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UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon meets with Caribbean Climate Change Agencies



United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon meets with representatives from regional climate change agencies, including Dr. David Farrell, Principal of the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) on July 3, 2015 in Bridgetown, Barbados. Photo credit: Caribbean Development Bank.

Strong regional organisations are key to moving forward the Caribbean’s agenda on climate change.

This according to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations, who met with Caribbean organisations which co-ordinate climate action on Friday, July 3 at a meeting at the Caribbean Development Bank ([CDB](#)) in Barbados. The agencies were the CDB, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre ([CCCCC](#)); Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology ([CIMH](#)); Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency ([CDEMA](#)) and Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility ([CCRIF](#)).

The Secretary General applauded the Caribbean for its contribution and engagement on climate change and affirmed the importance of regional institutions in keeping on the front burner the concerns about the impact on the Caribbean.

“Regional organizations are critical to moving this agenda forward – and realizing the development priorities of the Caribbean. The region has made progress in achieving the MDGs – but a number of challenges including a high debt to GDP ratio, low growth and youth unemployment. At the same time, the impacts of climate change are not only environmental but social and economic, exacerbating economic challenges that face the region, regardless of the fact that many Caribbean countries are middle income countries. Despite these challenges the region is still standing ahead of others,” the Secretary General said.



CIMH trains many of the region's meteorologists, hydrologists and climate scientists; provides specialized products and services to weather and climate sensitive sectors to support disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change as part of the region's implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services. Dr. David Farrell, the Principal of CIMH emphasized the importance of data integration in evidence-based decision making as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) adapt to climate change, increasing climate variability and increasing occurrences of extreme weather events.

"A significant amount of historical data at national levels has not been converted into electronic formats due to resource constraints and limited know how. Increasing support for data capture will be required in order to build resilience to extreme weather and climate events and sustain development. New or updated policies governing information sharing are needed. UN agencies in partnership with national and regional organisations should work more closely to source funding for data integration and analysis programmes if SIDS, Least Developing Countries and Developing Countries in the region are to maximize the benefits of Big Data and analytics to guide their future development plans under uncertain climatic conditions," Dr. Farrell said.

Dr. William Warren Smith, President of the CDB said Caribbean countries face: "serious structural, economic and social challenges that must be addressed as we build resilience to climate change...substantial climate finance is urgently required. CDB has been emphasizing support for the rebuilding of infrastructure to higher standards. However, we could make a more significant contribution to the Region's efforts in both disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, if adequately resourced."

CDEMA promotes the practice of Comprehensive Disaster Management and focuses on all phases and types of a hazard and involves all sectors of the society. Ronald Jackson, CDEMA's Executive Director proffered that:

"A major challenge to the region is the graduation of a number of CARICOM small island developing states from being able to access concessional financing from international financial institutions while facing constraints over which they have limited or no control. The space therefore exists for facilitation of direct access to UN technical and financial assistance by CARICOM regional institutions."

CCCCC: coordinates the region's response to climate change; works on effective solutions and projects; provides climate change-related policy advice and guidelines; and is the archive and clearing house for regional climate change data and documentation. Dr. Ulric Trotz, Deputy Director & Science Adviser to the 5Cs pointed out that: "Building climate resilient, low carbon economies in the Caribbean will require a transformational change by national governments, regional organisations, NGOs, the private sector and civil society supported by an unprecedented level of financial and technical assistance."

CCRIF provides hurricane, earthquake and excess rainfall insurance for 16 Caribbean Governments. To date, CCRIF has made 12 payouts for hurricanes, earthquakes and excess rainfall totaling approximately US\$35.6



million to 8 member governments. Starting this month (July 2015) Nicaragua will also receive coverage with other Central American countries to follow.

Isaac Anthony, Chief Executive Officer of CCRIF shared that: “Climate change and the increase in number and severity of storm events calls for upscaling of coverage by member countries and for coverage by non-member countries which are vulnerable to these hazards.... key areas of support include further capitalization of CCRIF for current or future products or direct country support for purchase of premium; and support for governments in identifying and delineating public and private responsibilities for disaster risk management.”

The Secretary General added that there are important developments emerging that can have positively transformational effects for SIDS and pointed to the Paris Climate Summit in December 2015 as an essential milestone.

“As we look to the immediate horizon, we see a post-2015 development agenda coming into view. It will be a transformational and people-centred agenda, with the proposed 17 SDGs the likely core of the plan. The UNFCCC process continues in parallel. The Paris Climate Summit will be an important opportunity to highlight the region’s concerns. Regional entities with a much more focused understanding of the issues will have a very important role in this process. As we go forward, the UN stands ready to support your organizations and to work in concert to advance the goals and aspirations of the Caribbean region. We rely on you as the bridge builders between local concerns, the regional landscape, and the international arena,” the Secretary General said.

The Secretary-General was in Barbados from Wednesday, 1 July, to Friday, 3 July, to address the opening of the 36th Summit of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). During his visit, he opened the Caribbean Sustainable Development High-level Dialogue, which focuses on partnership between the United Nations and CARICOM on the Post-2015 development agenda and climate change.