



DIRECTOR'S DESK:

LIMITING TEMPERATURE RISE TO 1.5 DEGREES TO STAY ALIVE - WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR CARIBBEAN SIDS?

As is well known, Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS) are vulnerable to recurrent multidimensional shocks. These have lasting social, economic, and environmental impacts; effects expected to become further aggravated in a world with a persistently warming climate. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbates these impacts.

Hheavy rainfall during May and July of both 2021 and 2022 had brought significant flooding to Guyana and Suriname. Relentless climatic events across the Caribbean in 2021 were compounded by the eruption of La Soufrière volcano, causing major population dislocation, damage and loss in Barbados, Saint Lucia and, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Similarly catastrophic multi-dimensional events were experienced in Haiti in 2021, with both a 7.2 magnitude earthquake coupled with hydroclimatic events.

The subregion is also inundated annually with massive sargassum blooms, resulting in significant negative impacts to coastal communities, public health, domestic sea transportation, tourism, and fisheries.

The 26th Conference of the Parties (COP) held in Glasgow in 2021 reaffirmed the commitment made by member states in the Paris Agreement to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. This was a limit strongly advocated by SIDS because of clear scientific prediction indicating significant damage and loss through sea-level rise, floods, droughts, and ecosystem degradation, when average global temperature rises above 1.5°C.

Given the multidimensional vulnerabilities of Caribbean SIDS, this issue of the FOCUS magazine considers the impact

of climate change on select sustainable development priorities.

The first article addresses the social, economic, and environmental impacts of climate change on coastal and marine natural resources and ecosystems. It observes that climate change and climate variability are leading to negative impacts on sectors already reeling from the impact of COVID-19 and global political instability. The article assesses these potential impacts and presents options for adaptation to climate change.

Next, we explore the complexities of integrating factors such as the environment, health, trade and innovation into policies addressing food security policies related to agriculture, trade and investment, incomes nutrition and tourism are also considered.

The third article addresses the effect of global warming and climate change on freshwater resources in the Caribbean. It addresses the global water cycle, its relationship with climate and the expected increased aridity of this region due to climate change. Finally, recommendations for integrating freshwater management as a key component of climate change adaptation are suggested.

The exploration of nature-based solutions (NbS) to support climate change mitigation and adaptation while delivering

benefits for biodiversity and disaster risk reduction follows. The article provides two examples that demonstrate the use of NbS being implemented: Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) and Mangrove Soil Sequestration Assessment of the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA), Trinidad and Tobago.

As the Caribbean and the rest of the world prepare for the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference, multidimensional vulnerabilities and challenges influenced by climate change affecting the areas discussed above demand strategic responses through advocacy, solidarity, partnership, and international cooperation. This edition is intended to put the spotlight on workable solutions to the multidimensional challenges of vulnerability experienced in the Caribbean.

Yours in FOCUS

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