



CARICOM COMMEMORATES INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DAY AND LAUNCHES SECOND BIODIVERSITY WEBINAR SERIES

On Friday May 20, 2022, in commemoration of International Biodiversity Day recognized globally on May 22, the Caribbean Community Secretariat launched a series of Biodiversity Webinars. These webinar series are part of ongoing efforts to prepare the region to continue and complete negotiations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Assistant Secretary General Joseph Cox and partners for the biodiversity series, the OECS Commission represented by Mr. Chamberlain Emmanuel and FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean, Dr. Renata Clarke officially opened the event. In their remarks, the importance of this initiative was highlighted as Caribbean Delegates prepare for the 15th Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention of Biological Diversity.

The first webinar served as a refresher on negotiation techniques and tips, which included sharing of lessons learned and best practices. Presenters included Ambassador Wayne McCook who has trained young diplomats, as well as seasoned regional negotiators, Ambassador Carlos Fuller, Le-Anne Roper, Reuanna Haynes and Khalil Hassanali. Included among the presenters were young negotiators who have grown over the years in their roles at the national and regional level.

In his opening remarks, Assistant Secretary General Joseph Cox utilized this opportunity to join the regional and international community ahead of International Day for Biological Diversity, 2022 (IDB 2022). He indicated that as the region seeks to recover from the economic impacts of the COVID -19 pandemic, it is timely that as a Caribbean Community we re-examine our relationship with nature recognizing that, despite all our advances we will always remain dependent on healthy and vibrant ecosystems.

It was noted that national, regional and international policy responses and frameworks for biodiversity management in CARICOM countries continue to evolve. It was further noted that a draft CARICOM Environmental and Natural Resources Policy Framework, currently under consideration by CARICOM Member States, will provide an enabling platform for acknowledging the vital role that land, air, water and oceans play in sustaining economic, social and environmental development of the Community. This along with the Draft Caribbean Biodiversity Strategy also under review by Member States outlines the vision to conserve and sustainably use the marine and terrestrial biodiversity in the Caribbean basin, including their access and benefits arising of the use of genetic resources.

With support from the European Commission, Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP) and the United Nations Environment Program, the long-term intended impact of the Programme on Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in

ACP countries, under which the webinar was convened, is to empower key stakeholders to address environmental challenges and to reap the benefits of improved environmental management at the national and regional levels.

The ACP MEAS Project will in the short-term, in preparation for the COP15, familiarize Caribbean Delegates with the COP15 agenda and the issues to be discussed and negotiated. These will be achieved by means of regional consultations to identify the national and overarching regional priorities for the Caribbean. A CARICOM position paper and Delegate Participation Guide will also be developed in consultation with Member States on key desired outcomes. On-the-ground technical support by a regional expert will be provided for our Caribbean negotiators at the COP to be held later this year.

Progress on all fronts must be realized through a broad alliance of people, governments, civil society and the private sector and solutions must ensure the integration of cross-sectoral strategies and actions to achieve the future we want for present and future generations, and a world living in harmony with nature.

In this regard, active and informed youth participation is part of the process of empowerment and knowledge building in the Community. As a significant step in promoting a place for youth in decision-making on biodiversity-related issues, the Caribbean Hub of the ACP MEAs Phase III Project invites young persons to participate in the 2022 International Day for Biological Diversity Youth Competition. <https://caricom.org/short-video-contest-youth-in-biological-diversity/>

- Caribbean youth ages 18 to 35 who are involved in environmental and biodiversity-related activities, can submit videos focusing on the IDB 2022 theme and topic: “Building a shared future for all life”; and national and regional youth priorities for the Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Video submissions should be no more than 5 minutes long and 1 submission per individual.
- Criteria for assessment include quality, creativity, logical solution that addresses theme and topic.
- Prizes will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners. 1st Place Award: fully funded participation at the Open-Ended Working Group Session in Nairobi, Kenya; United Nations Convention for Biological Diversity Fifteenth Conference of Parties (COP15); and CARICOM negotiators preparatory meetings training workshops.
- Deadline for entries is **May 31, 2022** and can be submitted to acp.meas.contest@gmail.com.