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EARTH CONSCIOUS



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REPORTS · ANALYSES · COMMENTARY

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Mark Meredith explores one of New Zealand's most-loved tourist attractions: The Waipoua forest in Northland, home of Tane Mahuta, the largest living kauri tree in New Zealand.

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On our Cover

Endangered stitchbird singing at Tiritiri Matangi island bird sanctuary, a conservation success story.

Photo by Mark Meredith

Earth Conscious
begins year 3 with the
9th issue this month.



Bumpy road to Cancún?

Following the latest rounds of climate change talks, many of the reports coming out of Bonn, Germany suggest that instead of advancing the agenda for Cancún beginning in late November, the negotiations have instead retreated.

Rifts between poor and rich nations gaped wider while disagreements emerged over previously settled issues resulting in the working draft doubling in size from 17 to 34!

This cannot be good news considering that any progress on the climate change agenda for a positive outcome in Cancún will have to be done in a mere six days when the final preparatory meeting takes place in Tianjin, China in early October, before the Mexico meeting.

Incidentally, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, Christiana Figueres doesn't see the Bonn conference going backwards but believes that governments have instead made some progress towards deciding the shape of a successful result in Cancún.

They just need to decide on a collective stance when they meet in China to ensure progress in Mexico on some of the key issues such as cutting and limiting growth in emissions and providing finance for developing countries, according to her.

Sensing the mood of the countries, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon admitted that the Cancun summit may not deliver an international agreement on reducing emissions of greenhouse gases but it can reach agreements on several key areas such as climate change funding, reforestation and promotion of clean technology, echoing an earlier position of Ms. Figueres.

The Caribbean, as part of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) continues to have concerns about the talks leading up to Cancún, Mexico.

Prime Minister of the island of Saint Lucia, Stephenson King says much bridge-building and many obstacles would have to be done and overcome on what he saw as an increasingly-bumpy road to Cancún.

Nevertheless, the Caribbean plans to be prepared as possible for Cancún and will meet sometime in September to discuss and agree on project priorities at the national and regional levels and mechanisms for coordinating the region's position at COP 16 in Mexico.

Linda Hutchinson-Jafar

Caribbean Economics of Climate Adaptation Study results released

The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) has released the preliminary results of a study on the Economics of Climate Adaptation (ECA) in the Caribbean.

In releasing the results, CCRIF Chairman Milo Pearson indicated that they will “enable countries in the region to develop fact-based adaptation strategies that can be incorporated into national development plans to increase resilience against climate hazards.”

The results for eight pilot countries (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, Jamaica, and St. Lucia) are presented in a short brochure entitled, ‘Enhancing the climate risk and adaptation fact base for the Caribbean’ (Preliminary Results).

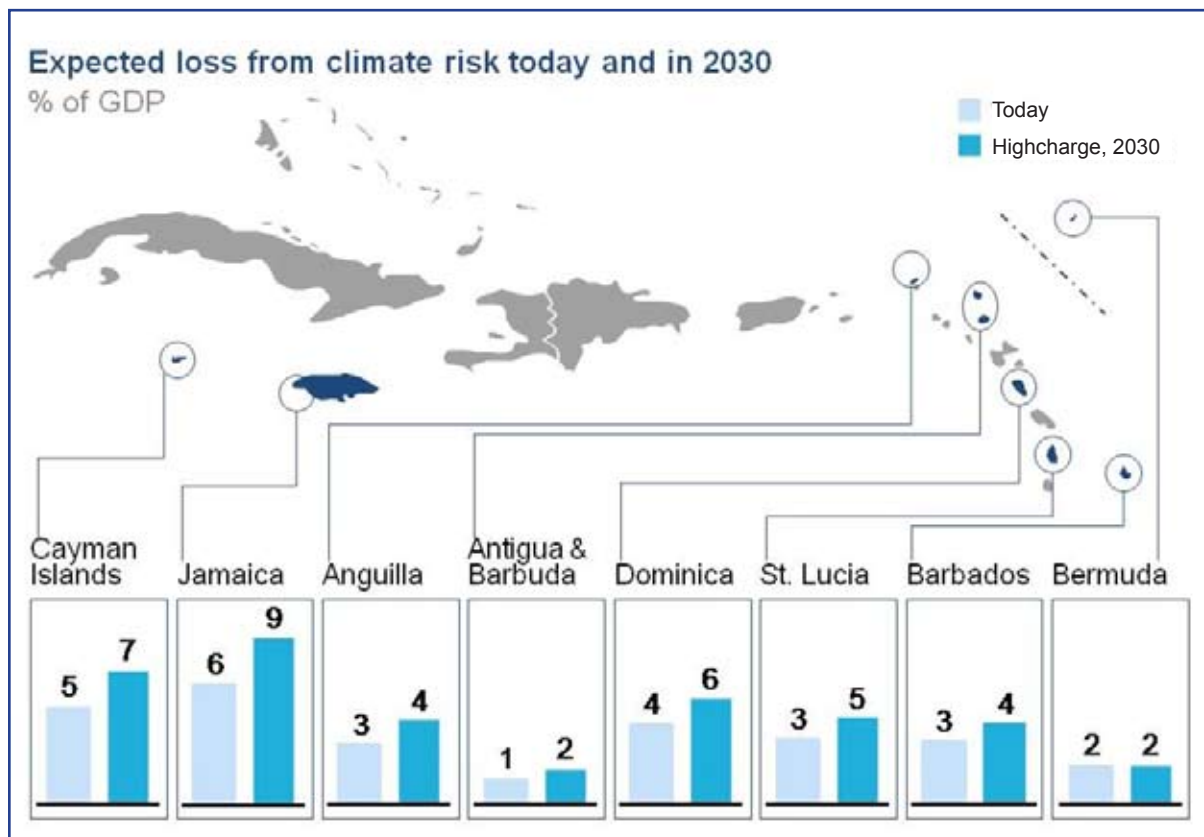
The ECA study, launched in February this year, was conducted by CCRIF, with Caribbean Risk Managers acting on behalf of the Facility,

and supported by regional partners, the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5Cs), the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and others. McKinsey & Company and Swiss Re provided analytical support.

The study has been welcomed by Caribbean countries which realise that climate change has the potential to greatly exacerbate their risks from hurricanes and storms.

Findings from the study indicate that annual expected losses from wind, storm surge and inland flooding already amount to up to 6% of GDP in some countries and that, in a worst case scenario, climate change has the potential to increase these expected losses by 1 to 3 percentage points of GDP by 2030.

CARICOM Secretary General Edwin Carrington says that the study “makes an important contribution to developing the capacity to address the climate change challenges facing the Caribbean



Source: CCRIF

... [and] will be of immense value to both Caribbean policymakers and the business sector, in their efforts to develop and implement sound adaptation strategies and plans.”

Decision makers can select both risk mitigation (e.g. constructing sea walls and enforcing building codes) and risk transfer initiatives (e.g. insurance) to address current climate hazards and respond to the growing threat of climate change. Depending on a country's characteristics, the preliminary results of the study suggest that risk mitigation initiatives can cost-effectively avert up to 90% of the expected loss in 2030 under a high climate change scenario.

Risk transfer measures play a key role in addressing the financial consequences of low-frequency, high-severity weather events such as once-in-100-year catastrophes by limiting the financial impact of these events.

The expected loss that can be averted cost-effectively is driven by various factors, for example, the value of buildings and the share of expected loss caused by coastal flooding/storm surge.

The best approach for each country is determined specifically by its topography, exposure to hurricanes, and value and vulnerability of assets.

The results presented in the brochure were generated from the input of regional stakeholders and experts as well as several country representatives.

As a next step, CCRIF said it would welcome the opportunity to further engage with countries via workshops to obtain feedback on the initial results and to determine potential areas for more detailed work.

Following consultation with the countries and subsequent refinement of results for the eight pilot countries, the team will work closely with interested countries and regional institutional and funding partners to enable application of the methodology on an ongoing basis throughout the Caribbean.

The benefits of the ECA study are clear.

The study provides a sound economic fact base that countries can use to further develop their national climate adaptation and disaster management strategies. For example, the study

■ **Risk Mitigation:** Risk mitigation responses are adaptation measures aimed at reducing the damage. They include asset-based responses (e.g. dikes, retrofitting buildings) and behavioural measures (e.g., enforcing building codes)

■ **Risk Transfer:** Risk transfer solutions such as catastrophic risk insurance, are adaptation measures aimed at limiting the financial impact for people affected by distributing the risk to other players in the market. Risk transfer solutions are particularly effective in the case of low-frequency and high-severity events. Risk transfer mechanisms are based on transferring part of the risk to a third party (e.g., an insurance/reinsurance company or the capital market), and include both traditional insurance products and alternative risk transfer instruments (e.g., NatCat bonds).

prioritises areas and sectors at risk and provides clear inputs for building an economically viable portfolio of adaptation initiatives designed to increase each country's resilience.

Additionally, the results of this study can be used by governments in multi-lateral and bilateral funding discussions.

Given the current and future financial situation of many developed and developing countries, access to funding will be enhanced by a country's ability to support effective business cases with sound quantitative data.

This study provides a relevant toolkit to aid Caribbean countries to do this.

The preliminary results can assist with preparations for the approaching COP16 Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Mexico that starts in November, 2010 and 5Cs has already agreed to include the ECA work in their coordination of a CARICOM presence at the conference.

At COP16, Caribbean and other small island developing states aim to engage in dialogue regarding positive actions on adaptation and disaster risk management, thereby potentially garnering financial assistance for the region.



A SPLASH OF GREEN

Taking action for a sustainable future

At every level in the GHL organization, our people are taking the initiative to improve lives. This is who we are as a corporate entity—purposeful and caring.

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Stephenson King,
Prime Minister of Saint Lucia

Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, Stephenson King delivered a speech at the recently held Fifth Biennial Caribbean Environmental Forum and Exhibition (CEF5) in conjunction with the Second Caribbean Sustainable Energy Forum (CSEF2) and the 15th Annual Wider Caribbean Waste Management Conference (ReCaribe).

We present a shortened version of his speech which evolved around the theme 'Coping with Copenhagen: Water, Waste, Energy, Health'.

From the reports of the post-Copenhagen sessions, including those of the recently-concluded Bonn sessions, it is evident that there is still much bridge-building to be done if we are to arrive at meaningful consensus in Cancun, Mexico, later this year.

There will also be many an obstacle to overcome on what is looking like an increasingly-bumpy road to Cancun. The negotiations have ground slowly, and not, apparently, always forward.

The rhetoric has on some occasions been sharp and some parties have become more firmly entrenched in their positions.

The Alliance of Small Island States, AOSIS, ably and indefatigably led by Grenada, has continued to take a principled position and to carry the banner of the small island developing states, and by extension, of CARICOM. Despite the repeated frustrations, our AOSIS negotiators, including those from the Caribbean, have shown resolve, resourcefulness, respect for the negotiation process, and where necessary, restraint, and deserve our continued encouragement and support.

Against the backdrop of the unfolding post-Copenhagen negotiation process, one can ask what has been the CARICOM response to Copenhagen? As I stated earlier, the Copenhagen Accord from the perspective of AOSIS, is far from perfect. For example, the Accord proposes limiting global greenhouse gas concentrations to a level that will result in an increase in atmospheric temperature of "below 2 degrees Celsius" in the first instance. This is not fully consistent with the call for AOSIS for emissions reductions leading to a temperature of well below 1.5 degrees.

Another flaw of the Accord is that it sets no real targets to achieve emissions reductions and leaves it up to developed countries to make commitments on emissions targets. In this regard, it is worth noting that the pledges made to date have fallen way short of what is needed, even for the 2 degree threshold.

Yet another shortcoming is that the Accord provides no actual guidance on the future of the Kyoto Protocol. AOSIS and many other developing countries wish to see the Kyoto Protocol extended in one way or another.

From an adaptation perspective, the Accord re-emphasizes and reaffirms the link between adaptation measures in response to the adverse effects of climate change and the potential impact of these response measures. AOSIS countries have fought hard to de-couple these two issues, especially as some other parties have used this link to retard progress on adaptation.

The Copenhagen Accord also poses difficulties with its definitions of vulnerability. For example, it states that "adaptation... is a challenge faced by all countries", but ignores the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" enshrined in the Convention.

It goes on to prioritize adaptation funding for “the most vulnerable developing countries such as LDCs, SIDS and Africa”. This is new language not included in the Bali Action Plan and conveys the impression that these countries are but a few in a long list of “most vulnerable countries”.

The Accord does not provide dedicated funding for adaptation. While it speaks of allocating funding between mitigation and adaptation on a “balanced” basis, it does not indicate how this balance will be determined.

In addition to the foregoing, and other concerns raised about the text of the Copenhagen Accord, you will recall that I have alluded to issues relating to the very process by which the document was prepared. For these and other reasons, a number of countries have refused to associate themselves with it.

On the positive side, however, the Accord reflects the joint efforts of the USA, China, India, Brazil and South Africa, the latter four of which, as developing countries, actually agree to make voluntary commitments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

It also, among others, makes reference to assessing the scientific validity of reducing the temperature threshold to 1.5 degrees and to providing financial assistance to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation.

It is for such reasons that many developing countries see the Accord a basis for moving forward and have chosen to associate themselves with it, albeit many have done so with reservations.

To date, at least six Caribbean have formally associated with the Accord and others have given some indication that they are also preparing to do so.

At a recent CARICOM inter-sessional meeting which was held in Roseau, Dominica, last March, Heads discussed the issue of Climate Change. The Copenhagen Accord was addressed in some detail and the meeting noted the observations of the CARICOM Task Force on Climate Change and Development that countries choosing to associate with the Accord should do so without prejudice to the UNFCCC Negotiations.

On that score, I wish to indicate that I, in my capacity as head with responsibility for Sustainable Development, which includes Climate Change, have encouraged my CARICOM colleagues to act in accordance with the foregoing observation and to adopt a joint approach, to the extent possible.

At the Roseau meeting, it was noted that the Copenhagen funds had so far failed to materialize. The meeting encouraged the World Bank to ensure that countries would not have to go through a series of assessment studies in order to access the Copenhagen-related funds that it is seeking to leverage.

The meeting also agreed to support an extension of the CARICOM Task Force on Climate Change and Development to the end of December 2010 to facilitate the provision of technical support to Member States in the UNFCCC negotiations leading up to and at COP 16.

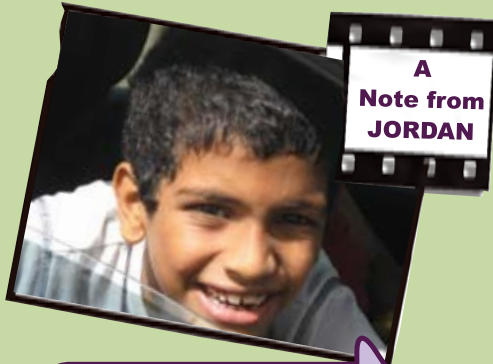
Further, the meeting agreed that the CARICOM Secretariat and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) would facilitate a joint COHSOD/COTED Ministerial Level Meeting in June, 2010 and that this meeting would discuss and agree on project priorities at the national and regional levels and mechanisms for coordinating the Region’s position at COP 16 in Mexico.

The aforementioned meeting was actually convened but had to be rescheduled to early September due to the unavailability of many invitees. This may actually be a blessing as the new date will allow for a better assessment of the state of negotiations following the session to be held in Bonn, in August.

At present, there are a number of adaptation and mitigation initiatives in the pipeline. Some of these are national in scope while others offer opportunities for regional collaboration in areas such as research and data management. Nevertheless, there is much to be done and it is hoped that post-Copenhagen, our development partners will make good on their pledges for new and additional funding, within a reasonable timeframe.

Reducing **CARBON FOOTPRINT**

By Jordan Brandon Jafar



I love accompanying my mom to the local markets in Trinidad and returning home with full bags of fresh vegetables and fruits.



Honestly, I used to cringe in the past when my mom took me to the markets since she liked to walk the length and breadth of the building until she was fully satisfied that she had bought everything she needed.

But all that changed when I asked her, why she doesn't simply buy the fruits and vegetables from the supermarket when we are there.

As in her usual manner, she explained in the simplest way to me how shopping in the markets are beneficial to the farmers, to their families, to their communities and it was even good for the planet.

When we purchase food directly from the farmers, she explained it benefits their families and communities. Our support for them helps improve the lives of their families and could even help them in employing other people to work in their vegetable gardens or picking fruits for sale.

A lot of the farmers who sell in the markets come from rural communities and many of them are poor.

So how is it beneficial to the planet? Well, a lot of the fruits and vegetables in the supermarket are imported from other countries. The further the country that it was being imported from, the higher the carbon footprint.

I learnt about the phrase carbon footprint. It means measuring the impact of activities on the environment and climate change. It relates to the amount of greenhouse gases produced through burning fossil fuels for electricity, heating and transportation.

The carbon footprint on imported vegetables and produce is measured by how far farmers drive their vehicles to wholesale sellers who further transport it to an aircraft which then brings it to my country. And that's just the carbon footprint on transportation.

When I buy local produce, I know that the carbon footprint of the fruits and vegetables is low because it involves a much shorter journey from the field to the market which is good for our environment.

Next time you eat your vegetables or fruit, try to find out whether it was grown at home or imported.

Also there are numerous websites that can explain in simpler details for kids like us what carbon footprint is and how we can help reduce our own footprint.

I know when we buy from local farmers, I'm reducing mine.

Guyana and Norway establish REDD + Investment

- Norway to contribute up to US\$ 250 million.

Guyana's President Bharrat Jagdeo and Norway's Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg have announced the establishment of the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF), and stated that they have invited the World Bank to act as the fund manager.

Norway will be the first contributor to the GRIF, and will pay US\$30 million into the fund when it is established. The payment is in recognition of Guyana's efforts to protect its 16 million hectare rainforest, and follows the memorandum of understanding signed by the two countries in November last year.

Norway intends to pay up to US\$250 million into the GRIF between 2010 and 2015, based on Guyana's performance in avoiding greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as well as Guyana's on-going and planned strengthening of inclusive and transparent forest management.

Guyana will invest GRIF revenues to implement the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS).

This will enable Guyana to place its forest under long-term protection, catalyse public and private investment for clean energy (to move virtually the entire economy away from fossil fuel energy dependence), and create new low carbon economic and employment opportunities for forest dependent communities and other Guyanese citizens. The process will be evolving with the full and effective participation of involved stakeholders, including indigenous peoples groups.

According to President Jagdeo, "Prime Minister Stoltenberg has long demonstrated global leadership in the fight against climate change. After Copenhagen, this leadership was particularly vital, and thanks to the Prime Minister's efforts, the Interim REDD+ partnership, recently established



by close to 60 countries at the Oslo Climate and Forest Conference, presents the world with a real chance to make progress on reducing deforestation and forest degradation.

"To support this, the work our two countries are doing together will provide the world with a model of how national scale action to protect forests can help to create a path to a prosperous, low carbon future. We can deliver long-term economic growth alongside a commitment to globally accepted social and environmental safeguards. Too many people say this is not possible, we hope to prove them wrong."

For Prime Minister Stoltenberg, "Guyana's model is truly visionary. Not only is the country making tough decisions to protect its forest, but it is also planning to invest heavily to move its economy onto a long-term low carbon trajectory.

"Paying to reduce and avoid emissions from deforestation is one of the most cost effective ways to combat climate change, and also has significant additional benefits regarding biodiversity, climate change adaptation and rights and livelihoods for forest dependent communities. This is good for Guyana and good for the world."



Power to the People

by Mark Meredith

Editor's note: The following two articles are written by Mark Meredith, a writer and photographer who lives on Auckland's North Shore.

People power has triumphed in two countries very dear to me.

In the Caribbean republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the "rainbow" coalition of the People's Partnership swept to power in May with a thumping majority. Kamla Persad-Bissessar became the country's first female Prime Minister, ending the 10-year reign of Patrick Manning's People's National Movement and, it must be hoped, the assault on the environment.

Manning's administration oversaw a ruinous downwards spiral in the condition of the country's environment, displaying no understanding whatsoever that it was entwined with the fortune of the nation's future. Sustainability was sacrificed on the altar of industrialisation – whatever it cost, in gas dollars or hectares of scorched earth.

Rainforest was flattened for industrial estates, the Northern Range ecosystem opened to a free-for-all for quarry operators to supply the raw materials to feed the frenzy

of ostentatious development in downtown Port of Spain and heavy industry in south Trinidad. Fires raged in the dry season; flooding reached new heights in the wet. The institutions that might have mitigated the worst excesses were emasculated. The Environmental Management Authority (EMA) became a rubber stamp in all but name, while the Environment Ministry morphed into an insignificant rump within the ironically titled Ministry of Planning. Irony because there was no planning; the National Physical Development Plan long tossed in the garbage.

Reversing decades of indifference to the environment is a hard ask, for any government. But in T&T's case it's now or never. Carrying on as before is simply not an option. Yale University's 2010 Environmental Performance Index shows that in the Caribbean only Haiti is in a worse state. Right now the country's most urgent environmental priority, by some distance, is reversing the destruction of the Northern Range forests, and those of

Charlotteville and Main Ridge in Tobago where siltation is damaging coral reefs. Quarrying must stop now; tree planting start, and protection of these areas funded and enforced.

Strike now, while the nation is still excited by change: the People's Partnership also swept the local government elections in July. There's a genuine opportunity for change, and hopeful noises are emerging. The coalition indicated in its manifesto that it understood the need for a national physical plan, and promised to review the National Environmental Policy while reintroducing the Planning and Development of Land Bill. It seems – fingers crossed – they also understand that, with the need to diversify the economy away from oil and gas industries, tourism could have a role to play.

The new government has set the right tone. One of Kamla Persad-Bissessar's first acts was to launch a "Clean Up and Beautify" Trinidad and Tobago campaign. How long it will last is anyone's guess, given the ingrained and persistent Trinidadian trait of littering.

But pride in your surroundings is the first step on the green road to salvation. Ideally, the next step would be the implementation of a household recycling industry. This would generate employment, a less wasteful attitude, and a better quality of life derived from living somewhere that's appreciated, looked after and respected.

Here in Auckland, where the council supplied over 370,000 plastic wheelie bins to ratepayers for recycling plastic, glass and tin, you will find signs in its parks and reserves, saying *Tiakina tenei takiwaa. Haria au para ki te kainga*. "Look after this environment. Take your rubbish home."

You'd be simply too ashamed to hurl your KFC box out of a car window in most of Aotearoa. And, ultimately, that's the level of guilt, or personal responsibility, that the People's Partnership needs to instill within the people of T&T. So that, one day, it will be natural for Trinbagonians to take to the streets for the cause of conservation and their unique environment.

And unique is how many Kiwis would regard *their* environment. In July they showed it. People power, as practised in New Zealand, saw another significant victory for conservation. The demonstration in May against plans to mine conservation land, which we reported on in our last issue, scared off John Key's Government. Rattled by the numbers of marchers



Photo: Mark Meredith

Trinidad's Northern Range forests are in danger of being wiped out.

in Auckland, and more than 37,000 public submissions and 50,000 signatures against mining, along with the political risk involved being deemed as "too great", Energy Minister Gerry Brownlee beat a complete retreat.

Not only would the proposed Schedule 4 land (the most valuable conservation land, afforded the highest level of protection) be exempt from mining, but another 12,400ha of land would be added to the Schedule 4 pile. And any future national parks and marine reserves would be untouchable, too. Environmental groups were ecstatic. Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei said "New Zealand's 100% Pure brand and our tourism markets are worth far more than mining in our National Parks could ever be."

Another environmental controversy is looming, though, also with Mr Brownlee's department: the government's invitation for exploration tenders for deep sea drilling off New Zealand. Greenpeace activists were filmed emerging from Auckland's Muriwai Beach apparently covered in oil – really sugar and cocoa powder – to promote a campaign against drilling in places they say are twice the depth of Deepwater Horizon.

Will this campaign against new oil, twinned with "no mining Pure NZ", succeed in driving New Zealand towards a clean energy future? People power can achieve surprising outcomes, especially here in Aotearoa where Kiwis' passion for what they have today stems from losing so much a long time ago.

By Mark Meredith



Kauris are second in size only to the giant Californian redwoods

“Evidence of wrong decisions made by those who have gone before us is so strongly apparent . . . it is up to our generation to try and put things back into balance again.”

— A caption at the Waipoua Kauri Forest Visitor Centre in Northland, New Zealand.

In July I went to explore an area of New Zealand that suffered the deforestation Trinidad and Tobago and other tropical countries face right now. Loss was the overwhelming feeling I left with. Something quite amazing had existed here, but it was taken away by the generations that came before us.

The Waipoua forest in Northland is famous as the home of Tane Mahuta (“Lord of the Forest”), the largest living kauri tree in New Zealand and one of the country’s most-loved tourist attractions. Tane Mahuta is estimated to have sprung from seed 2,000



Tane Mahuta, Lord of The Forest, 2,000 years old and still going strong

Photographs by Mark Meredith

years ago. Its massive trunk has a girth of 13.8 metres (45 feet) and its first branches start at a height of 18 metres (59 feet). With a trunk volume of 245 cubic metres, it dwarfs the 2.5–3 cubic metres of the average pine tree when felled at maturity.

Kauri are the most ancient of all of New Zealand's trees, and among the mightiest anywhere in the world. Standing next to Tane Mahuta is humbling enough, but compared to some of his long lost relatives he's a baby. The largest kauri ever accurately measured was the great "Kairaru" from the same region, three times the size of Tane Mahuta and believed to be 4,000 years old when it was destroyed by fire in the 1890s.

The Lord of the Forest has been lonely a long time. In the Waipoua Visitor Centre, and the excellent Kauri Museum near Dargaville, a distressing history is displayed. The demise of the mighty kauri forests that once covered the northern half of New Zealand's North Island is told in grainy old photos of men towing away trees the size of Nelson's Column.

The kauri's wide, straight, magnificent trunk, devoid of branches until the very top crown, was perfect and of unsurpassed quality. It was logged insatiably for spars and masts for ships; for railway sleepers; and to build Auckland's houses and Maori war canoes until... it was almost too late. In 1843 six sawmills existed. By 1868 there were 93 mills. Much of the wood was exported, with kauri becoming country's first export industry.

A display of maps in Waipoua is shocking in its indictment of exploitation and greed. The forest cover of New Zealand is shown before the arrival of Europeans, much of it swathed in beards of green. The map of post-European settlement to the present day is limited to stubbly blotches and acne-like rashes. Vast tracts of forest were burned to clear land for pasture in an orgy of appalling waste; often no attempt being made to salvage the timber first. It was a pattern repeated over most of New Zealand. Today, kauri forest exists only in scattered pockets of



A regenerating kauri forest at Warkworth near Auckland

the northern North Island, such as Waipoua and nearby Trounson Kauri Park and other areas of Northland. Further south, significant areas include the Waitakere and Hunua Ranges near Auckland, and the Coromandel Peninsula.

Keep Kauri Strong

Feet that stay on the rebuilt paths around kauri are welcome

Department of Conservation
Te Pūtahi Aotearoa



The European settlers were accelerating a transformation of the country's landscape and biodiversity that had begun in earnest about 1,000 years previously with the arrival of the first Māori. At that time 85 per cent of Aotearoa was forest. Its trees were giants, and some of the birds that lived among them were giants, too. The moa, a huge flightless bird standing 6 feet above the ground from the base of the neck, was hunted to extinction within a few hundred years – all that meat, there for the taking; feathers for clothes, and bones for ornaments and weapons. Haast's Eagle, a giant and terrifying bird that preyed on the 11 species of moa, disappeared with them. Enormous areas of forest were burned by Māori to drive out moa and clear land for agriculture, and the fires would rage wildly out of control. By the time Europeans arrived, New Zealand's forest cover had declined to 50 per cent.

The moa and Haast's Eagle were just two of 57 bird species, or 42 per cent of all New Zealand's terrestrial birds, to have become extinct since human settlement. While habitat loss was a major factor, the real culprit was introduced predators. Eighty million years of

isolation meant life here had evolved along an entirely different path to the rest of the world. It had become a land of birds, with no predators to worry about except avian ones. Some birds lost the need to fly, or became too fat to do so, or nested on the ground, unconcerned.

About 2,000 years ago, the first Polynesians arrived, bringing with them the *kiore*, or Pacific rat, as a food source. The humans did not survive initial settlement, but the *kiore* did. Over the next 1,000 years, until the arrival of the Māori, it is believed these rats may have formed huge rampaging armies that swept through the forests, destroying the unique avifauna as they went.

Māori brought more rats and their dogs, known as *kurī*, which were used to hunt birds, and fire. The Europeans followed with cargoes of disasters that they unloaded upon the environment: possums, cats, goats, sheep, rabbits and deer. In an effort to contain the resulting rabbit plague, stoats and weasels were introduced, but instead they decimated defenceless native species like the kiwi.

Today, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent annually on pest control — especially on

the 30 million forest-devouring possums — and, as anyone who has passed through Auckland airport can testify, biosecurity procedure is an education in itself.

The Department of Conservation spends much money and resources on reintroducing threatened birds into environments that have been cleared of pests, like Tiritiri Matangi Island in the Hauraki Gulf near Auckland. There, among the regenerating forest areas where endangered birds have been reintroduced and are flourishing, you can hear a dawn chorus you won't hear anywhere else.

Sadly, that's because a walk in New Zealand's forests today, from the mountainous rainforests of Fiordland and Westland in the South Island, to the Coromandel Peninsula and Waipoua in the North Island, is one undertaken in an almost eerie silence, as unnatural as its cause. When James Cook sailed around New Zealand, his botanist on board, Joseph Banks, wrote of his astonishment at the "deafening" bird choruses he had experienced. Today's choirs whisper in the branches where once they rang with glorious harmonies.

The sounds that Tane Mahuta and his massive relatives nearby, the 2nd and 3rd-largest kauris, are more likely to hear are the exclamations of wonder from puny humans below, craning their necks in disbelief. But for how much longer?

A deadly new threat to the magnificent kauri has emerged. One of New Zealand's leading environmental NGOs, Forest & Bird, warn that "Kauri dieback" is having a "devastating effect on our giants of the forest". They say that once kauri trees are infected they will die, because there is no known treatment. Tane Mahuta himself is threatened.

Kauri dieback is a microscopic fungus-like plant pathogen (a disease-causing agent) that only affects kauri. Known as PTA, *Phytophthora* taxon Agathis, it causes yellowing of foliage, loss of leaves, canopy thinning, and dead branches. An insidious death, affected trees can also develop lesions that bleed resin, extending

to the major roots and sometimes girdling the trunk as a "collar rot". PTA can kill trees and seedlings of all ages. It first came to light in 2008 and is believed to be related to a chestnut pathogen from Korea.

PTA is spread through the soil, by water movement, by people and animals, and plant-to-plant transmission through underground root-to-root contact. Signs at the entrance to Tane Mahuta's domain warn you to stay on the paths — Kauri dieback is reported to have been detected in nearby trees.

Auckland Regional Council was so concerned about the potential threat to the iconic kauri that it has created a website to publicise the problem, and set up a response team so that members of the public can report sightings of infected trees. In the Waitakere Ranges near Auckland, walkers must disinfect their footwear before entering the forest. It seems a particularly apt 21st century threat to the ancient kauri, this creeping disease.



Mark Meredith is a writer and photographer who lives on Auckland's North Shore. A former environmental journalist for the *Trinidad Express*, he also produced a Caribbean natural history and environmental magazine called *Samaan*. See (<http://issuu.com/meredith/docs/samaan2>)

"If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, then let us allow them to love the Earth before we ask them to save it."

David Sobel



UNEP Report on Latin America and the Caribbean Addresses Environmental Degradation

Latin America and the Caribbean require comprehensive environmental policies to guarantee the sustainable management of their natural resources.

These new policies will be documented in a series of reports entitled "Latin America and the Caribbean: Environment Outlook GEO LAC 3".

In its soon to be released report, "Latin America and the Caribbean: Environment Outlook GEO LAC 3", the United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) is warning that the region needs to take a step forward to sustainably manage its natural resources and effectively counteract the forces that are leading to environmental degradation.

This third report in a series prepared by UNEP on the state of the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean notes that the greatest challenge is to guarantee the development of environmental strategies, the creation of bodies specialized in the establishment of institutional and legal frameworks, and the ratification of international conventions.

The GEO LAC 3 study will also highlight the positive efforts already being carried out, for example, in Brazil to stop Amazonian deforestation, in Uruguay's energy strategy to encourage the incorporation of alternative fuel sources, or payments for environmental services such as those done in Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Nicaragua.

The report points out the urgent necessity of achieving consensus that effectively promotes sustainable development, integrates environmental considerations and the value of ecosystems and environmental services into development policy in the runup to the Rio+20 meeting to be held in Brazil in 2012.

According to the study, some countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have advanced in the transition process towards an environmentally sustainable economy. There are the experiences of Brazil, a world leader in recycling, with a national industry employing nearly 170,000 people, or in the Caribbean Hotel Energy Action Programme which encourages the implementation of energy-efficiency practices in the tourism sector.

Yet, in spite of these advances, the environment in the region does not receive the level of priority it deserves. In addition to the limited existence of comprehensive and cross-cutting environmental policies, the GEO LAC 3 report emphasizes the need to improve action, and coordination between the countries of the region. It also notes the importance of being able to rely on quality data concerning the state of the environment, and to increase the level of investment for achieving environmental and social sustainability, essential for the continued development in the region.

According to the study, greater prosperity and development in the region depends on the joint efforts of national and local governments, citizens and civil society organizations which must work together in a consensual manner to resolve the environmental challenges facing Latin America and the Caribbean.

The growing interest and willingness to tackle environmental themes is evident in the agendas of different sectors national and local governments, civil society and business organizations and

universities and research institutes and offers an opportunity to confront environmental degradation and establish the basis for advancing toward a more sustainable model of development, the report stresses.

The state of the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean

Climate change, loss of biological diversity, environmental degradation, emergencies caused by natural disasters, water scarcity, and accelerated urbanization that the region is experiencing make it necessary to make urgent and decisive changes in environmental management, according to the UNEP report.

Historically, the drivers of the regional development model have been based in the production of food, primary materials, and natural resources. This model has generated economic growth, the study notes, but also environmental degradation and societal breakdown. The tendency toward the concentration of income and an inequitable division of the benefits of this growth has led to Latin America and the Caribbean being the region with the highest level of inequality in the world.

The region possesses great environmental richness. The six countries (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela) are among those countries with the greatest biodiversity in the world. Although promising efforts of environmental protection have been launched, this rich diversity is presently under threat.





Environmental degradation plagues Haiti's earthquake recovery



Over six months since the 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, severe deforestation and the uncontrolled dumping of debris are among the complex environmental issues the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is helping to address.

As part of the UN relief and recovery effort, UNEP said it is focused on promoting a sustainable recovery for Haiti by minimising the environmental damage from reconstruction and ensuring there is adequate, long-term investment in natural resource management.

Prior to the 12 January earthquake, Haiti was already the poorest and most environmentally degraded country in the Caribbean, and its largely destroyed rural environment could not fully support its population.

For example, the total forest cover was approximately 2% in a country where 75% of energy demands were satisfied by wood fuel, and a lack of trees had in turn caused significant soil erosion.

The massive damage from the earthquake has now exacerbated the sustainability problems in rural and urban areas, according to UNEP's Haiti Programme Manager, Andrew Morton.

"The demand for timber poles for tents and construction is accelerating the rate of deforestation and this is one impact which will be very difficult to mitigate," Mr. Morton said.

"A new and highly visible problem is debris and waste management in the Port-au-Prince region where the city is literally choking on building rubble and garbage because dumping is generally uncontrolled.

"UNEP is working with the Haitian Ministry of Environment, the UN and non-governmental organizations to try and turn around the environmental situation, but the people of Haiti and the international community have a major recovery challenge in front of them," Mr. Morton added.

Field-based rapid assessments since 13 January identified numerous environmental issues for the short and medium term, including the disposal of medical waste, rubble and demolition material, secondary spills and hazardous chemicals, geological and flood risks for camps and the environmental impact of massive population displacement.

Jointly with the Haitian government, UNEP is identifying opportunities for investment, for example, in erosion control to help increase the productivity of farmland, and in clean energy by establishing a Haiti Improved Stoves Network to introduce more fuel-efficient stoves and reduce the demand for charcoal.

UNEP has conducted environmental assessments of camp management in Haiti and is also part of a working group on timber issues which is promoting a sustainable wood chain in Haiti as part of developing a national wood market.

UNEP's post-earthquake activities in Haiti are supported with funding from the governments of Ireland and Norway.

Through its Disasters and Conflicts Programme, UNEP has been working with the Government of Haiti since 2008 and opened a project office in Port-au-Prince in January 2009.



The issue of waste management in camps is amongst a range of challenges confronting relief and recovery efforts.

... the total forest cover was approximately 2% in a country where 75% of energy demands were satisfied by wood fuel, and a lack of trees had in turn caused significant soil erosion.

Pitons stay off danger list but ...



Photos: St. Lucia Tourist Board

The Pitons Management Area in Saint Lucia will remain off the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) welcomes the decision following new information from the Saint Lucia government that a moratorium on all new and unapproved development has been approved.

“In view of the moratorium, IUCN considers that the Pitons Management Area should not be inscribed to the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger,” said Tim Badman, Head of IUCN’s World Heritage Programme.

“However, we cannot forget that the impacts of inappropriate hotel and housing development within the property have already seriously affected this area of outstanding natural beauty.”

“In some ways World Heritage Status appears to have contributed to increasing damaging pressure on the Pitons site. The challenges facing this property illustrate why effective protection and management must be an integral part of the decision to inscribe a property on the World Heritage List.”

The Pitons was first inscribed to the World Heritage List in 2003 under the criteria for exceptional natural beauty and significant geomorphic features.

After an inspection trip in March 2010, IUCN found that new and unapproved commercial development within the region was threatening its World Heritage status.

“We found that the area was at a crossroads,” said Badman. “Any further development will likely lead to the irreversible loss of the area’s exceptional natural beauty.”

ECLAC releases report on achieving the MDGs with equality

The UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has released a report titled "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with equality in Latin America and the Caribbean Progress and challenges."

The report finds that climate change greatly contributes to making the supply of natural resources and energy uncertain, and that power generation is a key theme both for development and the environment.

The report also highlights the link between environmental degradation and poverty, noting that the poor suffer most from environmental degradation as a result of air and water pollution, the degradation of forests and fisheries, and the effects of climate change.

It further states that gains in reducing poverty (Goal 1) and other aspects of human development depend heavily on the achievements in environmental aspects.

On Goal 7, which seeks to "ensure environmental sustainability," seven indicators were developed for follow-up to target 7A (Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources) and target 7B (Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss).

In relation to the indicator that refers to the proportion of total water resources used, the report states that climate change and rising demand will worsen water availability problems.

In the face of these challenges, it stresses that progress towards the target urgently requires effective management of water resources.

On the indicator "Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits," the report finds that studies carried out have found that the growth of industrial fishing and aquaculture, changes in habitats and increasing pollution are placing heavy pressure on hydobiological resources, and this is exacerbated by climate change, which could lead to biodiversity loss.

The report states that although some progress have been achieved in the region in relation to the indicator "proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected," evidence exists of habitat loss as a result of deforestation and coral bleaching, among other causes, often associated with large-scale economic activities, the introduction of non-native species and climate change.

The report further underlines that although the drinking water target has been met in urban areas, the sustainability of service provision needs to be ensured in light of climate change and increasing contamination.

Furthermore, it recommends that the State be involved in overseeing, regulating and inspecting the provision of improved drinking water and sanitation services, underlining that climate change imposes new challenges for the provision of these services.





New UNFCCC Executive President lays out Cancún challenges

New Executive Director of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Christiana Figueres delivered the following opening statement at her first press conference to the global media from Bonn, Germany on July 22, 2010.

Last year, we saw the emergence of high level political will to tackle climate change as the defining challenge of our times.

Today I want to address two issues with you: First, why governments need to make further progress now and, secondly, what next steps are not only possible but essential.

First, to the role of governments:

Only governments, working together, can mobilise the human ingenuity, innovation and initiative to set free the full power of societies, science, and business to meet the climate challenge.

Governments must set full sail ahead to capture the powerful winds of change that humanity is wanting to release.

In Cancún, governments can set those sails higher. They can capture pledges they have made and begin to implement them, fully appreciating

that what is agreed may not be at the level which science demands but that it is the next essential step in the right direction.

Governments have both the opportunity and responsibility to build on past efforts in five key areas.

First, they need to resolve what to do with their public pledges to cut emissions. All industrialised countries have made public pledges to cut emissions by 2020 and in addition, 38 developing countries have submitted plans to limit their emissions growth.

The industrialized country commitments amount to a range of between 12 to 19 percent cuts in their emissions by 2020.

That is, as you know, still well below the 25 to 40 percent cut which the IPCC says gives us half a chance of staying below a 2 degree average global temperature rise. There is no doubt that industrialized countries need to raise their ambitions to cut emissions.

To progress, governments must also have a more serious conversation about the Kyoto Protocol, the only existing international agreement with legal status to verify emission reductions.

Governments need to address divisions over a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol after 2012, not least for clarity on the future of the carbon market.

Second, governments seem on track to agree to a comprehensive set of ways and means to allow developing countries to take concrete climate action.

This includes adapting to climate change; limiting emissions growth; getting adequate finance; boosting use of technology; promoting sustainable forestry; and building up the skills and capacity to do all this. All developing countries need help to take these actions, but the poorest and most vulnerable among them need the support most urgently.

Third, industrialised nations can turn their pledges of funding into reality. Last year, they promised 30 billion dollars in fast-track financing for developing country adaptation and mitigation efforts through 2012.

Developing nations see the transparent and real allocation of this money as a critical signal that industrialised nations are committed to progress in the broader negotiations.

Industrialised countries also pledged to find ways and means to raise 100 billion dollars a year by the year 2020. The Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Finance is looking at possible sources of this funding and will report to governments at the end of October.

Fourth, countries want to see that what they agree with each other is measured, reported and verified in a transparent and accountable way.

It's called MRV in the negotiations and it's not complex. Countries simply want to know that what they see is what they get. Progress here will be a gauge that countries are moving to common ground.

Fifth, and last, governments agree that pledges need to be captured in a binding manner. But they still need to work out how to do that.

Binding agreements among governments can be on an international level, on a national level, or can be based on compliance with rules and regulations. They could also involve a mix of all three, and governments are currently considering them all.



It's important to note that the combination of the last two elements, accountability and binding action, is essential for societies, science, and business to be confident that clean, green strategies are being pursued and will be rewarded globally, as well as locally.

The challenge governments face is not a small one. What's at stake here is the long term, sustainable future of humanity.

We know the milestones science has set, by when and by how much emissions must drop to have a chance of avoiding the worst. It requires nothing less than an energy revolution both in production and consumption.

A transformation like this is built by grasping the politically possible at every step turning countless, diverse and sometimes conflicting interests into the common good.

Governments have been building common ground since the UNFCCC began in Rio in 1992, and then, consecutively, in Berlin, Kyoto, Marrakesh, Bali, yes! Copenhagen and now Cancún.

The idea that a single magic, global agreement could solve all climate issues does not do justice to the crucial steps already achieved and, most importantly, dangerously ignores the need to keep innovating.

In Cancún, governments can harness the politically possible in order to achieve concrete and unmistakable progress.



CARICOM Summit Discusses Position Ahead of Cancun



Ban Ki Moon

The 31st Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from 4-7 July to discuss, among other things, climate change issues.

In an opening address delivered on 4 July, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon congratulated the region for its leadership and advocacy leading up to, and during, the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in December 2009, noting that the Caribbean community had conveyed an important message to the world as to the urgent and growing threat of climate change.

He expressed hope that more financial support will be given to the region in its bid to increase mitigation and adaptation measures by the 16th session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 16) in Cancun, Mexico, at the end of 2010.

According to the final Communiqué, Heads of Government agree to expedite the regional programme in preparation for COP 16.

Recognizing that the Copenhagen Accord was disappointing, they agree that CARICOM negotiators must adhere to the principles of the Liliendaal Declaration on Climate Change and Development of 2009, and to the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS) Heads Declaration of September 2009.

World Bank President Visits Mexico, Signs Green Loans

World Bank president Robert B. Zoellick visited Mexico to sign two recently-approved 'green loans' worth US\$800 million and announce new Mexican participation in the Forest Investment Program (FIP).

The FIP is within the World Bank's Strategic Climate Fund, a



Robert B. Zoellick

multi-donor Trust Fund within the World Bank's Climate Investment Funds (CIF).

The FIP's overall objective is to mobilize significantly increased funds to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, and to promote sustainable forest management, leading to emission reductions and the protection of carbon reservoirs.

Mr. Zoellick said these decisions demonstrate the Bank's commitment to deepen its support to Mexico's already extensive climate change programme, especially in light of the upcoming 16th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP16) to be held in Cancun, Mexico, at the end of 2010.

Jamaica's Minister Proposes Integrated Environmental Approach



Dr. Horace Chang

Jamaica's Minister of Water and Housing, Dr. Horace Chang has urged Caribbean countries to urgently adopt a more integrated approach to development, with special attention to water and natural resource management.

"As the islands within the region struggle to deal with a myriad of socio-economic challenges, it is clear that we need to employ a more integrated approach to development, with special attention being paid to areas such as water and natural resources management, pollution control and energy efficiency," Dr. Chang said.

As the National Committee Chairman and Honorary President of the Caribbean Environmental Forum (CEF-5), Dr. Chang was addressing participants in the Fifth biennial CEF held in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

He also called for greater collaboration among Caribbean Islands, through the sharing of information and experiences.

ECLAC and AFD Sign Cooperation Agreement



Alicia Bárcena

The Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Alicia Bárcena, signed an agreement with the Executive Director for Operations of the French Development Agency (AFD), Jacques Moineville, for inter-institutional collaboration in areas such as climate change, sustainable cities, innovative instruments for financing for development tied to fiscal decentralization, and triangular cooperation.

The agreement establishes a framework to benefit Latin American and Caribbean countries through technical cooperation and the dissemination of information and publications of mutual interest.

The first activities will be carried out in the Caribbean.

Ms. Bárcena also met with Brice Lalonde, Special Ambassador of France for climate change, who is working on the preparation of the UN Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development.

Brazil-EU Summit Addresses Sustainable Development and Bioenergy

The fourth Brazil-EU Summit was held in Brasília, Brazil, on 14 July and attended by Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, and European Commission President José Manuel Barroso. The resulting joint statement contains a section titled "Sustainable development, climate change, energy and biodiversity."

According to the Joint Statement, Brazil and the EU welcome the approval by the UN General Assembly of the Brazilian Government's offer to host a UN high-level Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 (also referred to as "Rio+20").

Both parties shared the view that the Conference, including its preparatory process, should deliver ambitious and concrete progress on the themes of green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction, and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

Both parties reiterated their commitment, on the basis of the results of the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, including the political guidance contained in the Copenhagen Accord, to work together ahead of the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the UNFCCC, to be held in Cancun, Mexico, in late 2010.

CARICOM-US Discuss Partnership for Prosperity and Security

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met in Bridgetown, Barbados in June and pledged to strengthen cooperation in responding to common challenges in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect.

According to the resulting Joint Statement on the Commitment of Bridgetown: Partnership for Prosperity and Security, ensuring energy security and mitigating the impact of climate change are fundamental to sustainable development, long-term prosperity and stability.

In the Statement, parties underscored their commitment to cooperating under the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas and identifying new areas for partnership in: energy efficiency, renewable energy, cleaner fossil fuels, infrastructure, energy poverty, sustainable forests and land use, and adaptation.

Parties reiterate their shared commitment to addressing climate change, recognizing the special vulnerabilities of small island and low-lying States to the social, economic and environmental impacts of this global phenomenon.

They further recognize the need for urgent and decisive actions on climate change, reaffirm their commitment to work toward the successful conclusion of negotiations within the context of the UNFCCC, and stress the importance of stepping up financing mitigation and adaptation measures.



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Make Noise for the MDGs



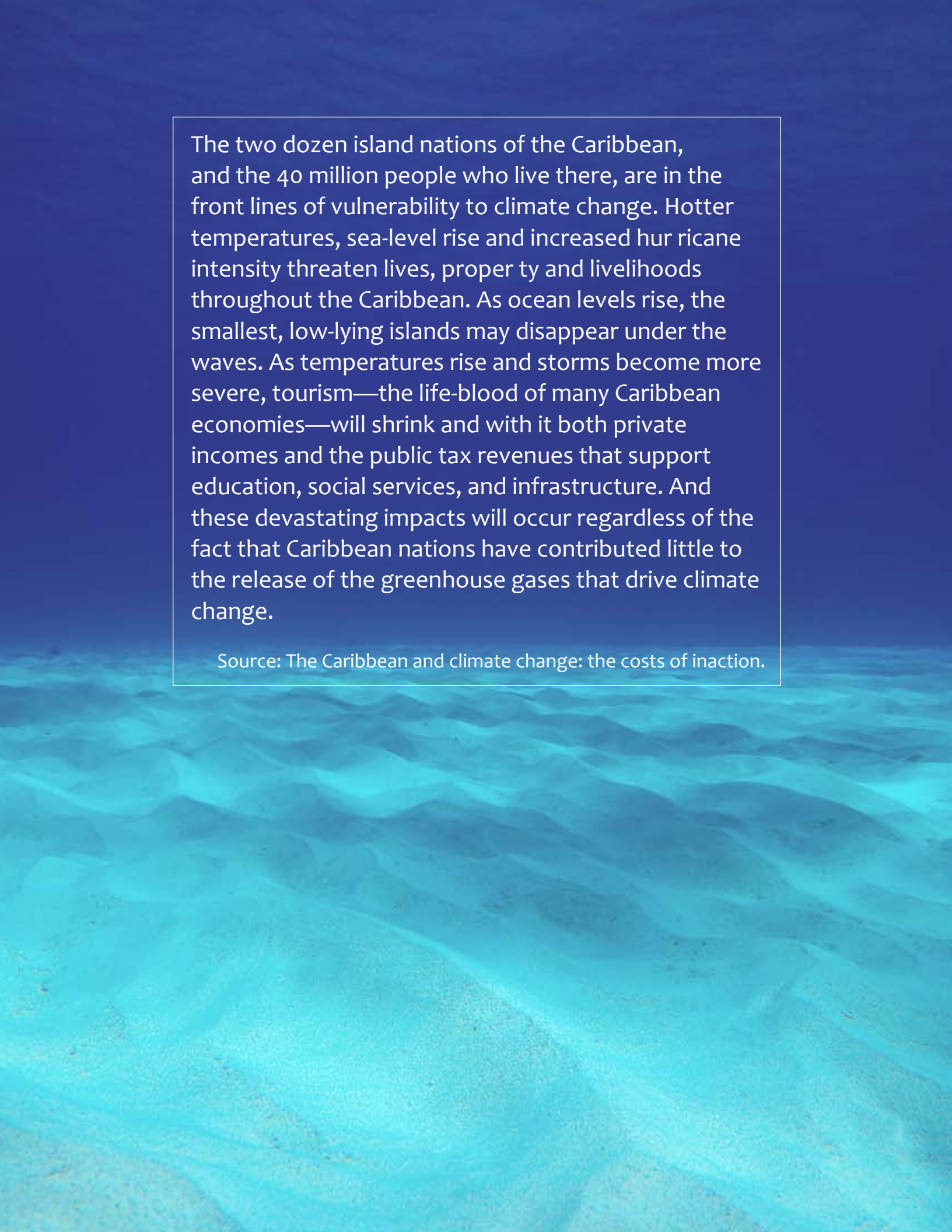
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The two dozen island nations of the Caribbean, and the 40 million people who live there, are in the front lines of vulnerability to climate change. Hotter temperatures, sea-level rise and increased hurricane intensity threaten lives, property and livelihoods throughout the Caribbean. As ocean levels rise, the smallest, low-lying islands may disappear under the waves. As temperatures rise and storms become more severe, tourism—the life-blood of many Caribbean economies—will shrink and with it both private incomes and the public tax revenues that support education, social services, and infrastructure. And these devastating impacts will occur regardless of the fact that Caribbean nations have contributed little to the release of the greenhouse gases that drive climate change.

Source: The Caribbean and climate change: the costs of inaction.

The UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon has posed a series of questions to Heads of State or Government ahead of their big meeting on biodiversity at the UN headquarters on 22 September.

Can your Head of State answer these questions?



1. As Head of State or Government what is your biodiversity vision, for your country, your region and globally?
2. What lessons need to be learned from the experience of the 2010 biodiversity target and what guidance can you provide to the negotiators at Nagoya to ensure that the new strategic plan for the Convention is comprehensive, ambitious and achievable?
3. What are the human, institutional, scientific and financial resources that countries need in order to fully implement the Convention and what mechanisms are needed to ensure that each country has access to the resources it needs?
4. How will you ensure that the post-2010 biodiversity strategy is reflected in your national biodiversity strategy and action plan, including a set of measurable national biodiversity targets?
5. How will you ensure that the post-2010 biodiversity strategy is reflected in your national and local development priorities and that biodiversity will be mainstreamed throughout government and in all sectors of society and the economy?
6. What is your view as Head of State or Government on the importance to your country of the ecosystem services provided by biodiversity and the risks to your country's well-being and security represented by continuing loss of biodiversity?
7. How are you able to make the economic values of biodiversity visible to economic actors and policymakers, and effectively integrate those values into decision-making at all levels?
8. In your country, how can the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources form part of a green economy that achieves sustainable development and the eradication of poverty?
9. How do you envisage managing biodiversity and ecosystems in your country to contribute to your national climate-change mitigation and adaptation strategies, including REDD+?
10. How will you promote synergies among the three Rio Conventions and other biodiversity-related conventions at the national level and what is needed at the international level, from their Conferences of the Parties and from the 20-year review of the Rio summit, to support national efforts?
11. What can be done to ensure that the oceans can continue to function as important blue carbon sinks?



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Indigenous communities in Central America use traditions to protect biodiversity

An IDB feature

Not long ago, José López Hernández, a member of the Oxlajuj No'j tribe, would readily take his axe to chop down trees in the town of Santa María de Jesús in the heart of Guatemala.

However, that changed after the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), embarked on a project to revive local Indian traditions and culture.

"Before this project I did not understand the importance of Mother Nature and the environment," said Mr. Hernández, 30. "I would look at a tree and I would cut it down without thinking."

Today Mr. Hernández is a leader of his indigenous community and he is working with other 600 families on weekends and after work to plant as many as 60,000 new trees by the end of the year. All the trees are grown using traditional organic methods that have been revived by the project.

The IDB-GEF project, which has been conducted in coordination with the World Bank, is strengthening the capacity of indigenous communities in Central America to protect and manage their natural and cultural resources as well as recuperate and promote positive cultural values and traditional land use.

"I will work on this until God allows me," Mr. Hernández said. "The idea is to leave something for our children and grandchildren."

The project is part of ongoing efforts by seven Central American governments to help reduce poverty in rural communities while protecting and promoting the sustainable development of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor.

Indigenous people populate about one-third of the area of the seven Central American countries, or roughly the size of Uruguay. Eighty percent of this area is covered by forest and 23 percent overlaps with established protected areas.

The project is groundbreaking because it is supporting the cultural and traditional use of land by indigenous communities as a way to prevent further land degradation and conserve the region's high, though increasingly endangered, biodiversity resources.

The programme is using a special methodology developed by the IDB and the Lausanne Technical School of Switzerland on cultural land use analysis.

"This is completely different from what used to be done," said Carlos Perafán, the IDB project team leader. "In the past, technical people would tell communities what they had to do. In this project, we are learning from them."

The actions to be taken are based on extensive consultations with indigenous communities, which help decide when and how their traditions could be appropriate to work the land. Once that decision is made, the project works with them to restore their culture and traditions in land use.

"This project has allowed indigenous communities to organize themselves, make their own work proposals based on their own experiences," said Carlos Batzin, a member of the K'iche tribe in the department of Totonicapán in Guatemala. "It has allowed them to decide for themselves what to do with their territory."

Once these communities decide what is important, specially tailored training programs help revive traditions and relearn old customs like growing trees and maize. In addition, the project is supporting the creation of a network of indigenous communities in the Corridor engaged

in biodiversity conservation and sustainable and culturally appropriate land uses.

The project is also promoting exchanges between indigenous communities on traditional knowledge, experiences, and lessons learned. The IDG-GEF project is also fostering participatory land use planning in indigenous lands and regions.

For the K'iche community, this means a plan for a better future. After working closely with the IDB and the executing agency to demarcate their land, learn about the natural resources and the social and economic needs of the population, they are now planning to promote sustainable tourism activities in its territory.

"The plan brought our community together," said Mr. Batzin, who is getting his community prepared to start the training program in areas such as replanting indigenous trees and producing different types of maize seeds, much like the tribe's ancestors used to do. "We want to promote cultural tourism in our community. Guatemala is well known for its nature but there is little attention paid for those who help conserve it."

The promotion of cultural and traditional land use in Central America is one of the components of the project "Integrated Ecosystem Management in Indigenous Communities," that has been financed by a \$9 million grant from the Global Environment Facility and \$2 million in counterpart funds. Both the IDB and the World Bank are implementing different components of the project.

The IDB, with financing from a \$5 million GEF grant, is heading the cultural and institutional strengthening of indigenous communities as well as the promotion of cultural land use and traditional ecosystem management. The World Bank, with a \$4 million GEF grant, is helping these communities consolidate and market a regional supply of products and environmental services derived from traditional land use practices and evaluate the monitor the results of the project.

The Central American Indigenous and Peasant Association for Community Agroforestry is executing the project in agreement with the Central American Indigenous Council (CICA).



A young Embera girl demonstrates the art of basketry, woven from natural palm fibers and coloured using natural dyes. Emberá Drúa is a small indigenous community in the Republic of Panama.

First four projects to receive Adaptation Fund money



A major outcome of the tenth meeting of the Adaptation Fund Board, held from 14-16 June in Bonn, was the approval of four proposals for concrete adaptation projects. The project concepts endorsed had been submitted by Nicaragua, Pakistan, Senegal and the Solomon Islands, with a total proposed value of US\$ 21.8 million.

The four projects approved are:

- a plan to improve watersheds to better deal with droughts and floods in Nicaragua;
- a proposal to tackle sea level rise in the Solomon Islands,
- an effort to adapt to climate change in the coastal areas of Senegal, and
- a proposal to reduce risk and vulnerabilities from glacier lake outburst floods in the mountains of Pakistan.

Accessing the funds

There are two ways to receive funding and countries can choose whichever option they prefer. They can either access finances from the AF directly via their own “national implementing entities” accredited by the board - as is the case with Senegal - or they can go through multilateral agencies like the UN Development Programme (UNDP) or the World Bank.

The fact that countries can access the fund’s resources directly and without having to go through the multilateral agencies is an innovative feature evolved by the Board.

In order to use the direct access option, a national organization has to illustrate that it meets the fiduciary standards set by the Fund, before submitting proposals to and receiving funds from the AF.

The proposal by the Government of Senegal, submitted through Centre de Suivi Ecologique, is the first one to make use of the direct access option of the AF. The other three project concepts were submitted through the UNDP, which acts as a Multilateral Implementing Entity.

Funding will become available following the Board’s next meeting from 14-16 September, when the preliminary proposals will be re-submitted as full proposals. There is no cap on the funding as yet.

The Adaptation Fund is still small in relation to the amounts required, but it is growing. It has received EUR 45 million from Spain, EUR 10 million from Germany, and Sweden recently announced a EUR 10 million donation. Other countries

including France, Finland, Japan, Norway and Switzerland have also promised funding.

The Fund also has its own money from proceeds of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism levy, a projected amount of between USD 300 to 400 million up to the end of 2012.

Last year, the Board happily accepted the first voluntary contribution of EUR 100 that was raised by a group of German schoolchildren and stressed that all contributions regardless of size are welcome!

At the June meeting, the AF Boational Fund for Agricultural Development rd also accredited four new Multilateral Implementing Entities: Asian Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development(IFAD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). In addition, the Board approved a Results-Based Management and Evaluation Framework that will help enhance the effectiveness of the AF project portfolio.

The Board is composed of 16 members and 16 alternate members representing developed and developing country Parties, formally elected at a session of the CMP on the Adaptation Fund. They serve for a two-year term, with a maximum of two consecutive terms.

The Adaptation Fund was established to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing country Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

The Adaptation Fund is financed from the share of proceeds on the clean development mechanism project activities and other sources of funding. The share of proceeds amounts to 2% of certified emission reductions (CERs) issued for a CDM project activity.



Photo: NOAA

Time now for taking adaptation seriously

by
Dr. Promode Kant



Winter is the favourite season of climate naysayers.

With shivering temperatures and thick blanket of white snow around them in the industrial heartland of North, and sometimes even in the deserts of Dubai, it does not require high persuasive skills to kick up a furore in a section of the media and for a few days the world can only talk of how it is colder now than ever in the past and how the climate scientists, ever greedy for funding, have been misleading the gullible international community about warming presenting one exaggerated model after another when actually the temperatures are dipping!

Contrary to what one would like to believe all of this is not driven only by petrodollars and the car manufacturers since inertia, unwillingness to apply even the least bit of pressure on the cranium, and blindness to what should be obvious, is at least as widespread as corruption.

Still, one suspects, these days the climate change naysayers are increasingly becoming disheartened if not rare. Their decline started a number of years back when it began becoming clear to even the Neanderthals among men that warming did not result from climate modeling!

New evidence is now emerging which suggests that the IPCC estimates on Himalayan

glacier melt may not actually have been far off the mark.

The differences in the sizes and shapes of some of the Himalayan glaciers now, when compared with their photos taken by climbers in the early years of twentieth century, are startling.

And fresh data released by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration of USA makes the picture even more dismal.

June 2010 was the hottest month of June in the entire recorded history of the weather with its average over the entire oceanic and terrestrial surface of the world 0.64 C higher than the average over the past one century.

And so were the January to June half yearly and April to June quarterly average temperatures for the current year.

But now it hardly requires scientific proof. Till a few years back many Finns had seen fans and air conditioners only in movies. This summer there have been news reports that shopping malls in Helsinki are running out of their stocks of air conditioners even before the supplies reach them.

But hardy and determined as they are, you could depend upon the naysayers to rise up from their bunkers sooner rather than later. Their last tactical attack on their favourite target IPCC and its boss,

R K Pachauri, almost succeeded in making him walk into his Himalayan oblivion nursing the glaciers, he predicted, were going to disappear.

Apart from the timing of their assault, always winters, the nationalities of the doubters are as predictable.

They are invariably from the developed countries. It would be impossible to find even a single naysayer in the developing countries, most of them in tropics, because the evidence of warming climate is everywhere.

The poorer the country, the greater are the difficulties that are already being caused by the changing climate and for the least developed countries (LDCs) the debate is not whether the climate is changing or not but about how to survive the warming.

Fortunately, the UNFCCC has prioritized adaptation programmes for the LDCs and helped them formulate their National Action Plans for Adaptation (NAPA) and by this time most of the forty nine LDCs have already submitted their NAPAs.

The implementation of NAPAs has not yet begun in earnest and it is to be hoped that there are adequate funds for implementing these programmes, most of which are very modest in their ambitions, perhaps because they are tentative in nature, more by way of scoping than actually adapting.

While most plans are sound, if modest, some may not be able to help the countries and the communities to adapt to the changing climate as they appear to be ill-conceived even though well intentioned.

Adaptation to climate change is not going to be cheap. We would only delude ourselves if we look for options which are cheap and technically inappropriate.

There could be another source of problem. Among development experts there is a widely held view that adaptation to climate change must be planned bottom up and many examples are shown

how small communities have been able to tackle higher temperatures and irregular rainfall by changing their cropping patterns and crops, or using white paints over their rooftops among encouraging stories of human innovative spirit.

Such instances are indeed many but it should be remembered that non-technological innovations of this nature have only very narrow range within which they can provide some succour.

Serious adaptation measures that can help tide over large changes in temperatures and precipitation are likely to be costly technology based efforts the demand for which would not arise bottom up but must, of necessity, be planned top down.

Adaptation Planning is best done by a small team of experts happy to work among a noisy opinionated crowd of local stakeholders, willing to listen to them but knowing well that Grandma's wisdom is good only for surviving a hot day's outing in the sun.

Adaptation is a serious business the costs of which, undertaken with sincerity, is going to be no less than that of mitigation.

Dr Promode Kant is Director of the Institute of Green Economy (IGREC)

...the debate is not whether the climate is changing or not but about how to survive the warming.



Global warming will likely result in sea level rise, increased sea surface temperatures and changes in atmospheric temperatures.



UNCTAD'S Chief joins high-level group on financing for climate change



Supachai Panitchpakdi

UNCTAD's Secretary-General Supachai Panitchpakdi has accepted an invitation to take a seat on the High-Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing -- joining several Heads of State -- top spearhead the UN's role on the issue.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established the High-Level Advisory Group, or AGF, in March.

Current members include Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, and Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway, who serve as co-chairs and Bharrat Jagdeo, President of Guyana along with finance ministers, bank representatives, regional financial and monetary officials

and leading economists from around the world.

The AGF has the task of studying potential sources of revenue that can be used to help developing countries carry out activities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Such financing was promised during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

According to the Copenhagen Accord, "in the context of meaningful action and transparency on implementation, developed countries commit to a goal of mobilizing jointly US\$100 billion a year by 2020" for such activities in developing countries.

SPREP Launches study on regional financing for climate change

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) has commenced a study with a view to establishing a regional Climate Change Fund or other mechanism. It aims to help

Pacific island countries improve access to and management of the various financial resources being committed globally to combat climate change.

The study responds to recommendations of the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable held in the Marshall Islands in 2009.

Delegates to the Roundtable meeting had expressed concern that, while millions of dollars in climate change funding are currently available at the global level, the Pacific region faces challenges in the ability to access this funding. There are also the added difficulties with effectively managing and implementing many of the projects under current funding arrangements.

The lack of human resources to design and develop proposals and general limitations in technical expertise are major challenges. Compounding the issue are the different expectations and reporting requirements of the different donor organisations.

Uganda Shows Way on Scaling up Carbon Mitigation

Uganda's launch of a Municipal Waste Compost Programme has made it the first African nation to successfully register a Programme of Activities (POA) that will reduce dangerous methane emissions into the environment. This is being done under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol.

The Uganda POA is the first of its kind in the world, and promotes solid waste composting in urban areas in an environmentally friendly manner. Composting of waste has multiple benefits over landfills, the most common practice in Uganda and many other countries.

Composting returns the much needed organic matter to the soil, prevents land degradation, and significantly reduces methane emissions.

"This POA, the first in Africa, is important not only because of its greenhouse gas mitigation potential, but also because it serves as an example for many other African countries to design and implement large scale mitigation activities. Although the process is complex, it has been an extremely useful learning experience, which we hope to replicate all over Uganda", says Henry Aryamanya Mugisha, Executive Director of the National Environmental Management Authority.

The new programme helps Ugandan municipalities set up waste composting facilities that are financially sustainable because of the revenues generated from the sale of both compost and carbon credits. While nine municipalities have already been identified for this purpose, other cities are expected to request that similar projects be included in this registered programme.



UNCTAD'S WORLD INVESTMENT REPORT 2010 FOCUSES ON LOW-CARBON ECONOMY

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) published its World Investment Report 2010, with a focus on "Investing in a Low Carbon Economy."

The report examines foreign direct investment trends, and proposes a global partnership to synergize investment promotion and climate change mitigation and to galvanize low-carbon investment for sustainable growth and development.

The five major components of the proposed partnership are: establishing clean-investment promotion strategies; enabling the dissemination of clean technology; securing international investment agreements' contribution to climate change mitigation; harmonizing corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions disclosure; and setting up an international low-carbon technical assistance center (L-TAC).

Regarding climate change negotiations, the report also notes the current national and international policy frameworks are in flux and do not target private sector and transnational corporation contributions sufficiently and effectively. It stresses that integrating international investment policies into the climate change framework is essential when designing the new post-2012 regime.



Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate discusses advancing agreement at COP 16

The seventh Meeting at the Leaders' representative level of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate took place in Rome, Italy, from 30 June-1 July 2010.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the 17 major economies, UN officials, and representatives from Bangladesh, Denmark, Barbados, Ethiopia, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

Participants discussed various issues related to the international climate change negotiations and, according to the Chair's Summary, they emphasized the importance of quickly implementing the Copenhagen Accord's fast-start financing provisions.

They highlighted that maximum clarity and transparency will build international confidence and be an essential part of a balanced outcome of the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 16) to be held Cancun, Mexico, in late 2010.

COP 16 & CMP 6 (UNFCCC)

16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16)/ 6th Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 6)

Cancún, Mexico
29 Nov - 10 Dec 2010



Felipe Calderon

African Leaders Prepare Common Position Ahead of Cancun

The Conference of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) convened in Kampala, Uganda, from 24-25 July 2010, on the margins of the 15th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Summit.

Jean Ping, President of the AU Commission, addressed participants by highlighting Africa's concerns and demands for a fair and equitable outcome of the international climate change negotiations.

He noted the continued need to urge developed countries to meet their historical responsibilities and make progress on delivering on the Copenhagen pledges on finance for developing countries.

He reported that the Commission convened a meeting of the CAHOSCC Ministers in Bamako, Mali, on 23 June 2010, and presented a proposal on "Streamlining African Climate Change Negotiating Structure at the Ministers and Experts Levels," which was adopted by the meeting of Ministers.

Mexican President Felipe Calderón also participated in the meeting, warning that a lack of agreement in the international negotiations will affect the poorest nations and countries.

He noted that the African Continent's priorities include energy, water resources, and land management in forestry and urban infrastructure, and that the cost of adaptation for African nations and governments could be equivalent to 5-10% of Africa's GDP.

Did you know...

Human systems like settlements, water resources, agriculture and industry are all vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.



Did you know?

262 million people were affected by climate disasters in 2004, more than 98 per cent of them in developing countries

unicef.org



LIVING CONDITIONS



ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE WILL SHAPE THE FUTURE OF POOR COUNTRIES

Climate change will reverse years of work reducing poverty in the developing world without strong, urgent action.

The report *Future Climate for Development* calls on governments and NGOs to build climate change into their economic development programmes to help low-income countries manage its impacts and seize new opportunities as the world shifts to a low-carbon economy.

The report, produced by independent sustainability experts *Forum for the Future* with support from the Department for International Development (DFID), explores how climate change will transform low-income countries over the next 20 years, causing profound social, economic and political transformations as well as major environmental impacts.

“Without urgent action, climate change threatens to undo years of work tackling poverty in the developing world,” said Stephen O’Brien, UK’s International Development Minister.

“That is why the UK is now working across the globe to help the world’s poorest people prepare for the potentially devastating

effects of climate change and shift to the clean technologies that are so vital to a stable, successful future for us all.

“This report will act as an important tool to help poor countries plan for an uncertain future, and underlines our need to build climate change into everything we do.”

Peter Madden, Chief Executive of *Forum for the Future*, said: “Climate change and development should be seen as complementary, not competing, issues. By putting climate change at the forefront of development thinking we will not only help the world’s poorest to avoid serious risks, but we can also help them seize new opportunities to create better lives for themselves. Development aid should be much more climate resilient.”

The *Future Climate for Development* calls for low-income countries and all those who work in development to look for “win-win” opportunities which address climate change and tackle development goals like reducing poverty and improving health and education.

For example:

- investment in renewable energy and energy



efficiency can enhance energy security;

- promoting low-carbon transport means less congestion and pollution and improves health;
- low-input agriculture, which does not rely on fertilisers to maintain soil quality, boosts food security and helps countries adapt to a changing climate.

It argues that aid must not be blind to climate change, ignoring measures to help countries adapt to its impacts and promoting high-carbon development.

Climate change will transform countries and reshape the global economic and political landscape, it says, and this must be factored into development decisions to ensure they continue to yield benefits in the long-term.

The report is designed to be a practical tool to help governments, NGOs, businesses and policy makers in developed and developing countries "future-proof" their strategies and plan for a range of possible outcomes.

It examines key issues which will affect low-income countries over the next 20 years and explores how these may play out in four plausible scenarios for the world of 2030.

The scenarios highlight the need to be prepared for radical changes, and they throw up some challenging possibilities, for example:

- shortages of food and natural resources and climate change impacts may lead many low-income countries to question the Western model of democracy;
- once unthinkable population control measures may be introduced as a policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- conflicts over water and scarce resources may

escalate and come to dominate international relations.

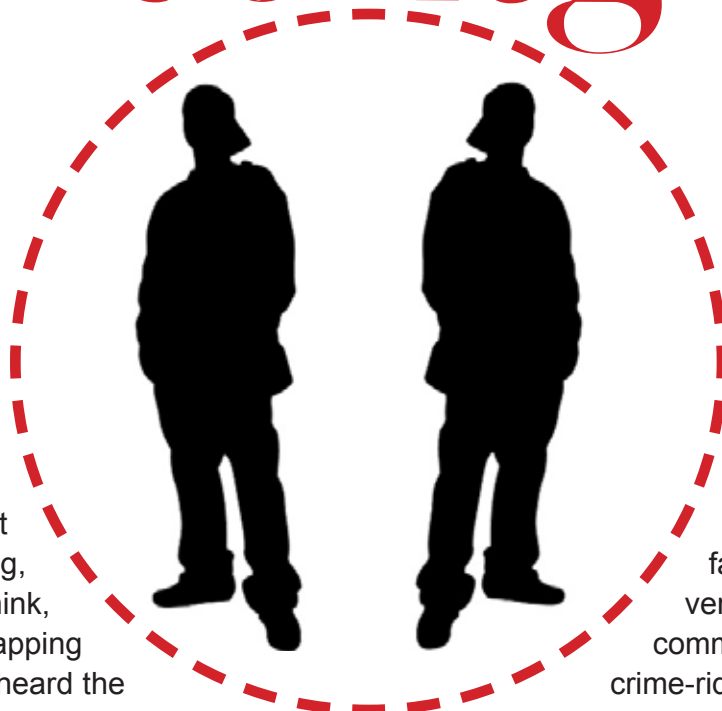
And it notes that development agencies may need to reappraise their strategies, for example:

- promoting subsistence farming may build more climate resilience than intensive agriculture;
- disaster response may need to become part of long-term development planning;
- GDP may no longer be used as the primary measure of success in all countries.



Numbing out

*By Barbara King,
The Parent Support Centre,
Arima, Trinidad*



I sat in my home last weekend. It was early evening, just after dark I think, maybe later. As I was tapping away on the computer I heard the screaming of car tyres in the distance accompanied by the sound of muffled explosions like the old cap guns. My mind registered the sounds and I continued doing what I was doing, not turning to look out the window, not getting up to see what could be happening.

I did not react. I didn't even mention it to my husband or children who were also in the house. I did not respond. That bothers me. It bothers me that I might have become so immune to stories of gang gun battles and police shoot outs that it no longer disturbs me. It bothers me that there were sounds of gunshots within hearing range of my children and my heart did not pound, I did not feel any sense of panic, not even a stirring of concern. It worries me that I have become so numb.

I know why I was so numb though. I know that I chose not to let it all in. If I did it would mean having to acknowledge the fact that the place I chose to raise my very precious children, the

place that I selected as a sanctuary for my family from a sometimes very stressful world, is now commonly an imitation of the crime-ridden television shows and movies I refuse to watch. That is an overwhelmingly frightening thought. If I let that in I know I'm going to end up fuming in feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness and frustration.

Two weeks ago at a parenting workshop I listened to the testimony of a young man who had endured a childhood of rejection and abuse by those that were supposed to love and protect him – family and teachers alike. By the age of twelve he was smoking marijuana and involved in petty criminal activity. He graduated to armed robbery and drug dealing. By the time he was in his early thirties his lifestyle and internal rage had alienated him from the people he considered important to him, his two children and his partner. He attempted suicide on at least three occasions.

Eventually, he came to consciousness and determined to turn his life around. He made a break from the companions that held him locked in a destructive cycle. With the help of spiritual

guidance and support from a church group, he got himself to a point where he could start to reach out to vulnerable young people in his community and direct them away from the path he had taken in his youth. He also worked with other members of the community to establish a neighbourhood watch. This of course, did not please certain people and, with accusations of informing and threats of violence, they eventually succeeded in breaking the spirit of neighbourhood members and the watch was disbanded.

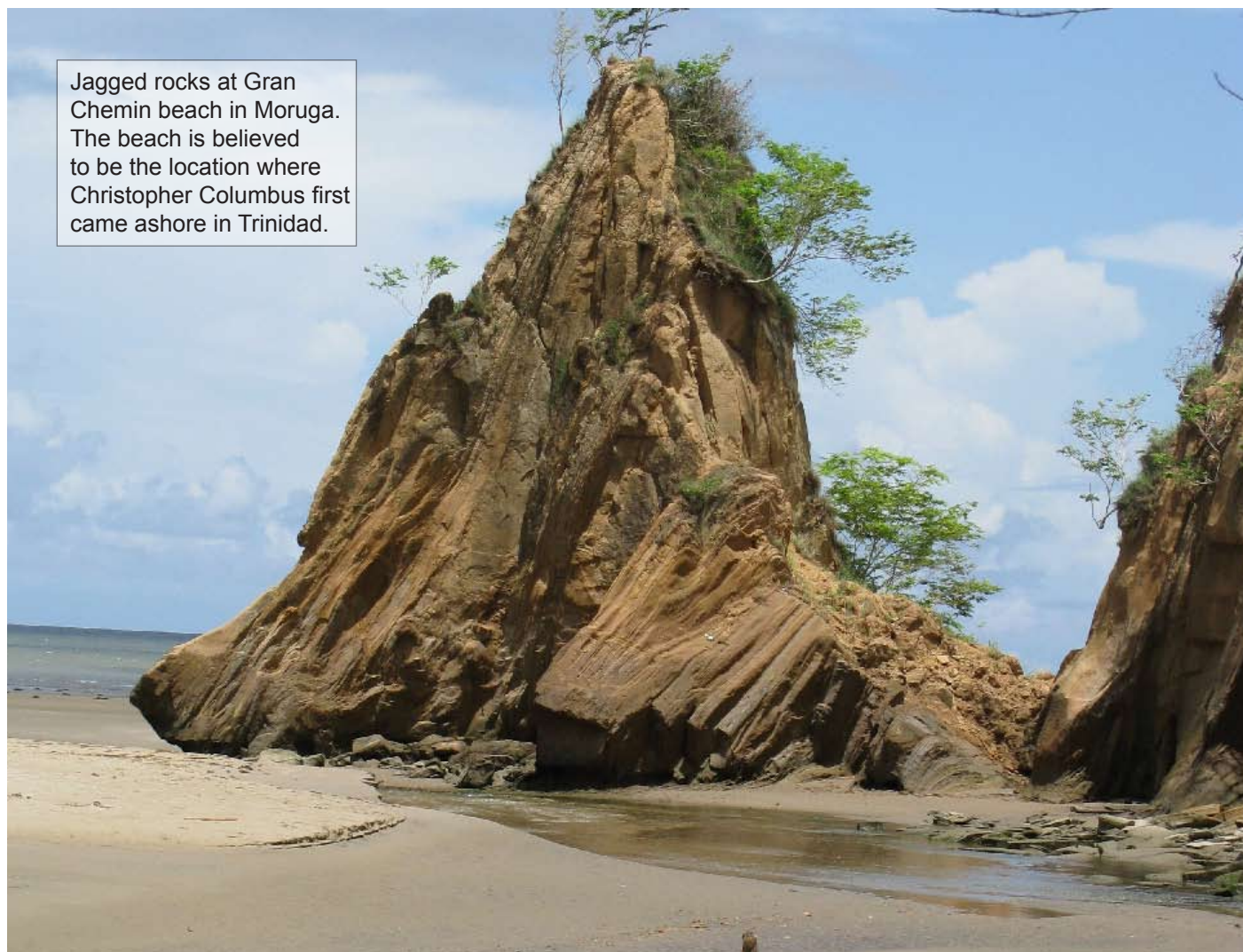
It saddened me think that the good intentions and good will of a community could be thwarted in this way. Law abiding citizens are unprotected and at the mercy of the lawless. This lawless element often comprises young and vulnerable boys, like the storyteller, whose hearts and minds have been hardened by childhood experiences. Who are their mothers and fathers?

The chances are their parents' childhood experiences were similar or worse. Where are the neighbours, the teachers, pastors and priests, the doctors and nurses who have passed their way, witnessed their growing rage and confusion, who could have redirected their paths? Have we all been too numb, too afraid or distracted?

I'd like to know your views on the reasons for this apparent numbness.



Barbara King is a founder of T&T Innovative Parenting Support. She is a facilitator of Parent Education programmes and provides counselling and support group services through The Parent Support Centre, Arima, Trinidad. Tel: (868) 664-1520



Jagged rocks at Gran Chemin beach in Moruga. The beach is believed to be the location where Christopher Columbus first came ashore in Trinidad.

Greener pastures... are they?

By Garfield King

Ever noticed how the grass on the other side always seems greener, until you find yourself stuck on that side and you become homesick?

In my teenage and early twenties that was a common experience. Most of us, at one time or another, have felt something similar. We grow accustomed to what we have and take it for granted... it gets boring. The things other people possess, the adventures they appear to be having and the jobs they're engaged in seem so much more exciting than where we are at.

So we decide to drop what we have and jump the fence. When we land and are up close, we realise what we thought was a luscious, green pasture is in fact a smelly swamp.

We didn't really survey the new location; it just appeared to be so much better that where we are right now. We did no research, no assessment; we didn't even take the time to question why we wanted to make the move. What was so distasteful about our current position? Are we sure the frustration, boredom or whatever else we felt, was in the external environment, or was it something in us?

Ever noticed when it's time for some serious self-examination, we immediately get busy looking for distractions so as not to have to look too closely at what is really happening in our life? It doesn't work for long. Even if we go where the grass is

greener, we are still there. The issues that may be at the root of our dissatisfaction will still be with us at the new location. How far can we run from ourselves?

I remember some years ago working at a job that seemed to be sucking the life out of me. I'd go so far as to say I felt my spirit was dying. I would complain every day to my wife and tell her I just had to get out of that place as soon as possible, even if we had to move to a smaller house and consume only dry bread and water.

She listened to my rants for several weeks then eventually asked me what I was running from? What part of me felt disrespected or dissatisfied, what was causing my emotions to run uncontrolled? The last thing I wanted was a counseling session, but I did slow down and take a look at my internal environment.

Sure enough it needed work. I'll spare you the details, but part of the difficulty was that I was not taking the time at work each day to be fully present in what I was doing.

Past... present... future. We often forget the one in the middle. The present can be tense. We don't seem to place enough value on the present. Today is something we just want to get through quickly in order to get to tomorrow. Many people miss the present moments that make up their life because they are either obsessed with the past or anxious about the future. We also tend to overestimate the past, we struggle under the weight of regret over old mistakes as well as replay past glories in our minds like worn out video tapes. Then there's the anxiety over possible future problems. All this makes it difficult to fully utilise the time we have right now.

There are some people for whom the present situation may be emotionally or physically damaging. The only way to endure is to mentally "take themselves out of it" or even create multiple personalities just to survive the ordeal.

Most of us are not in that situation. We are not available to embrace what's happening in front of us because we choose to focus on what has already happened or on what has yet to happen (or may never happen).

We sometimes make this choice because we are bored with things as they are. The boredom clouds our vision, obscuring the interesting things that are going on. With a little effort we can usually find something, no matter how small, that interests us, something that can lift the boredom.

My experience is usually that when there's a task to be done that I really don't want to do, or I'm in a place where I really don't want to be, moaning and fretting just makes me feel worse. On the other hand, when I accept that "it is as it is", my attitude changes and it's easier to latch onto something I can embrace.

You may have heard the famous quote from US basketball coach John Wooden: "Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out." This may be a useful strategy in the workplace. When you can find something to get you through the day; something that interests you, you perform better in the present... with less frustration, a greater willingness to learn. There's benefit in the experience, which leads to greater job satisfaction and a higher level of competence.

Then, if you do eventually decide to seek greener pastures there's less likelihood of being tricked by the bright lights and glitter or deceived by the smelly swamps disguised as luscious, green pastures.



Garfield King is an independent radio producer, presenter and writer with almost 30 years broadcast experience. As a trainer, he conducts workshops on public speaking, presentation skills and communication dynamics. inkings@tsstt.net.tt



Heavenly Himachal



By Bogusia Sipiora

*Bogusia is a Polish citizen
living in Delhi, India*

Whenever I go to Himachal, which is part of the Himalayas, it rains. It is evidently healthy, clean and juicy rain which washes out all the Delhi dust.

I have even begun getting used to this mountain rain and admire Himachal like this – wet, wet, wet... and cloudy.

Gazing at the swirling and shifting clouds I eagerly took the invitation of the chilly and delicious air to soak in this natural beauty. Fortunately, this time the sun also decided to pamper us, for a change so we could experience some Himalayan warmth.

Himachal Pradesh is a state of India nestled in the western Himalayas. Inhabited by descendants of Aryans (Sanskrit meaning honourable, respectable, noble), it welcomes all frantic overheated “city animals” with its pristine natural beauty, dense green forests and lovely plunging valleys, bountiful

fruit orchards, snow-fed lakes and gushing rivers.

No wonder it's called Devbhumi which in Sanskrit means Land of the Gods.

It's no surprise then that colonial British made some places of Himachal Pradesh their summer quarters; they too desperately trying to escape from heat of Delhi, I imagine.

Apart from being extremely crowded in summer towns like Shimla, Mussoorie or Manali which are the reminiscence of the colonial by-gone era and highly appealing to foreign tourists, one can find some of the most awesome places hidden in the deep nature.

Like the one we stayed at, a tranquil and remote camp in the middle of an apple orchard in Tirthan Valley, near the Great Himalayan National Park, above Banjar village.

This is called Camp Himalayan and everything here is planned to enjoy and protect the nature around it.

The huts, for instance, are made of ecological materials and blend perfectly in the surrounding orchard.

Water is so clean that one can drink it from the tap (or better straight from the stream) which is a miracle for city people as we need to use all these filtering facilities to get clean and wholesome drinking water.

Above all, places like Tirthan Valley attracts people who enjoy nature, care about it and don't need any extraordinary activities to declare their holiday to be successful. Just lay back and unwind!

The atmosphere at the camp is very homely and nothing can beat the evening at the cosy campfire with a bottle of chilled beer and relaxed chatting and exchanging experiences with our neighbours.

What is interesting about Camp Himalayan is that it is an example of the so-called concept tourism which aims to sustain village life involving the local villagers who can also benefit in some way from the tourism.

The camp's cook serves local, simple yet delicious dishes and the guide can take you to the great treks and initiates you into local trivia.



In the valley, all around seems to be perfect. Water is crystal and cold and so fresh that you can't resist drinking it straight from the torrent.

The blue of the sky is so clear (if it does not rain!) that you think it is the only true colour and the green of the forests is so succulent you can't resist touching and indulging in this nature perfection.

Unlike in the city, people here are cheerful, working hard and trying to protect their own identity.

The women who passed on the narrow paths to go to the pasture to supervise cows keep knitting as they walked. On their backs they carry willow baskets for collecting twigs or transporting goods. They also stop for a nice chat with passersby. Their family will definitely enjoy a warm cap or socks knitted on the way to the pasture when winter approaches and frost will make itself at home. Mountains are always replete with stories, legends and myths which are being passed around during the long winter's evenings.

In the village where we stayed, there is one about the Hindu saint of ancient India, called Shringi Rishi. He performed a Vedic sacrifice called 'Putrakameshti Yajya' for king Dashrath of Ayodhya, and after that his son - Lord Ram - was born.

In Hinduism, Ram is the seventh avatar of supreme God Vishnu and a legendary prince of Ayodhya. Thus there was a talking stone who introduced himself as sage Shringi Rishi to

some villager in Banjar. The stone asked to be put in isolated place and the man took him to the jungle. But the sage didn't like the place and went to a hill.

After a few years with the help of a shepherd he came down to the village where the villagers built a temple for him. Today an ancient temple of Shringi Rishi sits in the hills above village Banjar and there are around 200 steps leading to it.

It is believed that Gods live in Himalayas. Over there each village has a God, in some villages there may be two or more Gods. Also when roving amid mountains paths one can see bizarre looking trees covered with some red clothes and different offerings. These are known as tree Gods.

It is said that a long time ago whenever a tree became a landmark or shelter or was really old, it became a tree God. Nowadays, if the tree is on a roadside, people offer motor parts to save their vehicle or themselves from falling into a deep gorge. It has also become a practice to save old trees from being cut down. Thirthan valley is a belt of some of the best fruits which are actually exported all over the country. June is time for plums and apricots; later on the best apples and pears will come.

At the cottage where we stayed, every day we were awakened by the branches of an apple tree, made heavy by the fruits. They are now getting ready to be plucked and sent all over. When they reach Delhi, we will still be remembering our time in the Himachal orchards.

Photos by Gaurav Dhingra



Global Trends in Green Energy 2009:

New Power Capacity from Renewable Sources Tops Fossil Fuels

In 2009, for the second year in a row, both the US and Europe added more power capacity from renewable sources such as wind and solar than from conventional sources like coal, gas and nuclear, according to twin reports launched by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21).

Renewables accounted for 60 per cent of newly installed capacity in Europe and more than

50 per cent in the USA in 2009. This year or next, experts predict, the world as a whole will add more capacity to the electricity supply from renewable than non-renewable sources.

The reports detail trends in the global green energy sector, including which sources attracted the greatest attention from investors and governments in different world regions.

Investment in core clean energy (new renewables, biofuels and energy efficiency) decreased by 7% in 2009 to the value of \$162 billion. Many sub-sectors declined significantly in money invested, including large (utility) scale solar power and biofuels.

However, there was record investment in wind power. If spending on solar water heaters, as well as total installation costs for rooftop solar PV, were included, total investment in 2009 actually increased in 2009, bucking the economic trend.

New private and public sector investments in core clean energy leapt 53 per cent in China in 2009. China added 37 gigawatts (GW) of renewable power capacity, more than any other country.

Globally, nearly 80 GW of renewable power capacity was added, including 31 GW of hydro and 48 GW of non-hydro capacity.

China surpassed the US in 2009 as the country with the greatest investment in clean energy. China's wind farm development was the strongest investment feature of the year by far, although there were other areas of strength worldwide in 2009, notably North Sea offshore wind investment and the financing of power storage and electric vehicle technology companies.



Wind power and solar PV additions reached a record high of 38 GW and 7 GW, respectively. Investment totals in utility-scale solar PV declined relative to 2008, partly a result of large drops in the costs of solar PV. However, this decline was offset by record investment in small-scale (rooftop) solar PV projects.

The reports also show that countries with policies encouraging renewable energy have roughly doubled from 55 in 2005 to more than 100 today - half of them in the developing world - and have played a critically important role in the sector's rapid growth.

The sister reports, UNEP's Global Trends in Sustainable Energy Investment 2010 and the REN21's Renewables 2010 Global Status Report, were released by UN Under-Secretary-General Achim Steiner, UNEP's Executive Director, and Mohamed El-Ashry, Chair of REN21. The UNEP report was prepared by London-based Bloomberg New Energy Finance. The REN21 report was produced by a team of authors in collaboration with a global network of research partners.

The UNEP report focuses on the global trends in sustainable energy investment, covering both the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors. The REN21 report offers a broad look at the status of renewable energy worldwide today,

covering power regeneration, heating and cooling and transport fuels, and paints the landscape of policies and targets introduced around the world to promote renewable energy.

Achim Steiner said: "The sustainable energy investment story of 2009 was one of resilience, frustration and determination. Resilience to the financial downturn that was hitting all sectors of the global economy and frustration that, while the UN climate convention meeting in Copenhagen was not the big breakdown that might have occurred, neither was it the big breakthrough so many had hoped for. Yet there was determination on the part of many industry actors and governments, especially in rapidly developing economies, to transform the financial and economic crisis into an opportunity for greener growth."

"There remains, however, a serious gap between the ambition and the science in terms of where the world needs to be in 2020 to avoid dangerous climate change. But what this five years of research underlines is that this gap is not unbridgeable. Indeed, renewable energy is consistently and persistently bucking the trends and can play its part in realizing a low carbon, resource efficient Green Economy if government policy sends ever harder market signals to investors," he added.



CLIMATE CHANGE CORNER

If the world temperature rises by more than 1.5 degree Celsius the Caribbean's low-lying counties and small island states will be at serious risk of economic hardship, poor health, and environmental degradation from rising sea levels, severe weather, coastal erosion and coral and sea life deterioration.

Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre

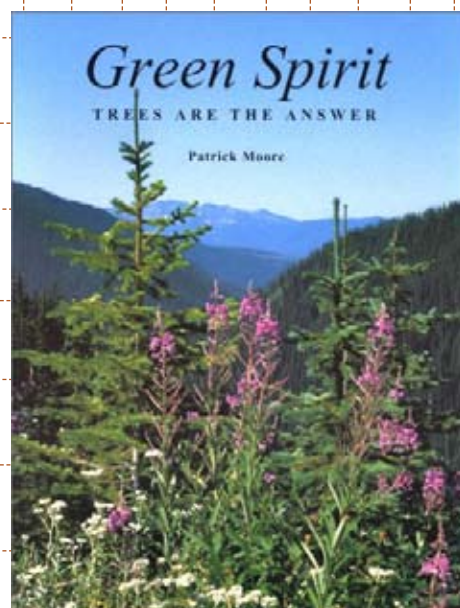
BOOKS

GREEN SPIRIT: TREES ARE THE ANSWER

Greenpeace co-founder and former leader Dr. Patrick Moore, an ecology PhD, challenges our common assumptions about forests and forestry.

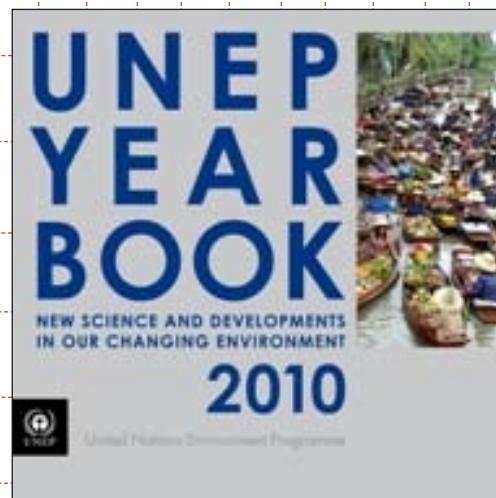
Written for the expert and novice alike, this book will entertain and enlighten by taking you behind the scenes, showing you forests and forest management in a way you've likely never seen before.

Illustrated with beautiful photography, this is a must have book for anyone interested in how forests can help us solve some of today's toughest environmental challenges from climate change to green building, renewable biofuel energy to paper and product recycling.



UNEP YEARBOOK 2010

The UNEP Year Book 2010 is essential, informative and authoritative reading and reports on new environmental science plus recent developments in our changing environment. It looks at progress in environmental governance: the effects of continuing degradation and loss of the world's ecosystems; impacts of climate change; how harmful substances and hazardous waste effect human health and the environment; environmentally related disasters and conflicts; and unsustainable use of resources. Water is a recurrent theme in this seventh edition. Each chapter considers water-related environmental changes, together with a number of challenges and opportunities.





UNEP Sasakawa Prize open:

US \$200,000. for innovative green project

especially in the under-served rural communities.

By helping these entrepreneurs scale-up their activities, the prize is able to boost local economies and help tackle poverty and marginalization, while promoting the sustainable use of resources and ecosystems.

The winner of the 2011 UNEP Sasakawa Prize will receive the prestigious award at a special ceremony to be held at the meeting of the UNEP Governing Council from 21 - 25 February 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya.

First awarded in 1984, the UNEP Sasakawa Prize has helped nurture a wide range of grassroots environmental initiatives across the world, spurring fledgling projects onto great success.

One of the recipients of last year's Prize was Nuru Design; a project that brings innovative lighting solutions to rural communities in Rwanda, Kenya and India. By replacing kerosene and firewood lamps with solar-powered lights, Nuru Design not only helps reduce the high levels of CO₂ produced by traditional lamps, but also tackled the health and literacy problems caused by a lack of access to affordable lighting. Thanks to Nuru Design's efforts, over 3,000 households in Rwanda are switching from kerosene to Nuru lights every month.

It is this kind of innovative, inspirational project that the UNEP Sasakawa judges hope to reward in 2011.

Nominations will be accepted until 30 September 2010 via the UNEP Sasakawa Prize website: www.unep.org/sasakawa

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and The Nippon Foundation officially launched the 2011 UNEP Sasakawa Prize to find the most innovative environmental project in the developing world - with a cash prize of US\$ 200,000 awaiting the winner.

The UNEP Sasakawa Prize is awarded every year to a grassroots organisation judged to have made an outstanding contribution to the protection and management of the environment, and to social development.

The theme for this year's prize is "Forests for People, Forests for Green Growth" in support of the United Nations International Year of Forests in 2011.

Of particular interest to this year's jury will be projects that:

- Promote the conservation and sustainable management of

forests;

- Contribute to a meaningful reduction in carbon emissions caused by deforestation or forest degradation;
- Maintain forest ecosystems to improve resilience to climate changeSupport development among forest-dependent communities;
- Conserve biodiversity and help protect ecosystems in forests.

The UNEP Sasakawa Prize is designed to nurture innovation and research in green solutions to environmental challenges by offering financial support to the winner. The jury is especially interested in sustainable projects that can be scaled up or replicated elsewhere, thus helping to inspire others to take a greater interest in protecting our environment and to increase its scope of beneficiary,



Dear Earth Conscious:

Thank you so much for this amazing June 2010 magazine. This is the first time I've had the pleasure of receiving a copy and it totally blew me away. I liked your wide-ranging articles, features and columns. I really enjoyed reading Mark Meredith's lengthy and well-written feature on New Zealanders battling to save their environment to Thoughts from young Jordan. Ms. Hutchinson-Jafar, you have a splendid magazine and I am really looking forward to getting my next issue.

Zaman,
Kampala

Dear Editor:

Wow, what a surprise I received when I opened up my mail and received your wonderful magazine. Madame, you and your team have done such a fantastic job in bringing all these climate change news to readers like me. Congratulations to your board of directors and your editorial team for this amazing magazine.

Charles Butunyi,
Kenya

Dear Editor:

I found Garfield King's column on 'Nature in your home' in your June 2010 edition quite fascinating. I'm from the Caribbean and after reading his column, it has inspired me to begin minor adjustments to my own house to bring in more of Mother Nature and enjoy it while reducing our impact on the environment.

I particularly liked how rain water was being collected to be used for flushing toilet and for the lawns while potable water from the taps is for drinking and cooking. I think this is something that governments in the Caribbean should look at particularly as we just came out of a bruising drought during the dry season.

Congrats again on a superb edition.

Kendall Jones
St. Vincent

lighten this red

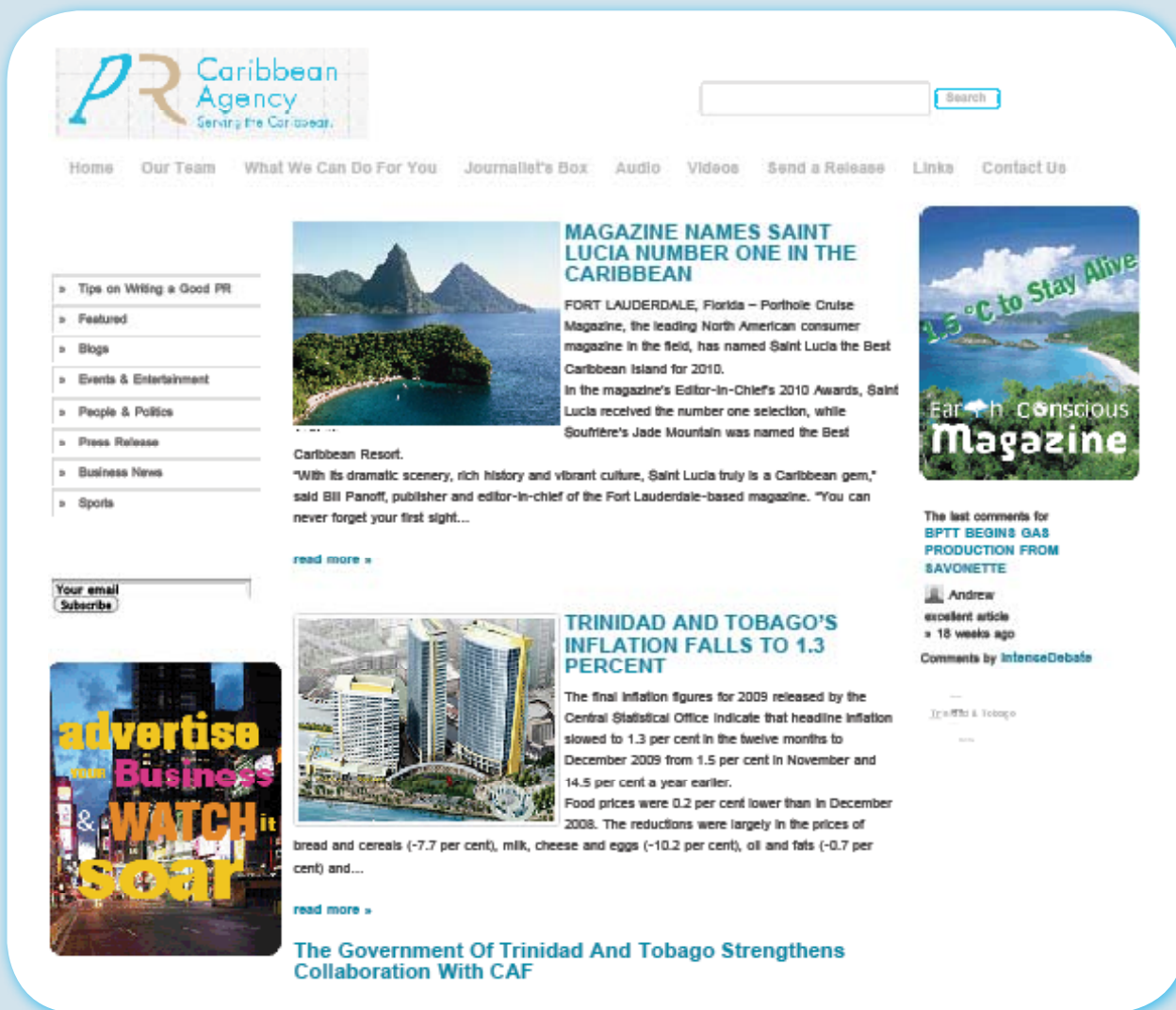


The Blue Mountains National Park and World Heritage Site in Australia,
viewed from The Three Sisters.

Photograph by Mark Meredith

***~ The poetry of the earth is never dead. ~
John Keats***

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