

## **1998, Year of the Oceans: Saving the Caribbean**

by

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## **Introduction**

The Earth's marine environment -- oceans, seas, and coastal zones-- cover over seventy percent of the planet's surface. Moreover, more than sixty percent of the people on Earth live within approximately sixty kilometers of an ocean or sea shoreline (UNEP-ROLAC 1998a).

Oceans and seas play a crucial and decisive role in the Earth's biological, geological, and chemical processes. Therefore, their health is undoubtedly critical to the planet's well-being. For a very long period of time, oceans and seas were regarded as infinitely vast with an unlimited supply of living resources. Regrettably, they were also considered to have an endless capacity to absorb and recycle the wastes produced by human societies. This perception is inevitably changing.

Our marine environment is in trouble. It has become particularly vulnerable to environmental damage produced by pollution and overexploitation of resources resulting from human, economic, and industrial activities. Coastal and island settlements are threatened by human activities such as fishing, shipping, tourism, and urban waste and pollution, among others (UNEP 1997: 22). Consequently, it should not come as a surprise that for decades concerned environmentalists, scientists, citizens, states, and governmental and non-governmental organizations have pursued courses of action that would facilitate the protection and management of our oceans and seas.

In recognition to the importance of the marine environment to life on Earth, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared 1998 as the International Year of the Oceans (UNEP-ROLAC 1998a: 1). UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) has been charged with the responsibility of overseeing the Oceans 98 Programme, which focuses on education, media, and outreach activities (UNEP-CEP 1998m).

The scope of this paper is, therefore, to inquire into the role and importance of the Caribbean Environment Programme --what Rivera (1998a, 1998b) names the Marine Environment Regime for the Wider Caribbean Region (MERWCR)-- and into its efforts in promoting environmental commitment and concerted actions amongst the countries of the region targeted at rescuing and protecting the region's marine environment.

### **The Marine Environment Regime for the Wider Caribbean Region (MERWCR)**

This paper establishes that the Marine Environment Regime for the Wider Caribbean Region (MERWCR) fulfills the requirements necessary to be considered a regime. The MERWCR is a consensus or negotiated regime. The action plan; the convention and protocols; the level of cooperation that has occurred on this issue area; and the governance system created to oversee, implement, and achieve the goals and objectives for the marine environment of the region conform with the basic definition of international regimes (Krasner 1983) or governance systems (Young 1994, 1995, 1997; Young, Demko, and Ramakrishna 1996). In other words, the MERWCR has a set of principles, norms, rules, agreements, and decision-making procedures created to deal with a specific issue area or problem: the region's marine environment.

The Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) is one of thirteen regions<sup>1</sup> included as part of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s Regional Seas Programme.<sup>2</sup> The Regional

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<sup>1</sup> The other regions are: Mediterranean Region, Kuwait Region, West and Central African Region, East Asian Seas Region, South-East Pacific Region, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Region, Eastern African Region, South Pacific Region, Black Sea Region, North-West Pacific Region, South Asian Seas Region, South-West Atlantic Region (action plan currently under development) (UNEP 1998).

<sup>2</sup> The Regional Seas Programme is one of the programmatic components of what used to be the Centre for Oceans and Coastal Areas Programme Activity Center (OCA/PAC). OCA/PAC has been merged with the Freshwater unit of UNEP and is now called the Water Branch under which the Regional Seas Programme is still a very important component.

Seas Programme was initiated in 1974 as an “action-oriented programme” (UNEP 1982a: 1; 1995: 1) that follows a regional approach for the control of marine pollution and protection and management of the marine and coastal areas. The Mediterranean<sup>3</sup> became the first region to develop and adopt an action plan for the area and since then all other regional programs have followed the three-step program implementation process: the adoption of an action plan; the adoption of a framework convention to serve as the legal base for the development and implementation of the program; and the adoption of a number of more specific protocols, dealing with different aspects of the protection and management of marine coastal resources.

The WCR is home to a large and diverse ecosystem, including approximately fourteen percent of the world’s coral reefs<sup>4</sup> (Schumacher, Hoagland, and Gaines 1996: 100). The diversity of the region is not limited to its marine environment. The Caribbean is also a region characterized by an incredibly broad range of peoples, cultures, customs, traditions, religions, languages, and political and economic systems. Furthermore, an estimated 40% of the approximately 80 million inhabitants in the WCR resides within two kilometers of the coast (UNEP-CEP 1996b; 1998i). The WCR, as illustrated in Table 1, encompasses twenty-five nation-states (13 island states and 12 continental states) and twelve non-sovereign territories and departments of France, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Despite of their differences, these countries have decided that collective action is the correct alternative if the marine environment of the region is to be protected.

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<sup>3</sup> The Mediterranean Region program (MedPlan) has been studied extensively by Peter M. Haas (1989, 1990, 1991, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> The United Nations General Assembly declared 1997 as the International Year of the Coral Reef.

**Table 1 - Political Units of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR)**

<b>Nation-States</b>	<b>Territories/Dependencies</b>
<i>Islands States:</i>	<i>France:</i>
Antigua and Barbuda	French Guyana
Bahamas	Guadeloupe
Barbados	Martinique
Cuba	
Dominica	<i>Netherlands:</i>
Dominican Republic	Aruba
Grenada	Netherland Antilles
Haiti	
Jamaica	<i>United Kingdom:</i>
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Anguilla
Saint Lucia	British Virgin Islands
Saint Vincent and The Grenadines	Cayman Islands
Trinidad and Tobago	Montserrat
	Turks and Caicos Islands
<i>Continental States:</i>	<i>United States:</i>
Belize	Puerto Rico
Colombia	U.S. Virgin Islands
Costa Rica	
Guatemala	
Guyana	
Honduras	
Mexico	
Nicaragua	
Panama	
Suriname	
United States	
Venezuela	

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Source: UNEP-CEP 1998o

The Action Plan for the WCR was adopted by twenty-eight states at the First Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme which

was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, on April 8, 1981 (UNEP-CEP 1998b).<sup>5</sup> It is, therefore, in 1981 that the WCR became the fourth designated UNEP Regional Seas Programme.

The First Intergovernmental Meeting also established the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) to support the activities of the action plan, entrusted its management to UNEP, designated UNEP as the secretariat responsible for coordinating the implementation of the action plan, and called for the development of regional legal agreements to provide a legal framework for the plan. The Contracting Parties at the First Intergovernmental Meeting also established a Monitoring Committee (MonCom) consisting of nine nation-states of the region (UNEP-CEP1998n). The MonCom is charged with the responsibility of providing guidance to the secretariat with regard to the implementation of the action plan in the period between the intergovernmental meetings.

After the Action Plan for the Wider Caribbean Region was adopted, two other meetings of legal experts were convened by UNEP, in cooperation with the International Maritime Organization (New York in December 1981 and July 1982) to review a draft convention for the protection and development of the marine environment and a draft protocol concerning cooperation in combating oil spills. The meetings reviewed and revised the draft convention and protocol and recommended that they be presented to a Conference of Plenipotentiaries for their adoption (UNEP 1989: 3).

The Conference of Plenipotentiaries was held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, March 21-24, 1983. The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region was approved and signed by thirteen of the states and territories

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<sup>5</sup> The action plan is contained in **Development and Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region: A Synthesis** (UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 14, 1982b).

participating in the Action Plan as well as by the European Economic Community<sup>6</sup>. The same states and territories also signed a Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region.<sup>7</sup> In order for the convention and protocol to enter into force they have to be ratified by nine nation-states (UN 1983b: Article 28).<sup>8</sup> Most ratifications took place between 1986 and 1990. The Convention is presently ratified by nineteen states.

Evidently, the nation-states of the WCR were able to compromise allowing for the creation of the CEP. The CEP embraced and continue to embrace the following objectives:

- (a) assistance to the smaller (island) States and Territories;
- (b) use of the Region's (scarce) human, financial and natural resources through technical co-operation between developing countries (TCDC);
- (c) regional self-reliance through the sharing of experience on common problems;
- (d) co-operation on problems of transnational or international nature, including natural man-induced disasters;
- (e) stimulation and co-ordination of international assistance activities;
- (f) strengthening of the existing national and subregional institutions;
- (g) demonstration of the Region's appreciation of the importance of the environment/development process;
- (h) increasing public interest in, and awareness of the environment/development process (UNEP 1982b: 23).<sup>9</sup>

### **The Cartagena Convention and Its Protocols<sup>10</sup>**

The MERWCR counts with the existence of several legal instruments which capture the issue-areas, the scope, and the level of commitment agreed upon by the countries of the region:

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<sup>6</sup> The signatory countries were: Colombia, Grenada, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Lucia, the United States, Venezuela, France, and United Kingdom.

<sup>7</sup> The European Economic Community (now the European Union) did not sign the Oil Spills Protocol.

<sup>8</sup> The Cartagena Convention makes clear that "no State or regional integration organization may become a contracting party to the Convention without also becoming a contracting party to at least one protocol" (UN 1983b: 4).

<sup>9</sup> See also UNEP-CEP 1998b.

<sup>10</sup> Porter and Brown define a framework convention as "intended to establish a set of principles, norms, and goals and formal mechanisms for cooperation on the issue" and protocols as "more specific obligations on the parties on the overall issue in question: (1996: 17).

### *1. The Cartagena Convention*

*The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region*, better known as the *Cartagena Convention*, is a framework convention (UN 1983, UNEP-CEP 1998h). It is an “umbrella agreement” (UN 1983b: 4), for a regional marine environment regime for the WCR. This agreement has thirty articles which provide the legal framework for the implementation of the Action Plan. Its main objective is to protect and manage the marine environment and coastal areas of the WCR. The WCR is defined by Article 2, Section 1 of the Cartagena Convention as the marine environment of the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea, and the areas of the Atlantic Ocean adjacent thereto, south of 30 degree north latitude and within 200 nautical miles of the Atlantic coasts of the States of the region (UN 1983, UNEP-CEP 1998h). Along those lines, the Contracting Parties agreed to:

1. Take all necessary measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the Convention area (Article 4), particularly pollution from ships (Article 5), dumping of wastes (Article 6), land-based sources (Article 7), activities relating to exploration and exploitation of the sea-bed (Article 8) and airborne pollution (Article 9);
2. Protect and preserve rare or fragile ecosystems as well as the habitat of depleted, threatened or endangered species and other marine life especially protected areas (Article 10);
3. Cooperate in dealing with pollution emergencies in the Convention area (Article 11);
4. Cooperate in assessing environmental impacts in the Convention area (Article 12) and in exchanging data and other scientific and technical information (Article 13);
5. Establish rules and procedures for the determination for liability and compensation for damage (dispute resolution) resulting from pollution of the Convention area (Article 14); and



6. Designate UNEP to discharge secretariat functions under the Convention (Article 15).

Therefore, the Cartagena Convention put forward the general obligations for the Contracting Parties in a wide range of activities after the identification of the sources of marine pollution which require control and the environmental management issues for which cooperative efforts are to be made. Thus, two protocols addressing specific issues or problems identified in the Cartagena Convention have been developed and a third one has been drafted (UNEP-CEP 1998d).

## 2. *The Oil Spills Protocol*

The *Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region*, better known as the *Oil Spills Protocol* (1998o), details more specific obligations to “prevent and combat pollution resulting from oil spills, damage to the marine environment, including coastal areas, of the wider Caribbean region” (UN 1983b, Preamble). It was negotiated concurrently with the Cartagena Convention in 1983 and entered into force on October 11, 1986 (UNEP-CEP 1998g; 1998h; 1998o).

In order to assist the countries of the WCR in preventing and responding to major oil pollution incidents,<sup>11</sup> the International Maritime Organization (IMO) established the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre - Wider Caribbean (REMPEITC-Carib) in Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles. The Centre was established on a provisional basis by decision of the Seventh Intergovernmental Meeting of the Action Plan and the Fourth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and Protocols in December 1994.

REMPEITC-Carib was opened on June 15th 1995, within the framework of the CEP, under the

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<sup>11</sup> Nineteen major oil spills have occurred in the WCR since 1962 (REMPEITC-Carib 1998c).

management of the UNEP and the IMO, and with support of the Governments of the Netherlands Antilles, The Netherlands, and the United States (REMPEITC-Carib 1998g).

The main objectives of the Centre is “to carry out activities to strengthen national and regional oil response capabilities, facilitate co-operation and mutual assistance, exchange information and co-ordinate the mobilisation of regional and international resources in an emergency” (REMPEITC-Carib 1997b: 2). Therefore, the Centre performs various tasks related to “oil pollution preparedness, response, assistance / information, training and exercise” (REMPEITC-Carib 1997b: 3). Contingency plans have already been implemented for the following countries: Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, French Antilles, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Venezuela (REMPEITC-Carib 1997c).

### 3. *The SPAW Protocol*

The *Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife*, better known as the *SPAW Protocol* (1998p), addresses the conservation of biological diversity. The SPAW Protocol is directed towards expanding and implementing Article 10 of the Cartagena Convention, which requires Parties to take “all appropriate measure” to protect wildlife habitat in specially protected areas (UNEP-CEP 1995: 7). Nevertheless, it goes beyond the provisions of Article 10 by incorporating

detailed provisions addressing the establishment and management of protected areas and buffer zones for *in situ* conservation of wildlife, both national and regional cooperative measures for the protection of wild flora and fauna, the introduction of non-native or genetically altered species, environmental impact assessment, research, education, and other topics (UNEP-CEP 1995: 7).

The SPAW Protocol was adopted in two stages, its text in 1990 and its Annexes in 1991 (UNEP 1991). However, the protocol has not yet entered into force (UNEP 1998g). Although fifteen parties have signed the Protocol, only six have ratified it.<sup>12</sup>

Table 2 summarizes the status of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols in regards to the nation-states that have signed and/or ratified them. The Cartagena Convention has 19 Contracting Parties, including three extra-regional Western European states: France, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. However, nine (9) countries from the region have not ratified the Cartagena Convention and the Oil Spills Protocol yet. These are: Bahamas, Belize, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts & Nevis, and Suriname.

**Table 2 - Status of the Cartagena Convention and Its Protocols**

Nation-State	Convention		Oil Spills Protocol		SPAW Protocol	
	Signed	Ratified	Signed	Ratified	Signed	Ratified
Antigua & Barbuda		X		X	X	
Bahamas						
Barbados	X	X	X	X		
Belize						
Colombia	X	X	X	X	X	X
Costa Rica		X		X		
Cuba		X		X	X	X
Dominica		X		X		
Dominican Republic						
France	X	X	X	X	X	
Grenada	X	X	X	X		
Guatemala	X	X	X	X	X	
Guyana						
Haiti						
Honduras	X		X			

<sup>12</sup> Nine (9) ratifications are needed for the Protocol to enter into force.

Nation-State	Convention		Oil Spills Protocol		SPAW Protocol	
	Signed	Ratified	Signed	Ratified	Signed	Ratified
Jamaica	X	X	X	X	X	
Mexico	X	X	X	X	X	
Netherlands	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nicaragua	X		X			
Panama	X	X	X	X	X	
Saint Kitts & Nevis						
Saint Lucia	X	X	X	X	X	X
St. Vincent & The Grenadines		X		X	X	X
Suriname						
Trinidad & Tobago		X		X	X	
United Kingdom	X	X	X	X	X	
United States	X	X	X	X	X	
Venezuela	X	X	X	X	X	X
European Economic Community	X					

(Source: UNEP-CEP 1996c: Annex III; 1998g)

#### 4. *The Land-based Sources of Pollution Protocol*

Efforts to expand the scope of the MERWCR are currently underway. A third *Protocol on Marine Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBSMP)* has been drafted in collaboration with scientists with expertise on the subject (UNEP-CEP 1998b). This new protocol will respond directly to Article 7 of the Cartagena Convention. Negotiations were held in June of this year, but unfortunately the contracting parties did not complete the protocol. It is expected that the next round of negotiations and the adoption of the protocol will take place in the summer of 1999 (Kasten 1998).

## **Institutional Arrangements**

The Caribbean Regional Co-ordinating Unit (UNEP CAR/RCU) for the Caribbean Environment Programme was established in 1986. The official inauguration of the RCU's headquarters took place in 1987 in Kingston, Jamaica (UNEP-CEP 1987b: 1). The UNEP CAR/RCU answers and is responsible to the member governments. The RCU Secretariat to the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) has the general task of collecting, reviewing, and disseminating information related to the coastal and marine environment of the WCR (UNEP-CEP 1998c). A major part of this information is generated by CEP scientific and technical studies coordinated by RCU staff and implemented through national and technical focal points, bodies of experts, scientific and academic institutions, regional and subregional institutions, and individual consultants (UNEP-CEP 1998c).

The CAR/RCU also organizes meetings of experts, and manages arrangements for the MonCom meetings and biennial Intergovernmental Meetings. The arrangements for CEP meetings include the preparation of relevant documents to be presented at these meetings such as: draft protocols, technical and administrative reports, annual workplans based on the advice of panel of experts and country proposals (UNEP-CEP 1998c). The Secretariat is supported by a professional and an administrative support staff with a Deputy Director in charge of overseeing the operation of the CAR/RCU.

The CEP focuses on four regional subprograms (UNEP-CEP 1998b):

1. *Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region (SPAW)*

This program is responsible for enhancing the promotion of the SPAW Protocol among the governments of the region to ensure its ratification. Noteworthy is the fact that this program responds directly to the objectives and activities of *Agenda 21* regarding the protection of habitats

and fragile ecosystems, the designation of protected areas, and the protection and restoration of endangered species, among others (UNEP-CEP 1997b: 11; 1998q).

2. *Marine Pollution and Integrated Environmental Management (AMEP)*<sup>13</sup>

In December 1996, the decision was made to merge the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution (CEPPOL) and the Integrated Planning and Institutional Development for the Management of Marine and Coastal Resources (IPID) Programmes into the AMEP Programme (UNEP-CEP 1996a). The AMEP Programme deals with the assessment and management of environmental pollution in relation to the Land-Based Sources Protocol. It is a program which supports the activities required for the establishment and enforcement of necessary measures to prevent, reduce, and control marine pollution. In addition, it intends to assist countries in the development of integrated environmental planning and management of coastal and marine areas (UNEP-CEP 1997b: 17, 1998a) according to the methodology laid out in the *Guidelines for Integrated Planning and Management of Coastal and Marine Areas in the Wider Caribbean Region* (UNEP-CEP 1996b).

3. *Information Systems for the Management of Marine and Coastal Resources (CEPNET)*

This program has been created to provide a solid technical foundation and supporting infrastructure for the CAR/RCU secretariat including information management services, database development and maintenance, computer and network support, and related technical training.

The main objective is to strengthen the coastal and marine resources management capabilities of

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<sup>13</sup> The 1996 Eight Intergovernmental Meeting decided to combine the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution (CEPPOL) and the Integrated Planning and Institutional Development (IPID) Programmes into a single program under a new name, AMEP). See UNEP-CEP (1996a: 1-2).

the seventeen Inter American Development Bank country members<sup>14</sup> participating in the CEP. The CEPNET Programme will eventually develop an external server which will host CEP's regional information. It will also be capable of acting as a clearing-house for marine and coastal data and information in the Wider Caribbean Region (UNEP-CEP 1997b: 23, 1998e).

4. *Education, Training, and Awareness for the Management of Marine and Coastal Resources (ETA).*<sup>15</sup>

The ETA Programme is supposed to address the need for education and training related to activities within the other subprograms of the CEP. The goal is to provide the governments of the region with the information, guidelines, and recommendations required for the improvement of educational systems that will allow for the appropriate management of marine and coastal resources. In addition, this program is intended to enhance the utilization of the information and or data produced by the other subprograms for environmental educational, training, and awareness purposes (UNEP-CEP 1997b: 28, 1998b).

Evidently, the MERWCR has been strengthened by an array of legal instruments as well as programs and activities aimed at rescuing, protecting, and managing the Caribbean marine environment. However, this regional regime is not exempt from challenges that could hinder its future endurance and enhancement or could make it a strong and effective regime. The next section presents some of the challenges to be faced by the MERWCR now an into the new millennium.

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<sup>14</sup> For instance, Cuba cannot participate in a CEPNET/IDB pilot project, even though it is a CEP member, because Cuba is not a member of the IDB. IDB is funding the project and it requires that participants must be IDB members. This situation generated a long discussion during the last MonCom Meeting held in Kingston, Jamaica in June 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Due to financial constrains ETA's Programme Officer position has not been filled. The same applies to the Legal Officer position which is also vacant.

## **Challenges at the Threshold of the New Millennium**

There are at least four major challenges that would test the MERWCR' endurance and effectiveness: convention and protocol ratification, land-based sources of marine pollution, monitoring and evaluative mechanisms, and financial solvency.

### *1. Convention and Protocol Ratification*

The evidence presented elsewhere in this paper clearly shows that the Cartagena Convention and the Oil Spills Protocol have not been ratified by nine nation-states of the region: Bahamas, Belize, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, St. Kitts & Nevis, and Suriname. Moreover, the SPAW Protocol has not even entered into force. One could infer from these facts that the level commitment of the governments of the region is not, at the present time, as strong as it was in the early 1980s when the regime was in the process of being implemented. An effective campaign and action plan must be put in place to urge and convince the national legislatures of the governments of the region that have not ratified the convention and/or protocols to do so.

If this pattern of "no-ratifications" does not change, the prospects for a negotiated Land-based Sources of Pollution Protocol entering into force are rather slim. The Caribbean countries' commitment must begin by signing and also ratifying the Cartagena Convention and all its protocols.

### *2. Dealing with Land-based Sources of Marine Pollution*

I would argue that if the Protocol on Marine Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities is successfully adopted and ratified by the sovereign states of the WCR, the biggest challenge would be to ensure that the countries of the region will really commit themselves to its effective implementation. The commitment must come in the form of national legislation and



public policies crafted in compliance with the Protocol and in response to the need to tackle the marine degradation and pollution generated by:

- inadequate sewage systems, treatment plants, and disposal practices;
- oil hydrocarbons resulting from one of the world's largest oil producing areas (especially in Colombia, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and Venezuela);
- sediments (produced the deforestation of the river basin watershed, mining and dredging operations) carried into the ocean by rivers;
- the discharge of nutrients (especially nitrogen and phosphorus compounds which cause eutrophication);
- the use of pesticides such as insecticides, herbicides, fungicides in agricultural activities;
- the disposal into the ocean of solid wastes and marine debris;
- the release of toxic substances into the ocean as a result of manufacturing operations, effluent discharges, and accidental spills (UNEP-CEP 1998i; 1998j).

This is, perhaps, the most serious challenge for the WCR community. But what makes this particular challenge stand out? The answer to this question lies in the fact that the control and management of land-based sources of marine pollution require the achievement of a delicate balance between industrial development, agricultural production, and tourism, which are crucial for a region with a wide gap in its levels of socioeconomic development. Sustainable development and the integrated planning and management of coastal and marine areas (UNEP-CEP 1996b), combined with a real commitment of the citizens, governments, and economic interests of the region are required elements to the successful implementation of a land-based sources of pollution protocol. This is, undoubtedly, a grand project that requires of the concerted action of various social, political, and economic interests that either will facilitate the successful implementation of a land-based sources of pollution protocol or will jeopardize the entire initiative.

### *3. Monitoring and Assessment Mechanisms*

The MERWCR need to develop and implement effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms or instruments to assess the effectiveness of the regime in achieving its goal objectives and in improving the environmental conditions of the marine environment. Furthermore, it should be a top priority the collection of data pertaining to the level of compliance of the regime participants and the steps taken at the national to protect the marine environment of the region. The marine pollution generated by one or more countries has the effect of contributing to the pollution and environmental degradation of the entire region. Marine pollution is not limited or restricted to national boundaries.

### *4. Financial Resources*

The MERWCR has historically faced serious economic difficulties due to the lack of sufficient economic resources for the operation of the Secretariat as well as the different programs and activities developed by the CEP. According to Rivera (1998a; 1998b), the MERWCR has a serious problem of free-riding, which he defines as “a situation in which participants derive benefits from their membership in a regime without fully complying with their voluntary financial commitments. In other words, free-riding is defined as participants being in arrears” (1998a: 7).

Rivera presents evidence which illustrates that for the period between 1982 and 1996, only four of the 19 contracting parties to the Cartagena Convention have paid their monetary pledges in full. In other words, 15 of 19 contracting parties are in arrears (1998a; 1998b). Furthermore, he explains that if one considers all the participants (i.e., non-contracting parties and those countries under The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which pay their own pledges), the evidence shows that only 7 (21%) of the 34 participants have paid all their pledges, while 21 participants (79%) are in arrears.

The financial solvency of the MERWCR is unequivocally indispensable for the success and endurance of this regime and for the achievement of the goals and objectives operationalized through the services delivered and the programs developed under the leadership of the Regional Co-ordinating Unit of the CEP.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The program of activities coordinated in celebration of the International Year of the Oceans should, at least, raise awareness about the importance of a healthy marine environment to life on our planet. Nevertheless, the awareness campaign must be followed by specific courses of action at the national level. This means that the national legislatures around the globe and specifically in the Wider Caribbean Region are called to enact environmentally sound legislation aimed at protecting our marine environment and at deterring and eventually eliminating the sources of marine pollution. Environmental discourse which is not followed by concrete actions does not have the teeth necessary to make decisions pertaining to the environment that would benefit present as well as future generations.

The WCR needs to reassert its 1980s commitment to the marine environment by complying with the commitments to which they agreed. A healthy marine environment is indispensable for the Caribbean community. Its inhabitants depend on it for food consumption, source of income, and even leisure. Recent news on the accelerated rate at which the Caribbean coral reefs are dying are rather alarming. It is a signal that the beauty and survival of the marine environment cannot be taken for granted. Coral reefs, for instance, are instrumental for they host an incredible variety of biological diversity. In addition, they serve as a defense barrier against natural disasters (such as hurricanes) and deters the erosion of coastal lines. The only way to

counteract habitat loss and environmental degradation of the region's marine environment is by utilizing and applying the concept of integrated coastal planning and management which,

interweaves economic, social, physical and environmental considerations equally into a mainstream strategy at every stage (and level) of policy design, policy implementation, and policy review. It requires long standing institutional support and intellectual discipline if it is to serve the state well. Its genius is in its openness, its flexibility, and its responsiveness to the needs of the people (UNEP-CEP 1996b: 5-6).

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