


A commitment
to address the environmental
and development problems of

THE WIDER CARIBBEAN



"We know...that increased trade and economic development is needed to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for all the world's people. However, if we fail to make wise economic and environmental choices, those needed increases in economic activity are likely to result in new burdens on earth's ability to sustain life. Our challenge is both to provide greater opportunities for an expanding population and to protect the environment on which we depend."

—President George Bush

"Ecology and economy are inseparable. Lip service has been given to this proposition; but it is clear that it is still not widely understood."

—Sir Shridath S. Ramphal, Chairman
of the West Indian Commission

"The issue is not whether we will survive as a species but under what condition we will be living in the future. By the end of this decade, we either will have rallied and turned back the threatening trends, or environmental deterioration and economic decline will be feeding on each other."

—Lester R. Brown, President, Worldwatch
Institute

Matching Environmental

The coastline of the six states bordering on the Gulf of Mexico is the largest single shoreline linked to marine waters of the Wider Caribbean—a 1,741 mile coastline.

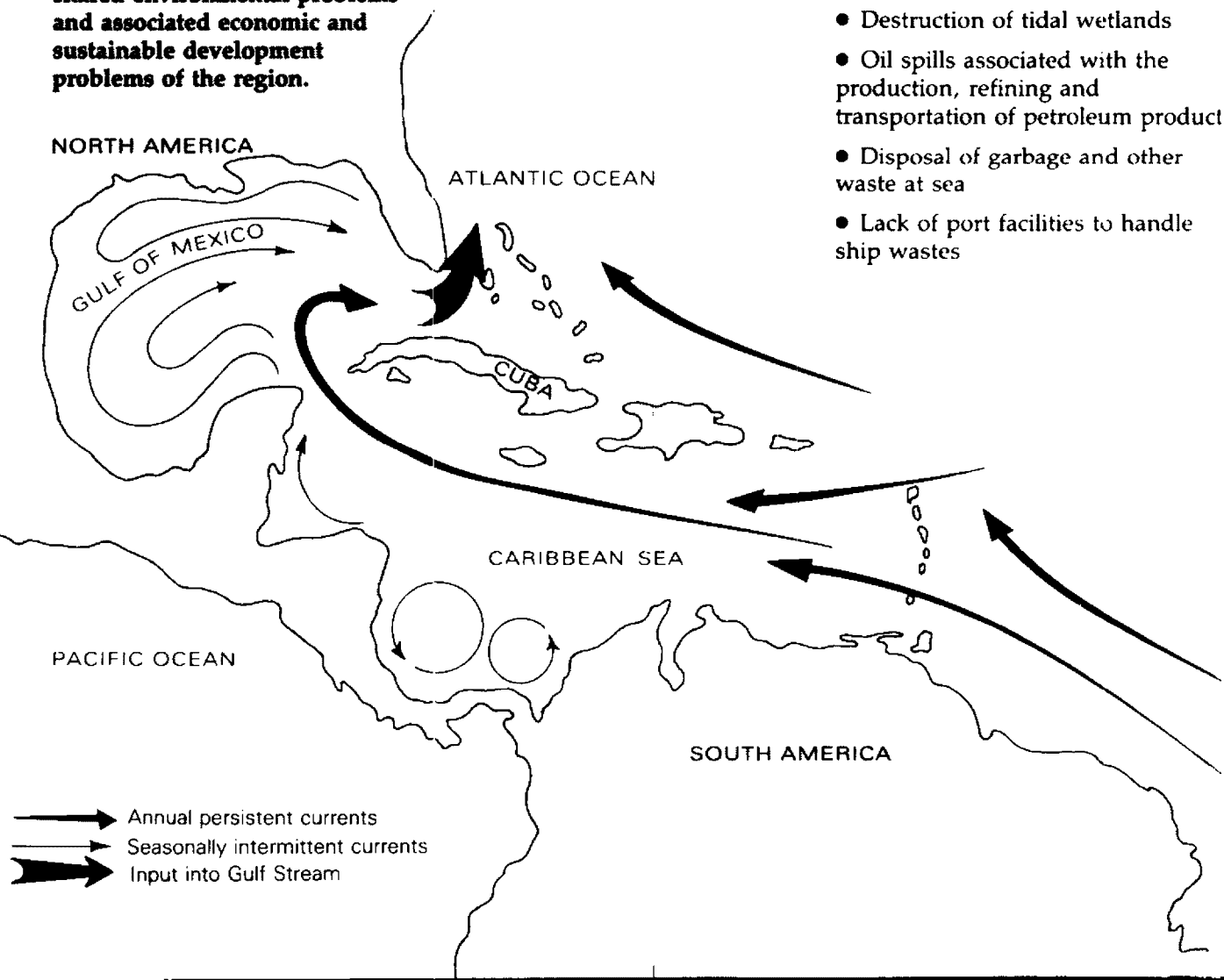
The marine environment of the southern United States and Mexico is linked by circulating ocean currents to the marine environment of the other Caribbean countries and the countries of South America.

The ocean circulation of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico are integrated systems which produce common marine and coastal pollution and related environmental problems.

International concerted efforts are needed to address shared environmental problems and associated economic and sustainable development problems of the region.

The Wider Caribbean countries need to work in concert to solve shared marine and coastal pollution problems:

- Increasing urbanization and tourist development which produce pressure on ecosystems
- Disposal of untreated or inadequately treated sewage with attendant public health concerns
- Increased use and runoff of pesticides and chemicals
- Contaminated ground water and coastal pollution resulting from improper solid waste disposal
- Overfishing and non-enforcement of regulations to protect immature fish stocks
- Deforestation, soil erosion, declining agricultural productivity and silting of estuaries
- Destruction of tidal wetlands
- Oil spills associated with the production, refining and transportation of petroleum products
- Disposal of garbage and other waste at sea
- Lack of port facilities to handle ship wastes



Solutions to Development Problems

Role of the United States Environmental Protection Agency

The Department of State has asked the Environmental Protection Agency to assume the technical lead for the United States to assist in developing a protocol for land-based sources of marine pollution under the Cartagena Convention. The agency is working closely with the Department of State, other federal agencies and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) on this matter.

In addition, EPA is pursuing several new and innovative approaches to promote cooperation among the governments, industry, academia and non-governmental organizations of the Wider Caribbean.

Based on EPA's regulatory authority and environmental mission in the Gulf of Mexico states of the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the agency is furthering cooperative efforts with concerned parties in the region to facilitate the establishment of a **Caribbean Environment and Development Institute**. The Institute will be a non-profit, institution involving academia, non-governmental environmental organizations and the private sector. Financial mechanisms will be established to support public-private environmental partnerships.

The Consortium for the Wider Caribbean is also established as a partnership of institutions and agencies from Wider Caribbean countries dedicated to a common venture of finding solutions to regional problems.

Goals of the Institute

- Assist in the development of an environmental network among countries, organizations and facilities in the region for the purpose of sharing expertise, technology and information
- Develop partnerships between business, government, academic and non-governmental environmental organizations and encourage practices of sustainable development, pollution prevention and waste minimization
- Coordinate with existing programs emphasizing environmental capacity building, education, training, technical cooperation and demonstration projects related to sustainable development
- Facilitate projects and programs for the Wider Caribbean drawing on existing facilities, institutions and capabilities in the region

Proposed Projects and Programs of the Institute include development of

- Public-private partnerships through voluntary actions and joint environmental research projects;
- Education, training and technical cooperative programs similar to EPA workshops for tropical water quality standards, treatment of solid waste and control of land-based sources of pollution;
- Local and regional information management and research capacity to support improved environmental decision-making through the sharing of information, technology and expertise; a concerted effort among U.S. federal agencies to develop a joint program for environmental research, monitoring and mapping the ecosystems of the region;
- Outreach programs to organizations throughout the Wider Caribbean region, so as to develop a flexible consortium to define and facilitate solutions to common problems; land-based sources of pollution have already been identified through the Cartagena Convention as a priority regional environmental issue.

The Institute will complement existing public and private initiatives within the United States with other nations of the Wider Caribbean, including President Bush's Caribbean Basin Initiative, the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, the Gulf of Mexico Program and the proposed Interhemispheric Research Center for Global Change, and other binational and multinational efforts in the hemisphere, including the proposed North America Free Trade Agreement and the first stage of an Integrated Environmental Plan for the Mexican-U.S. Border Area (1992-1994).

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