



YOUTH CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2017

Our Climate, Our Voice, Our Change: Advancing Youth Action Through Partnerships for Global Impact



RAPPORTUER'S REPORT

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ACRONYMS

COP23	Conference of the Parties
CYEN	Caribbean Youth and Environment Network
DYEO	Dominican Youth Environmental Organization
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
Ja-REEACH	Jamaica Rural Economy and Ecosystems Climate Change Project
J-CCCP	Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership
JET	Jamaica Environment Trust
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NIA	National Integrity Action
NWC	National Water Commission
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TIDE	Toledo Institute for Development and Environment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWI	University of the West Indies
WUSC	World University Services of Canada
YCC	Youth Climate Change Conference

BACKGROUND

The 2017 staging of the Youth Climate Change Conference (YCCC), held under the theme “Our Climate, our Voice, Our Change” was co-hosted by the USAID-funded Jamaica Rural Economy and Ecosystems Adapting to Climate Change II (Ja REEACH II) Project and the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership (J-CCCP) Project in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. The YCCC was first held in September 2014 and the second staging took place in 2015.

The 2017 YCCC, the third iteration of the event, involved the participation of 600 youth from eight Caribbean countries and Japan. Caribbean countries included: Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname. For the first time, the conference hosted participants from Japan. This was in keeping with the mandate to facilitate North-South and South-South cooperation, having benefitted from financial and technical support from the Government of Japan as well as the partnership between the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the Sophia University in Japan. Conference participants were selected by local review panels. They ranged in age from 14 to 29 years.

The execution of the conference was guided by the overall goal of fostering an environment in which Caribbean youth had the opportunity to grasp climate change concepts and were empowered to take action. The goal was pursued through the following objectives:

- Facilitating increased understanding among youth attendees of local and regional climate issues;
- Developing advocacy skills among youth attendees;
- Sharing individual and institutional climate actions taken by youth, with these actions scaled up to youth who were not in attendance; and
- Facilitating the transfer of knowledge between Japan and the Caribbean.

Participants were engaged in a series of climate advocacy training workshops, presentations, exhibitions and competitions to increase their awareness of the various challenges and proposed solutions. The conference was expected to cement the role of youth as being vital in advancing climate action in the region.

The 2015 staging included the first UN-style Climate Change Conference of parties which resulted in the drafting of a Climate Change Framework for Schools in Jamaica. This year saw the drafting of a Youth Statement on Climate Change (Annex 1).

YOUTH CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2017

OCTOBER 10 – 11

JAMAICA CONFERENCE CENTRE

DAY 1

OPENING CEREMONY

Moderator Candice Carlton welcomed the “climate change warriors” and provided an overview of the day’s programme. She noted that the representatives were here on a mission as the hosting of the Youth Climate Change Conference (YCCC) 2017 came in the wake of the devastation caused by the different climate events that the region had experienced. She observed that Hurricane Irma had left Bermuda almost uninhabitable while Maria had caused extreme damage in Dominica. Turks and Caicos, St Kitts and Nevis had also experienced loss and damages. The conference, she added, provided the opportunity for participants to increase their knowledge and understanding of climate change issues, build advocacy skills, to share the individual institutional climate actions undertaken by youth in individual territories and to brainstorm regarding strategies that might be implemented. This would be achieved through training and presentations, group discussions, competitions and field trips. The programme, she added, was designed to broaden their perspective and encourage climate change action.

Ms Carlton urged participants to be engaged, present and activated; to be the change they wanted to see in their future. Ms Carlton concluded by reminding participants of the mantra of the YCCC 2017 – Our climate, Our voices, Our change.

The overriding themes of the morning’s presentations centred on the vulnerability of the Caribbean region to natural disasters, as evidenced by the recent devastating events; the actions that had to be taken to mitigate against climate change and increase resilience in the region; and the role of the youth in the struggle against climate change.

Greetings from the Canadian High Commission

Mr Walter Bernyck, Counsellor and Head of Development Cooperation, Canadian High Commission. Mr. Bernyck works with the PROPEL Programme, administered by the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), which assists small farmers to find markets for their products in five Caribbean countries, including Jamaica.

Mr Bernyck, who brought greetings on behalf of the Canadian High Commission, highlighted the long-standing relationship between Canada and the Caribbean. He gave an overview of Canada's overseas development policy which reflected the Government's philosophy of preserving human dignity and aimed at promoting growth, climate change resilience and disaster risk reduction. He noted the particular vulnerabilities of the Caribbean, including coastal erosion.

Mr Bernyck highlighted the timeliness of the conference in light of the recent destruction suffered by several Caribbean countries. This not only underlined the urgency for action but the need for an inclusive approach to disaster risk management, embracing both genders and, most importantly, the youth.

He highlighted the Canadian Government's inclusive approach to development issues, stressing that climate change, and other issues, should be tackled by "men and women working together", and pointed to a deliberate decision that had been made recently, after consultations with partners and stakeholders, to establish a Feminist International Assistance Policy – designed to be inclusive "but not exclusive".

In relation to youth involvement, he noted that, as outlined in the United Nations Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change, it was critical to include youth. He shared with the meeting the fact that Canada's Environment Minister, Catherine McKenna, had hosted the National Youth Summit on Climate Change in November 2016, which was attended by some 500,000 people – in person and online. "Youth voices", he emphasized, provided a different perspective, "No one sees the world the way you do."

This generation, he continued, was challenged to find innovative ways to meet climate change goals. The new circumstances should be viewed as creating opportunities for the creation of new career paths as long-term solutions were pursued. He pointed to the new blue and green economy concepts which demanded new skills and innovations for the promotion and development of renewable energy technology. He observed that opportunities now existed for young people to be change agents (including pursuing jobs that didn't exist ten years ago).

Mr Bernyck reiterated the importance of partnerships in the battle against climate change. The PROPEL Programme, the USAID, UNDP, Japan Caribbean Climate Change Programme and various Caribbean governments were currently collaborating in the development of long-term projects aimed at achieving the sustainable development goals, said Mr Bernyck. Partnerships, teamwork and youth involvement represented the way of the future, he pointed out.

He ended with a quote from Deng Xiaoping: "It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice."

The International Context for Climate Negotiations

Mr Gerald Lindo, Project Management Specialist (Energy) at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Jamaica.

Mr Lindo informed the meeting that climate change negotiations had begun as far back as 1992. In recent years, the City of Bonn, Germany, had been the focal point for many climate change meetings and would be the venue for the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP23).

Mr Lindo furthered the understanding of climate change and its impact by demonstrating the challenges faced at the individual, community, national and international levels in very practical terms.

He noted that climate change and its impact was not predictable and thus presented new challenges that made planning difficult – national and individual circumstances could change in an instant thus placing undue strain on individuals, communities and governments.

He presented three main challenges in the handling of climate change:

- The difficulties presented for planning – assumptions could not be absolute
- Changing landscape for investment
- Additional strain placed on governments, communities and individuals

He then elaborated on the concepts of mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage.

Mitigation

He explained that mitigation meant that the previous assumptions about development had to be changed. The effort to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) required a major shift in thinking as our economies and lifestyles which, for over a century, had been built on an infrastructure that produced GHGs. In moving forward, the world had to find a way to maintain and improve our quality of life without the use of polluting agents.

Mr Lindo introduced the Paris Agreement, a global mitigation strategy, which required all signatories to limit their GHG emissions in an attempt contain the impact of global warming which has been brought about by climate change.

The Paris Agreement, he elaborated, was based on consensus, voluntary action and accountability. Each country had to decide on the actions it would take individually (Nationally Determined Contributions – NDCs) to reduce GHG emissions. The countries also had to report, at agreed intervals, the results of these actions. He described some of the areas of agreement as follows:

- Agreement to report actions
- Development of a framework for forests
- Development of a framework or voluntary cooperation (e.g carbon markets)
- Development of a framework for loss and damage
- Technology transfer and capacity building

He observed that the issue of climate change was most urgent for youth who would have to live with the consequences of change and the spirit of the Agreement was that each generation was responsible for protecting the interests of the next.

Adaptation

Adaptation, Mr Lindo explained, was reflected in the lifestyle changes required to cope with the consequences of climate change. He noted that the success of adaptation depended on the capacity of individuals, communities and countries to accommodate the necessary changes which required money, technology and the organization of people.

Loss and Damage

Loss and damage was identified as one of the hardest aspects of climate change as it referred to permanent loss; for example, the loss of land (coastlines) biodiversity and culture. He pointed to the recent effect of Hurricane Irma on Barbuda which had been completely flattened. He also cited the situation in Bangladesh where one metre in sea level rise had the potential to displace 20 million people.

Mr Lindo also highlighted the issue of the *tragedy of commons*. This concept referred to those elements that were shared by all and on which no boundaries could be placed. The atmosphere was described as a common commodity and one which could be impacted in one region by the actions of people in another region – as in the case of developed and developing countries where industrial activities of the former contributed to disastrous events in the latter.

Climate change also created uneven impacts as all effects were not equally deleterious to all.

PANEL DISCUSSION: “UNDERSTANDING THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY CONTEXT AND OUR OPTIONS FOR YOUTH ACTION”

Ja-REeach’s Dainalyn Swaby introduced the panelists who included Ambassador Sheila Monteith, Germaine Bryan, Sean Davis, and Ja’dan Johnson who shared their perspectives on the climate change struggle. All were in agreement on the imperative of youth involvement.

Ambassador Sheila Sealy Monteith, Under-Secretary for Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

Ambassador Sealy Monteith praised the Dominican delegation for their commitment in being at the conference despite the recent occurrences in their country and asked them to stand to be recognized. The Ambassador welcomed the Japanese delegation from Sophia University and praised the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP), Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership (J-CCCP) Project, including Japan and eight Caribbean countries, for showing a “collective responsibility.” She cited the UN Secretary General’s remarks in Antigua after the hurricane on October 7 which demonstrated the

clear link between climate change and the damage witnessed, asserting the “collective responsibility of the international community to stop this suicidal development”. The impact of climate change on the regional marine environment was considered a major problem as it was the base of so many sectors of the economy and livelihood of the Caribbean – food security, transportation and tourism.

Ambassador Monteith shared elements of Jamaica’s climate change programme which was driven by the goals of the country’s National Development Plan, the Vision 2030. She highlighted some of the many bilateral and multinational agreements in which the country participated. Specifically, she pointed to a \$48 million project funded by the European Union (EU) with the Westmoreland Municipal Corporation; the UNEP/UN/EU project to reduce the risk of natural hazards; and the Portmore risk reduction project. She noted that Jamaica was a signatory to the Paris Agreement and had played a leading advocacy role in promoting the goal of maintaining global temperature at 1.5°C. She reiterated the country’s upcoming participation in COP23 in November 2017.

Ambassador Monteith exhorted the youth present to get involved in action against climate change delineating the ways in which they could contribute.

1. They needed to be effective change agents as a matter of self-preservation as they would bear the brunt of the consequences of climate change and had responsibility for the well-being of future generations.
2. Informed youth would redound to the benefit of all.
3. They were better communicators, with the ability to share climate change message more efficiently with the wider community.
4. There was also the advantage of entities, such as the UNDP, USAID and so on, wanting to work with the youth.

She encouraged youth to raise awareness on climate change, noting that their involvement was integral to achieving the goals of sustainable development.

Ja'dan Johnson, Co-founder of Next Gen Creators and Managing Partner at Disrupt Ventures – and a great fan of Elon Musk. Johnson participated in the first Youth Climate Change Conference when he was still at Munro College.

Mr Johnson extolled the important role and the limitless possibilities of the “tech effect” in tackling climate change. He noted that “we haven’t even scratched the surface” of what is possible in the future. He added: “We can’t ignore the science anymore,” pointing out that in 2012 40 billion tons of carbon dioxide went into the Earth’s atmosphere. He noted that climate change had accelerated, with species having less time in which to adapt.

Mr Johnson shared that in the wake of Hurricane Maria, Elon Musk had announced his intention to assist with the rebuilding of Puerto Rico’s power grid, using his Solar City model. He also noted that technology could be an “important ally,” enabling greater access to data and information.

He pointed to young people who were already harnessing technology for environmental purposes with innovative concepts and products. His Co-founder in Next Gen Creators, Nicholas Kee (currently the Ministry of Education's Jamaica Youth Ambassador for the Commonwealth) had begun research in artificial photosynthesis, using plants to harness energy from the sun. He had gone on to work with scientists to build a solar collector, a device that was 500 times more effective than solar panels. Mr Johnson also referred to Boyan Slat, founder and CEO of The Ocean Cleanup, a group that develops advanced systems to rid the oceans of plastic. He announced Slat's first full-scale operational system which aimed to tackle the Great Pacific Garbage Patch with the aim of removing 50 per cent of the garbage in five years.

The challenge today, Mr Johnson concluded, "is to move forward with technology, which will transform the conversation on climate change."

Germaine Bryan, former president of the University of the West Indies Guild of Students at Mona, is a civil society activist, who set up a student branch of National Integrity Action (NIA). He currently works with a tech startup company in Kingston. He is interested in exploring ways of developing advocacy on climate change that will break through what he sees as the apathy of young people on the topic.

Mr Bryan referred to what he called the "Triple D Fix" manifested among the youth: Dissonance, Disenchantment, and Disconnect. He elaborated on each as follows.

Dissonance represented the "lack of harmony" among youth in Jamaica and across the region. There were many different voices which came across as noise. To make an impression and attract the attention of policy makers they needed to develop a common vision and common values

Disenchantment resulted from youth's frustration of being born into a generation that had inherited a mess of an economy and judicial system. It was, however, necessary for them to remember those on whose shoulders we stood – Garvey, Manley, Bustamante and so on. Institutions such as the church, schools need to incorporate relevant programmes to share this knowledge.

Disconnect was the result of lack of understanding of the issues. To achieve connection and identification with the cause information had to be communicated in a way that would appeal to their self-interest. They had to be made to understand how the effects of climate change would affect them

Mr Bryan exhorted the audience to "arm yourself" to break down the "Three D's", mentioned above, which are holding young people back from fulfilling their potential and tapping into their creative energy.

"We must begin acting in our own small spaces... Youth must claim the climate change fight as its own." He said he would like to see climate change clubs in high schools and a move from rhetoric to action. "Action, not a bag o' mouth."

Sean Davis work is a member of the Climate Change Advisory Board which is a part of the Climate Change Division in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Energy Creation.

Mr Davis shared that the Government of Jamaica had decided to include the youth in the climate change discussion in keeping with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 which requires the strengthening of climate change resilience through raised awareness. He acknowledged that the youth had to be more than a voice, they had to be activists as it was their lives that would be seriously impacted in 30 years when the consequences of climate change would be fully manifested.

He highlighted his own advocacy including membership in the Climate Change Youth Council and the Caribbean Youth and Environment Network (CYEN) as well as the National Youth Parliament. He expressed his satisfaction with the climate change proposals being put forward by the CYEN to the government. He observed that the current policies and legislation were inadequate and it was the future of the youth that was being impacted.

He reiterated the need for raising public awareness on environmental issues that contributed to climate change including waste management. He referred to the successful staging of the Caribbean Youth Leaders' Summit under the theme "Rerouting Our GPS: Governance, Peace, Security". Emanating from the summit were important position papers challenging governments across the region to treat environmental issues responsibly – waste management, climate change.

He challenged youth to become involved.

DISCUSSION

Dainalyn Swaby then moderated the discussion section with the audience.

The moderator began by posing questions to the panel. The first was addressed to Ambassador Sealy Monteith.

The Moderator wanted to be assured that the suggestions made would be taken seriously at COP 23.

Ambassador Monteith responded that she hoped that there would be a youth representative on the delegation. The outcomes of the YCCC should be shared with the delegates to the COP and every effort made to encourage them to embrace it. In addition, there was strength in numbers and the youth had to make their collective voice heard through the channels at their disposal such as social media. She also added that the Government of Canada was responsive to social media and would be influenced by appropriate communication.

Moderator asked what the lead motivating factor for youth action on climate change would be.

Germaine Bryan noted that a prime motivating factor would be to show young people that there was opportunity (financial or otherwise) to be had in taking action. He highlighted the opportunities to help themselves while helping the Earth.

Moderator raised the question of the policies that the youth should support.

Ja'dan Johnson noted that the Government had a responsibility to create an environment for change, one way was through the appropriate technology – innovation labs. However, the youth could not wait on policy to catch up with action that was needed urgently but had to take action.

Moderator asked for suggestions regarding other strategies that the youth could pursue in building climate change resilience?

Sean Davis responded that most urgent was educating people on the threats of climate change and the dire consequences if the opportunities to change were not grasped. At the bilateral level development partners: PROPEL, EU, USAID could support this action.

Suphane Dash, Guyanese delegate, questioned the probability of success in the face of President Donald Trump pulling the USA out of the Paris Agreement.

Ambassador Monteith noted that climate change was a universal problem and the rest of the world simply had to move ahead with what it had to do. She added that COP 23 would be going ahead and issues would be addressed. The climate change situation was not an isolated issue as there was lack of universal cooperation and agreement on other things.

Germaine Bryan observed that the power and influence of the Caribbean region to bring about change was underestimated. He suggested that our impact on the area of sports could be replicated in the arena of geo-politics. The important issue was regional collaboration and it was prudent to leverage the available resources to introduce innovations in solar and wind technology to advance our goals.

Darrell Maitland, Jamaican delegate, raised the question of accountability – “How do we hold others accountable?” – and was there a channel through which youth advocates could benefit from funding?

Gerald Lindo explained that the UN system required consensus and voluntary action and no country could determine the actions of another. However, it did necessitate the reporting of climate change action and those who had not achieved anything or attempted to comply would be embarrassed. Political pressure might be brought to bear, gently, but there was no room for coercion.

Ambassador Monteith advised that the request for financial assistance to fund youth advocacy should be one of the calls coming out of the YCCC.

COUNTRY REPORTS

The eight Caribbean delegations represented at this conference presented country reports. Each report began with a brief socio-economic background as well as topographical highlights to contextualize the effects of climate change. The reports underscored the strong commonalities among the countries in terms of their vulnerability to natural disasters, in particular hurricanes. The reports looked at the impacts of climate change, the youth action being undertaken and the policy direction recommended in order to mitigate against climate change.

The impacts of climate change were also common to all the countries and included:

- Sea level rise leading to loss of beaches
- Increased frequency and intensity of hurricanes
- Increased rainfall leading to flooding and landslides
- More severe periods of drought – impacting agriculture and food security
- Degradation of corals
- Loss of forest cover

The reports are presented in the order they were at the conference with countries taking the stage in alphabetical order. They will focus on specific vulnerabilities to climate change, Youth-led activities against climate change and policy direction proposed by the youth.

BELIZE

Climate Change Vulnerabilities

- The increased intensity of storms, hurricanes and loss of livelihoods
- The unpredictability of rainfall leading to variability in shortage and excess supplies.

Youth-led Initiatives

Environmental advocacy, management and monitoring were being carried out by several bodies.

- **Friends for Conservation and Development** and public education
- **Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE) Community Researchers Programme** trained students in collection of data on the reefs for the information of policy makers
- **Oceana Belize** successfully mounted a campaign to ban offshore drilling for oil in Belize waters. The government established a moratorium on drilling.

Policy Direction

- The National Climate Change Committee was mandated to include youth representation.
- Youth had to be able to function efficiently, thus the need for capacity building at individual and community levels.
- The National Climate Change Committee should be responsible for all climate change activities in the country

An important initiative was facilitated by the Japan International Cooperation Agency in Belize which had executed a pilot programme to mitigate against sea level rise by sharing technology and building capacity.

DOMINICA

The very moving presentation made by Dominica was a vivid demonstration of the urgent need for disaster management and resilience building.

The presenter noted that on September 18, 2017, Dominica was braced for a category 2 hurricane, as had been forecasted. Hurricane Maria hit the island at a category 5 level. The estimated damage was US\$1 billion; there were 26 deaths and over 37 people missing, villages had been cut off, there was no electricity and major infrastructure damage – roads, schools and churches – experienced. Food security had been compromised with the devastation of agriculture resulting in issues of food security and public health. There was mass migration.

Youth-led Action

The Dominican Youth Environmental Organization (DYEO) had been promoting youth involvement in environmental matters since 1993:

- The DYEO collaborated with GEF/SGP to educate organizations on climate change through the Living Classroom and Floating Classroom programmes in Dominica
- There were clean-up programmes – annual beach waterways
- Multimedia training on climate change had been coordinated
- Renewable energy programmes for schools and communities had been coordinated
- Environmental clubs played an important role in assisting clean up and data collection activity

Policy Direction

Recommendations included:

- Development of legislation pertaining to climate change;
- Mandating youth who received government funding for overseas study to return to the island to work for at least two years;
- Encouraging climate-resilient agricultural development through incentives to farmers;
- Developing tools for disaster and vulnerability planning;
- Introducing structured youth programmes to tackle environmental issues; and
- JICA partnership should encourage development in renewable energy technology – solar energy, infrastructure, fishing inputs, early warning systems.

GRENADA

Despite being a minimal threat to climate change with its relatively low carbon emissions of carbohydrates, Grenada was committed to further reducing the buildup of greenhouse gases (GHGs). The island was a signatory to multilateral agreements and was working in partnership with the UNDP in over

100 climate change-related projects – including coastal restoration. The island was also in partnership with Japan.

Climate Change Vulnerabilities

- Since Hurricane Ivan in 2004, Grenada had become more vulnerable to droughts which affected the water supply. Limited storage capacity and decreased rainfall had even led to closure of schools in some areas.
- Unpredictable rainfall
- Increase in mean temperature
- Sea level rise – vulnerability of major infrastructure along the coast and reduced resilience of the ecosystem.

Youth-led Action

- Water harvesting initiatives in a special education school for use in irrigating school garden project to support its school feeding programme
- Implementation of coastal reforestation programme and coral harvesting and replanting

GUYANA

The report noted that although Guyana was not an island it shared many of the vulnerabilities of colleague CARICOM states. Georgetown, the capital of Guyana, is below sea level and the country's major administrative infrastructure located here. Flooding in 2005 resulted in infrastructure damage of some six per cent of GDP. Georgetown is subject to flooding annually.

Climate Change Vulnerabilities

- Drought was particularly serious in the hinterland region where the indigenous population numbered approximately 20,000.
- Pest infestation, food shortage, declining fish stock, declining livestock and increase in communicable diseases brought on by drought.
- Food security was compromised.

Youth-led Initiatives

- Public education on climate change and how to adapt and mitigate among schools
- Partners of America Shadehouse Agricultural Project
- Sandwatch Programme for monitoring of beaches

Policy Direction

- Youth should have the opportunity to participate in national and international climate change activities
- Climate change information should be integrated into the school curriculum
- Knowledge sharing on climate change, specifically from youth to adults

- Student exchange programmes between Caribbean, Guyana and Japan to facilitate knowledge sharing and technology transfer on climate change and environmental management should be implemented
- Youth involvement in climate change policymaking should begin immediately.

JAMAICA

Annual climatic cycles impacted major industries and economic activities including agriculture and tourism.

Climate Change Vulnerabilities

- Increasingly longer periods of drought were being experienced leading to an increase in the cost of water. Since 2011, there had been a drought every year.
- Between 2001 and 2012, the agriculture sector had suffered loss valued at \$23.48 billion due to weather-related events.
- There was unpredictable rainfall
- Jamaica was unprepared for a major hurricane. Such an event would result in the loss of infrastructure including tourism and health facilities.
- Beach erosion would likely result in the lowered value of beach housing – loss of consumer satisfaction. Major tourism centres – Ocho Rios, Montego Bay and Negril – could lose US\$19 million per year. Forty-five per cent of the population relied on tourism for employment.

Youth-led Initiatives

- Eastwood Gardens Community Initiative in partnership with Jamaica REEACH and USAID
- Jamaica Climate Change Youth Council was active in a Go Green Campaign, National Tree Planting Day and International Clean Up Day

Policy Direction

It was recognized that the youth of Jamaica had a constitutional right to a healthy environment as embedded in the National Development Plan – Vision 2030 in which Outcome 14 addressed the right to a healthy environment. Recommendations included:

- Inserting climate change into the curriculum
- Implementing a climate change resilience tax
- Establishing a climate change department in each community youth centre
- Inviting youth to make submissions on policy, law, and implementation strategies

JAPAN

The Japan delegation described the impact of climate change on the seasonal pattern in Japan which saw the lengthening of summer and winter and the shrinking of spring and autumn, a phenomenon described as the bipolarization of the weather. The rising temperature had had a negative impact on agriculture and

health. The team shared case studies on the impact of temperature rises on the quality of food (mandarin and rice) and the spread of the dengue fever.

Climate change Vulnerabilities

Increasing precipitation and increasing temperatures have had negative impacts on agriculture and health. Three case studies were used to illustrate the situation.

- The mandarin had been subject to peel puffing as a result of too much moisture while citrus greening, also in the mandarin, was the result of increasing temperatures.
- Increasing temperatures had also resulted in the degradation of rice crops. A new, more resilient species had been developed to maintain quality without loss of flavour.
- The increase in the dengue bearing mosquito had led to outbreaks which had the potential of costing the public health system millions.

Youth-led Initiatives

- The implementation of Green Wave, a national tree planting project, which aimed to sustain biodiversity and build environmental diversity. Post-disaster rebuilding initiatives, for example after the great earthquake of 2011 it was the high school students who assisted farmers in rebuilding
- Green campus Action Network (partnership between Japan and the Caribbean) recommended a green action plan for campuses which would encourage strategies such as:
 - The development of paperless campuses;
 - Rooftop gardening (e.g vegetables for the kitchens);
 - Efficient waste management (waste reduction);
 - The introduction of energy saving technology such as solar panels; and
 - Adopting a responsible lifestyle that took climate change resilience into account.

The team made recommendations for increased partnerships between Japan and the Caribbean. This was in keeping with recommendations from several of the Caribbean delegations

SAINT LUCIA

Climate Change Vulnerabilities

- Increasing frequency and intensity of rainfall
- Increasing frequency and intensity of droughts
- Agriculture extremely vulnerable to the above impacts

Youth-Led Initiatives

- CYEN partnered with GEF in Saint Lucia to support capacity building in climate change,
- Tree planting programmes
- Youth were involved in increased advocacy against climate change
- Youth exchange programmes
- Knowledge sharing

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Climate Change Vulnerabilities

- Rainfall unpredictability which led to unseasonal and high intensity rainfall with the result of flooding
- Increased air temperatures which resulted in pests, fungi and diseases which harmed livestock, crops and compromised public health

Youth-led Initiatives

- St Vincent and the Grenadines won the global tree planting **Olympics (201?)**
- St Vincent Community College Environmental Club advocated installation of solar panels in the college saving the institution thousands of dollars
- Conducted survey on climate change awareness as basis for public education (St Vincent & the Grenadines)

Policy Directions

Increasing youth engagement with climate change by:

- Encouraging young people to work with the government to ensure policy implementation
- Encouraging young people continuing to participate in intergovernmental climate change processes globally
- Involving youth in the implementation of domestic policies to
 - Reduce emissions from the landfill
 - Improve energy efficiency in buildings
 - Reduce CO₂ emissions

Collaborated with Japan in knowledge exchange and capacity building.

SURINAME

The delegate reported that some 80 per cent of the country was tropical rainforest with huge biodiversity. However, the forest was under threat from increased development. She shared that about 90 per cent of the population of 500,000 lived on the coast which was vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Climate Change Vulnerabilities

- Heavy winds along the coast was a new phenomenon
- Increased flooding
- Sea level rise had led to loss of coastal land and biodiversity (mangroves etc) and compromised food security

Youth-led Action

- The Boy Scouts had organized a car free day

Policy Direction

- More funds should be generated to facilitate research
- Youth should be encouraged to utilize social media to share knowledge on climate change
- A green living programme should be implemented in households to encourage recycling and composting

Message – Stay engaged climate change could be resolved if youth got more involved.

These reports emphasized the need for regional collaboration in the struggle against climate change and building resilience. They also underlined the importance of partnerships such as that facilitated by the Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership Project.

TRAINING WORKSHOPS: BUILDING YOUTH CAPACITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADVOCACY

Two workshops for youth delegates took place concurrently with the presentation of Country Reports on Climate Change in the plenary.

TRAINING SESSION 1: TALK UP YOUT

Presenter Emprezz Golding

Mrs Golding emphasized that advocacy “is not a sprint, it’s a marathon.” She informed the group that advocacy was a long-term commitment, and advocates would not see results over night. She defined advocacy as “a process which causes change,” in attitudes and behaviour; policies and legislation; or influenced various groups, including donors, political leaders and decision-makers.

The process of advocacy might involve a range of actions – citizen initiatives, targeted campaigns moving towards achieving a specific outcome – which were not random but focused. She noted the importance, in advocacy, of building relationships founded on respect. Opposing views should always be honoured. She observed that listening to each other was critical.

She reminded trainees that “self-advocacy” and self-belief was as important as advocating on behalf of others. An advocate must be fully aware of his/her rights and responsibilities.

Mrs Golding stressed that effective advocacy “requires large numbers of individuals” – a collective voice. Group advocacy operated on behalf of a community of individuals with similar experiences and concerns, uniting to speak out. Citizen advocacy involved community dialogue and action. Advocacy would likely involve partnerships with other individuals or groups. Mrs Golding shared that youth advocacy (whatever the cause) was critical for the future.

Co-presenter Sujae Boswell, an active advocate and Jamaica’s Commonwealth Youth Ambassador, gave inspiring examples of impactful youth advocacy.

- The *Vote Like a Boss* voter education campaign launched in 2015 by the Guyana National Youth Council (GNYC), supported by other civil society organizations, including women's groups. Recognizing the high level of apathy among Guyanese youth, it sought to engage youth on democracy issues. GNYC co-founder Tricia Teekah received the Commonwealth Youth Award for the Caribbean and the Americas region earlier this year.
- The Roshni Campaigns launched in India four years ago by 22-year-old Pravni Nikam. Roshni focuses on women's health issues and education for underprivileged children. Roshni illustrated the fact that one did not have to be directly affected to advocate on an issue: This young man began advocating on behalf of teenage girls.
- The Caribbean's "1.5°C to Stay Alive" campaign prior to and during COP21 in Paris. The participation of youth and use of social media and music before and at COP21 resulted in a very successful project.

Mr Boswell said advocates had to overcome their doubts, noting simply: "You must have passion."

Colleague **Renée Johnson** addressed techniques and tactics in the advocacy process. In any group, each person played a separate role. She advised that the first step was to identify and analyze the issue. What was the problem to be addressed? Ms. Johnson asked trainees to suggest an issue that would resonate with them.

Jhanell Tomlinson (Jamaica delegation) pointed to the challenges rural Jamaican women had in tackling climate change.

First steps (presenters noted the importance of good research):

- Identify and establish all the stakeholders involved.
- Work on establishing goals, objectives and indicators.
- Develop key messages and select techniques, tools and materials.
- Develop an action plan.
- Establish a monitoring and evaluation plan – how, what and why.

A powerful message should include a clear delineation of the issue or problem, its negative impact on stakeholders, and possible solutions.

Group Activity

Based on the above guidelines, trainees were asked to split up in into five groups of five or six each to work on an advocacy campaign which would require the definition of a priority problem; development of strategy and consider monitoring and evaluation which was one of the most important elements in an advocacy plan.

Groups were unable to present their reports, due to a lack of time. Ms. Golding suggested that the groups continue with this exercise later.

The presenters concluded with some “do’s and don’ts”:

- The importance of confidence, honesty and genuine feeling;
- Stick to your message; do your research and make sure you know your topic;
- Ensure that your group reflects the diversity of your community;
- Do not be confrontational or harass people;
- Do not overstate your case;
- Be human.

TRAINING SESSION 2: MAKING A DIFFERENCE – ADVOCACY WARRIORS TRAINING

Presenters: Gavin J. Myers (National Integrity Action) and Leon J. Samms

The presenters defined advocacy thus: “Advocacy is the deliberate process, based on demonstrated evidence, to directly and indirectly influence decision makers, stakeholders and relevant audiences to support and implement actions that lead to change.”

They used the case of the Harbour View Sewage Plant as an example of a lengthy but successful advocacy campaign by residents of Harbour View, supported by the Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) which had lasted for some 30 years.

The original plant had been commissioned by the National Water Commission (NWC) in the 1960s. By the early 1970s it was malfunctioning. In January 2010, JET and a group of citizens took legal action. On July 6, 2010, the parties successfully agreed on a consent judgment requiring the NWC to rehabilitate the Harbour View Sewage Treatment Plant. In August 2015, the citizens finally had a fully operational sewage treatment plant.

The presenters outlined tools and strategies for an advocacy campaign.

The problem:

- What is the problem, and why?
- The issue must resonate with you, but also with others;
- What impact is it already having – or what impact will it have on stakeholders? It may be something that is anticipated;
- What is a possible solution or solutions? Not everyone affected may agree on the solution;
- What are the obstacles (political, economic, social)?

Analysis of the situation:

- Do thorough research;
- Use credible sources for information – avoid gossip, rumour and anyone trying to influence the campaign for their own purpose/gain;
- Document and package information for presentation to policymakers;
- Maintain your credibility by ensuring the accuracy of information;

- Use local data wherever possible. Use the Access to Information Act.

Tools would include:

- social media – a range of different platforms for different audiences;
- traditional media campaigns, engaging journalists;
- consider petitions – online or hard copy;
- community meetings and engagements;
- distribution of printed materials: flyers, posters etc;
- development of media content (articles, videos, photographs, etc);
- contact with policy makers at the appropriate time;
- legal or administrative action if necessary; and
- “***Yuh Mouth, Hed, Foot an Han!***” – face to face engagement.

Elements of strategy and planning:

- setting objectives using the “SMART” method: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound;
- identifying allies;
- determine advocacy tools (above) and messages for each tool or medium;
- monitoring and evaluation.

Participants were advised to identify allies in various sectors to support their campaign which should have an engaging theme. At the community level, these allies might be found in churches, youth clubs, service clubs, businesses and schools. Individuals who were thought leaders and influencers might rally to your cause.

The presenters also noted that messages should be clear and compelling as the public had to understand the cause for which they were advocating. A catchy slogan was crucial.

The presenters reminded trainees that advocacy often took place in public. A strong and articulate spokesperson for the group was therefore essential.

OUTCOME DOCUMENT

Day 1 ended with the drafting of the Outcome Document. The process was led by Gerald Lindo who emphasized that the end product had to be one that had full consensus of all delegates.

The following elements were identified for inclusion in the document:

- Research Needs Assessment
- Capacity Building
- Youth participation in policy decision making

- Youth activism
- Legal and regulatory framework.

The delegates formed five groups, each taking responsibility for drafting one of the elements as follows:

Youth activism –	Michael Morgan (Jamaica)
Capacity building	Renae Baptiste (Grenada)
Policy	Channiella Jacob (Suriname)
Research	Shanika John (St Vincent)
Legal framework	Suphane Dash (Guyana)

The draft presented by each group was accepted with further additions being recommended. It would be completed on the following day.

DAY 2

Moderator for Day 2, Deron Maitland, welcomed conference participants charging them to dive into the war against climate change. He shared video clips of previous conferences highlighting the fact that there was a place for persons with disabilities. Mr Maitland provided an overview of the day's activities which began with a summary of Day 1 (Annex 2).

UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE

Kimberley Stephenson

Ms Stephenson presented an explanation of climate change. She pointed out the difference between weather and climate and identified the reasons for climate change – (i) natural variation, (ii) volcanic activity, and (iii) human activity.

She discussed the new and unpredictable patterns of climate change in the Caribbean and its effects:

- increasing temperature, it was now 1 degree hotter than the pre-industrial era;
- unpredictable rainfall;
- more extreme weather events, for example hurricanes were more intense, she emphasized that some occurrences were a part of the regular pattern; and
- rising sea level resulting in the loss of beaches.

The unpredictability of temperature and rainfall patterns impacted productivity and quality of life with unexpected disruptions of school and work which made planning difficult.

Ms Stephenson noted that in addition to being more unpredictable there was much that was unprecedented in our climate. She explained that in the study of climate, in order to predict what future climate would be like certain assumptions had to be made about best and worst-case scenarios and models run to detect possible results. The best-case scenario showed that the temperature in the Caribbean could be 1.5°C degrees hotter than pre-industrial times and the worst case up to four degrees hotter by the end of the century. It might also become up to 30 per cent drier. The shorter rainy seasons would have a serious negative impact on agriculture and food security. Sea level rise would result in most countries losing coastal infrastructure – ports, airports, businesses and critical buildings such as hospitals.

She advised that urgent regional, national and community action was needed to stem this situation. The region had to become climate smart to mitigate against climate change.

COUNTRY STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY THE DELEGATES REPRESENTED AT THE YCCC 2017

The statements are presented verbatim.

BELIZE COUNTRY STATEMENT

Current climate change trends mean that:

- Youth must drop out of school to help their families compensate for loss in financial security from agriculture due to rainfall unpredictability;
- Government cannot prioritize key issues such as increases in teachers' salaries and youth development because of the increasingly larger amounts of the budget which must go towards building back infrastructure destroyed by hurricanes;
- Young fishermen will lose their traditional way of life and ability to feed their families as the bleaching and destruction of coral reefs and therefore also the disappearance of accompanying ecosystems;
- All youth in this room recognize that we are the ones that must live through the effects of climate change. If we are not a part of the adaptation process we risk losing the ingenuity and continuity required to maintain an aggressive approach to climate change.

As youth we must commit to:

- Researching best practice on watershed and land management to adapt to rainfall unpredictability;
- Practising what we preach by reducing the use of energy, plastics and water resources;
- Educating our communities on the effects of climate change and importance of adapting;
- Actively engage with policy makers and climate change committees to ensure that our needs are being met.

DOMINICA COUNTRY STATEMENT

The youth is cognizant of the fact that the Commonwealth of Dominica is party to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change Convention and international agreements and is committed to the achievement of its objectives. The youth believes that a great economy is dependent on the survival of our island state.

Be it resolved that the youth corp of the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, CARICOM and modern international partners continue to recognize that climate change is real and requires continued attention, we continue to honour our commitments to the protocols and conditions therein. We continue to be more aware regarding the promotion of matters pertaining to climate change. The youth will continue to seek financial commitments to combat climate change.

The youth of Dominica is committed to seeking financial assistance in combating the cause of climate change and to giving due consideration to introducing appropriate educational programmes in schools. The youth is committed to setting up a commission to give guidance on strategies and to create an enabled environment to promote national development.

As youths we commit to being involved in issues and tourism activities and promoting projects that will reduce the use of fossil fuels and give support to climate change endeavours and to advocate for the enactment of the National Youth Policy which will drive matters of climate change and support activities which will drive climate change and matters of mitigation and adaptation.

GRENADA COUNTRY STATEMENT

"I don't want to protect the environment, I want to create a world where the environment doesn't need protecting."

I greet you all warmly from the people and Government of Grenada. Brothers and sisters, we are not here to discuss the possible existence of climate change, while our brethren to the east are living that reality. Therefore, allow me the opportunity to encourage us to pay respects and express sympathy to our regional neighbours who were among the victims of those terrible storms last month.

Grenada stands in solidarity with those who suffered as we bleed collectively with Dominica, Antigua and the other islands. Let me take this opportunity to express sincere gratitude to you, our loving neighbours who came to our aid after our similar experience with Hurricane Ivan, 13 years ago. We have toiled and managed to transform our beautiful, battered island into a tropical paradise. Let me go a step further to thank all of you who have donated and supported our fellow members at this challenging time. The Caribbean continues to foster unity and this is evident as relief efforts pour in from near and far. However, there are certain trends that Grenada and our region are becoming more aware and vulnerable to. One of the common trends we small island developing states are exposed to is the recent destruction experienced by our friends and worse as climatic changes escalate. Climate change impacts can disrupt and are already disrupting Grenada's critical economic sectors like agriculture and tourism. A review of

our government's budget in 2016 showed that 48.6 % of the capital budget is at risk of being compromised by the negative impacts of climate change.

Our island, of roughly 110,000 in population, is experiencing hot days and nights dating back to post Hurricane Ivan era. Last year, 2016 was the hottest year ever recorded and this year is on course to break that record. This increasing heat is the engine of those massive storms. Brethren we have never seen such a rapid succession of hurricanes, which are becoming more prevalent and powerful. Permit me to shed some light on how devastating and record-breaking Hurricane Irma was:

- the largest storm to ever pass through the Atlantic Ocean at 375 miles wide, with 220 gale force winds;
- the strongest Atlantic Basin hurricane ever recorded outside the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea;
- unprecedented in lasting three days as a Category 5 hurricane, the longest Category 5 hurricane since satellite storm-tracking began;
- record breaking as no other storm maintained winds 185 mph or above for as long as Irma (a total of 37 hours); and
- devastating, destroying 95 per cent of all the buildings on Barbuda.

Sustained hurricane force winds covered an area of 70, 000 sq. miles (more than The Bahamas, Dominican Republic and Cuba combined). Irma and her friends were also some of the fastest growing systems, going from tropical storms to category 3 hurricanes in almost a day. The warming of our oceans also breeds a more silent killer; sea level rise. Have you all seen the clip '1.5°C to stay alive'?

An increase in Grenada's average sea level of one metre will cause our capital, towns and many coastal settlements to be significantly affected. These sites are at risk from coastal erosion since a substantial amount of our businesses, hotels and livelihood activities occur close to our shores. They are likeliest to succumb to floods after just brief showers and become degraded and uninhabitable. This scenario is similar for most, if not all of us. Life as we know it will never be the same if this drastic increase in average temperature and sea level rise persists.

Additionally, water is becoming more scarce and less available to our much-needed agricultural sector as weather patterns deviate. Rivers are drying up and farmers must combat with weeds, less fertile land and grazing grounds. We are observing shorter periods of heavy rain and less distinction between the wet and dry season.

My question to you now is, where do we, the youth stand in all these climate change conversations?

Our populations are becoming more exposed to diseases spread by warmth and mosquitoes as we are being threatened even in our mother's womb. Wake up guys because in 20 years this planet will be ours. We are filled with energy and passion; let us use it to fuel a revolution against climate change. We need to be more involved in mitigating and learning more ways in which we can adapt to our changing environment. We must act now because we are the ones who will have to cope with the more severe

effects of climate change. The policies and decisions to safe guard our future and our children's future must take greater consideration to our specific needs. Our inaction will only hinder our sustainability, productivity and ultimately, survival.

Hence, I would like to advise our present policymakers to not just think of their future but ours since 50 per cent of the world's population is at least 20 years old. We must, and I repeat, we must have a say and our voices must be heard in climatic and other related matters. More avenues for youth to partake in leadership and in the planning and mitigation process should be presented so that we feel more responsible and have a better appreciation for climate change awareness. Thus, establishments like a youth parliament and/or junior ministers will enable youth to encourage greater youth involvement in securing their own futures. Countries should import less fossil fuels and take advantage of more opportunities to explore and harness alternative and renewable energy sources. Governments can give incentives and grants to persons who choose to 'go green' as well as persons who practice agriculture. Farmers should be educated and trained in more environmentally friendly and sustainable techniques to grow crops and rear animals. Furthermore, stiffer penalties should be in place and enforced for those who violate environmental laws by pollution, over hunting, sand and mangrove minding, etc.

In addition, government ministries like education, agriculture and the environment must undertake more educational initiatives to inform our precious youth. In a recent survey conducted in Grenada, 72 % of primary school students sadly indicated that they have never heard of climate change. Relevant organisations should invest in developing more programs to engage more youth in recycling campaigns, environmental quizzes, competitions and research, and provide attractive prizes to motivate them. We need to be equipped with the necessary skills, abilities and resources to effectively curb climate changes issues.

Parliamentary representatives and community leaders must assemble civilians in community meetings and seminars to ensure the wider public is up to date with ongoing climatic alterations and the implications involved. Society in general must shift their focus and include conservative measures in everything they do. Relevant agencies and utilities should pioneer water conservation, vector control and sustainable agriculture, among others.

Nevertheless, I charge my generation to take the lead and explore opportunities even if they are not offered to you. Stay in school, take your education seriously and always do your best. You can join local youth groups to edutain each other about climate change issues. Reduce, reuse and recycle waste into useful products. There are many ideas right at your fingertips. Brethren, I urge you to partake in competitions and conferences like this to hear from other youth like myself, to find out what they are doing and what works for them and see how you can modify and implement those ideas to suit you. Furthermore, aim to be a national youth delegate and pursue positions of leadership to chart the way toward relevant actions to secure your future.

As youth, we commit to educating our peers about the common trends associated with climate change in our region and how we can adapt and collectively become more resilient. "if you really think the environment is less important than the economy, try holding your breath while counting your money."

GUYANA COUNTRY STATEMENT

Climate Change Trends

- Rising sea levels
- Increasingly unpredictable weather patterns
- Prevalence of storm surges
- Increase in atmospheric temperature

Implications

- Lives – Spread of water-borne and vector-borne diseases, heart stress, disruption in daily routines major roadways, eroded coastlines
- Livelihood – Loss of property and assets, financial losses, destruction of
- National development – Threatened food security, decline in the economy

Policymakers

- Participation of youths in national, regional and international activities associated with climate change
- Educate youth through workshops, forums and conferences

Enabling Institutions

Incorporation of the concept of climate change into curriculum

Community/Youths

- Education and exchange of information on climate safe agricultural from youth to the older generation.
- More youths pursuing studies in the area of climate change and the environment.
- Youth established community-based organizations
- Youths actively engaged in national consultation and discussion advancing youth rights and involvement (Youth advocacy)
- Youths involved in country specific research on the impacts of climate change, non-governmental organizations focused on environmental/climate change education, awareness and action
- Greater engagement and cooperation among youths in the Caribbean region and internationally

JAMAICA COUNTRY STATEMENT

Climate Change: The hotter the battle, the sweeter the victory

As we stand before you today, we express on behalf of the Jamaican delegation and by extension the people of Jamaica that we are in great danger. Climate change is not coming, it has come, and our efforts against it must be treated with utmost urgency.

There are a myriad climate trends affecting Jamaica, including increase in intensity of hurricanes and tropical storms, sea level rise, increased levels of drought, damage to our environmental resources, threat to sustainable development, increase in likeliness of illnesses and diseases. For a country so heavily dependent on sectors such as agriculture and tourism, the tangible implications of climate change impacts cannot be over-emphasized. The risk of loss of crops, damage to housing developments, destruction of our tourist attractions are just a speck of major implications on our lives/livelihoods/national development.

Urgent action needs to be undertaken by youth because climate change is everybody's fight, and youth possess the most proactivity and a certain zeal to address issues in a widespread manner. Youth today are armed with and have easier access to information, making it easier to gain knowledge about what is happening and how to deal with it. Inaction of youth will leave the army stranded, and history shows that the smallest armies always lose the fight, and this fight against climate change is not one we want to lose. Stemming from YCCC 2017, we as youth urge our policy makers to switch to overdrive and fast track policy procedures, put them at the forefront of various negotiations. To the enabling institutions, we urge them not to cut off their nose to spite their face, and fuel your resources towards aiding in the fight. We urge individual communities to be more proactive, as a chain is as strong as its weakest link. If every community adopts to various measures, the collective effort will lead to a victory against climate change. Lastly, to our youth, we urge you to seek knowledge and act accordingly. The time is now, and we are the foot soldiers of this army, so let us become involved and play our part.

Within the next two years, we commit to undertaking various efforts, and we urge our fellow youth to do the same. As youths, we commit to:

1. Establishing youth-led projects to combat climate change.
2. Collaborating with our policy makers in ensuring that policies include youth involvement
3. Being leaders in our community and applying the right measures so others can follow
4. Learning and applying new ways to deal with new risks posed by climate change
5. Becoming active today so we can have a world for tomorrow.

We conclude by reiterating Jamaica's commitment to aiding in the collective fight against climate change. We are a community of nations, whose destiny and prosperity are intertwined, therefore we are encouraged to work together to win this fight. Let us put our planet first. Join the fight!

SAINT LUCIA COUNTRY STATEMENT

Climate change is no longer simply a theoretical scientific concept, but rather an unfortunate reality. We the youth of the Caribbean stand at the crossroads of a global phenomenon that threatens the mere existence of our planet and in turn our survival. From Hawaii in the west to Japan on the east coast the effects of climate change are evident and rather rampant. Life on my island home Saint Lucia is certainly being forced to adapt in order to survive the sheer impacts of climate change. As a small island developing state (SIDS) our economy is fragile and susceptible to external economic shocks. However, the main shock we need to be cognizant of, is that which arise from climate change as every sector of our economy have and are poised to be negatively impacted.

We have reached a stage when we as young people should take the lead in this battle. This is not a battle only for ourselves but the survival of our generation and those to come. This is our planet, we cannot afford to allow our children to inherit a planet in which they are denied an opportunity to enjoy the quality of life which we currently enjoy. Imagine living with the fear of category five hurricanes lining up one after the other on an annual basis annihilating our agriculture sector affecting our food security, increased droughts threatening our water supply, increase sea temperatures killing our marine life, rising sea levels displacing residents in low lying coastal villages. This is not fiction, this is the reality man will encounter in the years ahead if we as young people do not join and lead this battle. The Youth are our future, can almost be considered a cliché, but the reality is there will be no future for our youth to thrive, if we do not take a stand now.

We all have a part to play in this battle. It starts with simple steps, and making simple changes to our lifestyle. This is the opportune time to not only let the youth voice be heard but youth action be seen throughout the Caribbean. Combating climate change requires a multi sectoral approach. Government, the church, the private sector, community groups all need to join in the fight. From a legislative standpoint, laws pertaining to littering need to be enforced. Our “Refundable containers act” needs to become law with immediate effect to help curb the plastic waste problem in my country and many other islands. We are saying no more to developments that lead to the destruction of our eco systems. Why can't we promote more eco-tourism? We are appealing to all institutions which form our society to embrace renewable energy. In 2017, all our street lights should be solar powered! Moreover, we are charging our policy makers to create the legislative framework that will encourage such investments. Renewable energy investments should be granted tax breaks, not a five-star resort on our beaches and now even resorts in the oceans killing our marine life.

What is for certain is that we as young people want a region that will be the beacon that others will follow. A global leader in renewable energy, environmental conservation and sustainable development. Let us as young people be committed to this endeavor. Let us redefine who we as young people.

We as young people commit to:

Y- Yearning to see a Caribbean region that is renowned for being global leaders in the fight against climate change and our efforts should and will not stop until that is achieved.

O- Organizing a program within our islands to get more young people involved in this movement. Every island should formulate national youth climate councils to serve as a lead voice and action oriented organization geared towards supporting existing and creating of new clubs that seek to promote the preservation of our environment.

U- Uniting as one region through collaborative efforts in promoting climate action through the youth movement. In unity there is strength, and we as young people are called to display this strength by working together.

T- Transforming our lifestyles and encouraging others in adopting one that is sustainable. Sustainable living is key to a sustainable planet, one that our successors can enjoy comfortably. Let us each analyze lives, and commit to making one change in our life that will ensure the protecting of our environment.

H- Helping our fellow citizens who are currently on the frontline of the climate change, in adapting to this global phenomenon as we work assiduously as a region towards mitigation efforts with the hope curbing down on the impacts of climate change.

Let us advocate for climate action, let us educate other young people on climate action, let us mobilize a regional if not a global youth movement for climate action. Whilst all forms of regional integration seem to always be compounded with issues from the West Indies Federation down to CARICOM, this is an opportune time to show our strength and unity as young people in standing together on one common issue, with one common goal, as one Caribbean. As the West Indies cricket slogan goes “We All in”. Time is running out for planet Earth and the time for action is NOW! We are #YOUTH4CLIMATE
Saint Lucia is ready for climate action. Are you?

ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES COUNTRY STATEMENT

Key Messages

Policy Makers	Involve us in the process not just the implementation
Enabling Institutions	Give young people a chance to join in the discussion
Other Youth	Get involved.

Over the next two years:

- We would like a ripple effect of climate change action to be occurring across the region
- Let us all become a part of the plan to make a difference; what organizations do you belong to?
- Let's capture the views of our young people as they relate to climate change

Specific Actions

- As youths we commit to environmental waste management by practicing the principle of the Three Rs – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

- As youths we commit to lobby government to ban environmentally damaging products
- As youths we commit to forming more environmental groups in schools, colleges and universities
- As youths we commit to be the trendsetters for environmental protection
- As youths we commit to protecting the environment

SURINAME COUNTRY STATEMENT

Suriname is also experiencing the negative effects of climate change. In Suriname the overall temperatures are increasing and overall rainfall decreasing. Heavy rainfall with high intensity and wind gusts and wind swirls seem to be increasing year on year. Therefore, urgent action is needed by the youth regarding climate change. The temperature has increased by two degrees since 1975 and rainfall has decreased over the past 40 years.

We continue to experience heavy rainfall with high intensity and also heavy wind gusts and wind swirls, sea level rise, decreased ground water, rising temperatures and the coastlines of Suriname are flooded. Mangroves, the natural shield of the coast are not protected enough. There are and will continue to be many implications.

Urgent actions are needed by the youth on climate change because the youth represents tomorrow. We have to start at a young age to engage with climate change issues. Climate change education is a must in order to raise awareness. The youth has a huge contribution to make in relation to climate change because they form the majority of the population. Inaction or insufficient action by the youth have many implications for loss of soil cover, increased flooding, severe dry periods and continued temperature increase.

Eventually we will end up in the same place we are now, still discussing how to mitigate climate change. To ensure that mistakes are not repeated key measures must be communicated to stakeholders.

Climate change can be resolved if youth get more involved. Any action that does not involve the youth will lead to inaction. Unity, awareness, involvement *and the willingness to be involved are a few key elements to reach our goals*

Finally, the climate is changing, the climate will continue to change, the climate demands that we change.

OUTCOME DOCUMENT

The exercise of drafting the youth statement from YCCC 2017 was continued under the guidance of Mr Gerald Lindo.

He reminded the delegates and the visiting youth that views would be considered and a final decision taken, by all, as to the precise wording of any points for inclusion. He invited comments from the wider audience but the decisions of the delegates would be final. He repeated and emphasized that consensus was imperative.

The draft document from the previous day was shared on the screen and gone through line by line.

The exercise had to be paused to allow for other aspects of the day's programme. The document was finalized later in the afternoon. A copy is attached as Annex 1.

CLOSING CEREMONY

The closing ceremony was chaired by Rochelle James. Presentations were made by Senator Mathew Samuda representing Minister Pearnel Charles Junior, junior minister of state in national security, with particular interest in issues relating to youth development; Mr Hideki Shinozaki, Second Secretary and Director of Economic Cooperation, Embassy of Japan in Jamaica; Mr Bruno Pouezat, Resident Representative, UNDP; Ambassador Monteith and Ms Rebecca Robinson, Mission Director to USAID.

Senator Mathew Samuda

Mr Samuda shared the fact he had started the debate in Parliament for the banning of styrofoam and single use plastic bags. Subsequently, a study had been done to see what the implications of the ban would be and a draft policy completed.

Mr Samuda noted that Jamaica and the Caribbean could not take climate change lightly as the region was on the front, so to speak. Our situation required young people to move to a heightened level of advocacy in order to establish a sustainable lifestyle. He commended the youth present noting that their participation in YCCC 2017 demonstrated their commitment to sustainable development. He reiterated his commitment to implementing the solutions proposed by the youth.

Mr Hideki Shinozaki

Mr Shinozaki described Japan's contribution to the Caribbean in the area of environment and climate change. In 2014, the Government of Japan had contributed approximately US\$16 billion to developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Of that amount, a US\$15 million grant was committed to this Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership Project (JCCCCP) to boost the Caribbean region's capacity to overcome its vulnerabilities to natural disasters. Pilot projects were being implemented in eight countries in the Caribbean region. He highlighted the fact that Prime Minister Mr. Shinzo Abe, who was the first Prime Minister of Japan to visit this region, attended the Signing Ceremony of the JCCCCP during the first Japan-CARICOM Summit held in July 2014 in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr Shinozaki noted that Japan's support of SIDS was based on not on GDP per capita, but the vulnerabilities particular to SIDS. Under this arrangement, Japan had granted some US\$2 million to The Bahamas to purchase equipment related to natural disaster management. He was encouraging the other OECD countries such as USA and Canada to adopt the same criteria.

Mr Shinozaki expressed appreciation to the students from Japan for attending the conference thus strengthening the relationship and friendship between Japan and the Caribbean region.

As an integral international donor partner, the Government of Japan was committed to the continuation of the ongoing “partnership” with the Caribbean countries and Japan viewed the CARICOM region as important and integral partners for cooperation and development.

Ambassador Sheila Monteith

Ambassador Monteith commended the increased involvement of the young people in the climate change discussion. She stated that they deserved to have their voices heard and had an integral role in building climate change resilience.

The Ambassador referred to the three Ds – Dissonance, Disenchantment and Disconnect – identified by Germaine Bryan on Day 1 of the conference which represented the attitude of the youth to climate change represented. She proposed the development of the three Es – Enlightened, Engaged, Energized.

She advised the young people to hold the government to book and to use their advantage in communication to promote the sustainable use of the region’s resources.

Mr Bruno Pouezat

Mr Pouezat thanked the delegates for their contribution and applauded their conviction to helping to find solutions for climate change. He encouraged them to act on their commitment. He referred them to the UN website which pointed to the necessity for everyone to act “This is your world, the world is in bad shape, only you can fix it.” The UN, he pointed out, valued the youth perspective as they recognized that today’s youth would have to live in the future with the consequences of decisions made today.

He emphasized that the Caribbean would be more seriously impacted than developed countries, as evidenced by the devastating events of the last month.

Mr Pouezat cited a UNEP global survey on climate change and findings showed that it was believed that nine per cent throughout the world would act to combat climate change and 89 per cent thought youth could make a change with education about climate change. He said that UNDPs Youth Strategy was committed to assisting youth to develop strategies for green solutions.

He was encouraged by the level of enthusiasm displayed at YCCC 2017 and looked forward to their continued engagement.

Mr Pouezat thanked the Government of Japan, USAID the Government of Jamaica and other governments of the Caribbean for their contribution to making the conference happen.

Ms Rebecca Robinson

Ms Rebecca Robinson commended all the youth in attendance declaring the “we are the future and together we will secure our environment for generations to come.” She stated that the USAID, as the US Government’s development arm, considered the youth as being key to the innovative and sustainable development. She added that she was encouraged by their enthusiasm and commitment to be the stewards of the environment.

Ms Robinson noted that the programme had equipped the young people with the necessary skill sets to become advocates in their schools and communities. She was encouraged, also, by the expansion of the YCCC to include regional and international participants and this was in keeping with the US Government’s commitment to including youth on issues that threatened our development. Awareness of climate change issues would improve their ability to minimize future risks. She urged them to encourage other youths to get involved, reminding them that they all had the potential to become agents of change.

Ms Robinson thanked all partners for their role in supporting the conference mentioning the Governments of Japan and Jamaica for the efforts put into the organizing of the conference. She noted that the conference represented the cooperation of Caribbean governments.

AWARDS CEREMONY

POETRY:	First Place	Kenloy Smith, UWI, Mona Campus
	Second Place	Chrystal St Ange, St Lucia
	Third Place	Jevaruk, St Lucia
DANCE	First place	Kenloy Smith
	Second Place	Japanese delegation
SONG	First Place	Kenloy Smith and Jodi Williams, Jamaica
	Second Place	Jodi Williams, Ardenne High, Jamaica
	Third Place	Briana Barnes, Bustamante High, Jamaica
POSTER	First Place	Jorda Nelson, Ardenne High, Jamaica
	Second Place	Miko Smith, Mayday High, Jamaica
	Third Place	Jorda Nelson, Jamaica and Kohai Inozawa, Japan
VIDEO	First Place	Mayday High, Jamaica
	Second Place	St Andrew High, Jamaica
	Third Place	Merlgrove High
LITERARY ARTS	First Place	Mayday High
	Second Place	Kenloy Smith

TRASH CHIC

First Place

Tafari Sewell, Mayday High, Jamaica

Second Place

Adrian Smith, Hillel, Jamaica

Third Place

Derven Harley Smith, Mayday High, Jamaica

ANNEX 1

YOUTH STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Our Climate, Our Voice, Our Change: Advancing Youth Action Through Partnerships for Global Impact

**Youth Climate Change Conference
October 10-11, 2017, in Kingston, Jamaica**

We, the youth delegates of Belize, The Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, The Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Jamaica, Japan, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and The Republic of Suriname - participating countries in the Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership;

Being present at the Youth Climate Change Conference 2017, in Kingston, Jamaica;

Recognizing the severe impact of climate change on individuals, communities, and countries, particularly with respect to the youth; and with respect to the rights of individuals, particularly the right to life;

Being conscious of youth concerns in the areas of activism, capacity, policy decision processes, research, transparency and the legal and regulatory frameworks within our countries;

Hereby commit ourselves to leading, supporting and advocating for actions by our peers, communities, institutions, leaders and policy makers on climate change, under five broad areas of focus.

1. Youth activism:
 - Developing a social audit toolkit to assess the social and ethical performance of initiatives in tackling climate change;
 - Developing a social media toolkit to promote and coordinate initiatives surrounding the fight against climate change;
 - Developing climate change frameworks in countries listed above in order to incorporate youth, and reinforcing existing initiatives;
 - Supporting the youth arm of our home country ministries to mitigate the effects of, and adapt to climate change;
 - Involving vulnerable groups in the development and promotion of strategies;

- Continuing to work together towards a Kingston Framework that is a youth-led action in which the youth have: a) training courses for disaster risk reduction; and b) engaging the youth in citizen science.

2. Capacity building

- Developing, implementing and maintaining effective climate change awareness programmes:
 - Incentivise programmes to promote youth interest and involvement, particularly through educational opportunities;
- Supporting and participating in the implementation of climate change awareness programmes focused on the youth - including all vulnerable groups in an equitable manner, leveraging the support of influential persons and institutions;
- Using multimedia to host discussions and share ideas about climate change, thereby reducing the costs of collaboration;
- Using visual and performing arts to attract youth and to perform community outreach, while tailoring climate change information to attract multi-generational audiences.

3. Policy

- Advocating for the amplification of the voice of the youth in policy processes (drafting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation);
- Making youth aware of relevant policy developments as they happen.

4. Research

- Informing public awareness campaigns using mixed method approaches;
- Ensuring youth are involved in ongoing research being done in countries, as required by the UNFCCC contributions;
- Centralizing, publicizing and making easily accessible the results of climate change research.

5. Legal framework

- Advocating for the enforcement and strengthening of laws imposing stricter sanctions and fines. For example, discouraging slash and burn agriculture, illegal mining and littering;
- Advocating that infrastructure and building codes mandate the use of sustainable and renewable sources of energy, such as the use of solar power, wind power, and geothermal power, with tax exemptions for those who comply, and mandatory fines for those that do not comply, by the year 2020 (applicable to new infrastructure built or commissioned after 2020);

- Advocating for the regulation of international funding within countries to ensure sectors, such as agriculture, are given a substantial amount that can be inputted into climate-smart agricultural practices, which can make a positive impact on the sector;
- Strengthening of environmental impact assessment models, so as to ensure the development of our tourism and business sectors in particular, coincide with sustainable development;
- Encouraging the implementation of the returnable containers law, similar to what obtains in some Caribbean countriesⁱ.

GLOSSARY

1. VULNERABLE – In need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect (*The Oxford Dictionary*).
2. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – An international environmental treaty negotiated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>).

ⁱ Out of the deliberations it was noted that Belize, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines have Acts that are similar in nature.

ANNEX 2

RECAP OF DAY 1

Youth Climate Change Conference 2017

Day 1 of the 2017 Youth Climate Change Conference saw presentations which sought to further the goal of facilitating a deeper understanding of the issue of climate change and its impact on the Caribbean. It provided the opportunity for the delegates from the eight Caribbean countries participating in the Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership to share their experiences and report on the status of climate change impact within their countries as well as the actions being undertaken by youth groups.

The overriding themes of the morning's presentations were the vulnerability of the Caribbean region to natural disasters, as evidenced by the recent devastating events; the action that had to be taken to mitigate against climate change and increase resilience in the region; and the role of the youth in the struggle against climate change.

Mr Walter Bernyck, Counsellor and Head of Development Cooperation, who brought greetings on behalf of the Canada, highlighted a number of initiatives in the battle against climate change. He made the point that any lasting approach to disaster risk management had to be inclusive, embracing both genders and, most importantly, the youth. This generation was challenged to find innovative ways to meet climate change goals. This provided opportunities for the creation of new career paths as long-term solutions were pursued. He pointed to the new blue and green economy concepts which demanded new skills and innovations for the promotion and development of renewable energy technology.

Mr Gerald Lindo, of the USAID, furthered the understanding of climate change and its impact by demonstrating the challenges faced at the individual, community, national and international levels in very practical terms.

He noted that climate change and its impact was not predictable and thus presented new challenges that made planning difficult – national and individual circumstances changed in an instance placing undue strain on individuals, communities, governments.

Climate change demanded changes in how we lived, process of adaptation and mitigation meant reviewing use of substances on which our economies are built. Climate change meant having to deal with permanent loss.

He highlighted the issue of the tragedy of commons – the atmosphere being a common commodity and one which could be impacted in one region by the actions of people in another region – as in case of developed and developing countries where industrial activities of the former contribute to disastrous events in the latter.

He explained the way the Paris Agreement worked – based on consensus, voluntary action and accountability.

The Panel Discussion – panelists Ambassador Sheila Monteith, Germaine Bryan, Sean Davis, Ja'dan Johnson shared their perspectives on the climate change struggle. All were in agreement on the imperative of youth involvement.

Ambassador Monteith shared elements of Jamaica's climate change programme which was driven by the goals of the country's Vision 2030. She highlighted the many bilateral agreements in which the country participated, signatory to Paris Agreement and leading advocacy role played in promoting the goal of maintaining global temperature at 1.5. and the country's upcoming participation in COP. She exhorted the youth present to get involved in action against climate change as not only were they most well positioned to bring about change but they would bear the brunt of the consequences of climate change. She encouraged youth to raise awareness on climate change, noting that their involvement was integral to goal of sustainable development.

Germaine, Sean and Ja'dan offered important perspectives of current youth involvement as well as suggestions for further awareness raising and engagement.

Country Reports

The eight Caribbean delegations represented at this conference presented country reports. These reports underscored the strong commonalities among the countries in terms of their vulnerability to natural disasters, in particular hurricanes. The very moving presentation made by Dominica was a graphic demonstration of the need for disaster management and resilience building.

The impacts of climate change were also common to all the countries and included:

- Sea level rise leading to loss of beaches
- Increased frequency and intensity of hurricanes
- Increased rainfall leading to flooding and landslides
- More severe periods of drought – impacting agriculture and food security
- Degradation of corals
- Loss of forest cover

All countries shared stories of youth-led action against climate change. Examples included

- Tide Community research Programme in Belize
- Campaign to ban offshore drilling also in Belize
- The Living Classroom and Floating Classroom programmes in Dominica
- Post-Maria environmental clubs assisted with clean up and data collection in Dominica
- Water harvesting initiatives in a special education school in Grenada for use in irrigating school garden project to support its school feeding programme
- Also in Grenada implementation of coastal reforestation proramme and coral harvesting and replanting
- Public education on climate change in Guyana as well as shadehouse and sandwatch projects
- Jamaica Climate Change Youth Council active in a Go Green Campaign, National Tree Planting Day and International Clean Up Day
- CYEN partnered with GEF in St Lucia to support capacity building in climate change, tree planting programmes and youth were involved in increased advocacy against climate change

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- St Vincent and the Grenadines won the global tree planting Olympics (201?), advocated use of solar panels in schools.

Policy proposals

- The National Climate Change Committee in Belize was mandated to have a youth representative, for youth to function effectively capacity building was required
- Students who receive funding for overseas study in Dominica to be mandated to return and provide at least two years' service
- Government to be more meticulous in enforcing environmental related laws in Grenada
- Youth to participate in national and international climate change activities and climate change to be introduced into curriculum
- Establish a Climate Change Department in each youth centre, invite submissions on policy and law from youth and be more rigorous in pursuing Vision 2030 goal of a healthy natural environment (Jamaica)
- Conduct survey on climate change awareness as basis for public education (St Vincent & the grenadines)
- Generate more funds to facilitate research and youth to utilize social media to share knowledge on climate change (Suriname)

Message – Stay engaged climate change can be resolved if youth get more involved. (Suriname)

Japan described the impact of climate change on the seasonal pattern in Japan which saw the lengthening of summer and winter and the shrinking of spring and autumn – described as the bipolarization of the weather. The rising temperature is having negative impact on agriculture and health. The team shared interesting case studies on impact of temperature rises on the quality of food (mandarin and rice) and the spread of the dengue fever.

Youth action

- Greenwave Project (tree planting)
- Post-disaster rebuilding initiatives, e.g. after the great earthquake of 2011 it was the high school students who assisted farmers in rebuilding

The team made recommendations for increased partnerships between Japan and the Caribbean. This was in keeping with recommendations in several of the Caribbean reports.

These reports emphasized the need for regional collaboration in the struggle against climate change and building resilience. The also underlined the importance of partnerships such as that facilitated by the Japan Caribbean Climate Change Control project.

Outcome Document

Day 1 ended with the drafting of the Outcome Document. The process was led by Gerald Lindo. The following elements were identified for inclusion in the document:

- Research Needs Assessment
- Capacity Building
- Youth participation in policy decision making
- Youth activism
- Legal and regulatory framework.

The delegates formed five groups, each taking responsibility for drafting one of the elements as follows;

Youth activism – Michael Morgan (Jamaica)

Capacity building Renae Baptiste

Policy Channiella Jacob (Suriname)

Research Shanika John (St Vincent)

Legal framework Suphane Dash (Guyana)

The draft presented by each group was accepted with further additions being recommended.