to the General Assembly of the United Nations. Given, however, that the national representation of the CDCC is through each country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is apparent that this reporting process does not receive feedback to the broadest range of national stakeholders, especially those who play critical functional roles in managing the implementation of the SIDS development agenda at country level. Among such agencies are Ministries of Finance, Planning, Trade, Health and Education, as well as other important stakeholder organizations related to the private sector, labour, and civil society. An enhanced RCM must therefore provide clear arrangements for reporting to all national and regional stakeholders on its SIDS development coordination efforts.

C. Appointment of members, and sub-committees

As currently established, the RCM comprises the IGC the National Focal Point, the Secretariat, and the TAC. There exists however no formalized guidelines and rules of procedure for managing the operations of the RCM. In practice, the RCM has operated to date on the basis of precedence, assumptions and expediency, with an assumed legitimacy based on its link to the CDCC. This mode of operation has not worked efficiently, as it has relied on the goodwill, and motivation of interested parties for its functioning. It also does not provide for effective capture of the institutional memory of the RCM, nor the transparent and reliable appointment of members and committees, which at times becomes necessary for the smooth functioning of the RCM. These critical legal and administrative inadequacies must be addressed in any future incarnation of the RCM.

D. Links to regional and international bodies

The original conceptualization of the RCM envisaged functional linkages with all regional and international development agencies invested in development in general, and the SIDS development agenda in particular. In the latter instance, the fostering of clear linkages with coordinating bodies in other SIDS regions was identified as a specific priority. Such engagements were intended to facilitate the sharing of lessons learnt, technical and human resources, and the brokering of joint negotiating positions on matters pertinent to SIDS in the multilateral arena. The limited institutional mechanisms, under which the RCM operated however, did not facilitate a broader engagement of the RCM with the wider regional and multilateral framework, except for its connections to the CDCC. A revised RCM must also provide the institutional capacity to overcome this challenge.

E. Financing Arrangements

Since its earliest incarnation, several efforts have been made to establish a reliable financing framework for supporting the work of the RCM. The most elaborate of these propositions was crafted by ECLAC in 2007 as a project proposal titled "Operationalisation of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the Further Implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action/Mauritius Strategy in the Caribbean". This proposal identified three specific activities anticipated to give effect to the full operationalization of the RCM. These were:

- Establishment of a Project Implementation Unit/RCM Secretariat;
- Institutional Strengthening and Capacity-Building of CDCC Member Countries, for mainstreaming sustainable development into national development policies, plans and programmes;
- Convening of preliminary meetings of the TAC.

These operational activities were intended to be undertaken over a period of three years (from 2007 – 2009), with a budgeted project cost of US\$ 756,064. This initiative, however, was never funded, possibly because the institutional framework into which such project funding would be injected remained unclear. Nevertheless, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development appear to provide a renewed institutional space for brokering financial, technical and human resources for the mainstreaming of the sustainable development goals into national development planning for the Caribbean subregion. In this regard, the CDCC, as one of ECLAC's subsidiary bodies, has been identified as a key element of the regional institutional architecture for the implementation of the SDGs. It is expected that this framework should provide enhanced opportunities for the financing of the RCM. One such avenue which could be explored is the Green Climate Fund.⁸

⁸ The Green Climate Change Fund created under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2010 to activate the Convention's financial mechanism to assist with mitigation and adaptation efforts.

V. Towards the Future

Given the background, rationale, legal and administrative context outlined above, this section proposes a possible direction for the future revitalization of the RCM, through its integration into the institutional framework for monitoring progress towards the SDGs.

A. Integrating the RCM into the SDG Monitoring Framework

As noted by ECLAC (2017) in the first review of regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, “the integrated approach implicit in the SDGs requires increased intersectoral coordination”. For small economies with the limited institutional infrastructure such as obtains in Caribbean SIDS, the attainment of the SDGs will also require joint coordination and monitoring of action at the level of the subregion in order to achieve the intentions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in synergy with the SIDS agenda. As prescribed under the SDG implementation mechanisms, such joint actions would be required in terms of policy orientation; coordination of institutions and sectors; mobilization and spending of resources; management of partnerships; monitoring, evaluation and reporting; and coordination of international cooperation. While many Caribbean institutions and agencies currently play this role to varying extents, the imperatives of adjustment that would be necessary for SDG achievement also extend to the improvement of the regional coordination apparatus.

The efficient functioning of the RCM provides a good opportunity to address this deficiency, since it may be appended to the currently evolving national institutional frameworks for the implementation of the SDGs. In this regard, the RCM can function as the focused mechanism for intra-regional coordination of SDG implementation.

At this point it may be reasonable to propose that the SDG national framework replaces the NFPM and that data and information collected for the SDG process could also be utilized for the RCM. The advantage of this strategy is the integration of the national SDGs process into regional strategies, which could be coordinated through the RCM framework and fed through the system to the Forum of Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, and then to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Under this arrangement, ECLAC (through its

Sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean) could continue to play its role as secretariat in supporting the Technical Advisory Committee of the RCM.

The Forum of Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was formed using existing platforms and mandates, thereby minimizing the duplication of efforts and the formulation of additional structures or arrangements (ECLAC, 2016). The operation of the Forum is linked throughout the United Nations system. It interacts with States, civil society and the private sector reporting upwards to the HLPF which operates under the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations. This Regional Forum was deemed a necessary mechanism for the review of the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the SDG and targets along with the means of implementation, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Since ECLAC serves as the secretariat the annual meetings of the Regional Forum with representation from civil society, academia and the private sector, development banks and other United Nations agencies and regional integration blocs, this may prove to be an appropriate platform upon which regional follow-up could be effected (ECLAC 2016).

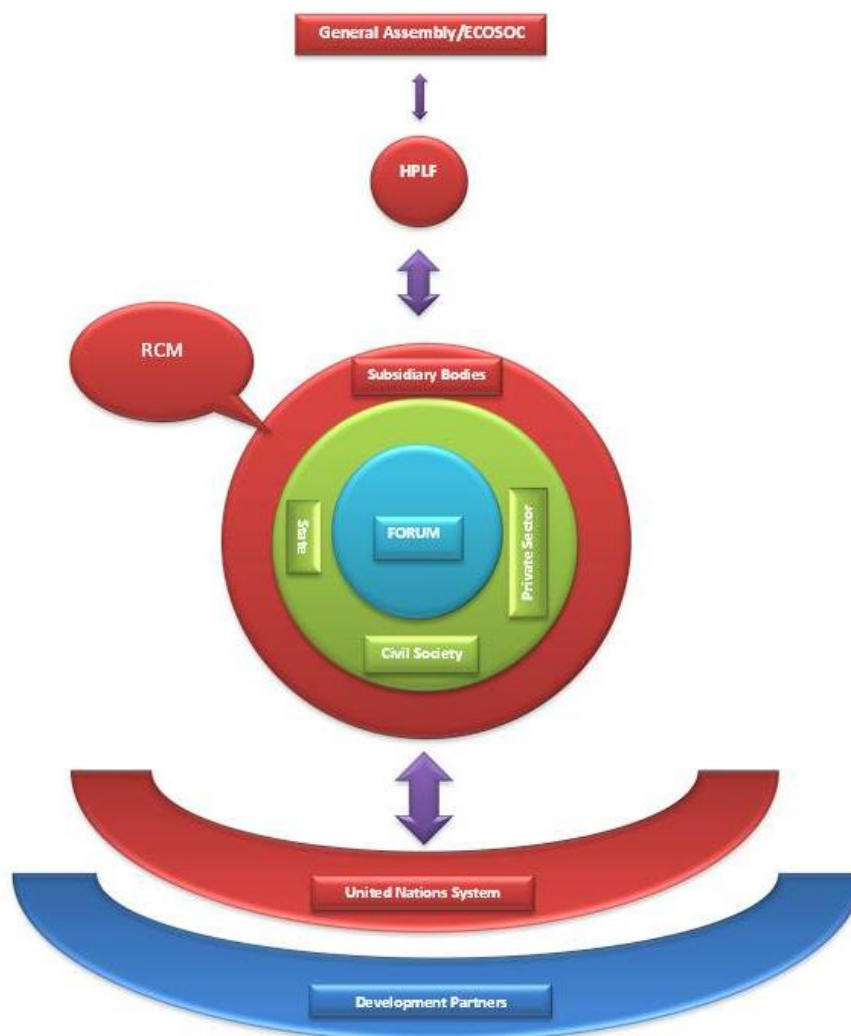
This Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean also includes ECLAC's subsidiary bodies, these being:

- The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean,
- The Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee,
- The Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning,
- The Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,
- The Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,
- The Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies, The Committee on South-South Cooperation,
- The Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,
- The Committee of High-Level Government Experts, and
- The Central American Economic Cooperation Committee.

Other relevant intergovernmental regional mechanisms, including the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and the Forum of Ministers of Social Development of Latin America, are invited to provide inputs and contributions and inform the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, within their existing mandates, on their work related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

Figure 2, below indicates a possible linkage point of the RCM to the multilateral development framework. The rationale for this approach is based on the logic that the prevailing requirements for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development -and the SDGs have committed countries to strengthening their national frameworks for the monitoring of their implementation. In fact, several countries have already initiated institutional reforms towards this end, with such reforms taking two broad approaches, : i) utilizing existing institutions and assigning new responsibilities that demonstrate the new challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda and SDGs; and ii) the creation of new specific and targeted institutions to coordinate the implementation of the goals (ECLAC, 2017). In most cases, the institutional arrangements are endorsed through decrees and agreements that detail the structure, scope and aims of the mechanism. Some of these established mechanisms have held meetings, advanced national advocacy, and conducted awareness-raising activities in many formats, including courses, seminars, debates, multisectoral dialogues and forums (ECLAC, 2017).

Figure 2
Possible linkage point of the RCM to the multilateral development framework



Source: ECLAC 2016 (Adapted).

The following Caribbean countries have already begun the process:

Aruba:

Aruba has established a National Commission on the Sustainable Development Goals and two working groups: one group addresses the SDGs indicators and the other, is focused on advocacy and communication led by the Office of the Prime Minister in collaboration with the Office of the Minister of Economic Affairs, Communication, Energy and Environment. The latter working group also included the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce and Industry and the Central Bureau of Statistics (ECLAC, 2017).

The Bahamas:

The Bahamas established a National Development Council that would head the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Council includes civil society, the private sector, academia, trade unions and political parties. The Council's secretariat is the Economic Development and Planning Unit operating out of the Prime Minister's office, having the main responsibility to implement the National Development Plan of the Bahamas – Vision 2040 (ECLAC 2017).

Guyana:

Guyana is focused on formulating and implementing its Green State Development Strategy (GSDS) and sought the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) support in this regard. This nation has successfully prepared the framework document for the GSDS. Furthermore in the near future, this government will mobilize resources, conduct national consultations and secure national approval and agreement on the final structure of the GSDS, as this will be the vehicle through which it will implement the SDGs.

Jamaica:

The Government of Jamaica established the National 2030 Agenda Oversight Committee, a national governance framework to lead the implementation of the national Vision 2030 Jamaica Development Plan aligned to the SDGs and other regional and global frameworks. Their structure includes: a National Core group on SDGs, a National 2030 Agenda Working Group, the Cabinet and Parliament. The core group is made up of the Planning Institute of Jamaica, the Statistical Institute of Jamaica and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. This structure includes the participation of various ministries civil society, academia and the private sector.

Trinidad and Tobago:

Trinidad and Tobago is in the process of developing a new national development strategy called Vision 2030. The government - led by the Ministry of Planning and Development - has been working on a new plan which would consider and incorporate the SDGs (ECLAC, 2017).

B. Requirements for Implementation

The implementation of the above proposal will require enhanced operational and reporting elements of the RCM at the level of the CDCC. The following key prerequisites are noted:

- CDCC centrality: In spite of the historical role of the CDCC in issuing the mandate to establish the RCM, this body's subsequent engagement has been largely cursory in terms of the routine receipt of reports at its biannual meetings. The enhanced engagement of the RCM via the modality of the CDCC as a key subsidiary of ECLAC, and by extension its manifestation in the Forum of the Countries for Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, would require a significantly enhanced sense of ownership of the RCM by the CDCC. This has been to date a significant deficiency.
- A tacit recognition of this renewed ownership could best be expressed through the crafting of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), between the countries and the CDCC, which outlines a legal framework and rules of procedure, for the administration of the work of the RCM. Indeed, in the reformed RCM it is critical that these MOUs clearly articulate the expectations, responsibilities and commitments of States. Once again, this has also been a significant gap in the operations of the RCM to date.
- Peru and Belize⁹ adopted an online data sharing mechanism that could guide the data sharing infrastructure of the RCM. The work of the RCM in monitoring and coordinating progress

⁹ Peru: The National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) designed a platform that tracks the SDG indicator monitoring and a follow-up system. It is a web portal that includes the institutions that report on the SDG indicators and a dynamic database to facilitate data sharing.

Belize: The Statistical Institute hosts the central data repository that facilitates data sharing among all the working groups involved.

towards the SDGs could be significantly enhanced by the use of a digital platform for the sharing of key data and information among Caribbean SIDS. As countries begin to implement the SDGs, their mainstreaming into the national strategy is paramount. However, in order to successfully realize these national, subnational and subregional indicators, data collection and reporting systems would have to be standardized in accordance with global requirements. This is to ensure that statistics would be comparable; this process would be led by the National Statistical Systems (NSS) of Caribbean countries. In the context of the proposed national and multinational institutional infrastructure for the implementation of the SDGs, the requirements of the RCM could be incorporated into this infrastructure, thereby obviating the need for additional independent data platforms for the exclusive use by the RCM.

- Finally, clear and specific financing arrangements for the operations of the RCM secretariat are critical for its sustainability. Such seed financing should provide the basis by which the RCM could ultimately undertake its own resource raising in the form of donor-funded projects.

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Annexes

Annex 1

Activities to establish the RCM

Activities	Timeframe
Component 1	
A. Establishment of the Project Implementation Unit/RCM Secretariat	Q1/2007
Procure office furniture	
Support in recruitment of staff through transparent mechanism	
Prepare inception report	
Establish operational procedures	
B. Resource mobilization strategy developed	
Prepare TOR and recruit resource mobilization specialist	Q1/2007
Review resource mobilization strategy	Q1/2007
Obtain approval of the strategy from the members of the Inter-Governmental Council	Q2/2007
Operationalize strategy in the Project Implementation Unit	Q3/2008-Q2/2009
C. Public awareness of the RCM	
Prepare TOR and recruit communications specialist	Q1/2007
Review public awareness strategy	Q1/2007
Media articles, brochures , web site	Q1/2007-Q2/2009
Obtain approval of the strategy from the members of the Inter-Governmental Council	Q1/2007
D. Establishment of project monitoring system	
Prepare TOR and recruit M&E specialist	Q1/2007
Develop indicators, datasets, reporting format and guiding principles for reporting progress of implementation of the BPOA/MSI	Q1-2/2007
Operationalize monitoring system	Semi-annually
Pre-evaluation procedures in place	Q4/2008
Component 2	
A. TA and advisory services delivered	
Develop TORs and recruit consultants for delivery of TA and advisory services to CDCC member countries	Q1/2007-Q2/2009
Backstop consultants in the field	Q1/2007-Q2/2009
Arrange for the effective review and dissemination of consultants' reports	Q1/2007-Q2/2009
Participate in stakeholder national-level meetings	Q2/2007-Q2/2009
Participate in needs assessment and strategic planning exercises	Q2/2007-Q2/2009
B. Delivery of training	
Develop TORs and recruit training facilitators	Q2-Q4/2007
Organize and participate in the three training workshops	Q3/2007-Q2/2009
Arrange for capacity-building at the national level	Q3/2007-Q2/2009
Component 3	
A. Meetings of the Technical Advisory Committee	
Prepare agenda for the three meetings	Q2/2007, Q1/2008,
Meetings coordinated by ECLAC, through the Project Implementation Unit	Q3/2008

Source: ECLAC 2007.

Annex 2

RCM proposed budget (US dollars)

ITEM	ECLAC	DONOR	TOTAL
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE			
Office Furniture		20,000	
Sub Total			20,000
OPERATING EXPENDITURE			
Professional Staff ^a	129,445	194,167	
Research Assistant ^b		74,675	
Secretary ^c		53,327	
Regional Travel		25,000	
Convening of Meetings ^d		24,000	
Sub Total			500,614
Consultant Services ^e		25,000	25,000
TA and Advisory Services		100,000	100,000
Three (3) Training Workshops	3,470 ^f	45,000	48,470
Total Base Cost			694,084
Overhead (Admin. Support Costs) ^g		90,230	90,230
Total Cost	132,915	623,149	756,064
<i>(US\$1–TT\$6.28 at 15/12/2006)</i>			

Source: ECLAC 2007.

^a One Regional Coordinator at L-4 level, Step 1 (\$81,943-salary; \$26,458 – Post Adjustment; \$1,416 - J. Van Breda Medical Ins.; \$19,628 - Pension Fund).

^b One Research Assistant at G-6, Step 1 (\$26,027-salary; \$260 – Medical Insurance Plan; \$3,583 – Pension Fund).

^c One Secretary at G-4, Step 2 (\$18,261 – salary; \$185 – Medical Insurance Plan; \$2,885 – Pension Fund).

^d Three TAC meetings.

^e Resource Mobilization Consultant (\$10,000); Communications Consultant (\$5,000); Indicators Consultant (\$10,000).

^f Daily cost for 4 ECLAC staff members to conduct the 2-day training workshop on the disaster assessment methodology.

^g 13% of total base cost, including Communication Costs (\$5,000) and the cost of the Evaluation (\$10,000).

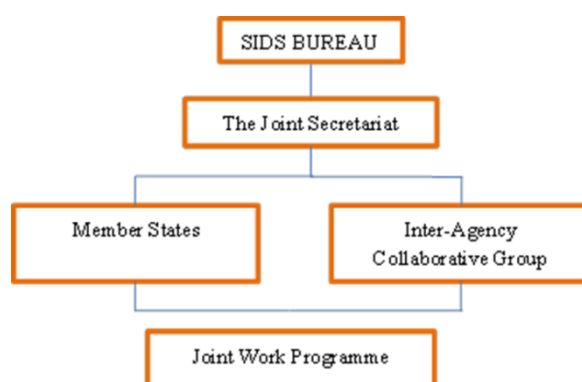
Annex 3

Preliminary proposals for the RCM

The earliest these proposals were presented was at a Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the SIDS PoA in Barbados in 1997.

The first proposal named the Caribbean Model, comprised a structure with a SIDS Bureau constituted by Caribbean ministers of the Ministerial Meeting, heading the arrangement and providing political oversight in the implementation of a Joint Work Programme (JWP) (Figure A3.1). The JWP therefore, would be guided by the BPoA. A proposed Joint Secretariat was also intended to be the temporary Regional Coordinating Mechanism with collaboration between ECLAC and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, where ECLAC would provide technical assistance and CARICOM would be the political outreach arm of the RCM. Finally, an Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG) of Caribbean development multilateral partners which attended the Ministerial Meeting was proposed to support the Joint Secretariat.

Figure A3.1
Proposed RCM structure

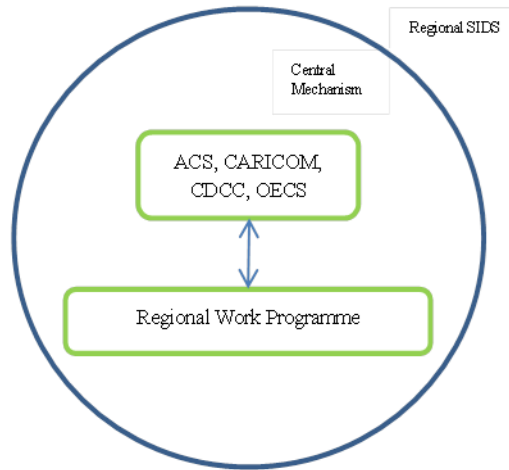


Source: Author's compilation.

There were three other proposals being considered for the interim RCM, two of which were categorized under the centralized coordination and the coordinated decentralization structures.

The **centralized coordination** was based on the Caribbean Model. It is “a central mechanism with a nucleus of representatives of each subregion, supported by subregional secretariats, coordinating the development and implementation of a Regional Work Programme agreed by all regional SIDS and support by regional and regionally-based agencies” (Figure A3.2) (ECLAC 2005).

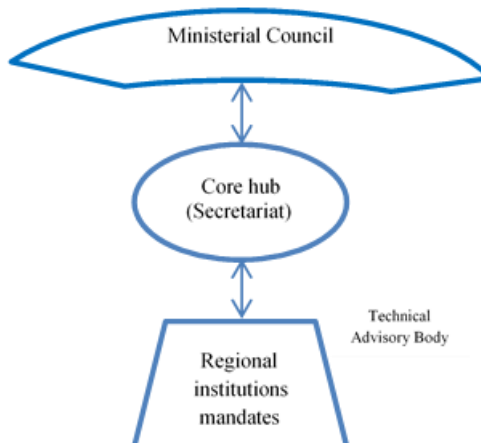
Figure A3.2
Centralized coordination RCM structure



Source: Author's compilation.

The third proposal was a fusion of OECS and CARICOM Secretariats, but followed the centralized coordination model. It consisted of a core or hub to act as the secretariat along with a Technical Advisory Body (TAB) and a Ministerial Council. The core was the secretariat, which was proposed as either a permanent or pro-tempore. The Technical Advisory Body (TAB) was proposed to consist of regional institutions or agencies with their respective mandates for sustainable development issues and the implementation of the BPoA and MSI. In this setup a Ministerial Council would provide the political oversight (Figure A3.3).

Figure A3.3
Adapted centralized coordination RCM structure



Source: Author's compilation.

In this model, some of the original characteristics and proposed functions of the RCM were:

- A Pan-Caribbean membership scope;
- Provide assistance at the national level in focusing and obtaining resources to support national implementation;
- Creation of synergies among regional organizations and encourage cooperation in common areas;
- Maintenance of a database of sustainable development professionals (much like SIDSTAP¹⁰);
- Provide information, monitor/evaluate sustainable development indicators and provide global and regional sustainable development;
- There should be a clear political directorate for oversight and arrangement on the functions of the mechanism.

Finally, the **coordinated decentralization** model was proposed as a system in which “an autonomous implementation unit – an internal arrangement, there is coordination via a consultative mechanism, comprising of selected members of each unit and the relevant secretariats. These would be supported by representative of agencies, lending support to as many Implementation Units as necessary. This arrangement would facilitate closed meetings among member States. Ultimately it would also realize a consultative mechanism entrusted with the reporting function on the basis of inputs from member states and secretariats of implementation Units” (Figure A3.4) (ECLAC, 2005).

Figure A3.4
Coordinated decentralization RCM structure



Source: Author's compilation.

¹⁰ SIDS/TAP is designed to facilitate the exchange and transfer of experiences, knowledge, policies and practices among small island developing states intra-regionally and inter-regionally.

Annex 4

Review of multilateral actions informing the SIDS development agenda

- The World Summit on Sustainable Development

The World Summit on Sustainable Development which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 26 August to 04 September 2002 was intended to review progress towards the attainment of the sustainable development targets outlined in Agenda 21, over the ten years since the Earth Summit of 1992. The conference concluded with two main outcome documents, these being the Johannesburg Declaration and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (JPOI). While the Declaration itself was silent in respect of SIDS issues, the Plan of Implementation acknowledged the special case of SIDS, and proposed specific actions related to the management of biodiversity, protection of the coastal zone, promotion of energy security and disaster risk reduction, among others. These factors were not inconsistent with several of the priority action areas identified in the BPoA Programme of Action thereby giving continued currency to the first multilateral action plan for SIDS development.

- The Second International Conference of SIDS – Ten Year Review of the BPoA

Like the World Summit on Sustainable Development, a ten year review meeting to examine how much progress had been made in the development of SIDS States since the crafting of the BPoA, was held in Mauritius in 2005. The meeting outcome known as the Mauritius Strategy Initiative (MSI) reaffirmed the targets of the BPoA, while acknowledging the limitations of inadequate implementation infrastructure and weak governance mechanisms as key limitations to the attainment of SIDS development goals. The MSI therefore extended the number of actions to include enhancement of such mechanisms in order to achieve “coherence and consistency with the international monetary financial and trading systems, which would facilitate the participation of small island developing States in international financial decision-making processes” (UN, 2005).

- The Rio Plus 20 Initiative

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio +20 was a revisit of the Agenda 21 outcomes proposed at the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. This initiative took into account fully emerged challenges such as climate change, and effectively initiated the global dialogue towards the elaboration of sustainable development goals as the global agenda to replace the Millennium Development Goals. The conference further acknowledged the importance of financing and a global partnership for development as important enabling frameworks for development. Although the outcome did not address SIDS issues specifically, it continued to recognize many of the specific SIDS development challenges articulated under the BPoA, albeit within the broader global context. The conference also acknowledged the need for an updated special multilateral discourse on SIDS, and therefore paved the way for the hosting of the Third International Conference of SIDS.

- The Third International Conference of SIDS

The Third International Conference of SIDS took place in Samoa in September 2014. The outcome of the meeting – the SAMOA Pathway - closely mirrored the concerns of SIDS as elaborated in the BPoA

and reiterated in the MSI. The questions of energy security for SIDS in light of the need for CO₂ mitigation to combat climate change, and the need for disaster risk reduction were clearly articulated in the meeting. Moreover, the importance of financing for development and stronger global partnerships for SIDS development were more fully ventilated in the outcome. Ultimately, this conference provided a context for defining the priorities of SIDS countries going forward to the elaboration of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The development target areas proposed in the SAMOA Pathway outcome document are summarized in the annex.

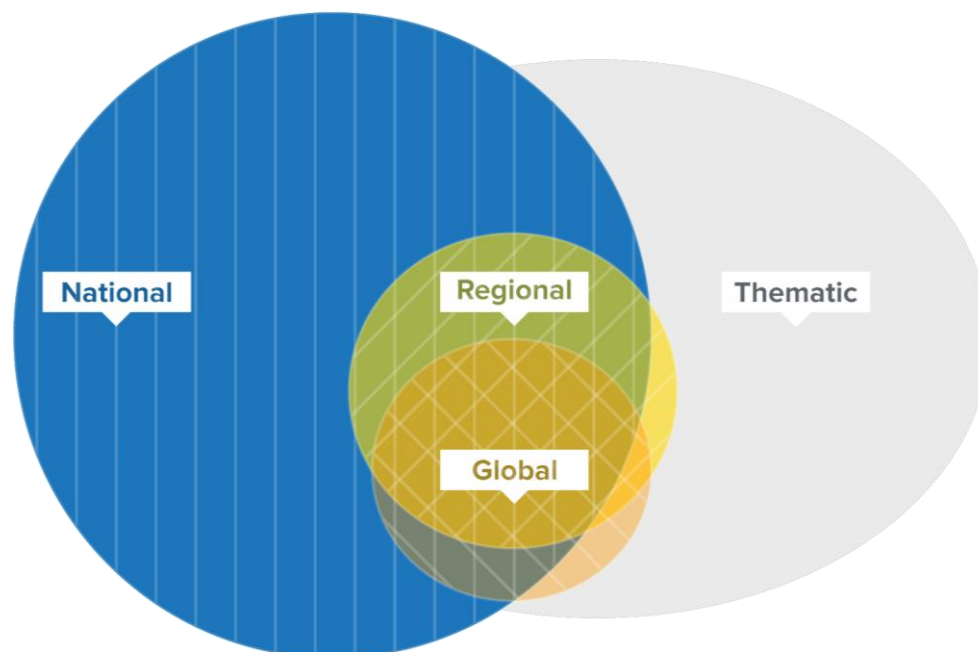
- The Post -2015 Development Agenda: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The multilateral process for the development of the Post-2015 Development Agenda benefited from the identification of 18 SIDS priority areas. These were:

- Sustained and sustainable inclusive and equitable economic growth with decent work for all
- Climate Change
- Sustainable Energy
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- Oceans and Seas
- Food Security and Nutrition
- Water and Sanitation
- Sustainable Transport
- Sustainable Consumption and Production
- Management of Chemicals and Wastes including Hazardous Wastes
- Health and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)
- Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
- Social Development
- Biodiversity
- Invasive Alien Species
- Means of Implementation
- SIDS Priorities for the Post-2015 Development Agenda
- Monitoring and Accountability

These priorities were ultimately formalized as part of the 17SDGs. A notable aspect of the proposals for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs is the framework of indicators for monitoring progress. This framework requires monitoring of Goals implementation at three geographic levels - National, Regional and Global - as well as monitoring at a thematic level (Figure A4.1).

Figure A4.1
Schematic illustration of indicators for national, regional, global, and thematic monitoring



Source: UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

National level monitoring is to be based on a number of country specific and country determined indicators, and may be informed by official or non-official data. Regional monitoring is expected to provide a platform for facilitating knowledge sharing, and peer review and is to be based on regionally agreed indicators which focus on regionally agreed priorities. Significantly, under the monitoring framework for the SDGs, regional monitoring initiatives are anticipated to build on existing regional mechanisms. Global monitoring will support a set of global indicators, which is being reviewed by the HLPF and would be based principally on internationally recognized and accepted data. Finally thematic modelling will appeal to the review of knowledge specific communities or groups who can offer prognoses on the evolution of certain development themes. Such monitoring is expected to be based on specific technical metrics, or unofficial data.

Annex 5

Summary of SAMOA outcomes

SAMOA Pathway
<p>Sustainable Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilient and inclusive sustainable tourism policies Diversify sustainable tourism Entrepreneurship and local participation Strengthen sectoral governance
<p>Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptation and resilience Baseline monitoring Awareness and communication Capacity building- climate finance
<p>Sustainable Energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy efficiency and sustainable energy. Diversification Awareness Access to regional and international markets Capacity building Research and development Investment in technology and infrastructure
<p>Disaster Risk Reduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaster risk management strategy Technical assistance and financing Cooperation and investment- private and public Reporting systems Insurance facilities
<p>Oceans and Seas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable management and use of coastal and marine resources Sustainable conservation and protection of coastal and marines resources Research and development Capacity building: conservation and protection, and sustainable use Marine pollution and acidification Monitoring, control and surveillance Small scale fisheries Strengthen sectoral governance
<p>Food Security and Nutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable and resilient agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture practices Food security and nutrition. End malnutrition in all forms Access to markets Rural income and jobs. Small- scale producers and entrepreneurship
<p>Water and Sanitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated management Sustainable management Facilities and infrastructure for safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management systems Institutional and human capacities Wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse Water- use efficiency
<p>Sustainable Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to environmentally sound, safe, affordable, and well- maintained transportation Safety: land, sea and air transportation

SAMOA Pathway

Energy efficiency

Sustainable Consumption and Production

Develop and implement programmes to advance sustainable consumption and production

Management of Chemicals and Waste, including hazardous waste

Waste management. Reduce, reuse, recycle, recover and return approaches

Strengthen sectoral governance

Health and Non- Communicable Diseases

Sector policies and strategies: prevention and management

Strengthening health systems

Health promotion, primary health care

Non- communicable diseases. Monitoring

HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Fight against malaria, tuberculosis and tropical emerging and re-emerging diseases

Reduce maternal, new born and child mortality. Improve health

Gender Equality and Empowerment

Eliminate discrimination against women and girls

Comprehensive gender perspective

Economic empowerment and access to productive employment. Economic resources

End violence against women and girls

Equal and effective participation

Equal access to education and health. Sexual and reproductive health

Social Development:

Culture and Sport

Cultural diversity

Cultural and creative industries

Conserve, promote, protect and preserve natural, tangible and intangible cultural heritage

Sports for development

Social Development:

Promoting Peaceful Societies and Safe Communities

Peaceful societies and safe communities: responsive institutions, access to justice, respect of human rights

Combat trafficking, cybercrime, organized crime, international piracy

Assist victims

Social Development:

Education

Full and equal access to education in all levels

Investment

Biodiversity

Preservation and conservation

Sustainable use

Promote exports

Desertification

Deforestation and forest degradation

Reforestation, restoration and afforestation

Financial and technical resources

Strengthen sectoral governance

Invasive Alien Species

Strengthen preventative measures

Eradication and control

Research and development

Capacity building

Awareness

Means of Implementation

Partnerships

SAMOA Pathway

Financing

Trade

Capacity building

Technology

Data and statistics

Institutional support to SIDS

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