



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-ninth session

Agenda item 18 (b)

### **Sustainable development: follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States**

## **Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2024**

[on the report of the Second Committee ([A/79/437/Add.2](#), para. 16)]

### **79/204. Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations**

*The General Assembly,*

Reaffirming the principles and commitments enshrined in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,<sup>1</sup> the principles embodied in the Declaration of Barbados,<sup>2</sup> the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,<sup>3</sup> the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development,<sup>4</sup> the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),<sup>5</sup> the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,<sup>6</sup> the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April–6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, annex II.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10–14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.



Development, entitled “The future we want”,<sup>7</sup> the outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, entitled “The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity”,<sup>8</sup> the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development<sup>9</sup> and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>10</sup> as well as other relevant declarations and international instruments,

*Recalling* the Paris Agreement,<sup>11</sup> and encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>12</sup> that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

*Recalling also* the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,<sup>13</sup>

*Recalling further* the Declaration and review document adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-second special session,<sup>14</sup>

*Recognizing* the efforts of Caribbean States to develop and implement strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources, in this regard reiterating the calls made in the declarations entitled “Our ocean, our future: call for action”<sup>15</sup> and “Our ocean, our future, our responsibility”,<sup>16</sup> calling for further enhanced actions to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, with a particular focus on targets 14.2, 14.4, 14.5 and 14.6 that matured in 2020, and renewing the commitment to take urgent action and to cooperating at the global, regional and subregional levels to achieve all the targets as soon as possible, without delay, and looking forward to the 2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, co-hosted by Costa Rica and France, to be held in Nice, France, from 9 to 13 June 2025,

*Taking into account* all its relevant resolutions, including resolutions 54/225 of 22 December 1999, 55/203 of 20 December 2000, 57/261 of 20 December 2002, 59/230 of 22 December 2004, 61/197 of 20 December 2006, 63/214 of 19 December 2008, 65/155 of 20 December 2010, 67/205 of 21 December 2012, 69/216 of 19 December 2014, 71/224 of 21 December 2016, 73/229 of 20 December 2018, 75/214 of 21 December 2020 and 77/163 of 14 December 2022,

*Recalling* the 2005 World Summit Outcome,<sup>17</sup>

*Recalling also* the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, signed at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on 24 March 1983,<sup>18</sup> and the protocols thereto, which contain the definition of the wider Caribbean region of which the Caribbean Sea is part,

<sup>7</sup> Resolution 66/288, annex.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution 78/317, annex.

<sup>9</sup> Resolution 69/313, annex.

<sup>10</sup> Resolution 70/1.

<sup>11</sup> Adopted under the UNFCCC in FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

<sup>13</sup> Resolution 69/283, annexes I and II.

<sup>14</sup> Resolution S-22/2, annex.

<sup>15</sup> Resolution 71/312, annex.

<sup>16</sup> Resolution 76/296, annex.

<sup>17</sup> Resolution 60/1.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1506, No. 25974.

*Reaffirming* the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,<sup>19</sup> which provides the legal framework for ocean activities, and emphasizing its fundamental character, conscious that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach,

*Welcoming* the adoption in June 2023 of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction,<sup>20</sup> recognizing its potential significance for the Caribbean region, and noting with appreciation the efforts of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat to promote a better understanding of the Agreement and prepare for its entry into force, including hosting a workshop on the Agreement in Placencia, Belize, from 7 to 10 October 2024, for Caribbean States,

*Recalling* the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>21</sup> and other biodiversity-related conventions, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora<sup>22</sup> and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat,<sup>23</sup>

*Emphasizing* the importance of national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector as recognized by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in chapter 17 of Agenda 21,<sup>24</sup>

*Recalling* the relevant work done by the International Maritime Organization,

*Taking note* of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations”,<sup>25</sup>

*Considering* that the Caribbean Sea area includes a large number of States, countries and territories, most of which are developing countries and small island developing States that are ecologically fragile and socially and economically vulnerable and are also affected, inter alia, by their limited capacity, narrow resource base, need for financial resources, high levels of poverty and the resulting social problems, and the challenges and opportunities of globalization and trade liberalization,

*Recognizing* that the Caribbean Sea has unique biodiversity and highly fragile ecosystems,

*Recognizing also* that the Caribbean Sea is a critical asset, which inter alia provides a range of ecosystem services and socioeconomic benefits in the form of food security and nutrition, employment, foreign exchange, culture and recreation,

*Recognizing further* that the Caribbean has been shown to be the most tourism-dependent region in the world relative to its size,

*Noting with deep concern* the devastating impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its severe global economic disruptions on Caribbean countries, particularly affecting their tourism-dependent economies, commodity

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., vol. 1833, No. 31363.

<sup>20</sup> [A/CONF.232/2023/4](#).

<sup>21</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., vol. 993, No. 14537.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., vol. 996, No. 14583.

<sup>24</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

<sup>25</sup> [A/79/399](#).

exports, supply chains and remittance flows, and recognizing the additional challenges that this has created for achieving the 2030 Agenda in the region,

*Noting* that the Caribbean Sea, when compared with all other large marine ecosystems, is surrounded by the largest number of countries in the world,

*Emphasizing* that the Caribbean countries have a high degree of vulnerability occasioned by climate change, climate variability and associated phenomena, such as the rising sea level, oceanic oscillation phenomena, such as the El Niño phenomenon, and the potential increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters caused by hurricanes, floods and droughts, and that they are also subject to natural disasters, such as those caused by volcanoes, tsunamis and earthquakes, which increase their sustainable development challenges,

*Noting with appreciation* the ongoing efforts of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, including in launching the debt swap initiative and the Caribbean Resilience Fund, to support Caribbean economies to mitigate and adapt to the consequences of climate change, and noting also the particular efforts to address and reduce debt burdens, including through the Caribbean Resilience Fund,

*Bearing in mind* the heavy reliance of most of the Caribbean economies on their coastal areas, as well as on the marine environment in general, to achieve their sustainable development needs and goals,

*Welcoming* the adoption of resolution [78/322](#) of 13 August 2024 on the multidimensional vulnerability index, calling for the full and effective implementation of its mandate, and in this regard noting that the Caribbean small island developing States look forward to participating in the piloting of the index, and encouraging the participation of other interested developing countries as well,

*Expressing concern* at the record-breaking average global sea surface temperatures recorded in 2023 and 2024, including in the Caribbean Sea area, and the forecasted future trends for sea surface temperature,

*Acknowledging* that the intensive use of the Caribbean Sea for maritime transport, as well as the considerable number and interlocking character of the maritime areas under national jurisdiction where Caribbean countries exercise their rights and duties under international law, present a challenge for the effective management of resources,

*Noting* the problem of marine pollution caused, inter alia, by land-based sources and the continuing threat of pollution from ship-generated waste and sewage, as well as from the accidental release of hazardous and noxious substances in the Caribbean Sea area,

*Noting with concern* the impact of plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, on the Caribbean Sea area, encouraging further efforts at all levels to prevent, reduce and eliminate plastic pollution, and welcoming the decision by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its resumed fifth session, in resolution 5/14 of 2 March 2022,<sup>26</sup> to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment,

*Recalling* the call upon all stakeholders to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development by, inter alia, accelerating actions to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris, plastics and microplastics, nutrient pollution, untreated wastewater, solid waste discharges,

<sup>26</sup> [UNEP/EA.5/Res.14](#).

hazardous substances, pollution from ships and abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear, while at the same time recognizing that small island developing States are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of marine pollution,

*Taking note* of the relevant resolutions of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency on the safe transport of radioactive materials,

*Recalling* the decisions taken by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its resumed fifth and sixth sessions to strengthen global action on the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, in line with United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions 5/7<sup>27</sup> and 5/8<sup>28</sup> of 2 March 2022 and resolution 6/9<sup>29</sup> of 1 March 2024,

*Mindful* of the diversity of and dynamic interaction and competition among socioeconomic activities for the use of the coastal areas and the marine environment and their resources, and noting with deep concern the findings about cumulative human impacts on the ocean, including ecosystem degradation and species extinctions, as highlighted in the second World Ocean Assessment and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services,

*Mindful also* of the efforts of the Caribbean countries to address in a more holistic manner the sectoral issues relating to the management of the wider Caribbean Sea region and, in so doing, to promote the integrated management of the wider Caribbean Sea region in the context of sustainable development, through a regional cooperative effort among Caribbean countries,

*Noting* the progress that has been made on regional ocean governance by the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Project, and the opportunity to further advance marine spatial planning through the commencement of the global PROCARIBE+ project,

*Recognizing* the potential of living marine resources for the development of new products across various industries and noting that the Caribbean Sea provides substantial ecosystem services, including carbon storage and marine genetic resources, for Caribbean countries,

*Recognizing also* that a sustainable ocean-based economy in Caribbean countries can drive economic diversification by strengthening existing sectors and expanding into new ones by allowing for the integration of nature-based solutions to protect and sustainably manage coastal ecosystems, while noting the existence of various financing initiatives such as the Blue Natural Capital Financing Facility, the Blue Carbon Accelerator Fund and the Blue Carbon Initiative in the Caribbean region,

*Emphasizing* the critical need for enhanced data collection and -sharing, analysis and capacity-building to support evidence-based decision-making in sustainable ocean-based economy development, noting with concern the lack of sectoral and costing data, which hinders access to finance at scale for sustainable investments in the wider Caribbean region, and stressing the importance of investing in robust data management systems, establishing resilience indicators and implementing effective transparency and monitoring mechanisms to better assess economic potential, attract investments and track progress in the implementation of diversification strategies,

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<sup>27</sup> [UNEP/EA.5/Res.7.](#)

<sup>28</sup> [UNEP/EA.5/Res.8.](#)

<sup>29</sup> [UNEP/EA.6/Res.9.](#)

*Welcoming* the continued efforts of the States members and associate members of the Association of Caribbean States to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, and recognizing in this regard the firm commitment by Heads of State and Government of the Association to take the steps necessary to ensure the recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, without prejudice to relevant international law,

*Recalling* the creation by the Association of Caribbean States of the Caribbean Sea Commission, and welcoming its ongoing work, including its plan of action for the period 2022–2028, and its contribution to the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea,

*Cognizant* of the importance of the Caribbean Sea to present and future generations and to the heritage and the continuing economic well-being and sustenance of people living in the area and of the urgent need for the countries of the region to take appropriate steps for its preservation and protection, with the support of the international community,

1. *Recognizes* that the Caribbean Sea is an area of unique biodiversity and a highly fragile ecosystem that requires relevant regional and international development partners to work together to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, including the consideration of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to international law;

2. *Underlines* the need to address the economic, social and environmental impacts of climate change, and emphasizes the need for regional and international action to enhance efforts at the national and subnational levels, as appropriate, to build resilience;

3. *Stresses* the need to support and invest in adaptation and action at all levels to build resilience through, inter alia, disaster risk reduction, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, the sustainable management of ecosystems and the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, and in this regard urges Member States to adopt a climate- and environment-responsive approach to COVID-19 recovery efforts;

4. *Notes* the efforts of the Caribbean States and the work undertaken by the Caribbean Sea Commission of the Association of Caribbean States, including the development of their concept of the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, and invites the international community to support such efforts;

5. *Reaffirms its support* for the plan of action adopted by the Caribbean Sea Commission, including its scientific and technical components and its governance and outreach components, and invites the international community and the United Nations system to enhance their support, including financial, technical and capacity-building assistance, as appropriate, to Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to implement the plan of action;

6. *Welcomes* the resources provided by some donors to support the work of the Caribbean Sea Commission, and invites the international community to continue and to enhance its support, as appropriate, to the Commission, including through the provision of financial resources, capacity-building and technical support, the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms and the sharing of experience in the areas of work of the Commission;

7. *Also welcomes* the convening of the eighth International Cooperation Conference of the Association of Caribbean States, held in Paramaribo on 7 May 2024, which further strengthened cooperation to address new strategies and the implementation of projects and initiatives in support of the sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean;

8. *Acknowledges* the need to scale up the efforts of the Caribbean Sea Commission for the delivery of its programme of work, in particular in promoting the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, alongside plans to advance new initiatives at the eighth International Cooperation Conference of the Association of Caribbean States, and invites the international community to support these next steps;

9. *Looks forward* to the convening of the tenth Summit of the Association of Caribbean States, to be held in Colombia in May 2025, on the theme “United for life: towards a more sustainable Greater Caribbean”;

10. *Recognizes* the efforts of Caribbean countries to create conditions leading to sustainable development aimed at combating poverty and inequality, and in this regard notes with interest the initiatives of the Association of Caribbean States in the focal areas of sustainable tourism, trade, transport and natural disasters;

11. *Calls upon* the United Nations system and the international community to assist Caribbean countries and their regional organizations, as appropriate, in their efforts to ensure the protection of the Caribbean Sea from degradation as a result of pollution from ships, in particular through the illegal release of oil and other harmful substances, and pollution from the illegal dumping or accidental release of hazardous waste, including radioactive materials, nuclear waste and dangerous chemicals, in violation of relevant international rules and standards, as well as pollution from land-based activities;

12. *Also calls upon* the United Nations system and the international community to assist Caribbean countries in developing and implementing policies and strategies for the sustainable use and conservation of marine genetic resources within their jurisdiction, and calls upon the international community to support scientific research and technological cooperation in this field with a view to realizing the full potential of these resources for sustainable development;

13. *Invites* the Association of Caribbean States to submit to the Secretary-General a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution, for consideration by the General Assembly at its eighty-first session;

14. *Calls upon* all States to become parties to the relevant international agreements to enhance maritime safety and to promote the protection of the marine environment of the Caribbean Sea from pollution, damage and degradation from ships and ship-generated waste;

15. *Reaffirms*, in this regard, its support for the Special Area designation for the wider Caribbean region under annex V to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto,<sup>30</sup> which entered into force in May 2011;

16. *Supports* the efforts of Caribbean countries to implement sustainable fisheries management programmes and to meet the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;

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<sup>30</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1340, No. 22484.

17. *Calls upon* States, taking into consideration the Convention on Biological Diversity, to develop national, regional and international programmes to halt the loss of marine biodiversity in the Caribbean Sea, in particular fragile ecosystems such as coral reefs and mangroves;
18. *Invites* the international community to actively support efforts of Caribbean countries to implement regional strategies and action plans on marine pollution and marine biodiversity to further promote the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14, to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;
19. *Notes with deep concern* that invasive alien species, such as *Pterois miles* and *P. volitans*, known as lionfish, constitute an acute threat to biodiversity in the wider Caribbean region, and urges the United Nations system and the international community to continue to provide assistance and support in addressing this issue in the region;
20. *Also notes with deep concern* the sargassum seaweed influx and its negative impact on Caribbean coastlines, particularly the impacts on coastal communities, public health, tourism and fisheries, as well as the deterioration of the coral reefs;
21. *Encourages* continued collaboration and resource mobilization by the international community and all other sources, including public and private, bilateral and multilateral, to support capacity-building mechanisms and strengthen sargassum seaweed management for the Caribbean;
22. *Also encourages* initiatives that can contribute to solutions to address and sustainably manage challenges presented by sargassum seaweed, while also recognizing the potential for economic opportunities;
23. *Invites* Member States and intergovernmental organizations of the United Nations system to continue their efforts to assist Caribbean countries in becoming parties to the relevant conventions and protocols concerning the management, protection and sustainable utilization of Caribbean Sea resources and in implementing those conventions and protocols effectively;
24. *Calls upon* the international community, the United Nations system and the multilateral financial institutions, and invites the Global Environment Facility, within its mandate, to actively support the national and regional activities of the Caribbean States for the promotion of the sustainable management of coastal and marine resources;
25. *Expresses deep concern* about the severe destruction and devastation caused to several countries by heightened hurricane activity in the wider Caribbean region in recent years, in particular the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season;
26. *Notes with appreciation* the ongoing activities of the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and invites Member States and other partners to support early warning systems in the region;
27. *Urges* the United Nations system and the international community to continue to provide aid and assistance to the countries of the Caribbean region in the implementation of their long-term programmes of disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, management, relief and recovery, on the basis of their development priorities, through the integration of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction into a comprehensive approach to sustainable development;



28. *Acknowledges* the pivotal role of the Association of Caribbean States in regional dialogue and in the consolidation of a wider Caribbean cooperation zone in the field of disaster risk reduction, as well as the importance of the international community in deepening existing cooperation and consolidating new initiatives with that regional mechanism in the context of the outcomes of the High-level Conference on Disaster Reduction of the Association of Caribbean States, held in Saint-Marc, Haiti, from 14 to 16 November 2007, and the plan of action approved by the Ministerial Council of the Association upon the recommendation of the Conference;

29. *Invites* Member States, international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to consider training programmes for the development of human resources capacity at different levels and to develop research aimed at enhancing the food security of Caribbean countries, as well as the sustainable management of renewable marine and coastal resources;

30. *Calls upon* Member States to improve, as a matter of priority, their emergency response capabilities and the containment of environmental damage, particularly in the Caribbean Sea, in the event of natural disasters or an accident or incident relating to maritime navigation;

31. *Encourages* the international community and the United Nations system, in line with their programming priorities, to support initiatives aimed at addressing mitigation of and adaptation to climate change in the wider Caribbean region included in the plan of action of the Association of Caribbean States for the period 2022–2028;

32. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, under a sub-item entitled “Follow-up to and implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity” of the item entitled “Sustainable development”, emphasizing the three dimensions of sustainable development, including a section on the possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such, without prejudice to relevant international law, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and relevant regional organizations, unless otherwise agreed.

*54th plenary meeting  
19 December 2024*