

Antigua and Barbuda

SIDS 2014 Preparatory Progress
Report (July 2013)

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1 Introduction

The historic Rio Earth Conference brought sustainable development to the global political agenda. As part of this process and in recognition of the peculiar vulnerabilities and challenges faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) a separate program, the Barbados Program of Action (BPOA) and its subsequent successor, the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI), was developed. This approach was envisaged as a separate commitment strategy specifically for Small Island Developing States to effectively address sustainable development issues. Essentially, the overall objective of the BPOA and the MSI is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, and assessing the progress of SIDS in their capacity to address new and emerging challenges. It is important to note that the Barbados Program of Action represents the first commitment, collectively and comprehensively addressing the sustainable development issues faced by SIDS. In conjunction with the MSI it also provides a strategic framework that aims to mitigate the underlying vulnerabilities of SIDS.

The BOPA was adopted with fourteen priority areas and the necessary actions to be undertaken to meet these objectives. The priority areas included climate change and sea level rise, natural and environmental disasters, management of waste, coastal and marine resources, freshwater resources, land resources, energy resources, tourism resources, biodiversity resources, national institutions and administrative capacity, regional institutions and technical cooperation, transport and communication, science and technology and human resource development. The other cross sectoral areas identified as requiring attention included capacity building, institutional development at the national, regional and international levels, cooperation in the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, trade and economic diversification as well as finance. In culmination of the ten-year review of the BPOA there was the adoption of the MSI for the further implementation of the BPOA. In recognition of the fact that SIDS were still having constraints in implementing the BPOA the MSI set out nineteen priority areas building on the original fourteen from the BPOA. The additional areas included graduation from least developed country status, trade, sustainable production and consumption, health, knowledge management and culture. These were aimed at helping each SIDS to meet the international targets and goals established.

As part of the reporting requirements under these two strategies as well as to assess their progress, countries are expected to conduct internal and regional assessments prior to the 2014 SIDS Conference to determine how the first conference and other subsequent processes have influenced their development agenda. In preparation for this important meeting SIDS member states have held several regional meetings including at the levels of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean States (GRULAC). Subregional meeting led to a series of recommendations at the regional and global levels, which included calls for the strengthening of the CARICOM and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), establishing a new model of ocean governance and improving the coordination with the United Nations system in relation to defining sustainable development indicators. In line with the country priorities identified by Antigua and Barbuda, the following emerging issues were acknowledged at the meeting: non-communicable diseases, ecosystem services, the challenges associated with the opening of new shipping routes in the Arctic region and higher sea levels, climate change and energy, food and livelihood security. Priority was also placed on the weather-related disasters that have put the countries of the Caribbean to the test over the last decade. These have had serious implications for the economies of the region in addition to the global economic recession.

At the level of the GRULAC, a meeting held in Santiago Chile on the 7-8th September 2012, identified the following priorities for the countries in the region. Antigua and Barbuda supports these priorities and aligns itself at the national level with a commitment to ensure their implementation. The priorities include:

- The eradication of extreme poverty,
- A change in patterns of production and consumption, in which the developed countries should play a leading global role,
- Effective access to and transfer of safe and appropriate technologies, without conditionality and on preferential terms for developing countries,
- The promotion of a global intellectual property rights regime that facilitates the transfer of such technologies, in keeping with the commitments undertaken by each country,
- Full implementation of the right to access to environmental information, participation and justice enshrined in Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration,
- A global institutional framework for sustainable development which is efficient and flexible and ensures the effective integration of its three pillars,
- New, additional, stable and predictable financing for supporting implementation activities in developing countries,
- The fulfilment of mitigation and adaptation commitments in relation to climate change and the building of resilience to its impacts,
- Greater South-South cooperation and exchange of successful experiences,
- The restoration of harmony with nature,
- Better ways of measuring countries' wealth that adequately reflect the three pillars of sustainable development.

Despite these challenges progress has been made at the national level as Antigua and Barbuda has undertaken a number of national and regional initiatives to attain sustainable development. These initiatives have been outlined in the sections below based on the priorities considered in the BPOA and the MSI.

The preparation process for SIDS 2014 is being led by the Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the UN in New York and at the national level by the Environment Division and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

1.1 Country Profile

Antigua is located at 17° 10' N and 61° 55' W with a total land area of 270 Km². Approximately 40 Km to the north is the island of Barbuda which is located at 17° 35' N and 61° 48' W with a land area of 155 Km². The islands are part of the Leeward Islands which are in the north-eastern section of the Caribbean archipelago. The twin islands of Antigua and Barbuda sit on an extensive underwater platform known as the Barbuda Bank which has a total area of 3,500 Km² and is within the EEZ estimated at 110,071 Km².

In 2007, Antigua and Barbuda was ranked 57th on UNDP's Human Development Index making it the

second highest ranked in the OECS after Saint Kitts and Nevis which was ranked 54th. This high human development rank is based on a life expectancy at birth of 73.9 years, a literacy rate of 85.8%, and GDP per capita of US\$12,500 in 20045. Such a high standard of living makes the twin island one of the three most attractive places for intra-regional migrants within the GEF SGP's subregional programme area, with the others being Barbados and Saint Lucia.

According to the Caribbean Development Bank, Antigua and Barbuda's economy recorded the best economic performance in the 25 years since independence when GDP grew by 12% in 2006 compared with 5% in the previous year. In 2005, the GDP at market prices was estimated at US\$459.487 million and the GDP per capita was US\$10,513. This relatively high GDP per capita was made up of contributions from various sectors as follows: Transportation and Communications (20.8%); Government Services (16.8%); Construction (16.2%); Financial and Business Services (16.1%); and Hotels and Restaurants (9.9%). Comparatively, the Agriculture sector contributed only 3.6% to the value of GDP in 2005 and has continued its steady decline for a number of years. The main direct and indirect contributor to GDP is tourism which is the most significant economic driver for the economy. In 2005, CDB estimates gross tourism revenue amounted to almost 50% of GDP. Like many other SIDS in the Caribbean, the economy of Antigua and Barbuda has transitioned from an agrarian to a more service oriented economy within the last 25 years, but the economy lacks diversity and therefore resilience.

Crime, poverty and environmental degradation are considered major issues affecting the future development of Antigua and Barbuda. The CDB in its recent economic review noted that violent crime involving firearms had the potential to undermine the "... social and economic fabric of the country, but also because of its potential impact on tourism". Poverty is also a major concern with estimates as high as 18% being quoted, up from an estimated 12% in 1994. This increase is of concern and the Government is well aware of this situation. That same report also noted that there was an increase in evidence of coastal degradation which could have adverse impacts on the quality of the environment and the tourism industry. Antigua and Barbuda enjoys a high standard of living but the economy like many SIDS, is fragile and vulnerable to social and environmental issues, which includes the impacts of disasters, in particular hurricanes.

1.2 Report Overview

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has taken many strides in its effort to implement the Barbados Program of Action to achieve the agenda 21. This report provides an overview of the advancements, gaps and emerging challenges of the country.

The report first summarizes the progress made in the thematic areas of the BPOA and MSI with specific mentions of the significantly improved policy and legislative framework that guides national considerations for sustainable development. Pivotal to the policy and legislative framework for sustainable development, the reports highlights the National Physical Development Plan (NPDP) and National Environmental Management Strategy which cumulatively creates an overarching framework for land use developments. The upcoming enactment of the Environment Protection and Management Bill signifies the country's progress towards environmental sustainability and economic development.

The report will demonstrate that although the Government of Antigua and Barbuda has demonstrated much political will through the development and adoption of national policies addressing the various facets of sustainable development, climate change adaptation and mitigation presents a great challenge, in addition to invasive species and global economic trends and policies. The growing impacts of climate change and responsibility to meet international mitigation standards have enlisted a significant amount of financial investment to address this undue pressure. Not only within the context of the national economy, but greater financial assistance is required to support the implementation of national policies aimed at adapting the environment and natural resources as well as social liveability.

Overall, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda has made significant effort to enact the legislation and establish an enabling environment necessary to address the management of its natural resources. However, the process for creating a legislative environment suitable to promote the basic tenants of sustainable development has not followed a coordinated path.

2 National Assessment: Where we are

The following chapter provides a brief summary of the national actions undertaken to implement the BPOA and MSI. The chapter first summarizes the progress made within the key focal areas of the BPOA and MSI as well as major challenges experienced therein. Conclusion of this chapter highlights the national policy and legislative framework developed to support the advancements made in environmental management and development planning to attain sustainable development despite constraints within the thematic areas of trade liberalization and globalization.

2.1 Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

Antigua and Barbuda ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on February 2nd 1993 while the Kyoto Protocol, a subset of UNFCCC, was ratified on October 28th 1998. As a country, Antigua and Barbuda is in the process of preparing its Third National Communication however, the Second National Communication for Antigua and Barbuda, submitted in late 2011 highlights the current climate change situation including present and futuristic impacts. It also details the impact climate change will have on the weather and climate sensitive economic sectors. This subsection also details the implementation of Antigua and Barbuda's obligations under the UNFCCC, including the development of a climate change database, implementation of monitoring programs, research programs and economic instruments and policies as well as development of an inventory of GHG.

Like many SIDS, Antigua and Barbuda's contribution to global CO₂ emissions is insignificant, but the impacts of global warming will be severe because of its high vulnerability. Antigua and Barbuda's survival depends on its natural resources and climatic condition. Without appropriate adaptation, climate change may have an extremely harmful impact on the sustainability of the development process with the coastal zone being most vulnerable. Table 1 highlights the following as the projected changes to Antigua and Barbuda's climate due to global warming:

Climate Parameter	Predicted change for the Insular Caribbean ^{F1}	Predicted change for Antigua and Barbuda ^{F2}	Notes
Air temperature	Increase of 1.8 - 4.0°C by 2099	Increase of 1.3°C by the 2050s Increase of 1 - 3.5°C by the end of the century	<p>There is evidence to suggest that the climate of Antigua and Barbuda is changing. Both maximum and minimum temperatures have increased in the recent past.</p> <p>The warming trend is expected to continue. The country is projected to be 1 to 3.5 degrees warmer by the end of the century. Winter months will see marginally larger increases in temperature than summer months.</p> <p>The frequency of very hot days will increase, while very cool nights will decrease.</p>
Sea surface temperature	~1.7°C by the end of the century	Up to 2°C by the end of the century	
Sea level rise	Rise of 0.18 – 0.59 m by 2099	Rise of 0.24 m by 2050^{F3}	Caribbean Sea levels are projected to rise by up to 0.5 m by the end of the century.
Carbon dioxide	Reduction in all of Antigua and Barbuda	Antigua and Barbuda	

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