



Trinidad and Tobago civil society organisations prepare to take action on climate change as global agreement signed

Port of Spain, 06 May 2016 – Adapting to the impacts of climate change is a priority under the United Nations Paris Climate Agreement, which has been signed by 177 countries, including several Caribbean countries. Saint Lucia, Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis and Grenada have signed and ratified the Agreement. In Trinidad and Tobago, also a signatory, CANARI continued to work with members of five civil society organisations (CSOs) to build their capacity for assessing vulnerability and building resilience to climate change, under the project “Climate ACTT: Action by Civil society in Trinidad and Tobago to build resilience to climate change”.

On April 26-29, representatives from five CSOs in Trinidad and Tobago participated in a four-day workshop designed to enhance their capacity for assessing vulnerability and building resilience to climate change. The five CSOs at the workshop were the Caribbean Youth Environment Network Trinidad and Tobago Chapter (CYENTT), the Environmental Research Institute Charlotteville (ERIC), Environment Tobago (ET), the Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project (FACRP), and the Turtle Village Trust (TVT).

At the end of the workshop, Barry Lovelace, from Environment Tobago, stated that *“this is the one time that I am leaving [a workshop] with the most clarity and understanding. Having gone through these four days has allowed me to clarify a lot of the [climate change] terms and concepts and even learn new ones”*.

As part of the workshop, participants went into the field and worked in teams to conduct rapid vulnerability assessments to understand how climate change will impact the coastal community of Salybia in north-east Trinidad. This exercise was done in partnership with Nature Seekers, a leading CSO from the area. Teams used various methods such as community-mapping, participatory photo-journaling, semi-structured interviews and surveys. The vulnerability to climate change of one of the small businesses in the area was also assessed using a value-chain analysis, a method which CANARI is currently piloting in other communities in Trinidad.

Salybia was found to be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise and storm surges as well as heavy rainfall and wind events that will cause flooding and landslides. These will have significant impacts on coastal buildings and key infrastructure such as the main road, bridges and utility lines. The CSOs concluded that the economy and livelihoods of the Salybia community and others in north-east Trinidad are vulnerable to climate change and action must be taken. They explored the use of ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) where natural ecosystems such as forests, mangroves, coral reefs and sea grass beds are used to strengthen resilience and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

CSO participants welcomed the opportunity to be exposed to vulnerability assessment methodologies and adaptation strategies, and some indicated that they would like to incorporate them in future climate change work, including the practical adaptation and resilience building projects they will be implementing in the upcoming months as part of the Climate ACTT project.

During the workshop, Professor John Agard, from the University of the West Indies, and Rahanna Juman, from the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA), gave participants an overview of the latest developments on climate change scenario models and research in Trinidad and Tobago. Other agencies and organisations, including the Office for Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM), as well as the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society and Global Water Partnership-Caribbean, provided useful insight on their efforts towards adaptation actions and the links being made between disaster preparedness and climate change. The Ministry of Planning Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit emphasised that climate change adaptation is a priority under the Paris Agreement which was signed by the Government and recognised the role that civil society can play.

This workshop was held as one of the activities under the project “[Climate ACTT: Action by Civil society in Trinidad and Tobago to build resilience to climate change](#)” which aims to strengthen the capacity of five CSOs in Trinidad and Tobago to internationally accepted levels of best practice in two areas: institutional (organisational) strengthening; and technical capacity to deliver programmes/projects related to climate change adaptation and resilience. CANARI is implementing and managing this project in collaboration with Conservation International (CI) and BHP Billiton Trinidad and Tobago.

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About CANARI

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for more than 20 years. Our mission is to promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing natural resources critical to development. Our programmes focus on research, sharing and dissemination of lessons learned, capacity building and fostering regional partnerships.

Connect with us:



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