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Wider Caribbean

Panama City, Panama, 24 – 28 May 2010

**RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE CONVENTION FOR THE  
PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARINE  
ENVIRONMENT OF THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION  
(CARTAGENA CONVENTION)**

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**RULES OF PROCEDURE**  
**FOR THE MEETINGS OF THE CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND**  
**DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT OF THE WIDER CARIBBEAN**  
**REGION (CARTAGENA CONVENTION)**

SCOPE

**Rule 1**

1. These rules of procedure shall apply to any meeting or conference convened under the auspices of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region.
2. These rules of procedure shall also apply *mutatis mutandis*, to any meeting or conference convened under the auspices of Protocols to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region unless the Contracting Parties to the relevant Protocol agree otherwise.

DEFINITIONS

**Rule 2**

For purposes of these rules:

1. "Caribbean Action Plan" means the regional programme adopted by the Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme (Montego Bay, 6 to 8 April 1981) as modified by subsequent intergovernmental meetings.
2. "Conference" means any conference of plenipotentiaries convened under the auspices of the Convention.
3. "Contracting Party" means a State or Regional Economic Integration Organization that has ratified, accepted, approved or acceded to the Convention in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.
4. "Convention" means the 1983 Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, adopted in Cartagena de Indias on 24 March 1983.
5. "Meeting" means any ordinary or extraordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties convened under the auspices of the Convention.

6. "Secretariat" means the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the institution which, pursuant to article 15 of the Convention, has been designated by the Contracting Parties to carry out the Secretariat functions. Within UNEP, and on behalf of UNEP, the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (UNEP-CAR/RCU) is responsible for the administration of the Convention and its related protocols and therefore acts as the Secretariat under the Convention.

## VENUE

### **Rule 3**

All meetings, either ordinary or extraordinary, and conferences of the Contracting Parties shall be held at the Headquarters of the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit, unless otherwise decided by the Contracting Parties.

## MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

### **Rule 4**

1. The Secretariat shall prepare and convene all meetings and conferences provided for in articles 16, 17 and 18 of the Convention.

2. The Contracting Parties shall hold ordinary meetings once every two years. Subject to Rule 4(3), at each ordinary meeting, the Contracting Parties shall decide upon the date of the next ordinary meeting, where feasible.

3. Three Contracting Parties or the Secretariat may request an alteration of the date of a regular session. In either case, the Secretariat shall forthwith communicate the request to the Contracting Parties, together with appropriate observations, including financial implications, if any. If within twenty-one days of the inquiry the Contracting Parties approve the request in writing, the Secretariat shall convene the conference or meeting accordingly.

4. The Contracting Parties shall hold extraordinary meetings at any time deemed necessary, upon the request of the Secretariat or at the request of any Contracting Party, provided that such latter request is approved by the Contracting Parties. In the event of a request, the Secretariat shall immediately inform all Contracting Parties of the request, as well as of the approximate costs and relevant administrative considerations, and shall inquire whether they concur in it. If within twenty-one days of the inquiry the Contracting Parties approve the request in writing, the Secretariat shall convene the extraordinary meeting.

5. An extraordinary meeting shall be convened not less than 15 days and not more than 180 days after the date on which the request is approved in writing by the Contracting Parties.

6. Conferences of plenipotentiaries shall be convened for the purpose of adopting protocols to the Convention or amendments to the Convention or its protocols upon the approval of the Contracting Parties, pursuant to articles 17 and 18 of the Convention.

## NOTIFICATION TO CONTRACTING PARTIES

### **Rule 5**

The Secretariat shall communicate in the three official languages of the meeting the date of an ordinary meeting to all Contracting Parties at least 42 days in advance, and an extraordinary meeting to all Contracting Parties at least 28 days in advance.

### **Rule 6**

The Contracting Parties may decide at any meeting to adjourn temporarily and, depending on available resources, resume the meeting at a later date.

### **Rule 7**

Unless there are specific reasons requiring the use of other communication methods, notification by electronic mail shall be considered sufficient for the purposes of Rule 5, provided receipt of the electronic mail is acknowledged by the appropriate authority.

## AGENDA

### **Rule 8**

With the agreement of the Bureau, as described in Rule 19, the Secretariat shall prepare the provisional agenda for each meeting and conference.

### **Rule 9**

#### Agenda for Ordinary Meetings

The provisional agenda of each ordinary meeting shall include;

- (a) Items specified in paragraph 2 of article 16 of the Convention;
- (b) Items the inclusion of which was decided at a previous meeting;

- (c) Items referred to in Rule 13 of the present rules of procedure;
- (d) Any item proposed by a Contracting Party;
- (e) A report on the work undertaken or achieved under the Convention and the Caribbean Action Plan since the last ordinary meeting including recommendations for activities to be undertaken in the forthcoming biennium, the provisional budget, and all matters pertaining to accounts and financial arrangements.

**Rule 10**                      Distribution of the Provisional Agenda

The provisional agenda, together with supporting documents for each ordinary meeting, shall be distributed by the Secretariat to the Contracting Parties at least forty-two days before the opening session of the ordinary meeting in the three official languages. Documentation shall be provided in electronic form where it exists in that form.

**Rule 11**                      Supplementary Items

In consultation with the President of the Bureau, the Secretariat shall include any items proposed by any Contracting Party for inclusion on the agenda between the dispatch of the provisional agenda and the opening session of the ordinary meeting in a supplementary provisional agenda, which the ordinary meeting shall examine together with the provisional agenda.

**Rule 12**                      Adoption of the Agenda

1. At the beginning of each ordinary meeting, subject to the provisions of Rule 16 and after the election of officers under Rule 19, the Contracting Parties shall adopt the agenda for the meeting on the basis of the provisional agenda and any supplementary items proposed in accordance with Rule 11.
2. A Contracting Party that has requested the inclusion of an item in the agenda under Rules 9 or 11 above shall be entitled to be heard by the Contracting Parties on the inclusion of the item in the agenda for the session.
3. The Contracting Parties shall normally include in the agenda for an ordinary meeting items for which adequate documentation has been circulated to members at least forty-two days before the beginning of the meeting.

**Rule 13**                      Continuation of the Agenda

Any item of the agenda of an ordinary meeting, consideration of which has not been completed at the meeting, shall be included automatically in the agenda of the next ordinary meeting, unless otherwise decided by the Contracting Parties.

**Rule 14**                      Provisional Agenda for Extraordinary Meeting

The provisional agenda for an extraordinary meeting or conference shall consist only of those items proposed for consideration in the request for the holding of the extraordinary meeting or conference. The provisional agenda shall be distributed to the Contracting Parties at the same time as the invitation to the extraordinary meeting or conference or as soon as possible.

**Rule 15**

At the beginning of each extraordinary meeting, the Contracting Parties shall adopt the agenda for the Meeting on the basis of the provisional agenda.

**Rule 16**                      Revision of the Agenda

At any ordinary or extraordinary meeting or conference, the Contracting Parties may add, delete, defer or amend items. Only items which are considered to be urgent and important, and are approved by the Contracting Parties, shall be added to the agenda.

## REPRESENTATION AND CREDENTIALS

**Rule 17**                      Composition of the Delegations

Each Contracting Party participating in the meeting or conference shall be represented by an accredited delegation, consisting of a head of delegation and such other representatives and advisors as may be required.

**Rule 18**                      Submission of Credentials

1. The credentials of members of an accredited delegation shall be submitted to the Secretariat, at the latest, at the opening of the session. Any later change in the composition of the delegation shall also be submitted to the Secretariat. The credentials shall be issued by the Minister of Foreign Affairs or other competent authority of the Contracting Party and, in the case of a regional economic integration organization, by the competent authority of that organization.

2. The Bureau of any meeting or conference shall examine the credentials and submit its report to the meeting or conference. Pending a decision of the meeting upon their credentials, representatives shall be entitled to participate provisionally in the meeting or conference.

## THE BUREAU AND THE SECRETARIAT

### **Rule 19**

1. At the commencement of the opening session of each ordinary meeting, a President, a First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, and a Rapporteur are to be elected from among the representatives of the Contracting Parties present at the meeting. They shall serve as the Bureau of the meeting. The Bureau shall assist the President in the general conduct of business of the meeting. The Chairmen of such committees or working groups as may be established under Rule 48 may be invited to participate in meetings of the Bureau.

2. The Bureau may provide guidance and advice to the Secretariat in the period between meetings and conferences, and may meet outside of the times designated for the meeting or conference, if necessary and subject to the availability of resources.

3. Members of the Bureau elected at any ordinary meeting shall remain in office until their successors are elected at the next ordinary meeting and shall serve as the Bureau of any intervening extraordinary meeting or conference. Members of the Bureau are eligible for re-election for one additional term.

### **Rule 20**

#### **Functions of the President**

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred elsewhere in these rules, the President shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting or conference, direct the discussion, preside at sessions, ensure the observance of these rules, accord the right to speak, submit questions for decision, and announce decisions. The President shall rule on points of order and, subject to these rules, shall have control of the proceedings and over the maintenance of order at the meetings or conferences. The President may propose to the meeting or conference the closure of the list of speakers or the closure of debate, a limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times each representative of a Contracting Party may speak on a question. He may also propose the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting or conference or the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion.

2. The President, in the exercise of his functions, remains under the authority of the meeting or conference.



**Rule 21**                      Voting Rights of the President

The President or the Vice-President acting as President shall not participate in decision-making but shall designate another member of his delegation to do so in his place.

If the President, or the Vice-President acting as President, is the only representative of his delegation, he shall be permitted to participate in decision-making and shall announce to the meeting his dual role in this regard.

**Rule 22**                      Temporary Absence of the President

1. If temporarily absent from a session or any part thereof, the President shall designate the First Vice-President as Acting President or the Second Vice-President if the first Vice-President is not available.

2. The Vice-President, as Acting President, shall have the same powers and duties as the President until the President returns from his temporary absence.

**Rule 23**                      Permanent Absence of the President

1. If the President resigns or otherwise becomes unable to complete the term of office, the First Vice-President shall become President until the end of the term.

2. If the new President resigns or otherwise becomes unable to complete the term of office, the Second Vice-President shall become President until the end of the term.

**Rule 24**                      Functions of the Secretariat

In addition to the functions enumerated in article 15 of the Convention, the Secretariat shall, in accordance with these rules:

- (1) Prepare the provisional agenda in accordance with Rule 8;
- (2) Arrange for interpretation at the meetings or conferences;
- (3) Receive, translate, reproduce, and distribute the working and other official documents of the meetings or conferences;
- (4) Publish and circulate the official documents of the meetings or conferences;
- (5) When determined by the President or a Contracting Party as necessary, make and

arrange for keeping of sound recordings of the meetings or conferences;

- (6) Arrange for the custody and preservation of the working and other official documents of the meetings or conferences in the archives; and
- (7) Generally perform all other work that the meeting or conference may require or that may be assigned to it by the Bureau.

**Rule 25**                      Estimates of Expenditures

1. Before any proposal which involves expenditure from the resources of the Caribbean Trust Fund (“Trust Fund”) is approved at the meeting or conference, the Executive Secretary shall circulate to all Contracting Parties, as early as possible, a financial report on the estimated costs involved as well as on administrative and budgetary implications with reference to existing obligations against the resources of the Trust Fund.

2. The Contracting Parties shall take into account the estimates referred to in paragraph 1 before adopting any proposal involving expenditure from the Trust Fund. If the proposal is adopted, the Contracting Parties shall indicate, whenever appropriate, the priority or degree of urgency which they attach to the projects and, as the case may be, which current projects may be deferred, modified, or eliminated to ensure that the work of the Secretariat will be carried on most effectively.

3. The Executive Secretary of the Convention shall submit to the Contracting Parties on a biennial basis expenditure borne by the Trust Fund, in accordance with the Financial Rules of the Convention.

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

**Rule 26**                      Quorum

Two-thirds of the Contracting Parties present at the meeting or conference shall constitute a quorum.

**Rule 27**                      Speeches

No person may address the meeting or conference without having previously obtained the permission of the President. Subject to Rules 28 and 29, the President shall call upon Contracting Parties in the order in which they signify their desire to speak, and then he may give the floor to the other speakers. The President may call a speaker to order if his remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

**Rule 28**                      Precedence

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, or Rapporteur of a committee or working group may be accorded precedence in speaking for the purpose of explaining the conclusion arrived at by the committee or working group concerned and for the purpose of replying to questions.

**Rule 29**                      Points of Order

1. During the discussion of any matter, a representative of a Contracting Party may at any time raise a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with these rules of procedure. A representative of a Contracting Party may appeal against the ruling of the President. The appeal shall be immediately put to a decision, and the ruling of the President shall stand unless overruled by the Contracting Parties.

2. A representative of a Contracting Party rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

**Rule 30**                      Time-limit on Speeches

The President may limit the time allowed for each speaker and the number of times each person may speak during the discussion of any matter. When debate is limited and a speaker has spoken his allotted time, the President shall call him to order without delay.

**Rule 31**                      Closing of list of speakers

During the course of a debate the President may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Contracting Parties, declare the list closed. The President may, however, accord the right of reply to any representative of a Contracting Party if, in his opinion, a speech delivered after he has declared the list closed renders this justified. When the debate on an item is concluded because there are no other speakers, the President, with the consent of Contracting Parties, shall declare the debate closed.

**Rule 32**                      Adjournment of the Debate

During the discussion of any matter, a representative of a Contracting Party may ask to move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one representative of a Contracting Party may speak in favour of, and one against the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately decided by the Contracting Parties. The President may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.

**Rule 33**                      Closure of the Debate

A representative of a Contracting Party may at any time ask to move the closure of the debate on the item under discussion, whether or not any other representative of a Contracting Party has signified his wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of the debate shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the closure, after which the motion shall be immediately put to a decision. If the Contracting Parties are in favour of the closure, the President shall declare the closure of the debate. The President may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.

**Rule 34**                      Suspension or Adjournment of the Meeting

During the discussion of any matter, a representative of a Contracting Party may ask to move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting or conference. Such motions shall not be debated, but shall be immediately decided by the Contracting Parties. The President may limit the time to be allowed to the speaker moving the suspension or adjournment of the meeting or conference.

**Rule 35**                      Order of Procedural Motions

Subject to Rule 29 and regardless of the order in which submitted, the following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the meeting or conference.

- (a) To suspend a meeting or conference;
- (b) To adjourn a meeting or conference;
- (c) To adjourn the debate on the question under discussion; and
- (d) To close the debate on the question under discussion.

**Rule 36**                      Proposals and Amendments

1. Proposals and amendments thereto shall normally be introduced in writing and submitted to the Secretariat, which shall translate and circulate copies in the three official languages to the Contracting Parties. As a general rule, no proposal or amendment thereto shall be discussed or put to decision at any meeting or conference unless copies of it have been circulated to all Contracting Parties not later than 15 days preceding the meeting or conference. Subject to the consent of the Contracting Parties, the President may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of proposals or amendments thereto even though these proposals or amendments thereto have not been circulated or have only been circulated the same day.

2. No proposal or amendment thereto involving administrative or budgetary implications shall be discussed or put to a decision unless it is accompanied by an estimate of such implications, in accordance with Rule 25, prepared by the Secretariat and circulated to all Contracting Parties not later than the preceding day, unless the Contracting Parties decide otherwise.

**Rule 37**                      Decisions on Competence

Subject to Rule 35, any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the meeting or conference to adopt any proposal or amendment thereto submitted to it shall be put to a decision before a decision is taken on the proposal or amendment in question.

**Rule 38**                      Withdrawal of Proposals or Motions

A proposal or motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before a decision has been taken on it, provided that the proposal or motion has not been amended. A proposal or motion which has thus been withdrawn may be reintroduced by any other Contracting Party.

**Rule 39**                      Reconsideration of Proposals

When a proposal or amendment thereto has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered at the same meeting or conference, unless the Contracting Parties so decide. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the motion, after which it shall be put immediately to a decision.

## DECISION-MAKING

**Rule 40**                      Decision-Making

**1.**

(a) All decisions of the meeting or conference on matters of substance, which includes all financial matters, shall be taken by consensus of the Contracting Parties.

(b) All decisions of the meeting or conference on matters of procedure shall be taken by consensus of the Contracting Parties in the first instance, and, if efforts to achieve consensus have failed then such decisions shall be taken by a three quarters majority of the Contracting Parties present and voting.

(c) When an issue arises as to whether a question is one of substance or not, that question shall be treated as one of substance unless otherwise decided by the Contracting Parties by consensus.

**2.** For purposes of these rules, the term “consensus” means the absence of any formal objection made at the time the decision was taken.

**3.** For purposes of these rules, the phrase "Contracting Parties present and voting" means Contracting Parties present at the session at which voting takes place and casting an affirmative or negative vote. Contracting Parties abstaining from voting shall be considered as not voting.

**Rule 41**                      Voting Rights

Each Contracting Party shall have one vote, except as provided in article 21 of the Convention.

**Rule 42**                      Method of Voting

In the event that voting is required, it normally shall be by show of hands. A roll-call vote shall be taken if requested by any Contracting Party. It shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Contracting Parties participating in the meeting or conference beginning with the Contracting Party whose name is drawn by lot by the President. During voting, the name of each Contracting Party will be announced and one of its representatives will answer "yes", or "no" or "abstention". The vote of each Contracting Party shall be recorded in the report and any other relevant documents of the meeting or conference.

**Rule 43**                      Conduct During Voting

After the President has announced the commencement of voting, no representative of a Contracting Party may interrupt the voting, except that representatives of Contracting Parties may interrupt on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of voting.

**Rule 44**

The President may permit representatives of the Contracting Parties to make brief statements consisting solely of explanations of their votes, either before the voting has commenced or after the voting has been completed. The President may limit the time to be allowed for such statements. The representative of a Contracting Party sponsoring a proposal or motion shall not speak in explanation of the vote thereon, except if it has been amended.

**Rule 45**                      Division of Proposals or Amendment

1. A representative of a Contracting Party may move that parts of a proposal or of an amendment shall be decided upon separately. If objection is made to the request for division, the motion for division shall be put to the Contracting Parties for decision. Permission to speak on the motion for division shall be given only to two speakers in favor and two speakers against.

2. If the motion for division is carried, those parts of the proposal or of the amendment which are subsequently approved shall be put to the vote as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal or of the amendment have been rejected, the proposal or the amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

**Rule 46**                      Deciding on Amendments

1. A motion is considered to be an amendment to a proposal if it adds to, deletes from, or revises part of that proposal. An amendment shall be decided upon before the proposal to which it relates is put to a decision and, if the amendment is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be put to a decision.

2. If two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Contracting Parties shall first decide upon the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, then on the amendment next furthest removed there from, and so on, until all amendments have been put to decision. Where, however, the adoption of an amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment as determined by the President, the latter amendment shall not be put to decision. If objection is made regarding the President's determination, it shall be put to the Contracting Parties for decision. The President shall determine the order by which amendments shall be put to a decision under this rule.

**Rule 47**                      Deciding on Proposals

If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the Contracting Parties, unless they decide otherwise, shall decide upon the proposals in the order in which they have been submitted. The Contracting Parties may, after each decision on a proposal, assess whether to decide on the next proposal.

## COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

### **Rule 48**

1. During the course of a meeting or conference, the Contracting Parties may establish such committees and working groups as may be required for the transaction of its business.
2. Unless otherwise decided, the Contracting Parties shall elect a chairman for each such committee and working group from among the Contracting Parties. The Contracting Parties shall determine the matters to be considered by each such committee or working group and may authorize the Bureau, upon the request of the Chairman of a committee or working group, to adjust the allocation of work.
3. Unless otherwise decided by the Contracting Parties, these rules shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to the proceedings of committees and working groups
4. Such committees or working groups shall meet in the course of a meeting or conference, unless the Contracting Parties decide otherwise, taking into account any relevant administrative and financial implications.

## LANGUAGES AND RECORDS

### **Rule 49**

#### Languages

1. The official languages of the meeting or conference shall be English, French, and Spanish. Statements made in an official language of the meeting or conference shall be interpreted in the other official languages.
2. A representative of a Contracting Party may speak in a language other than an official language of the meeting or conference if that representative provides interpretation into one of the official languages and provided that this does not jeopardize the full participation of the Contracting Parties in the deliberations.
3. All working and other official documents of the meeting or conference shall be drawn up in one of the official languages and translated into the other official languages. These documents shall be distributed in all three official languages by the Secretariat to all Contracting Parties and others participating in the meeting or conference.



## PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEETINGS

### **Rule 50**

1. Plenary sessions of any meeting or conference shall be held in public unless decided otherwise at the meeting or conference.
2. Meetings of the committees and working groups of the meetings and conferences shall be held in private unless the Contracting Parties decide otherwise.
3. All decisions taken at a private meeting shall be announced and/or communicated at the earliest possible meeting or conference. At the closure of each private meeting of the committees or working groups, the Chairman may issue a communiqué through the Secretariat.

## PARTICIPATION OF TERRITORIES

### **Rule 51**

1. The meeting or conference and the committees or working groups thereunder shall be open to participation, with the appropriate authorization of the Contracting Party having responsibility for its international affairs, (for purposes of this rule, the “relevant Contracting Party”), to the following territories:

[List of territories]

2. Territories listed in paragraph 1 would be Participating Territories once they have the relevant authorization. Such authorization shall be filed with the Secretariat by the relevant Contracting Party.
3. The Authorization should describe the extent of the Territory’s competency and may be updated by the relevant Contracting Party, as appropriate.
4. Participating Territories have the right to participate at meetings or conferences and the committees and work groups thereunder, including, *inter alia*, through speaking at such meetings and making proposals and amendments in accordance with Rule 36, and to receive all communications in respect of those meetings. Participating Territories may not participate in decision-making.

## OBSERVERS

### **Rule 52**                      Participation of Non-Contracting Parties

1. The Secretariat may invite any State not a Contracting Party, which so requests, to any meeting or conference as an observer, provided that State has a direct concern in the protection and development of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region.
2. Such observers may, upon invitation of the President, and if there is no objection from at least one third of the Contracting Parties present, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any meeting or conference, or committee or working group thereunder.

### **Rule 53**                      Participation of the UN and its Subsidiary Bodies

1. The Secretariat may invite the United Nations, any interested subsidiary body thereof, or any specialized agency which so requests, to any meeting or conference as an observer, provided that body or agency has a direct concern in the protection and development of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region.
2. Such observers may, upon invitation of the President, if there is no objection from at least one third of the Contracting Parties present, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any meeting or conference, or committee or working group thereunder.

### **Rule 54**                      Participation of other Observers

1. The Secretariat may invite any international inter-governmental or non-governmental organization, which so requests, to any meeting or conference as an observer, provided that organization has a direct concern in the protection and development of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region.
2. Such observers may, upon invitation of the President, if there is no objection from at least one third of the Contracting Parties present, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any meeting or conference, or committee or working group thereunder, on matters of direct concern to the organization in question.

## AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

**Rule 55**

Amendments to these rules of procedure shall be adopted by consensus by the Contracting Parties at a meeting or conference, provided that the Contracting Parties have received a report on the proposed amendment from a committee or working group established for that purpose.

## OVERRIDING AUTHORITY OF THE CONVENTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS

**Rule 56**

1. In the event of any conflict between any provision of these rules and any provision of the Convention, the provision of the Convention shall prevail.
2. In the event of any conflict between any provision of these rules and any provision of a Protocol to the Convention, the provision of the Protocol shall prevail.