The Wider Caribbean Region
The Wider Caribbean Region

- Great geographical and political fragmentation (28 States and 10 territories) (both Common and Civil Law, diverse political systems, 5 official languages)

- Disparity in development and economies

- Geographic diversity in size of island States (from 100 to >100,000 Km2)

- Over 200 million people, more than 50% less than 100 Km from the coast

- Influenced by major river systems of the world: Mississippi, Amazon and Orinoco
The Wider Caribbean Region

- >5,000 islands (2-3% of all vertebrates and plant species)
- High terrestrial island endemism (~50%)
- Two of the 6 major bird migratory routes from N.A.
- One of the 4 biodiversity “hot spots” in the world
**Major Issues**

- Land-based pollution
- Only 10-20% sewage properly treated and <20% of population on sewage systems
- Reef fisheries overexploited, (also spawning aggregations in trouble)
- Beaches are being lost and eroded
- Only 19% of Caribbean land covered by forests
Major Issues: coastal development

- Dredging, land filling and reclamation
- Mining of sand and coral
- Sand dune and beach vegetation removal
- Sedimentation and runoff from soil erosion and construction
- Inappropriate design (from location & size facilities to lighting of beaches)
Major Issues

• Climate change (severe coral bleaching, sea level rise, acidification)

• Marine-based activities

• Invasive species (e.g. lion fish)

• Natural events (yearly hurricanes, storms)
Major Issues

• Tourism largest employer (25%) and provides ~ 30% GDP (largest in the world, 25 million tourists/year)

• Cruise ship arrivals increased exponentially last 10 years (58% worldwide)

• Four of the 6 major destinations are SIDS (DomRep, Bahamas, Jamaica, and Cuba)

• Primarily “Sun, sand and sea” tourism

• Benefits from MPAs but MPAs don’t benefit systematically from tourism and only 6% of MPAs considered effective
Impacts on coral reefs

- Coral ecosystems seriously deteriorated
- ~25% of region’s coral reefs have been lost and possibly 50% by 2015
- Up to 80-90% corals died at specific sites from 2005 bleaching event
- Up to $4 billion could be lost from coral reef services (fisheries, coastal protection, recreation)

Courtesy Dr. Jeremy Woodley
The Caribbean Environment Programme

Intergovernmental Processes

Cartagena Convention
Adopted 1983
Entered into Force 1986

Oil Spills Protocol
Adopted 1983
Entered into Force 1986

Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol
Adopted 1990
Entered into Force 2000

Land-based Sources of Marine Pollution Protocol
Adopted 1999

The Caribbean Environment Programme

CEP

AMEP  SPAW  CETA
Intergovernmental Processes

- St. Georges Declaration & STS for OECS
- CTO’s and ACS Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Plan of Action and Policy Framework
- UNEP’s Global Programme of Action (GPA) and NPAs in several countries
- Regional climate change adaptation (CARICOM)
- FAO regional commission (WECAFC)
- CARICOM fisheries management programme
Some Regional and Global Initiatives

• CAST (Better management practices for hotel industry, economic incentives)
• Blue Flag- certification beaches & marinas
• Practices and awareness for marine tourism recreation providers (CORAL, UNEP-CEP)
• Subregional GCRMN nodes (Invemar, UWI, MBRS)
• CaMPAM: network for strengthening MPAs, capacity building, exchanges and small grants
Some national actions

- Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans (e.g. Barbados)
- Integrated Oceans and Coastal Policy (Jamaica)
- Solid Waste (e.g. Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica) and sewage management plans (St. Lucia, Dominica)
- National coral reef initiatives (a number of countries)
- Payment for environmental services (e.g. Costa Rica’s water use policy)
- Sustainable Tourism Plans, Master Plans (Dom Republic, Jamaica, etc.)
- More marine reserves, MPAs (e.g. Belize, Bahamas, Colombia, Jamaica) and incipient MPA networks

Different levels of implementation and effectiveness. Some measures inadequate for issues at hand.
... so what is missing?
Stronger and more decisive political will and commitment!

- Integrated Coastal Area Planning and Management
- Improve MPA management effectiveness and MPA networks
- Reduce and manage wastes
- Sustainable resource use, e.g. fisheries, mangroves
- Develop tourism sustainably and strategically *vis a vis* the natural resource base
- Climate change adaptation
Merci!

For more information please visit

www.cep.unep.org