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RESEARCH REPORT BOOKLET  
ADVISORY PANEL  
ON THE QUESTION OF  
THE CARRIBEAN ISLANDS



## Research Report of the Advisory Panel on the Question of the Caribbean Islands

Dear Experts,

Welcome to the research report booklet of the Advisory Panel on the Question of the Caribbean Islands 2011. Compiled in this booklet is the thorough research conducted by your chairs on the four issues that the panel will be tackling, namely:

- 1) Maritime and resource disputes.
- 2) Environment and tourism.
- 3) Towards autonomy and/or independence of some Caribbean islands.
- 4) Reduction of disaster risk and vulnerability in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

Though this research report will no doubt be a valuable resource for you to gain a general understanding of the topics, do not solely rely on it for your research. It is strongly encouraged that you do your own research on the topics and on the Caribbean as a whole, focusing especially on the country/organization that you represent, its views on the issues, what it has done and proposed and its main objectives in the panel. Before debate commences in January, you are expected to be very familiar with your delegation's policies and views of the aforementioned topics. To do so, make sure to visit your country/organization's website as they are valuable references to obtain your delegation's views on certain topics. You should also keep up with current events not only surrounding your delegation but also on the Caribbean as a whole.

Keep in mind that that if information on your delegation on a specific issue is not available, it does not mean that you do not have a policy on the issue – use the information you've gathered elsewhere to form what your country/organization's policy will most likely be like.

For further assistance in your research, please visit THIMUN's website, <http://www.thimun.org>, and download the guide under "New Guide" on its home page.

At the end of the research report, we have included descriptions of all the different experts and their views. Note that these summaries are very short snippets of each expert and are not meant to be representative of your policies in its entirety.

We wish you luck in your research and look forward to exciting and productive debates.

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**Introduction Source:** *The different States in the Caribbean Basin*

**Forum:** The Advisory Panel

**Issue:** The Question of the Caribbean Islands

**Chairs & their areas of expertise:**

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*Environment and tourism, Reduction of disaster risk and vulnerability in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea*

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*Towards autonomy and/or independence of some Caribbean islands*

## INTRODUCTION

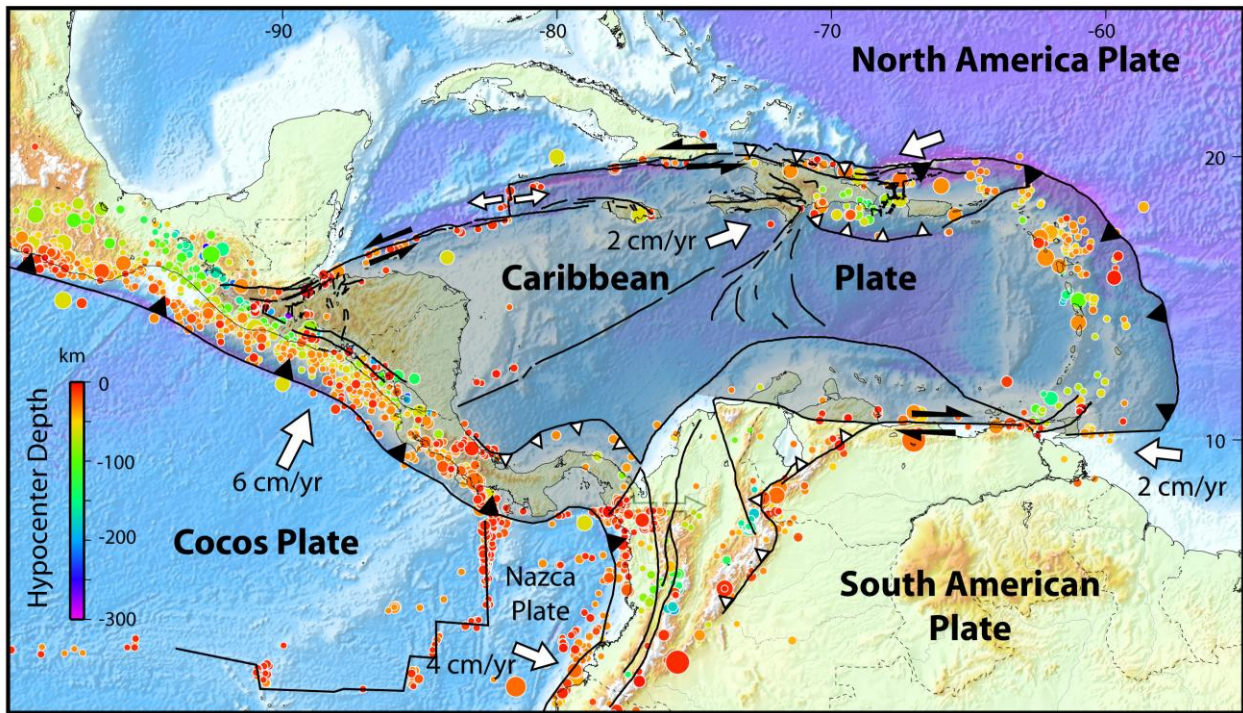
The Caribbean islands are located in the Caribbean Basin, whose map is shown on the right. They are bordered by the Gulf Coast, and the Caribbean Sea as well as North, Central and South America. The climate in the region is generally tropical, though it can vary per island. Though largely situated on the Caribbean and North American plates, these plates share borders with the South American, Nazca and Cocos plates, resulting in a disaster-prone area. The Caribbean is vulnerable



**Source 1:** Map of the Caribbean Basin

to numerous natural disasters such as but not limited to hurricanes and earthquakes, and the management of these disasters is of utmost importance to the region if they are to develop. With this, the Caribbean environment and the tourism it attracts, which comprises a large percentage of revenue for the region, must also be taken into consideration. The region is rich with natural resources, especially maritime, as it is completely surrounded by ocean. Because the islands are divided into 27 territories, however, all from various parts of the world, disputes on resources are unavoidable. Additionally, many islands are now seeking autonomy and independence from their colonizers, which the United Nations is heavily involved in as it seeks to help these new countries achieve self-determination.

Because all four topics are interconnected in one way or another, it is integral to find links and overlaps in the topics so as to develop the most effective propositions to the issues.



Source 2: The Caribbean Plate and Surrounding Plates



## GENERAL OVERVIEW: *Maritime and Resources Disputes*

Comprising of more than 7,000 islands on the Caribbean Plate, the Caribbean Islands, also known as the West Indies, can be divided into the Antilles (that can further be divided into the Greater Antilles and the Lesser Antilles), and the Lucayan Archipelago. The region is also organized into 27 different territories. However, due to its long history of colonial rule under numerous European countries and the proximity of islands that belong to different nations (alongside the 200 nautical miles' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) set by the international law of the sea, UNCLOS), there have been numerous territorial disputes in the region, most notably of that between Nicaragua and Honduras and between Venezuela and other Caribbean states including Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Furthermore, the Caribbean region is not rich in natural resources, and is limited to fisheries, bauxite, iron, nickel, petroleum, and timber. Hence, resources disputes in the region are also one of the biggest issues in the area. The two major contributors to the region's economic development are tourism and agriculture.

### KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

**Maritime disputes:** Disputes relating to the seas, ships, shipping, or navigation.

**Territorial disputes:** A disagreement over the possession/control of land between two or more states, or over the possession or control of land by one state after it has conquered it from a former state no longer currently recognized by the occupying power.

**Antilles:** The greater part of the Caribbean Islands that is considered to be a part of North America or Central America. Antillean countries include Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico.

**Lucayan Archipelago:** The smaller part of the Caribbean Islands that consists of the islands of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and of the Turks and Caicos Islands (a British Overseas Territory). It is located in the western North Atlantic Ocean, east of Florida and north of the Greater Antilles.

### TIMELINE OF EVENTS:

**1492-1504:** Christopher Columbus 'discovers' the Caribbean Islands.

**1503:** Spanish begins slave trade in the Caribbean Islands.

**17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> centuries:** Arrival of other Europeans such as British, Spanish, Dutch, and French who claim and dispute over different Caribbean Islands. Slavery continues, but increasing number of islands begins to declare emancipation for slaves.

**1914 - 1918:** World War I

**1939 – 1945:** World War II

**Post-WWII:** Independence declared by numerous islands. Maritime border disputes persist, for example between Nicaragua and Honduras (settled by the International

Court of Justice), and between Venezuela and other Caribbean Islands (such as Guyana).

**1999:** Dispute between Nicaragua and Honduras brought to the International Court of Justice.

**KEY ISSUE:** *Fishing*



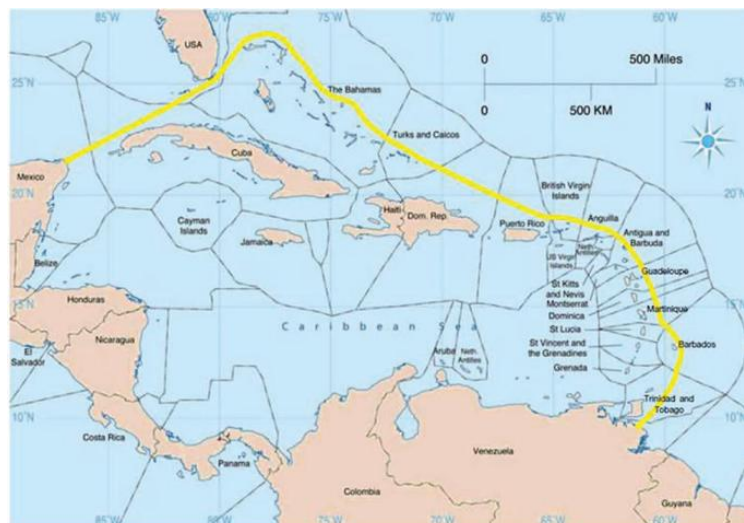
**Source 3:** *Fishing boats in the Caribbean.*

The demand for fisheries in the Caribbean Islands is very large; it not only assists the region's local economies and employment rates but is also a major export of the region. However, fishing poses some problems in the Caribbean Islands: fishing, on many of the islands, is largely unregulated and therefore is prone to overfishing, fisheries management is very difficult as EEZs overlap in many parts, and the region's most valuable stocks are decreasing more and more rapidly.

**CAUSES OF DISPUTES**

There are numerous disputes in the Caribbean Islands and even more impending. Depletion of limited resources and fish, overlapping territories, and increasing marine pollution are some of the problems that have strong potentials to expand to serious disputes.

The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), set by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), refers to "a sea zone over which a state has special rights over the exploration and use of marine resources." However, because the islands in the region are closer to each other than the 200 nautical miles' EEZ, fisheries management and territorial distinction is extremely difficult in the region. Furthermore, the maritime borders set when the islands gained independence are, in many cases, unclear, causing maritime border disputes with neighboring nations.



**Source 4:** *Exclusive Economic Zones in the Caribbean Region.*

## PROPOSITIONS TO SOLVE DISPUTES

In order to avoid disputes on fisheries in the region, the amount, size, and types of fish being caught in certain areas can be regulated. Similarly, to avoid other resources disputes, the amount of timber, iron, and other natural resources exploited in the region should be regulated, and fair trade should be supervised and ensured among Caribbean states and other countries. And to ensure that the resources are not stolen or illegally traded, security should be tightened in areas where they are being transported. Furthermore, in order to reduce fisheries that are potentially harmful to the environment and sustainable development of the region, incentives can be provided to private companies (most of which owned by foreigners) so that they employ more local population and follow protocols to protect the environment (especially since the ecotourism is vital for many Caribbean-Island states). Moreover, technology, investments, or loans could be provided to the countries so that they wouldn't have to depend so heavily on the foreign companies to pay them in exchange for resources, which, in term, cause great damages to the involved countries. Introducing and promoting more effective ways of raising crops, harvesting, etc. could also help the Caribbean countries where agriculture is becoming increasingly small. Lastly, to improve the territorial disputes, establishing clear borders to distinguish territories through the International Court of Justice and educating the fishermen accordingly are two of the solutions.



## GENERAL OVERVIEW: *Environment and Tourism*

Tourism is one of, if not, the main economic activities for the countries of the Caribbean. In fact, a third to half of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of most of the Caribbean islands comes solely from tourism. With over 15 million annual visitors

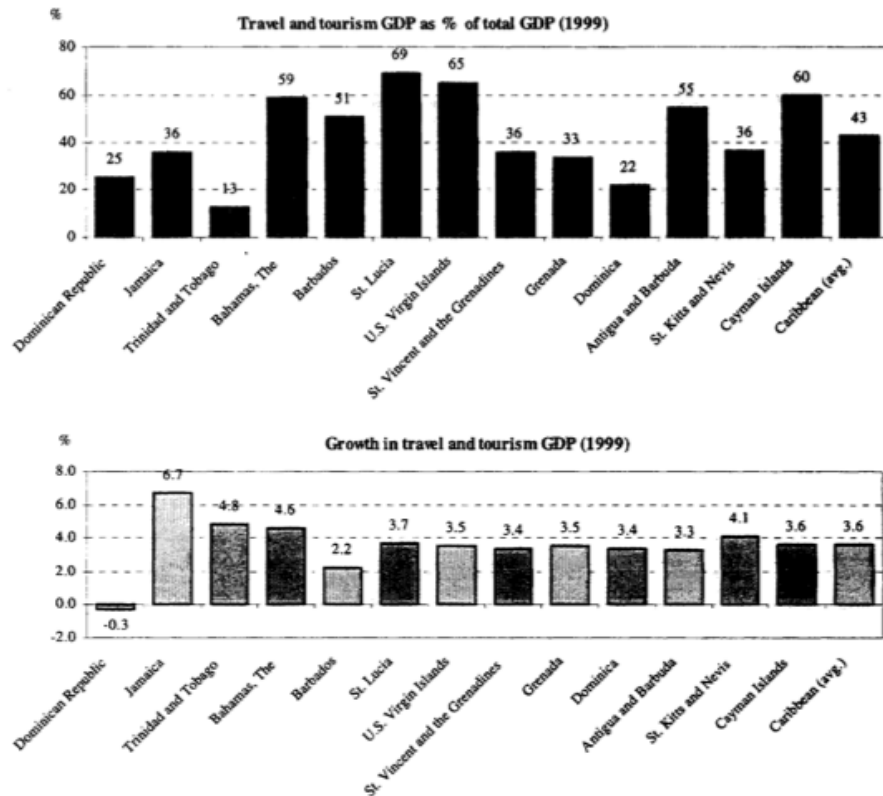
attracted by the environmental allure of the islands, the link between tourism and the environment is one that cannot be ignored. As tourism is the Caribbean's main source of revenue, its environment is its main economic asset. The balance between economic gains and environmental preservation is incredibly fragile, and is an issue of great importance to the region. Because tourism and the

environment are so intricately linked, the effects of implementing a policy regarding one, for example, cannot be done so without evaluating the effects on the other.

Although the conservation of the pristine Caribbean environment is integral in keeping visitors coming, it should be remembered that the most important beneficiaries of a well-managed environment are the people of the Caribbean themselves. They are almost entirely dependent on their environment for all aspects of their lives, and thus it is impossible to address any environmental issue without factoring in the local population. It is also important to note that regardless of the attention and research given to the impact of tourism on the Caribbean environment, it is not the sole cause of environment degradation. Any debate on this issue should ideally address not only the negative externalities of tourism but also how best to harness its benefits to push the region forward.

### KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

**Environment:** The fundamental environmental resources of the region can be summed up in three words – “sun, sea and sand”; damage to the latter two can be costly.



Source 5: Percentage of tourism in the GDP of Caribbean countries

**Rents:** A type of payment for use of a resource. These can be direct (such as charging tourists upon arrival) or indirect (through hotel costs).

**Wider Caribbean:** The Wider Caribbean includes “the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea, and the areas of the Atlantic Ocean adjacent thereto, south of the 30 degree north latitude and within 200 nautical miles of the Atlantic coasts” of any of the regional states. Twenty-five states fall within this region, not including France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, which participate due to their territories.

## CAUSES OF DISPUTES

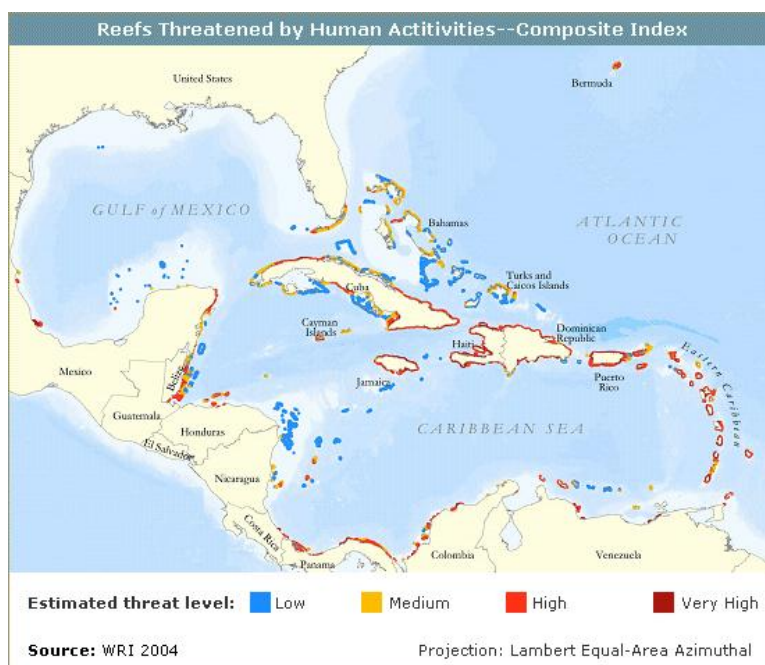
The balance between the Caribbean’s natural environment and its economic gains through tourism is one that needs to be maintained in order to secure a positive and sustainable economic future in the region. The stakeholders of the issue – that is, the citizens of the Caribbean, the government, the tourist industry and the tourists themselves – need to work together to address disputes in the most efficient way possible. If used as the sole vehicle of revenue, tourism is more negative than it is positive. However, if carefully planned and implemented, it can be an asset to the economies and living conditions of the various Caribbean islands.

### *Environmental awareness for tourists*

The main problems that arise within this issue entail the aforementioned balance. For example, visitors need to be made aware of the severity of the environmental problems that exist in the region that they make work towards alleviating such problems, especially if they are the cause. However, such awareness can sometimes be detrimental, as if visitors are more aware of the negative aspects of an island’s environment, then the less likely that they are to visit it or return again. Thus, any solutions aimed at curbing this dilemma should address how environmental awareness can encourage tourists to be more involved in it rather than being driven away.

### *Waste & damage to natural resources*

One of the most obvious problems that come in tandem with a large tourism industry is the amount of waste generated by visitors. Solid waste from tourists during peak season is estimated to be twice as much per capita as local residents, and liquid waste are mostly left untreated. The pollution that they generate, too, is a problem. Additionally, the simple presence of tourists can already be environmentally demanding. Because tourists visit the islands for its environment, their demand to experience this environment needs to be catered to. This leads to tourist facilities being built in environmentally sensitive areas, inevitably posing a larger threat to the natural ecosystem.



The presence of more tourists subsequently attracts more settlers, which again exacerbates the adverse effects of a larger number of people within a fragile environment. More appropriate infrastructure thus needs to be built. Such infrastructure needs to have access to potable water and adequate energy sources, and there is a limit to such areas. The natural resources used by these tourists, such as but not limited to coral reefs, also suffer because of overuse and inappropriate use. Coral reefs are an integral part of the Caribbean environment because they minimize the impact and damage from storms, to which the islands are prone. Cruise ships, one of the most important branches of the tourism industry, as well as its effects on the marine life of the Caribbean need to be taken into consideration. Other negative effects on the environment include congestion and overbuilding, which can demand too much from the environment and cause it to deteriorate. Most solutions to address such problems are costly.

### *Determining the causes of environmental degradation and its link to economic growth*

The fact that tourism, despite the focus on it, is not the only contributor to environmental degradation, nor the most important, needs to be reiterated. Environmental harm is also caused by factors outside of the tourism industry, and such factors, especially those pertaining to economic growth and development, need to be identified and properly addressed. The magnitude of each threat should be determined and dealt with individually, as no one solution exists to combat all causes. While a balance needs to be maintained between tourism and the environment, a balance must also be struck between economic development and the environment. The Caribbean islands need to keep up with the growth of the contemporary world and must do so with its environment in mind.

Additionally, the islands need to learn how to rely on more than their sun, sand and sea, because many nations across the world are growing to be equal competitors.



**Source 7:** *Tourism Barbados*

## Responsibility

Another cause of dispute within the issue is determining who decides on the how and the rents on environmental resources will be implemented and to whom revenue from tourism will go. There is thus an issue of a wise distribution and use of financial resources. The collaboration between the tourism industry, the local population, the local and national governments is thus integral. Topics that need to be discussed include but are not limited to who manages and maintains the resources, and to what extent this should be done, who covers the costs and how revenue will be divided. It is advised that revenue be concentrated on improving the capabilities of the island, through various technological but sustainable advancements, to respond to environmental damage as well as preservation of the ecosystem.

There is also the issue of climate change and its subsequent effects on the environment and tourism. Responsibility over this particular dispute should be shared amongst stakeholders and beneficiaries because its effects extend beyond the region's interests. Issues pertaining to climate change include the effects of the long flights needed to reach the islands and how to address this problem, especially considering the fact that reducing flights leads to a reduced number of visitors to the islands.

## PROPOSITIONS TO SOLVE DISPUTES

### Education

The education of tourists on the specifics of the Caribbean islands as well as on how to properly take care of its fragile environment is of great importance to attain a sustainable future. They need to know the extent and nature of the problems in the Caribbean that they may be careful in their actions. The ways in which they can be educated are numerous, including but not limited to in-flight education or integration of education into sightseeing tours and the like. The need to maximize the benefits that tourism can bring to an island's economy is ever present, and no better way exists than through the actual tourists themselves. However, as mentioned previously, the type of information dissipated to the public needs to be watched, as a bad reputation is easier to establish than a good one. Public information available can also determine how many visitors decide to visit.

### Certification and incentives

Incentives need to be in existence to encourage both tourists and the Caribbean islands they visit to preserve and care for their environment. One of the main and most important incentives for the nations is certification, such as *Blue Flag* and *Green Globe 21*. *Blue Flag* is a beach certification program that requires beaches to meet a certain standard, while *Green Globe 21* certifies that companies and communities meet sustainable development criteria. Such certification schemes not only assure tourists that they are visiting an island that has achieved economic standards, but it also serves as an incentive for islands to reach these standards. Attaining a certification ensures that visitors keep



Source 8: Green Globe 21 logo



coming as they are able to advertise their eco friendliness as well as puts pressure on the local governments and tourist industries to maintain such standards and continuously meet the criteria for such certification.

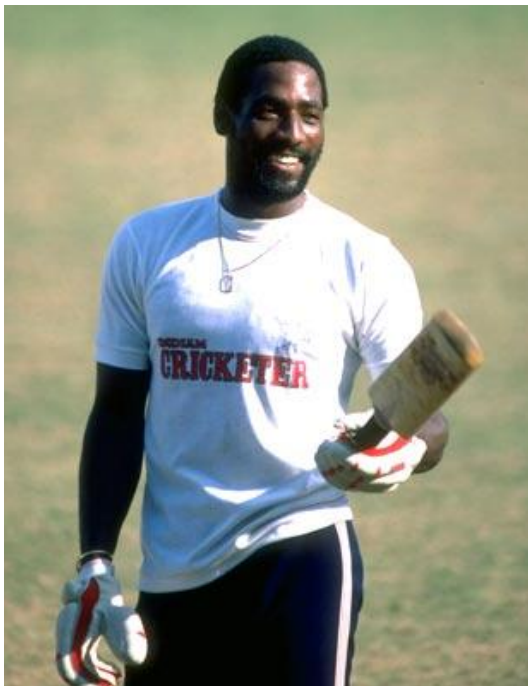
### *Cooperation and division of rents*

There is nothing more important in addressing the disputes related to this issue than cooperation between the tourist industry, the tourists, the local population and the local and national governments, as it should ideally be a shared responsibility. They need to work towards a more sustainable future. They also need to especially determine where the rents from tourism will go to and how they will be determined and effectively capture. Such examples include implementing tax incentives on the most appealing tourist attractions such as controlling access to particular environments or hotel fees. The management of such attractions that obtain rents also needs to be efficient and done so properly. It is advisable that a separate entity be used to manage generated funds as so bias can be avoided.

There is also a need to develop a coordinated response between islands to environmental problems, especially those occurring in the sea (thus, ship-generate waste). Maritime pollution has a tendency to spread to different countries and is a threat to tourist trade.

### *Developing alternative sources of revenue*

Because of the rising number of competition across the globe, the Caribbean islands need to develop further sources of revenue apart from their usual package of sand, sea and sun. Such developments include further promoting each island's cultural identity (though this can pose a problem within itself, as actions will need to be taken to ensure that a growing tourism industry does not corrupt the local culture) and developing alternative means of revenue. These include maximizing the regions' other resources, particularly the health benefits of its plant life, as Jamaica has already done. With regards to the island's culture, Antigua, for example, is using its cricket stars to promote sports tourism.



**Source 9:** *Antiguan Cricket Star  
Viv Richards*

The prospect of targeting a different, more domestic market, rather than an international one, should also be considered as this not only reduces the carbon footprint entailed by longer flights (which subsequently contributes to worsening the climate) but also gives the region a closer, different market to focus on.



## **GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *Towards Autonomy and/or Independence of Some Caribbean islands*

The issue of independence and autonomy of Caribbean islands has remained and still remains within the scope of active discussion and focus by the United Nations. With the United Nations Charter purposing the UN “to develop friendly relations amongst nations based on respect for... *self-determination of people*”, the UN has achieved significant progress in promoting acts of self-determination in the Caribbean regions. In decades succeeding the formation of the UN, peoples in 19 Caribbean territories have exercised their right to self-determination through various referendums to achieve independence, free association or full integration. However, for the remaining territories that have been either completely deprived of opportunities for the exercise of their right to self-determination or given unfair terms to determine their own political futures, there remain numerous challenges. Such challenges include the lack of active engagement and inclusion of local governments by administrative powers in decision-making processes, the lack of financial support and favourable economic climate that discourage political independence or autonomy and the lack of united, constructive and informed political sentiments amongst the local populations which damage the prospects of political autonomy and independence for these Caribbean islands.

### **KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:**

**Self-determination:** Enshrined in various UN treaties, the right to self determination generally refers to the right of a people to determine their own political destiny. The exercising of this right can come in the form of a referendum to reflect the people’s opinions on the political future of the island.

According to the UN Resolution 1514, there are 4 categories in which non-independent and decolonising countries can be classified into:

1. **Non Self-Governing Territories:**

“Territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government”.

2. **Free Association:**

Essentially, the status of free association should be established via an informed democratic system (like a referendum) such that the territory freely decides to associate itself with an independent State and not choose complete independence. Such a status should respect the individuality of the territory and also maintain the right of the people to change their status through another informed and democratic process. In addition, free association must also mean that the territory has the right to internally determine its internal constitution without outside interference.

3. **Full Integration:**

Integration with an independent state should mean that the peoples of the territory and of the independent State should have complete equality in terms of status and rights of citizenship (which includes political representation, economic opportunities, etc.)

4. **Full independence:**

This should mean establishing a different and separate political entity that is internationally recognised and admitted into the United Nations.

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS:

- September 1945:** UN Charter formally affirms the unalienable right of peoples to self-determination
- Feb-July 1952:** The Constitution of Puerto Rico was approved by a Constitutional Convention and ratified by U.S. Congress, giving Puerto Rico the status of a “Commonwealth”
- January 1958:** The West Indies Federation was formed, establishing a federation of Caribbean states including modern-day Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, Anguilla, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Turks and Caicos Islands
- December 1960:** UN passes Resolution 1514 (XV) which titles *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*
- December 1960:** UN passes Resolution 1541 (XV) which establishes principles and standards to follow for the decolonisation of Non Self Governing Territories
- May 1962:** The West Indies Federation dissolves, due to various reasons including imposed governance and administrative structures, disagreements over taxation and central planning policies and unwillingness of most Territorial governments to give power up to the Federal Government
- August 1973:** Caribbean Community and Common Market, later CARICOM, was established by the Treaty of Chaguaramas
- 1986:** Aruba achieves a separate autonomous constituent country of the Kingdom of Netherlands
- By 1988:** Barbados, Grenada, Dominica, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis achieved full independence from the United Kingdoms
- February 2007:** Saint Martin and Saint Barthelemy become separate overseas collectivities of France
- March 2009:** Direct rule was imposed by the British Crown on the Turks and Caicos Islands after an enquiry found evidence of corruption. Governor Wetherell states the aim to hold elections in 2011 or before.
- October 2010:** The Netherlands Antilles dissolve. Curaçao and St Maarten achieve separate autonomous country status, as constituents of the Kingdom of Netherlands. Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba are fully integrated into the Netherlands.

## CAUSES OF DISPUTES:

The first cause of dispute is the difficulty of making proper and informed political decisions by the peoples of the Caribbean territories. The availability of education is low in many Caribbean territories. In addition, public interest in political activities may also be highly deficient. A constitutional referendum in the U.S. Virgin Islands had votes from only 21 percent of the eligible electorate. Furthermore, the referendum done in 1993 in the U.S. Virgin Islands also provided an “excessive number of seven alternatives”. It is also difficult for peoples in these territories to believe in the economic viability of an alternative political future than the current one tied to an administrative power. This is especially so in an unstable global economic climate and with much of the trade and industries of these territories reliant on the administrative powers.

The second cause of dispute is the continued lack of engagement of local representatives by the administrative powers. As seen in the Turks and Caicos Islands, while these territories are not fully integrated into the independent state of their administrative powers, they do not have self-governing status as well, as the administrative powers can suspend the government and the constitution without a popular vote. Representative of the Chief Minister of Anguilla expressed that there was severe disregard by the administrative powers for the Territory’s identity and culture through the legalisation of abortion without consultation with the local populace and the desire of the U.K. government to “dictate the terms” of the new Anguillan Constitution. Representative of Bermuda and the British Virgin Islands expressed similar sentiments.

The third cause of dispute is the implementation of the standards and criteria established by the United Nations. Petitioners from the Turks and Caicos Islands have indicated that there was no clear agenda for the realisation of self-determination. The un-incorporated status of Puerto Rico also falls short of the international standards established by the United Nations. The implementation process for the realisation of self-determination in Puerto Rico is underway with the Puerto Rico Democracy Act, which calls for a vote by Puerto Ricans to decide if they wanted to keep the current political status or not.



**Source 10:** *The Puerto Rico Democracy Act will make Puerto Rico the 51<sup>st</sup> State of the USA*

## PROPOSITIONS TO SOLVE DISPUTES

Firstly, there have been many calls for increased involvement of UN specialised agencies to start and expand their programmes in the Caribbean region. The granting of financial support from the Caribbean Development Bank has provided crucial financial backing; more support in areas such as finance, education and infrastructural assistance can create conditions that will make political independence or autonomy viable for these non-independent territories. In addition, various UN bodies such as the Special Committee on Decolonisation can work on public information and knowledge so as to educate the local population about the choices of a referendum before the scheduled vote itself. The work of these agencies, however, needs to be more targeted and directed to be effective and produce long-term results.

Secondly, academically there has been a review of different systems of political statuses in the Caribbean territories. There are many propositions made to the U.K. and the U.S. to look towards more politically equal forms of integration such as the system of French collectivities in the Caribbean or more internally self-governing systems such as the Dutch model of free association. These reviews arise due to the recognition that there is a lack of political representation of the local population in the decision-making process in these territories.

Thirdly, there is a need for clearer and more definite plans for implementation. As put forth in a speech by the Chairman of the Special Committee of 24, there remains too much inaction year after year. He also expressed that new and innovative steps need to be taken. Plans for referendums and votes should be made specific and the dates for such action confirmed. This can prevent the ambiguity of such a process from being exploited by the administrative powers for their benefits.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW: *Reduction of Disaster Risk and Vulnerability in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea*

The Caribbean, which includes the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, is one of the most naturally hazard-prone regions in the world. The geophysical and geological processes occurring in the Caribbean as well as its more familiar and characteristic physical environment set the stage for a variety of inevitable natural disasters. Such phenomena include but are not limited to earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic activity, floods, tectonic activity, hurricanes and tropical storms. Completely surrounded by ocean, the Caribbean is incredibly vulnerable, both economically and environmentally, to the aforementioned disasters. It is thus imperative for all the countries in the region to take into account the management of such disasters in their foreign policies and plans of development.



**Source 11:** *The Caribbean Sea and its surrounding countries*

Though the islands in the Caribbean share many of the same attributes, they are not identical. When conjuring solutions to address the problem at hand, the variability of the physical environments of each island and their individual natural characteristics need to be taken into consideration. There is no single solution that will adequately address the problems of the entire region, though solutions dealing with the islands collectively definitely exist. Natural disasters are an inherent aspect of the Caribbean and are therefore inevitable. Currently, with burgeoning populations and economies, there is a negative trend of an increased risk with every disaster that strikes. Thus, the main objective of propositions tackling the issue of the reduction of disaster risk and vulnerability in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea should be to invert this trend and prepare the region to manage such disasters better.





Source 12: Map of the Gulf of Mexico

## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

**Disaster** – a sudden event, in this case a natural catastrophe that causes great damage or loss of life.

**Vulnerability** – susceptible to physical damage; in this issue, vulnerability primarily refers to the susceptibility of the infrastructure, economy, and people of the Caribbean islands to natural disasters.

**Disaster management** – a comprehensive strategy based on a set of activities to reduce the risk of disasters by reducing the vulnerability of those at risk, ensuring that adequate measures are implemented before disaster strikes, responding as efficiently and effectively as possible to disasters when they occur and ensuring a sustainable development of the stricken region.

**Gulf of Mexico** – a partially landlocked ocean basin surrounded by the United States of America, Mexico, and Cuba.

**Caribbean Sea** – Sea bounded by Mexico and Central America to the west, the lesser Antilles to the north and the greater Antilles to the East.

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS:

**1930:** Dominican Republic hurricane, fifth deadliest Atlantic hurricane on record

**1988:** Hurricane Gilbert hits Jamaica; water facilities and roads damaged, massive environmental degradation

**1998:** Hurricane Georges hits Lesser Antilles

**1994:** Yokohama Strategy and World Conference on Disaster Reduction 2005

**2004-2005:** several Caribbean islands including Haiti, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago affected by sediment-water flows recorded as common water floods

**2004:** Hurricane Ivan hits the Caribbean

**2007:** World Bank launches “Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility” – emergency assistance to Caribbean countries hit by hurricanes or earthquakes

**2010:** Haiti earthquake, over 230,000 dead, 300,000 injured and 1,000,000 missing

## CAUSES OF DISPUTE

Because of its geographical location and natural characteristics, disasters in the Caribbean region are inevitable. Years of development and progress can be completely erased in a single night, highlighting the importance of the reduction of the risk and vulnerability in the Caribbean. More often than not, the following disputes have immediate effects on the economies of the islands as well as on the poverty level. In the long run, disasters also have significant impacts on industries dependent on nature, such as but not limited to agriculture, fishing and forestry.

ATMOSPHERIC	SEISMIC	GEOLOGIC/ HYDROLOGIC	HYDROLOGIC	VOLCANIC
Hurricanes Tropical storms Tornadoes Rainfall Lightning	Fault ruptures Ground shaking Liquefaction Uplift	Landslides	River flooding  Erosion and sedimentation	Lava flows Mudflows Pyroclastic flows
Hailstorms  Bolides	Landslides	Submarine slides	Desertification Salinization Drought	Projectiles and lateral blasts Tephra (ash, cinders, lapilli)
Temperature changes	Tsunamis  Seiches	Subsidence	Coastal flooding (Storm surge, Tsunami) Sea-level rise	Gases

**Source 13:** Potentially Hazardous Natural Phenomena in Caribbean

### *Hydrometeorological statutes*

Because of its topography, some of the major environmental threats faced by the islands in the Caribbean come from land erosion and its effects. Major effects include various types of land flows and flooding, including but not limited to overland flows, debris flows, mud flows, debris floods, flash floods and sediment-water flows. Essentially, the aforementioned are fast moving, liquefied landslides that should not be treated the same way as normal floods. Such flows cause significant damage to architecture and infrastructure, most notably water pipelines and the like. If such flows reach the ocean, coral reefs will likewise be affected. Though flooding is a threat regardless of its form, its severity depends on what kind of flood it is and dictates the kind of management needed to curb its effects.

### *Climate Change*

Climate change affects the frequency and severity of hurricanes and tropical storms in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, thereby increasing risk in the Caribbean islands. It also has massive effects on other natural processes of the islands, such as an inevitable rise in sea level and unpredictable consequences on flora and fauna, the region's biodiversity as a whole. Additionally, because the islands are very small, it is unlikely that only a few will be affected; in short, repercussions of climate change will be widespread and devastating.

Examples of negative effects of climate change on an island's natural resources are the damage done to coral reefs as sediments in the reefs as well as excessive sediments in floodwater, which leads to the aforementioned overflows. Because reefs are integral to each island's natural composition and take years to recover from damage, addressing this problem will be costly. Further, the damage done to reefs only increases the islands' vulnerability to disasters as if the reefs have not yet discovered, they will only further deteriorate with the next disaster.

### *Hurricanes and tropical storms*

The nature and temperature of the ocean in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea makes the region very prone to hurricanes and tropical storms. Many of these, such as Hurricane Ivan, for example, are disastrous and heavily damage not only the islands' resources and infrastructure but also its natural resources. Every hurricane leaves a trail of disaster, forcing many communities and nations to rebuild what was destroyed instead of progressing further. The rising issue of climate change is also a big issue: the warmer the weather gets, larger hurricanes are more likely to occur.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Natural Event</b>	<b>Economic Impact (US \$ Million)</b>	<b>% of GDP</b>
Bahamas	Hurricanes Frances & T.S. Jeanne	551	10.54%
Cayman Islands	Hurricane Ivan	1620	183%
Dominican Republic	Tropical Storm Jeanne	296	
Grenada	Hurricane Ivan	889	212%
Jamaica	Hurricane Ivan	595	8%

**Source 14:** *Economic Impact of Hurricanes in Selected Caribbean Tourist Destinations, 2004, from UNECLAC 2005*



## Infrastructural damage and development

Infrastructure is unfortunately one of the worst hit sectors of the Caribbean islands during natural disasters for obvious reasons. Water pipelines and water supplies are the most vulnerable to risk, especially with floods and hurricanes. Because access to potable water is important to every community, limited access during and after disasters puts these communities at risk for sicknesses. With regards to earthquakes, roads and other buildings are at large. The problem with infrastructure is not just that they are destroyed but that many are damaged in the middle of reconstructive efforts, hampering progress even further.

On the note of development, progress is made even harder to achieve when the nation is focusing on developing in high-risk areas, or when there is an increase of urbanization in these areas. Because of reasons given above, such developmental plans will be long and risky. Unless a full understanding of the environment is attained as so infrastructure to be developed will be compatible with the environment, such development can prove futile. Additionally, because the island nations aren't very wealthy, most infrastructures do not adhere with the standards for vulnerable structures. This is essentially a guarantee that such structures will not survive the next disaster, whenever that may occur. Nonetheless, the lack of adherence to standards is understandable because infrastructural damage and development are very costly.

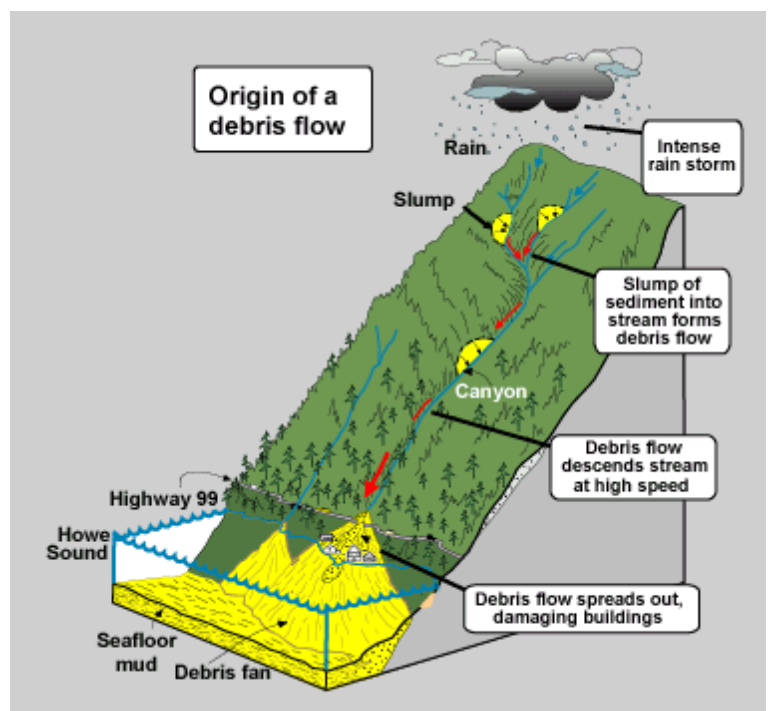
## Management

Problems can arise when determining who needs to be responsible and who should respond to natural disasters. Because North and Central America, as well as Cuba, border the Gulf of Mexico, determining responsibility and management is an issue that needs to be addressed. Appropriate distribution of revenue and resources, too, need to be addressed. Aid both from local governments and the international community should be distributed adequately, in that focus should also go to prevention and mitigation causes rather than just recovery.

## PROPOSITIONS TO SOLVE DISPUTES

### Evaluation

Evaluating the nature and severity of the natural disasters is of great importance in determining the best possible solutions to approach it. Such methods of evaluation include a thorough mapping out of a region to identify areas that may potentially be affected the most and how best to make these areas safer. Factors that must be taken in consideration include the topography of the areas and limitations it poses possible technological advancements, population density, what disasters certain areas are most prone to and the



Source 15: Origins of a Debris Flow

reasons behind these. Additionally, the type of disasters that occur must also be thoroughly examined because each disaster requires a separate and individual means of approach, regardless of what may have been believed in the past. Examples of such are the different kinds of floods – though commonly misconstrued as only being water, the majority of destructive floods in the Caribbean contain sediments that make the floods heavier and more dangerous. Methods need to be established wherein the different types of floods (mentioned under disputes) can be distinguished as to best mitigate them.

An intensive understanding of the local environment and the resources available in the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico are integral in ensuring that the quality of life remains high.

### *Cooperation*

As with any issue, one of the most important and effective means of addressing it is through cooperation and dialogue between involved parties. With regard to the reduction of disaster risk and vulnerability of the Caribbean and its surrounding seas, these parties would be the local and national governments of the nations benefiting from the oceans (including the Northern, Central and South American countries bordering the Gulf of Mexico), civil society, disaster committees and the international community. The national government will need to determine the extent of the involvement of other stakeholders and also be the most heavily involved with the management of entities tackling disaster risk as well as relevant businesses and industries that are affected by such plans. National governments are responsible for the care of their facilities and infrastructure. Bi-lateral and multi-lateral talks will need to be conducted with other surrounding nations, especially when disasters are widespread, in order to maximize the resources available in other states. The response to any disaster must be unified in order for it to be successful.

Importance also needs to be put on the need to cooperate with the international community, especially international organizations, as they inevitably are the first ones to rush to a nation's aid when disaster strikes. Because countries are likely incapacitated immediately following a natural disaster, donations from international organizations are the ravaged nation's best hope. Humanitarian organizations and relief efforts especially will have valuable and detailed information gathered throughout the years regarding conditions prior to the event that can be used in reducing disaster risk for the future.

Another form of dialogue usually overlooked is communication between the government and the local population. No other people will know the land better than those who have lived in it for their entire lives. Valuable information can thus be extracted through better cooperation. Further, tapping into a local community's knowledge and thereby engaging them makes the local population more eager to participate in government-led projects, as they will be able to understand the scope of the problem and contribute significantly.

### *Prevention and minimizing risks*

With regards to the topic at hand, focus is largely put on dealing with the aftereffects of a disaster rather than preparation for it, likely because of the inevitable nature of natural phenomena. Nevertheless, action can still be taken towards the prevention of such disasters or, at least, to minimize risks as much as possible. A proactive response, rather than a reactive response, is best, because then the region is not



completely under the control of disasters. Though natural disasters may be unpredictable, their severity is, to an extent, dependent on human activities. Climate change, for example, worsens hurricanes. Development without proper management can cause significant damage to land, leading to floods and soil erosion. The obvious solution is then to pursue policies for environmental sustainability and more eco-friendly infrastructure. With regards to infrastructure, in order to minimize damage done to them by natural disasters, they must be constructed with such disasters in mind. For example, buildings can be made stronger to withstand earthquakes and pipelines be created to properly manage floods. As much as possible, significant development should not occur in areas where risk is high.

Preparation for a disaster's aftereffects is, of course, of great importance as well because nations affected need to be able to recover as quickly as possible. Thus, it would be advisable that disaster-prone nations integrate disaster-preparedness training into their policies, or at least with organizations specializing in training, as so the proper training can be administered to personnel to respond efficiently to disasters. The Caribbean Red Cross Societies is a prime example of this. The implementation of early warning systems should also be put in place, though this may not be useful for all types of disasters, as only some can be predicted.

### *Government policies and education*

Besides the aforementioned, governments should thoroughly examine their capabilities and possible areas wherein they can improve responses to disasters and decrease their country's vulnerability. Certain industries can be transferred to private companies, most notably industries concerning infrastructure and possibly health, as so better quality can be achieved. The government must take care, however, that privatization of such industries does not result in massive increases in price that it will be disadvantageous to consumers. With these companies as well as other nations and organizations, the government should conjure innovative solutions that takes into account the nations' economy, environmental sustainability and social well-being. With regards to climate change, because the Caribbean nations are heavily dependent on fossil fuels, national governments should consider investing into more sustainable energy projects.

The government should also be supportive of research and education going into developing a better response to environmental disasters as well as a more thorough understanding of the land. They are also responsible for disseminating this information to the local population and the international community in the best way possible. Conscientiousness is integral in making government decisions, as it is with any issue.

## MAJOR PARTIES AND THEIR VIEWS

The **Association of Caribbean States** is concerned primarily with working to accentuate the interests that Caribbean nations hold in common while working to eliminate barriers left over from the colonial past of the region. **CARICOM** and **ECLAC**, though with a more specific focus on economic integration, will have similar views. The Association, CARICOM and ECLAC will hence be likely to promote and encourage Caribbean territories to move towards acts of self-determination, but will also urge the territories and administrative powers to be wary of possible social and economic implications. All three bodies will also be willing to provide regional assistance for these territories.

The Association of Caribbean States (**ACS**) was established in 1994 when its Convention was signed in Colombia with the purpose of “promoting consultation, cooperation, and concerted action” between all Caribbean states. Its objectives are as follows: “the strengthening of the regional co-operation and integration process, with a view of creating an enhanced economic space in the region; preserving the environmental integrity of the Caribbean Sea which is regarded as the common patrimony of the peoples of the region; and promoting the sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean.” It is composed of 25 members, 4 associate member states, and 18 observer states. Trade, Transport, Sustainable Tourism, and Natural Disasters are the main focuses of ACS.

The Caribbean Community (**CARICOM**) was founded in 1972, when Commonwealth Caribbean leaders decided to change the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) into a Common Market (which would be a division under CARICOM) at the Seventh Heads of Government Conference. By doing so, the leaders expanded CARIFTA to include free movement of labor and capital and coordination of agricultural, industrial, and foreign policies. According to the Revised Treaty which established this organization, the aim of CARICOM is “to improve standards of living and work; the full employment of labor and other factors of production; accelerated, coordinated and sustained economic development and convergence; expansion of trade and economic relations with third States; enhanced levels of international competitiveness; organization for increased production and productivity; achievement of a greater measure of economic leverage and effectiveness of Member States in dealing with third States, groups of States and entities of any description and the enhanced co-ordination of Member States’ foreign and foreign economic policies and enhanced functional co-operation.” CARICOM has 15 Caribbean nations and dependencies as its members.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, also as known as **ECLAC**, is composed of 44 member states and 8 non-independent territories in the Caribbean. Established in 1948 as one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations, ECLAC aims to “contribute to the economic development of Latin America and the Caribbean, coordinate actions to promote that development, and reinforce economic ties among the region’s countries and with other nations of the world.” The member states of revised ECLAC’s mission in 1996 to include the “design, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and the provision of expertise, advisory services and training, as well as support for regional and international cooperation and coordination activities.” By doing so, ECLAC became a very crucial organization that works closely with its member states to analyze and assist the region’s improvements. Today, the ECLAC functions both as a forum for dialogue (among the member states and their stakeholders) and as a policymaker whose databases are widely used.

The **Caribbean Tourist Organisation (CTO)**, with its focus on tourism, has no significant stake in acts of self-determination and will probably be concerned about the possible implications to the social climate (which may potentially affect the local tourist industry) when referendums or votes occur. The Organisation will therefore take a cautious stance with regards to this issue. It comprises 32 member countries (including English, French, Spanish and Dutch countries and territories). It was established in 1989 when the Caribbean Tourism Association and the Caribbean Tourism Research and Development Center were combined. The main aim of CTO is to provide services and information to the public and private sectors in order to promote sustainable tourism to benefit the region's people both economically and socially. The organization is mainly involved in marketing Caribbean tourist attractions in North America and Europe.

**Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia and St Vincent & the Grenadines** are likely to have the same views. Being former British colonies and members of CARICOM and ACS, they have pushed for more action and attention on this issue from the international community. These countries have gone through referendums and, being former British colonies themselves, can be examples for British overseas territories to follow. In addition, the inter-Caribbean trade as well as economic assistance via CARICOM and ACS can improve the potential economic situations of these territories should they choose independence.

The Federation of **Saint Kitts & Nevis** gained independence in 1983. Since then, there has been an internal struggle for Nevis to secede from the Federation – the last attempt of which was a failed referendum in 1998. Despite its struggles, Nevis maintains much autonomy under the constitution with each island being allotted equal seats in the Parliament. A primarily tourism based economy, Saint Kitts and Nevis experienced a prolonged period of economic decline in the late '90s and early 2000s, but the economy has been on an upswing since 2004 through diversification of tourism and construction related to the 2007 Cricket World Cup. The Federation has also been aided by new investment in the development of biofuels from sugarcanes, which are abundantly present in the nation. Saint Kitts and Nevis maintains good relations with the United States, and has been a beneficiary of many of their aid programs.

**Saint Lucia** is shaped like a mango and is one of the most prominent tourist spots in the Caribbean. The nation's economy has prospered greatly through investment in several different sectors. A combination of infrastructure improvements, stable political environment and a skilled work force, the nation continues to grow economically after a small setback after the September 11, 2001 attacks. Currently, economic growth is being affected by the recession, which has led to reduced tourist revenue. St. Lucia maintains good relations with powerful foreign nations in the region such as the US and the UK. Foreign relations are built greatly on economic interdependence, but Saint Lucia has cooperated with the US to address security concerns as well.

**Cuba, Haiti** and the **Dominican Republic** stand firmly against colonisation. The nations of Cuba and Haiti actively speak against the existence of such overseas territories, as well as the lack of political representation and realisation of self-determination in these territories. Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic have actively supported efforts in decolonisation.

**Saint Vincent & Grenadines** was the last of the Windward Islands to gain independence after colonial rule. Since independence, the nation has been ravaged by natural disasters through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Still, the nation is trying to develop economically through its strong relations with the US, the UK and Canada. Its reliance

on banana production (60% of jobs are in that sector and it makes up 50% of exports) has made the nation vulnerable to economic crisis when banana prices fall. To counter this, the nation has begun diversifying and developing itself as a high-end tourist locality.

The **European Union**, and in particular the **United Kingdom**, **France** and the **Netherlands** will support the process of decolonisation, but ultimately believes that the administrative power does have a role and a stake in this process, therefore, the process of decolonisation cannot be rushed for the sake of self-determination itself. The European Union, and in particular the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands are therefore wary of the consequences of premature independence or any kind of premature actions. All four parties are still committed towards the goal of realising self-determination but believe that action should be planned and stretched out according to the political and socio-economic situations in individual territories. France and the Netherlands, however, have much less issues with the realisation of rights of self-determination than the United Kingdom.

As of October 2010, the **Dutch Antilles** is no longer dependent on the Netherlands. Curacao and St. Maarten have become autonomous countries while Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba are autonomous special municipalities. The islands, especially Curacao, are highly dependent on tourism for their economy. The islands maintain close relations with the Netherlands and the United States, and will hold observer status at the CARICOM. They also signed an agreement with the ACS.

The **ICRC** is concerned with organising protection and care for civil populations. In this area, the **ICRC** can contribute towards improving the healthcare of people within these territories, thus building up the necessary infrastructure that will contribute to greater confidence amongst the population so that they can take up their rights of self-determination.



**Source 16:** *The Dutch Antilles*

Unlike most other nations in the Caribbean, **Trinidad & Tobago** was initially colonized by the Spanish, before going under British rule. Many factors have allowed Trinidad and Tobago to be one of the most prosperous nations in the Caribbean. Primarily, it was the discovery of oil in 1910 and the production of petroleum and natural gas. Tourism too has played a major role in its economic success, though an increase in violence is a major concern. Trinidad and Tobago has taken a leading role in the Caribbean and is a strong advocate of the establishment of a Single Market Economy (CSME). The nation maintains good relations with neighboring nations and foreign trading partners.

**The United States** has taken a shift towards granting Puerto Ricans a referendum to decide their political future. With the passing of the Puerto Rico Democracy Act in the House of Representatives, the United States has shifted from her previously defensive



stance towards outside interference of Puerto Rico towards accepting international standards of integration and association. The United States, however, will not rush any process through its political system, and the Executive branch (and therefore the delegate representing the US himself or herself) will not and cannot make promises with regards to major action or changes in Puerto Rico, for that will require approval from the Congress.

The United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**) was founded in 1965 as the global development network of the United Nations. It works with its 166 member countries to improve and promote sustainable development of regions by introducing and connecting nations to international knowledge, experience, and resources. By doing so, UNDP aims to stimulate capacity development, improve global living standards, and protect human rights all around the world. It further encourages democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, environment and energy, and HIV/AIDS prevention and reduction. Lastly, UNDP helps nations implement effective development strategies by “engaging partners and building consensus; assessing capacity assets and needs; formulating capacity development strategies; implementing capacity development strategies; and finally monitoring evaluating capacity development strategies.”

Established in June 1972 as a result of the UN Conference on the Human Environment, the United Nations Environment Programme (**UNEP**) coordinates the world’s environmental activities and helps developing countries implement environmentally friendly policies that enable sustainable development. Its mandate is “to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action”. UNEP deals with a wide range of environmental problems regarding the atmosphere and marine and terrestrial ecosystems. When implementing UNEP’s work, all activities pass through one (or more) of its 7 divisions which:

- “Monitor, evaluate, record and publicize environmental states and trends of varying scales.
- Assist in forming new alliances within the intercontinental society of environmentally active firms and the populace, as well as in further fortifying such associated institutions.
- Aid in negotiating environment covenants among/between/within institutions.
- Propagate environmental protection as an essential component of effectual economic development stratagems.
- Catalyze exchange of environmental or technological intelligence to promote sustainable development.”

The International Committee of the Red Cross (**ICRC**) is a private humanitarian institution established in 1863 when the first Geneva Convention (1964) was adopted (after the battle of Solferino). Its exclusively humanitarian mission is “to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavors to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.” Today, the ICRC is based in Geneva, Switzerland, as an independent and neutral organization, and employs over 12,000 people in 80 countries.

The International Labour Organization (**ILO**) is the United Nations' specialized agency based in Geneva, Switzerland, that was founded in 1919. It was initially established as an agency of the League of Nations that was established shortly after the First World War through the Treaty of Versailles. ILO aims to improve the working conditions and livelihoods of people all around the world by promoting rights at work, equal opportunities for employment, social protection, and dialogue between employers and employees. Furthermore, the ILO establishes international labor standards through its conventions. ILO's four strategic objectives include: "promote and realize standards and fundamental principles and rights at work; create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income; enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all; strengthen tripartism and social dialogue."

The International Maritime Organization (**IMO**), formerly known as the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), was founded in 1959 in order to strengthen maritime security and efficiency of shipping through the development of international regulatory framework. It also deals with marine environment and safety. IMO currently has 169 members (including the Cook Islands), and 3 associate members. As stated in the IMO Convention, the IMO is "to provide machinery for cooperation among Governments in the field of governmental regulation and practices relating to technical matters of all kinds affecting shipping engaged in international trade; to encourage and facilitate the general adoption of the highest practicable standards in matters concerning maritime safety, efficiency of navigation and prevention and control of marine pollution from ships."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (**IPCC**) was formed in 1988 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The IPCC is an intergovernmental, scientific body with the aims of evaluating climate change through scientific research and of providing the world with information on "human-induced climate change, the impacts of human-induced climate change, and options for adaptation and mitigation." Thousands of scientists from all over the world contribute their research to the IPCC voluntarily. As IPCC is the leading organization on climate change that provides scientific information to the public, it is a crucial body that influences the potential decisions of numerous states.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (**UNCLOS**) is an international agreement that came into force in 1994 as a result of the United Nations Conference on the Law of Sea that took place from 1973 to 1982 (it came to force only in 1994, because it required 60 member states to sign and ratify). UNCLOS defines the rights, responsibilities, and frameworks that all member states must abide by when using the world's ocean. Today, 158 countries have joined the Convention. However, UNCLOS does not have an operational role in the implementation of the guidelines stated in the Convention, and one of its greatest issues is the non-ratification of the United States.

Migrants passing through the Caribbean en route to the United States in search for a better life often fall into refugee status when they are left deserted on a Caribbean island after being told that it is the US. Such refugees are becoming more and more common for **UNHCR** to deal with. Thus, the UNHCR has been setting up procedures for refugees in the region and is trying to raise refugee protection standards. As the primary body for identifying refugees, it places a vital role in the region. Due to the lack of a permanent presence in the region, UNHCR relies on partner NGOs to undertake projects in the Caribbean.

Considering the high dependence of many Caribbean economies on tourism, the **UNWTO** becomes an essential cog in the tourism machine in the region. At the moment,

the UNWTO is planning a project to work with the Jamaica Tourist Board to rebuild the tourism industry in Haiti. It is believed that the economic reconstruction of Haiti will be given a quick recovery through tourism development. Historically, the UNWTO has been known to give technical cooperation to nations in the region to help nations acquire technical know-how in the formulation of sustainable tourism policies.

After the recent financial crisis, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have experienced fast economic recovery, second only to that of Asia. **The World Bank** has played a major role in its recovery along with increased exports to Asian economies, mainly China. One of the major difficulties for the World Bank in the Caribbean is the recovery of Haiti. Because of its extensive experience in managing multi-donor funds, World Bank is tasked with managing the Haiti Relief Fund. The World Bank has also expanded ending and advisory activities in the region as it recovers from the current financial crisis. As an essential financial institution in the region, the World Bank has continued to provide aid as necessary.

## RELEVANT TREATIES AND RESOLUTIONS

**United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** – was established in 1994 and defines the rights, responsibilities, and frameworks that the member states must abide by when using the ocean. It includes regulations for navigation and fishing.

**United Nations General Assembly Resolution 54/224** – “Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.”

**Article of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)** - passed in 1983, essentially entails nations and organizations involved to ensue bilateral and multilateral agreements to ensure the protection of the maritime environment of the Wider Caribbean.

**MARPOL 73/78** - MARPOL 73/78 is the international convention for the prevention of pollution from ships, passed in 1973, to which most, but not all, Caribbean islands are signatories of.

**Chapter 1 of UN Charter** states respect for the right to self-determination is a purpose of the UN.

**Chapter 11 of the UN Charter** defines a Non Self Governing Territory.

**Resolution 1514 (XV)**: this resolution states clearly and affirms the rights and urgency of the granting and exercising of the rights of peoples to self-determination.

**Resolution 1541 (XV)**: this resolution establishes principles and standards to follow for the decolonisation of Non Self Governing Territories, particularly with regards to the standards to follow for “full integration” and “free association”.

**Resolution A/RES/64/104**: this resolution outlines the response of the General Assembly towards the constitutional suspension in the Turks and Caicos Islands as well as the list of action to be implemented towards several Non Self Governing Territories



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