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Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

TWENTY-SIXTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Merida, Mexico, 10 to 14 April 2000

PLAN OF ACTION PROJECT FOR AGRICULTURE IN THE SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development, acting as a preparatory body for the twenty-second special session of the United Nations General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)¹, adopted the following decision:
2. **Reaffirming** the principles of and commitments to sustainable development embodied in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, the Declaration of Barbados and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS,
3. **Recognising** that SIDS share a common aspiration for economic development and improved living standards, and remain strongly committed to conserving the natural and cultural heritage upon which their future depends, and considering that this review of the further implementation of the Programme of Action aims to build on agreements already reached by the SIDS and the international community concerning sustainable development,
4. **Recalling** that SIDS are recognised as a special case for both environment and development because they are ecologically fragile and vulnerable, and because they face particular constraints in their efforts to achieve sustainable development and because their special physical circumstances often create difficulties in benefiting from global economic development,

¹ These are the 30 Small Island Developing and low-lying coastal states that are members of the AOSIS and of FAO (Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cape Verde, Comoros, Cook Islands, Cuba, Cyprus, Dominica, Fiji, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Jamaica, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu) and three non-AOSIS island states that are members of FAO (Bahrain, Dominican Republic and Haiti).

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5. **Recognising** that SIDS communities are custodians of large areas of the world's oceans and have a high share of global biodiversity, and that they are at the forefront in the fight against climate change and sea level rise, and that their exposure to recurrent natural disasters underline the urgent need to take action to implement the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS,
6. **Convinced** that the implementation of the Programme of action must be accelerated by progress in cross-cutting and interlinked areas of capacity-building, financing, and technology transfer, acknowledged the central place of the Barbados Global Conference on Sustainable Development in SIDS.
7. Since the Barbados Conference a number of events have taken place which would have influenced the UN General Assembly deliberations. In May 1996 a Technical Consultation on South Pacific Small Island Developing States on Sustainable Development in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, in Apia, Somoa. In 1995, the FAO Conference adopted the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
8. Some countries have already started formal programmes to re-design their fisheries policy and management practices in line with provisions of the Code. FAO has also developed Technical Guidelines in support of the implementation of the Code.
9. At the World Food Summit in November 1996, Heads of State and Government pledged their political will and common and national commitment to achieving food security for all. They called for particular attention to those countries affected by natural disaster or climate related ecological changes
10. "Small Island Developing States", as pointed out in the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit, "face the threat of land loss and erosion due to climate changes and sea level rises and have particular needs for their overall sustainable development. Improvements in trade, transportation, communication, human resources, stabilisation of income and higher export earnings will increase food security in these countries".
11. In March 1999, FAO organised a Ministerial Conference on Agriculture in SIDS, which prepared a Plan of Action. By focussing on the specific problems of agriculture, including fisheries and forestry, the Conference dealt with a sector that has a key role to play in achieving sustainable food security in the framework of economic and social development. This Plan of Action, provided a basis for activities in support of sustainable agricultural development in SIDS. Action and policies were designed in particular:
 - to prepare SIDS for participation in multi-lateral trade negotiations on agriculture;
 - to develop priority programmes for sustainable, intensified and diversified agricultural production, forestry and fisheries; and
 - to address problems related to natural resource management and protection of the environment.

12. The Special Ministerial Conference on Agriculture in SIDS agreed that the Plan of Action should focus on the following five commitments:

- i) Adjusting to changes in the Global Trading Environment.
- ii) Towards a more intensified, diversified and sustainable agriculture.
- iii) Meeting fisheries needs.
- iv) Ensuring sustainable management of land, water and forestry resources and environmental protection.
- v) Capacity building and institutional strengthening.

13. The Conference invited the Director-General of FAO to submit a developed version of the draft Plan of Action on Agriculture in SIDS to the FAO Council. At the 116th Session of the Council in June 1999, the Plan of Action was unanimously adopted and the Director-General was requested to submit it to the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in September 1999. The Council further recommended that the implementation of the Plan of Action be accorded high priority

14. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in June 1997, made decisions on the modalities for the full review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS. Through its resolution 52/202, the General Assembly reaffirmed commitment to implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS.

15. Small Island Developing States, share common constraints that impede their efforts to develop the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, while preserving their environment. Among the constraints are fragile ecosystems, vulnerability to natural hazards, poor communication facilities and dependence on external economic factors. On the other hand, most island States have the potential to gradually diversify their economies for export and import substitution, for tourism and for drawing greater benefits from the fisheries resources of their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). In determining their individual development objectives, SIDS can draw benefit from improved exchange of information with other islands sharing similar problems.

16. The international community, bilateral agencies, non-governmental organisations and the private sector, have a key role in supporting implementation of the FAO Plan of Action and the Barbados Plan of Action².

17. The focus of this paper is on the pivotal role of the agricultural sector in economic development of the Caribbean Small Island Development States (CSIDS)³ including the low lying developing States of Belize, Guyana and Suriname.

18. The agricultural sector in CSIDS is so diverse, between countries as well as regions, in terms of the natural environment, social practices and economic conditions that it is extremely difficult to address it in a manner that fits all circumstances. However, there are enough

² Such support could facilitate the adoption of appropriate national policies and, where necessary and appropriate, provide technical and financial assistance to help SIDS in fostering food security.

³ Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

similarities and commonalities to make it worthwhile to identify the key areas where positive change can assist countries in working toward sustainable agricultural and rural development. For example, agriculture in many small island countries is characterised by a combination of large-scale commercial production of cash-producing export crops and a small-scale sector which produces food crops primarily for local consumption⁴.

19. Specific characteristics of the CSIDS include: the open nature of their economies causing them to be affected by changes in the international economic environment leading to adverse movement of their terms of trade and balance of payment problems; increased competition facing domestic produce from imported foods; dependency on a few primary export products⁵; few trading partners and export markets⁶, absence of intra-sectoral linkages within these economies even for products which could be produced easily within countries of the region; the dependency on tourists from a few countries; evidence of large segments of the population facing problems of accessing adequate supplies of food, as a consequence of high poverty levels, high unemployment, declining real incomes and uneven distribution of benefits from economic growth; low level of investments in agricultural research notwithstanding that agriculture and fishing are important sectors of most of these economies and are responsible for a large proportion of domestic food supply⁷. Contributing to the fragile nature of the CSIDS is their inclination to natural disasters which impacts negatively on foreign exchange earnings and food security. These combined characteristics are so complex and inter-related that they demand attention which goes beyond environmental concerns alone.

20. A number of the CSIDS⁸, also face the challenge of eradication of the Tropical Bont Tick (*Amblyomma variegatum*) from their countries. This tick transmits *Cowdria ruminantium* and *Dermatophilus congolensis* that are major causes of economic losses. Annual losses to the tick and its transmitted diseases has been put at US\$35 million. At the same time the CSIDS spend an excess of US\$750 million on livestock product imports annually. During the past decade many significant new pest introductions into the Western Hemisphere have occurred through the CSIDS.

21. Aware of the complexity surrounding the achievement of overall sustainable economic development in the CSIDS and the role agricultural development could play in this, the following issues should be given priority for implementation in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States Plan of Action (CSIDS POA). These are:

- Agriculture and agricultural trade
- Linkages between tourism and agriculture

⁴ This structure is in a transition and is driven by changing world markets, trade imbalances, the quest for food security and growing human populations. The limited land area, the paucity of soils suitable for agriculture and the exposure to natural hazards, have led to a significant dependence on expensive food imports

⁵ sugar, rum, bananas, rice and fishery products

⁶ mainly preferential markets, EU, USA and Canada

⁷ The importance of agriculture and fishing industry for the supply of proteins, contribution to employment, GDP, and foreign exchange earnings; poverty head count index of 20% or more with some countries scoring more than 40%; the ratio of total debt service to total exports of goods and services continuing to show an increasing trend, currently around 20% with some countries having ratios exceeding 50%

⁸ Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Barbados, Dominica, St. Lucia

- Natural disaster preparedness and agriculture
- Drugs
- Poverty alleviation
- Environmental protection and sustainable development (including coastal and marine resources)
- Resource mobilisation and finance

AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL TRADE

22. The last decade has seen remarkable developments in the international trade system. These include the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO); the EU/ACP Lomé Convention; the formation of the North American Free Trade Area and the pending Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

23. The preferential trade agreements which have encouraged exports from the Caribbean to Europe and from the Caribbean and Central America to the United States have been revised or will be practically eroded. The WTO ruling on the preferential trading arrangements for bananas between the EU and the ACP is already impacting very negatively on the banana industry⁹. The reduction in subsidies of beet sugar in the EU as a result of WTO could also impact negatively on the price of sugar sold in the EU by a number of the CSIDS. Other traditional exports such as rice and rum are also under threat. Given the importance of these commodities in the earning of foreign exchange and the generation of employment in a number of CSIDS, their very socio-economic survival is being threatened.

24. The future market for traditional tropical export commodities is in doubt. Non-traditional exports are said to be the alternative, but competition for the markets for these products is intense. It will be imperative that the CSIDS put sound macro-economic policies in place and create a facilitating environment, including judicious use of “green box” measures, to increase their comparative advantage and export competitiveness.

25. Economic policy reforms, often stimulated by the need to borrow from international institutions, add to the pressure on trading sectors such as agriculture notwithstanding that many individual countries in the region have already taken significant steps in the direction of opening up their agricultural economies to trade¹⁰.

26. Summarised, three types of impact on the CSIDS are: (1) the commodity-specific impacts on markets through the changes in market access; (2) the restriction on exports for preferential goods {banana, sugar, rum and rice}; (3) and difficulty in meeting SPS requirements.

⁹ Whereas, for example in the past, the English-speaking CSIDS and Suriname had specific individual country quotas for export of bananas into the EU, this will now be aggregated into a common ACP quota

¹⁰ The prospect of further liberalisation in agriculture, combined with trade preferences in overseas markets impinges on the ability of the CSIDS to defend their domestic markets and put the CSIDS in an uncomfortable trade environment

27. The policy framework in the context of agricultural production and agricultural trade in assisting the CSIDS Plan of Action should therefore focus on:

- improving productivity and competitiveness of production and trade;
- enhancing agricultural diversification and increasing food security;
- improving access to and transfer of improved technology in agricultural production and trade;
- strengthening capacity for dealing with global economic changes and impacts;
- improving market access and support for meeting SPS requirements;
- supporting technical assistance to enhance participation in multilateral trade negotiations;
- improving competitiveness of the region's agricultural sector;
- promoting access to funds for implementation of policies and programmes dealing with issues such as poverty, food security and employment;
- increasing and improving the level of agricultural production;
- strengthening of capabilities for disease eradication and prevention¹¹;
- harmonisation of sanitary and phytosanitary legislation in line with the WTO SPS-Agreement;
- reduction of the risk of introducing pests and diseases by a regional import policies strengthening intra-regional trade;
- formulation of strategies, policies and programmes that encourage sustainable agricultural production and trade;
- compensating for losses due to erosion/deterioration of commodity preferential trade arrangements;
- assisting in creating the enabling environment for investment and external assistance.

LINKAGES BETWEEN TOURISM AND AGRICULTURE

28. It is well recognised that tourism plays a significant role in the economies of Caribbean countries. It is estimated that in 1998 about 32 million tourists visited the region, and the 19 million stay-over tourists spent an estimated US\$18 billion. A very high percentage of income earned by the tourist industry has to be spent on importing food to feed the tourist. Caribbean countries are net food importing countries, with food imports amounting to about US\$2.3 billion per annum, and a negative food trade balance of US\$0.45 billion.

¹¹ (e.g. FMD, heartwater)

29. Developing agricultural-tourism linkages is one way to increase the impact of tourism and to foster sustainable economic development. As the CSIDS lose their preferential markets as a result of globalisation and trade liberalisation, the challenge for market access increases. The tourism sector on their shores could in effect provide an almost captive “export” market alternative, to compensate for the disappearing preferential markets. Strategies for extending the impact of tourism should include:

- identification of the current impact of the tourism sector on CSIDS;
- assessment of the effect of the changes in employment opportunities, wages and other determinants;
- identification of challenges/opportunities for the agricultural sector and expected impacts;
- assessment of the effects of tourism on natural resources such as land and water use;
- producing foods preferred by tourists - training of farmers to meet new quality standards and maintain consistent supplies;
- enhancing safety of locally produced food consumption by tourists.

NATURAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND AGRICULTURE

30. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are found all over the world. Some have high population densities which, make them more vulnerable to hazards when compared to larger islands and continents. The disaster threat to the SIDS is considerable, although not all countries are exposed to threats of the same type, frequency or severity.

31. Natural phenomena which produce disasters affecting the CSIDS are caused by meteorological and geological events. The most notorious weather event to produce disasters in the region is the tropical cyclone (hurricane). An average of 80 tropical cyclones¹² are formed over tropical waters every year¹³, along with the associated flood and storm surges.

32. A large number of SIDS, including many of the CSIDS are volcanic in nature with steep slopes and rugged topography, and lie in the principal earthquake zones. A few have recently had volcanic eruptions. Other CSIDS are very flat or raised atolls (often only a few metres above sea level), and are vulnerable to a multitude of natural hazards other than tropical hurricanes, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. In addition, the threat of global warming might also cause loss of coastal territory and produce an increase in the frequency of coastal floods due to a rise in sea level. Any single event which causes a loss of life and great destruction can reverse years of development. Recovery is often slow and difficult for islands with limited economies.

33. SIDS are nearly wholly coastal zones, with a concentration of population in relatively small areas. This implies that economic as well as recreational activities are concentrated on coastal plains, which require integrated management. One of the common characteristics of SIDS

¹² also known as typhoons or hurricanes

¹³ producing winds in excess of 118 km/h and occasionally up to 300 km/h in the most severe cases

is that natural resources, in particular fresh water, are limited. This limited resource base allows little room for mistakes in natural resource utilisation and management.

34. Sustaining the development of SIDS is a very challenging exercise. Factors which would adversely affect this development could be divided into those relating to socio-economic issues and those due to natural disasters. The first category includes the over-exploitation of resources, adverse terms of trade, migration of skills, foreign debt servicing and drug trafficking. In the other category the devastation and death caused by natural hazards often bring thriving societies and economies to a sudden halt; and there is the cost of reconstruction which is often beyond the capabilities of some countries.

35. Agriculture, tourism and fisheries normally make up the prime industries, contributing to a substantial part of the Gross Domestic Product - (average 20-60%), but small-scale manufacturing activity is also fairly commonplace. Each of these sectors is susceptible to the ravages of tropical hurricanes and associated phenomena. Damage to agriculture is always overwhelming but is often overshadowed by the more dramatic damage to personal property, homes and buildings, boats, utilities, roads and fallen trees.

36. In recent years a number of severe hurricanes and storms have repeatedly devastated the agricultural sector of the Region and set back agricultural diversification programs. Losses while small in absolute terms are enormous in relation to the size and stage of development of the economies of the affected countries. The contribution of agriculture to GDP in 1988 for the hurricane affected islands ranged from 4% to 31%. In most of these islands export agriculture is the principal or second most important earner of foreign exchange, whilst being a very important source of domestic food supply.

37. Losses suffered by CSIDS as a result of hurricane disaster are of great importance in terms of the limited financial and natural resources available to these countries. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that both export and domestic agriculture suffer an immediate and sharp fall in output as a result of hurricane damage. This causes a decline in export earnings and an increase in agricultural imports and hence a deterioration in the balance of payments on capital and current accounts in the short and medium term. Efforts to reduce the impact of natural hazards often suffer from the fact that the irregularity and the uncertainty of the future occurrences of these hazards foster the notion that they do not qualify for high priority or urgent attention.

38. For example, Hurricane Allen destroyed the entire banana crop and severely damaged most hotels on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia in 1980. The return to full banana production took well over one year to be achieved, and it was much longer than that before tourism returned to normal. Significant unemployment and a dramatic loss of earnings ensued. Large numbers of private homes, public utilities and other infrastructure sustained intense damage.

39. When Hurricane David hit Dominica in 1979 serious damage was done to 50 percent of the 16,000 houses on the island, and 2,000 houses were completely destroyed. Two thirds of the island's population of 80,000 were left homeless. The banana industry was completely destroyed and took several years to completely recover. Hurricane Gilbert in 1988, caused severe destruction in Jamaica with hundreds of millions of United States dollars in damage.

40. A mechanism for combating the impact of natural disasters must be prepared. This mechanism must include long-term measures aimed at the provision of early warning mechanisms and the establishment and enforcement of local preventative measures along with community education, preparedness, response and rehabilitation.

41. The consideration of climate change issues invokes certain options concerning possible responses to sea level rise, such as the construction of sea-walls and reclamation and maintenance of reclaimed land, installation of pumping and drainage systems, land raising and beach nourishment projects, all of which are very costly.

42. Strategies for disaster preparedness and mitigation in CSIDS should focus on:

- Adoption of appropriate farming practices;
- Increased public awareness;
- Supporting national physical development and land use planning;
- The development of properly financed national preparedness and mitigation programmes;
- Training in damage and needs assessment techniques;
- Development of strategies and policies for rehabilitation and development programmes in the food and agricultural sectors;
- Internationally co-ordinated comprehensive risk assessment programmes;
- Strengthening the meteorological and hydrological data acquisition, telecommunication and data-processing infrastructure to improve forecasting of hurricanes;
- Investing in physical and institutional infrastructure and specific programmes for preparedness and mitigation.

DRUGS

43. The influence of illicit drugs continues to grow. Despite its illegality, the drug trade in some cases provides basic necessities for economic survival. It is therefore indisputable that there is a link between drugs and their implications for development.

44. The financial and employment effects generated by the illicit drug trade shadow the negative side effects on the economic, social and environmental front. In 1995 it was estimated that the global drug trade had an annual turnover of about US\$500 billion compared to US\$62 billion spent on development assistance in 1992.

45. The global area devoted to poppy cultivation was then estimated to have been 260,000 ha producing 3,700 tonnes of opium - equivalent to 370 tonnes of heroin. The cultivation of coca in 1992 occupied nearly 220,000 ha with an output of 340,000 tonnes of coca leaf. Marijuana cultivation is reportedly on the rise.

46. The CSIDS are located right between the major producing and consuming countries and are at great risk. They constitute a unique and homogeneous geographical chain to facilitate the illicit drug trade. Hundreds of small boats, cargo and cruise ships, private and commercial aeroplanes move daily between these islands. According to the Caribbean Drug Control Co-ordinating Mechanism, about half of the total cocaine production leaving South America for world markets goes through the Caribbean.

47. International traffickers consider the Caribbean in its entirety as a crucial gateway to reach the North American and, increasingly, the European markets. Moreover, the Caribbean as a prime tourist location is an interesting market. In addition, the cartels usually try to return their profits to the Caribbean for money laundering purposes.

48. No figures exist relative to the number of small farmers in the CSIDS employed in the illicit small-scale cultivation of marijuana on remote lands often in conjunction with traditional crops. Caribbean governments are aware of the dangers posed by the drug trade. In recognition of this, governments are taking significant steps, including strengthening police drug squads and coast guards, participating in counter-drug operations, adopting stronger anti-drug-money-laundering legislation and entering into regional and international law enforcement co-operation.

49. In 1996 the Regional Meeting on Drug Control Co-ordination and Co-operation in the Caribbean approved the Barbados Plan of Action for Drug Control. The transit traffic in illicit drugs, however, was undermining and threatening to their peace and security. The Plan of action included recommendations on national drug bodies, legislation, law enforcement, demand reduction measures and maritime co-operation.

50. In fighting the drug problem the agricultural sector could play an important role in providing economic opportunities for those involved in the production and trafficking of illicit drugs. The recommendations of the Barbados Plan of Action for Drug Control could be amended to include the creation of alternative economic opportunities outside of illicit drugs.

51. Some strategic options for linking the fighting of drugs through agriculture and devoting financial and other resources toward agricultural activities are:

- developing alternative development strategies for rural areas in order to substitute for illicit drug production;
- providing support mechanisms and long-term planning for rural communities involved in illicit drug production;
- addressing rural poverty through creating employment opportunities;
- increasing agricultural production and food security.

52. Benefits to be derived would include:

- institutional, political and economic stability/reduction of inflation
- improved agricultural production and food security
- generation of legitimate job opportunities
- helping farmers to improve their standard of living without having to fear the law
- reduction of crime

POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND FOOD SECURITY

53. Poverty has been on the rise in the Caribbean over the last two to three decades, despite considerable growth throughout the region in the 1980s. Today the spread of poverty, continues to increase. Inadequate macro and sectoral development economic policies including poverty alleviation policies contribute to the increase in poverty.

54. The low level of competitiveness, particularly in the agricultural sector, contributes to worsening of the economic situation. This situation is likely to worsen as a result of the implementation of trade agreements under the WTO that will lead to complete openness of Caribbean markets to all agricultural producers. In other instances preferential trade agreements for bananas, sugar and rice, will erode, with direct implications for employment and foreign exchange earnings, causing poverty to increase further.

55. The characteristics of poverty in the CSIDS vary considerably from one country to another. Although, according to some sources, poverty is a predominantly rural phenomenon in the CSIDS. The per capita income, which is often cited as a helpful indicator of the poverty level for the CSIDS, varied from US\$160 in Haiti to about US\$15,000 in the Bahamas in 1996. Countries with a per capita criteria below US\$2,000 included Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guyana and Suriname, where large sections of society in both rural and urban areas live below the poverty line. Vulnerable groups include old, pre-school and primary-school children and the disabled. The Caribbean Development Bank noted in the "Poverty Assessment Report" for St. Vincent and the Grenadines that 35 percent of households and 41.9 percent of the population were categorised as poor, while 30.5 percent of households, and 36.2 percent of the population were considered indigent¹⁴. Estimates for Suriname indicate that persons/households living below the poverty line in 1993 varied between 30-70 percent and the trend is increasing.

56. Poverty assessment studies conducted in the Caribbean showed that major determinants of poverty and vulnerability included:

- unemployment among non-professionals, non-technical, self-employed workers, (50-70% affected)
- limited access to resources - land, credit, improved technology and technical assistance

¹⁴ Estimates for the poverty line and indigence line were at US\$101.29 and US\$88.53 per person respectively.

- limited formal and non-formal education and skills
- insufficient non-agricultural employment opportunities
- low level of competition for agricultural produce
- lack of marketing for crops due to inadequate domestic purchasing power
- single parent families (women headed households) combined with an under-developed informal sector
- old age combined with a very limited safety net
- lack of alternatives to using children as family workers on farms or in other business
- low productivity and misuse of the small animals production systems of the small farmers
- division of family land to children resulting in a decrease in economies of scale
- limited resources to acquire adequate nutrition and to pay for health care and education

57. Being aware of the increase in poverty in the Caribbean, the United Nations convened a Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication in Trinidad and Tobago in October 1996, at which the Directional Plan of Action for Poverty Eradication in the Caribbean was Drafted and approved. The measures outlined in the Directional Plan of Action are a necessary complement to strategies for sustainable economic growth. The Directional Plan of Action was divided into 10 main areas. For each area, existing problems were identified, an assessment made of the situation and a description given of the constraints and opportunities, goals and targets, strategies and actions.

58. The complexity of poverty problems demands an integrated approach of all sectors of the economy. Education is important but health and social welfare are equally important. As primary sectors, agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry have a major role to play since poverty is found in rural areas. Due to the fact that the purchase of food, consumes the bulk of the income of the poor and the usual close correlation between poverty and food insecurity, it follows that poverty alleviation or its reduction must be given high priority if food security is to be improved. Strategies of CSIDS to alleviate poverty should therefore embrace:

- funding and support to impact assessment studies of trade liberalisation on rural and urban poverty
- policies to increase food security and reduce food imports
- increased agricultural research and development efforts aimed at increased productivity
- improved extension services, through governmental and non-governmental organisations
- improved infrastructure and socio-economic arrangements for rural poor and farmers
- improved access of farmers to both market information and necessary inputs

- increased linkages with sectors requiring agricultural produce (supermarkets, hotels, agro-industries, etc.) and reduce imports
- promotion and facilitation of the financing of cottage industries and micro-enterprise linked with the agricultural sector
- increased investment in modernisation of agricultural production and its expansion
- ensuring that policy and legal environments are appropriate for viable provision of financial services
- improvement in access to land
- promotion of mixed agriculture and livestock production systems for small farmers and other related policies and programmes which directly impact upon rural and urban poor.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

LAND

59. The 1994 Barbados Plan of Action for sustainable development of SIDS addresses, as part of its 15 programme areas, considerations and actions on environmental and natural resources conservation. The economic performance of most Caribbean SIDS and low-lying states is dominated by their dependence on renewable natural resources, mainly agriculture, fisheries and forestry. In countries such as the Bahamas, Barbados and Antigua & Barbuda where agriculture is not the mainstay of the economy, economic well being is supported by the aesthetic value of beaches and clean unpolluted seas for tourism and recreation.

60. The exploitation of crude oil resources in Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago; gold in Guyana and Suriname, and bauxite in Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname contributes substantially to these economies.

SELECTED SECTOR CONTRIBUTION TO GDP AS THEY RELATE TO NATURAL RESOURCE USE					
TOURISM	%	AGRICULTURE	%	MINING	%
Antigua	32.9	Belize	19.6	Guyana	17.0
Bahamas	60.0	Dominica	20.2	Jamaica	7.1
Barbados	14.5	Guyana	48.8	Suriname	12.6
		Haiti	40.0	Trinidad & Tobago	27.3
		Dom. Republic	14.0		
		St. Vincent & The Grenadines	14.1		

61. Natural resources of direct concern for protection include land, forests and fisheries, and directly linked are fresh water reserves. Non-renewable resources such as bauxite, crude oil and natural gas, and gold are of concern regarding their exploitation practices and the destructive impact this activity can have on land, fresh/ground water, forest and fishery resources, if not properly managed.

62. Land is a very fragile resource which can be eroded or damaged in such a manner that it becomes useless if not properly managed. Planning, management and legislation are therefore important issues when considering the sustainable use of land. This calls for the formulation of policies for promoting appropriate agricultural practices to maintain soil productivity and sound chemical use in order to prevent pollution of the soil and ground water as well as adequate handling of land when exploiting bauxite or other mineral resources. Avoidance of deforestation should be promoted to eliminate wastage of valuable top soil through erosion. The diversified use of land for agricultural production and food security, housing, industrial development and recreation requires sustainable development use. This should be supported by legislation and proper land use planning and management. Agriculture, which is a user of the resource, has a central role to play and should be directly involved in the planning of the use of the resource and its management.

63. The role of FAO is to assist the CSIDS, in the integrated planning and utilisation of land resources including inland and coastal areas. Stakeholder participation in decision making is crucial. Areas of support should also focus on promotion of economically feasible integrated production systems, including integrated plant nutrient systems; promotion of irrigation systems where technically and economically feasible and environmentally viable; promotion of water harvesting and runoff mixed farming techniques, considering crops and farm animals and strengthening the sustainability and profitability of existing sound farming systems.

FISHERIES

64. While men are mainly responsible for exploiting the fishery resource, women play an important role in the processing and marketing of fish caught by artisanal and small-scale fishermen. The industrial processing of fish is also a female-dominated activity.

65. A characteristic of the fishery resource is its open entry and common ownership which endangers its long-term sustainability and indirectly its contribution to GDP and food supply. While the Caribbean is endowed with good fishery resources, importation of frozen, salted and canned fish is high. The fishery resource - marine, coastal and inland water resources and their supporting habitat - coral reefs, mangrove and estuarine - requires planning for its use and management and for biological and economic sustainability. Since these water resources are also used for shipping, pollution of the water is a risk and should be avoided.

66. Among the problems facing the fishery resource of CSIDS are:

- overexploitation of traditional fishery resources
- underutilization of non-traditional pelagic and deep-sea species

- inadequate institutional strength and capacity of the public sector to manage the fishery resource
- difficulties in improving inshore fisheries management, using traditional knowledge and practices
- high post-harvest losses due to poor fish-handling, limited storage and processing facilities and weak marketing systems
- new and weak private sector industries affecting optimisation of the fishery resource potential
- lack of control and management of the fishery resource in the EEZ
- uncontrolled exploitation of the resource by illegal foreign fishing boats.

67. Recognising the importance of the fishery resource, the Conference of Parties to the UN Biodiversity Convention agreed that all parties would prepare a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. In addition, the Kyoto Plan of Action, the International Coral Reef Initiative stressed the development of a relevant policy framework for sustainable development of the fisheries of SIDS.

68. In supporting fisheries and aquaculture development in the CSIDS, FAO could collaborate in the following areas:

- Strengthening and enhancement of effective regional co-operation in fisheries development and management and increased assistance in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;
- Promotion of fisheries of coastal pelagic stocks and ensure CSIDS participation in the fishery and management of migratory oceanic pelagic species;
- Assistance in development of a joint programmes of action for fisheries development among CSIDS.
- Assist and collaborate in the collection and evaluation of available data on large pelagic species
- Foster co-ordination with relevant fishery management organisations¹⁵
- Enhance conservation and management of EEZ fisheries: the requirement to intensify inshore conservation and management drawing and to institute measures to relocate fishing effort from inshore to offshore areas so that the resources of the EEZ are utilised fully and rationally;

• ¹⁵ WECAFC, ICCAT, OECS Fishery Secretariat, CARICOM Fishery Co-ordination Unit.

- Institutional strengthening: to foster the development of effective and competent national fisheries administrations and to strengthen the fisheries conservation and management capacity of these administrations;
- Acquire skill and technology for utilisation of under-utilised non-traditional demersal and pelagic fishery species.
- Promote the demand for non-traditional marine fishery species
- Improved post-harvest fish management and marketing
- Strengthening the economic role of national fisheries industries and the privatisation of fisheries investments.
- Aquaculture and inland fisheries conservation, management and development through the introduction or strengthening of aquaculture and inland fisheries where feasible.

RESOURCE MOBILISATION AND FINANCE

69. More than 800 million people in developing countries suffer from chronic malnutrition. In these countries it is estimated that agriculture-related investment, over the 1990-2010 period is US\$166 billion per year, an increase of about 25% over the preceding decade. About 75% of this, as in the past, would need to be provided by farmers investing their own labour and funds. The remaining US\$41 billion per year would need to come from governments and international aid sources. External assistance to agriculture by bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, however, has fallen sharply in recent years. After climbing from US\$12 billion per year in the early 1980s to nearly US\$16 billion in 1988, international assistance to agriculture in developing countries fell to around US\$10 billion in 1995

70. In addition to the general reduction of international aid to agriculture in the developing countries, many of the CSIDS are heavily indebted, with debt repayment now consuming a significant percentage of the GDP or foreign exchange earnings. Greater debt forgiveness could for example, permit governments to devote more financial resources towards the promotion of "Green Box" measures as a means of domestic support to agricultural development that is WTO compliant. Particular areas deserving such support could include: research; pest and disease control, training; extension services and infrastructural services.

71. Most of the CSIDS are unable to access multi-lateral concessional loans, due to the fact that they are largely middle-income developing countries, other avenues need to be targeted therefore, to ensure that adequate finances can be mobilised to promote and achieve their sustainable development.

72. To create the policy framework and conditions so that optimal public and private investments are encouraged in equitable and sustainable development, governments, in co-operation with all actors of civil society, international and private financing institutions, and technical assistance agencies, should as appropriate:

- Promote policies and measures to enhance the flow of investments in agriculture;

- Give priority to human resource development and strengthen public institutions, in enhancing their role in promotional increased investment in agriculture;
- Promote national commitment to regional integration for sharing resources, harmonisation and co-operation towards a regional interdependence for support and strength;
- Encourage the development of public and private partnerships and other institutions in promoting socially and environmentally responsible investment and re-investment from domestic and foreign resources;
- Strengthen co-operation, at the regional and international level, to share the costs of investments in areas of common interest, such as appropriate technology through collaborative research and transfer as well as the sharing of investment experiences.

73. To mobilise and optimise the use of technical and financial resources from all sources, including debt relief, in order to raise investment activities for agriculture in the CSIDS, governments in co-operation with the international community and all actors of civil society, as well as international and private financing institutions, should, as appropriate:

- Undertake to raise sufficient and stable funding from private and public, domestic and foreign sources;
- Encourage investment to create infrastructures and management systems that facilitate sustainable utilisation and management of land and water resources and promote food security;
- Strengthen efforts toward fulfilment of the agreed ODA target of 0.7% of GNP;
- Promote mechanisms to mobilise domestic savings, including rural savings;
- Promote mechanisms to provide greater access to credit, including micro-credit, equally for men and women; and
- Intensify the search for practical and effective solutions to debt problems of developing countries, including the initiatives of the Bretton Woods Group, to reduce the total external debt burden of the heavily indebted poor countries.