



Strengthening CARICOM countries' capacities in South-South and Triangular Cooperation



Caribbean Regional Dialogue on Access to Climate and Environmental Finance

22 September 2021 - A regional policy dialogue was organized virtually for CARICOM countries to improve their capacity in accessing multilateral funds for the implementation of measures for adaptation to climate change and resilience-building using the South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) mechanism.

Thanks to this dialogue, the participating countries will be able to improve their capacities in designing and negotiating projects to be presented to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other financing sources, to allow them to address global shocks, such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The objectives of the event were to foster dialogue between countries of the Resilient Caribbean Initiative, regarding challenges and constraints to access climate finance, and to share lessons from successful attempts in accessing funds and, most importantly, to strengthen SSTC.

SSTC is a broad framework for promoting and supporting collaboration among countries of the South. Through SSTC, countries can share knowledge, experiences, good practices, technology and other resources.

The dialogue was a good opportunity to learn from Mexican Institutions, who have been successful in accessing the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and to receive feedback from and strengthen ties with GCF and GEF Secretariats.

The Resilient Caribbean Initiative was reformulated in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic shocked Caribbean economies. The aim of the initiative is to increase the focus on direct support to participating countries in their responses to safeguard livelihoods, ensure adequate access to healthy food and promote sustainable management of natural resources. The Initiative also strengthens the institutional capacities of CARICOM countries in areas related to resilient livelihoods and well-being through South-South and Triangular cooperation.

In her opening remarks for the regional dialogue, Renata Clarke, FAO's Sub-regional Coordinator for the Caribbean, described how the Resilient Caribbean Initiative has already been successful in facilitating access to climate and environmental finance, pointing to the recent approval of the USD 8.1 million regional GEF project Soilcare, which will promote land degradation neutrality in 8 countries, among other success stories with the GCF readiness window. "We in the Caribbean still need to optimize our efforts given the cascade of crises the world is currently facing and the interlinkages between climate change, food systems and health" Clarke, said.

In this context, Oscar Esparza-Vargas, Ambassador of Mexico to St. Lucia and the OECS Member States, assured the role of Mexico as a reliable partner in the promotion of climate change adaptation and resilience in the Eastern Caribbean, noting that some Mexican regions are actually encountering similar challenges. "Based on the principle of solidarity that has characterized our foreign policy, it is the cooperation provided by the Government of Mexico, together with the development of political dialogue, that is the most important aspect of our relations with these countries", Esparza-Vargas noted.

Four representatives of National Designated Authorities and GEF Operational Focal Points from the region shared their experience in liaising

with these funds. Their statements reflected the extent of the support provided by FAO and the continuous and positive engagement with the GEF and the GCF throughout the application process. “FAO has been our partner of choice on that path” highlighted UnaMay Gordon, Principal Director at the Jamaican Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change.

Orville Grey, Regional Manager for the Caribbean & Brazil at the GCF, signaled the willingness of the GCF to “work very closely with the National Designated Authorities to understand where the proposals come from, how they align with national priorities, other climate change policies and the GCF’s investment criteria.” Moreover, the discussions clearly mirrored the value of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in this context. “Building in-house capacity to develop full funding proposals is essential” concluded Graciela Reyes, Director of Research and Development at the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature, as she guided the Caribbean audience in the successful path of the USD 10 million project RIOS.

The regional dialogue was organized in the framework of the OECS – Sustainable Development Movement Summit 2021, jointly with Foreign Affairs Secretary of Mexico (SRE), the Mexican Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AMEXCID), CARICOM and FAO, partners in the Project Resilient Caribbean.

For more information:

Jacinto Buenfil

Policy Officer Environment and Climate Change
FAO Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean
E-mail: Jacinto.Buenfil@fao.org

Marquita Sugrim

FAO National Communications Consultant
FAO Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean
E-mail: marquitajuanne.sugrim@fao.org