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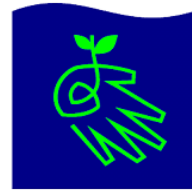
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Sustainable Development Goals being addressed



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The Jamaica Oceanarium as it will look on approach from the sea off Montego Bay. (Master Plan, 2021)

End-of-year-message from the RPC

Dear colleagues,

The recent Conference of Parties 26 on Climate Change in Glasgow, despite its successes, has shown again that states have different views and opinions of human behaviour on this planet and its related impact upon ecosystems. While some countries want immediate and far-reaching changes in certain parameters of economic activities, other countries prefer to have some more time....

But deadlines set as far into the future as 2050 are not motivating many to find fast solutions for the current 'climate crisis'. And for how much longer can we keep convincing ourselves that we, as a global community, have much more time?

As we cannot prevent global climate changes from already happening, we need to employ more,

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OCEANARIUM PLANNING UNDERWAY IN JAMAICA

Following the early interactions with the UN Environment Programme, the GEF-funded IWECO Project and Jamaica's Urban Development Corporation (UDC) in 2018 and 2019, the San Francisco based Smithsonian Affiliated non-profit Bay Ecotarium generated a comprehensive Master Plan with concept designs for a world class Climate and Ocean Conservation Living Museum, aptly named the Jamaica Oceanarium for the Montego Bay, adjacent to the recently completed MoBay Oceanfront Harmony Beach Park.

In May 2021, Prime Minister Andrew Holness, while making his Budget Debate presentation in Parliament, said this will be the first of its kind in the region and will function as both an attraction and a conservation development hub.

"For 2021, 2022, the UDC will focus on projects that will offer major

(Continued on page 3)



Caribbean Public Health Agency

CARPHA

SGP The GEF Small Grants Programme

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better and immediate adaptation measures to climate change if we are to minimize current and future risks and impacts of this human caused, worldwide ecosystem disturbance. The global climate is changing; risks and impacts are already being experienced in certain parts of the world, and more changes can be expected! We need to be prepared for action, not only to mitigate, but certainly to adapt to the new situation!

While it is good to note that some 79 % of countries worldwide have at least one national-level adaptation planning instrument in place, and while we thankfully acknowledge that some 2600 projects with principal adaptation focus have been funded by the top-ten bilateral donors to manage climate risks, we must also acknowledge that national capacity and capability constraints, as well as a lack of serious commitment -combined with the more recent COVID-19 restrictions- impede successful disaster risk reduction and response efforts.

This results, and will increasingly continue to result in vulnerable groups all over the world being disproportionately affected by economic and social impacts, leading to increasing polarisation within societies. On top of this, further into the future, the higher costs of servicing debt and decreased government revenues are additional causes for worry. We have seen that polarised societies are cradles of civil unrest and global destabilization, with potential catastrophic consequences for humankind.

All the above means that we should be extremely careful to use the funding with which we in IWECO have been entrusted to improve ecosystem services, to increase climate resilience in our societies, and to reduce current and future climate risks.

At the end of the day, we have a responsibility to deliver real, positive impacts and measurable results.

Whether we come from the private sector, government, NGOs, or belong to affecting or affected communities we need to act now as the problems become bigger every additional day that they are ignored or neglected.

I encourage us all to look back at what we have actually achieved during the last year. Not in terms of our personal wellbeing and family or institution's success, but in terms of actual and sustainable support to, and measurable resilience building of ecosystems in our countries. Can each of us honestly look into the eyes of our children and say: "Yes, I have indeed helped to build ecosystem resilience for your future"?

IWECO is a results-based project; we are focussing on measurable impacts...and we all have a responsibility to make this happen. Indeed, IWECO gives us an opportunity to make a positive difference.



With these thoughts, I wish you all a very healthy, successful and result-based 2022!

**Jan Betlem,
Regional Project Coordinator**

Marine Pollution from Pleasure Vessels in the Caribbean —a growing issue



The final report on the development of a public private partnership to reduce marine pollution from pleasure vessels (yachts) and tourism centres, which was commissioned by CARPHA under Component 2 of the GEF IWECO project is now available.

This PPP report is important to the GEF-IWECO Project as marine pollution, which includes plastic waste, wastewater and chemical contaminants, is an issue of growing importance in the region. It has been identified as one of the main threats to the health of aquatic life, the marine environment, the blue economy and public.

Yet, although the viability of the Caribbean tourism sector and yachting industry are reliant upon the value of our tourism product there is a significant amount of marine pollution emanating from these activities. The report makes the case that as we strive to balance the needs of the environment with present economic considerations it is important that we take measures to ensure the sustainability of the region's yachting industry. This will preserve both the environment and the earning ability of the tourism product in the years to come.

According to Cuthbert Didier, who authored the report, "all the islands highlighted [in the PPP report] rely heavily on land-based tourism, cruise and yachting. Some like Antigua, Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent have very active yachting products and attract thousands of yachts yearly. Discharge of sewage from visiting and local pleasure crafts plying the coastal areas however continues to present a major problem, especially in semi-enclosed coastal bays where flushing is negligible."

Based on the findings of the report, it is evident that the region must work towards a collective solution in order to combat the issue of marine pollution from pleasure vessels. A more collaborative approach is needed. Ideally, this will involve the development of clear and uniform standards for guidelines, monitoring and enforcement. It is also anticipated that the implementation of the report's recommendations, which seek to increase awareness and facilitate the implementation of initiatives geared at minimising the impact of black water pollution will assist in combating this challenge and helping to make the industry more environmentally sustainable in the region.

See the report at: <https://tinyurl.com/mvsr3ajt>

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climate resilient infrastructure and sustainable public spaces for residents and visitors and these include the Montego Bay Waterfront and we will be building on the successful completion of the Harmony Beach Park. There will be additional complimentary Waterfront developments...the project supports Jamaica's expansion on its blue economy platform and will see the convergence of urban development and environmental management in the tourism capital of Montego Bay," said the Prime Minister.

The team led by George Jacob, FRCGS President and CEO of BayEcotarium, made an in-person presentation to the Most Honourable Prime Minister Andrew Holness on July 1, 2021. The presentation was attended by Minister of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change, the Hon. Pearnel Charles Jr., and Minister of Tourism, the Hon. Edmund Bartlett, as well as other senior representatives, including the leadership of UDC.



George Jacob FRCGS, President & CEO of San Francisco based Bay Ecotarium, presenting the Master Plan for the Jamaica Oceanarium to Prime Minister H.E. Andrew Holness, flanked by Minister of Climate Change (Hon. Pearnel Charles Jr.) and Minister of Tourism (Hon. Edmund Bartlett).

Driven by the need for Ocean Conservation (ocean health is the key to reverse climate change), Sustainable development, reducing Green House Gas emissions and protection of Coral Reefs and co-dependent marine biodiversity, the Oceanarium offers a lens into the ecosystems and habitat that sustain life and sequester carbon, while offering solutions driven by lifestyle choices, policies, innovations in green shipping and divestment from fossil-fuels.

The Oceanarium will hold a saltwater aquarium at its core girded by immersive exhibits on climate change and sustainable oceans, a reverse dome theater, research labs, education and outreach programs, and living mangroves. It will draw power from solar panels and micro-algae embedded in its biomimetic façade. Once completed, it would have a positive generational impact on local economies and capacity building to take care of Jamaica' natural resources and indigenous environmental stewardship that can help the Caribbean region and beyond.

The Project gathers urgency and significance with the recent conclusion of UN COP26 in Glasgow where world leaders pledged to cut greenhouse gas emissions and step-up global conservation efforts aligned with UN SDG 2030 30x30 goals.



Above and right: Artist's impressions of the Montego Bay Oceanarium which aims to address and bring awareness to marine biodiversity and conservation as a key to reverse climate change through themed exhibits and aquariums.



IWEco Project Highlights 2021

Heading into 2021, many of us hoped the Covid-19 pandemic would soon come to an end. Little did we know that new variants would continue impacting our work. However, IWEco, while affected, has shown that we aren't going to let it stop us from advancing the Project's objectives – essentially conserving and protecting crucial Caribbean ecosystems.



As seen in our **5th Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting**, held virtually in September 2021, adaptive management and resilience in the face of a series of challenges, were consistent themes as partners continued work to meet project objectives.

Many examples of successful adaptation were shared by the national sub-projects, among them:

- **Trinidad and Tobago's** utilization of emergency/back-up nurseries at the homes of quarry rehabilitation champions in case of future lockdowns.



- **Saint Kitts and Nevis'** starting their coral reef restoration training virtually and making best use of an international consultant and remotely located partners, to ensure they would complete most activities by end-2021.

- **Saint Lucia's** workarounds to enable their under-forest canopy vanilla cultivation training and resourceful utilization of local retired foresters as well as existing internal Forestry Department capacity, as an alternative to hiring consultants.



COVID-19 was unable to stop the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the UN Environment Programme as they helped strengthen **Cuba's** national capacities to conserve and protect four demonstration sites by facilitating the acquisition of equipment for topography and tidal studies, vehicles to increase the mobility of technicians, and materials necessary for on-site studies.

The **Dominican Republic** was still able to conduct stakeholder meetings and move forward on hiring new personnel and consultants for their watershed restoration activities.



(Continued on page 5)

The **#RestorationBeginsWithMe** campaign which helped us recognize the beginning of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration in the Caribbean in June 2021 has been commemorated in a short publication prepared jointly by UNEP, FAO and IWeco. It is now available online at:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/37617>

Check it out!

Thanks again to our inspiring participants!



(Continued from page 4)

In addition, IWeco's sister project in **The Bahamas** was able to conduct a consultancy field trip, complete their biodiversity inventory workshop and hold their first public consultation.



We continued to celebrate holidays such as Youth in Service Day in **St. Kitts and Nevis**, where over 172 volunteers completed the largest coordinated beach clean-up effort cleaning up more than 930 kg of trash from the coastal zone.

In **Jamaica**, they celebrated World Wetlands Day by partnering with the Beaches Negril Resort for an interpretive boat tour of the Negril Great Morass to educate their staff members about the importance and benefits of wetlands.



Even the La Soufriere Volcano, couldn't stop **St. Vincent and the Grenadines** from their work to protect and conserve the habitat of the St. Vincent Parrot. Sixty staff members and volunteers journeyed to five sectors in remote locations of the interior forest of Saint Vincent to conduct a National Parrot census of the *Amazona guildingii*. Although we are still waiting for the results of the census, the preliminary findings point to a positive shift in the number of parrots in the area.

Although we cannot predict what 2022 will bring, we are optimistic that the partners of IWeco will continue to complete their activities and work to restore the vital ecosystem services upon which Caribbean communities depend. **#CaringForOurFuture!**

Education, empowerment and environmental improvement through metal recycling



Indiscriminate disposal and unsafe management of hazardous solid waste due to the lack of specialized treatment and disposal facilities is a major problem in Antigua & Barbuda. The burning of electronic waste to extract valuable recyclables such as copper wires and other valuable metal products, results in

the release of fumes and other unintentional persistent organic pollutants (UPOPs).

This affects the soil, air, water, human and animal health, particularly the nearby communities.

From 2018-2019, the UNDP SGP Project implemented a community metal recycling initiative in association with the GEF IW Eco Project.

To address this problem, Will's Recycling through the support of the project, implemented the following activities in St John's, Antigua:



A wide range of stakeholders from public and private sectors were consulted. These included NSWMA, Department of Analytical Services, and the Fire Department.



The building to house wire stripping equipment was constructed.



Waste pickers were interviewed for their feedback regarding the use of a granulator for processing their electrical waste. A granulator was purchased and installed to separate copper wire from its insulation, and to make both materials fit for re-use.



Video, and other educational materials showing appropriate ways of recycling waste and protecting the environment were used to improve the public's awareness.



The last phase of the project involved building and strengthening partnerships with schools, hotels, and the Antigua Public Utilities Authority.



This project has the potential to contribute towards environmental protection. With the operationalization of the granulator, it is expected that 30 tonnes of metal waste will be diverted annually from the burning process. Will's Recycling will safely separate the metal from its covering and prepare it for shipping, and eventual recycling. This is expected to improve air quality in surrounding communities as the practice of burning material to get to the metal components would be reduced.

In addition, Will's Recycling, in conjunction with several partners, are working to influence policy for a shift towards sound waste management systems. This is being done through:

1. consultation with government and non-governmental agencies such as Zero waste, National Solid Waste, the Department of Analytical Services, and the Department of Environment;
2. participation in key technical waste management workshops, training and conferences jointly organized by regional and international agencies such as the Basel Convention Regional Centre, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. These workshops and conferences often target key stakeholders who have the power to influence policy makers to develop and enforce legislation pertaining to the handling, transportation, treatment, processing, and disposal of waste.



“ For a small island developing country like Jamaica, climate change is not an academic issue. With hotter temperatures, coastal encroachment, shorter and more intense periods of rain, longer and more intense periods of drought, and more frequent and destructive hurricanes, climate change is our daily reality. ”

Most Honorable Prime Minister of Jamaica, Andrew Holness

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In loving memory of J'Laine Mary Richardson



Sunrise: 7th June 1993; Sunset: 27th October 2021

J'Laine was a beautiful, rare soul who will be forever young and beautiful, and greatly missed. She showed us that no matter how hard life can be, we must all learn from it every day and embrace every moment of it.

The IWEco Trinidad Quarry Rehabilitation Project Family was blessed and honoured to have J'Laine as a dedicated, hardworking and fun-loving part of the team.

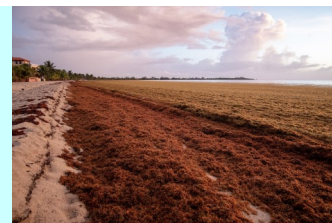
Her sudden passing is a shocking and devastating loss to all of us who loved and knew her.

The IWEco Family extends deepest condolences to J'Laine's family and loved ones she has left behind.

≈ May her soul rest in eternal peace ≈

UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat information products: **SARGASSUM**

Since 2011, Caribbean coastlines have been subjected to unprecedented, massive, episodic influxes of floating sargassum seaweed. The Cartagena Convention Secretariat recently produced the following information materials::



- **A UNEP Foresight Brief:** focuses on the floating sargassum seaweed and aims to support the sargassum paradigm shift from a 'brown tide' hazard to a 'golden jewel' opportunity. (Download at: <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/36315/FB024.pdf>)
- **An updated *Sargassum White Paper, Turning the Crisis Into An Opportunity*:** this is a living document intended to be regularly updated. (Download at: <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/publication/sargassum-white-paper-turning-crisis-opportunity>)
- **Summary briefs from the White Paper for:**
 - ⇒ **Policymakers:** <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/factsheet/sargassum-influx-update-policy-makers>
 - ⇒ **Civil Society Organisations (CSOs):** <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/factsheet/sargassum-influx-champions-civil-society-frontline>
 - ⇒ **Women and Youth:** <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/factsheet/turning-golden-tide-engaging-women-and-youth-sargassum-influx-management>
 - ⇒ **Entrepreneurs and Small and Medium-Sized Businesses:** <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/factsheet/sargassum-influx-update-entrepreneurs-and-smes>

New guidance document from the UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat and GCFI: **STONY CORAL TISSUE LOSS DISEASE**

On 25th October 2021, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Cartagena Convention Secretariat and the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute launched a new White Paper on Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD). Since it was first identified in 2014 off Virginia Key, Florida, SCTLD has spread to the Caribbean. As of March 2021, the disease has been confirmed in 16 Caribbean countries and territories.

Its impact is devastating. Lesions spread rapidly across individual coral colonies and coral reefs. Within weeks to months, the disease may cause up to nearly 100% mortality of the most highly susceptible coral species. It affects more than 20 species of the slowest-growing and longest-lived reef-building corals, including the iconic brain, star, and pillar corals.



Source: Cayman Compass

The following actions are further described in the White Paper as recommend next steps to addressing SCTLD:

- Ensure SCTLD is placed on the regional agenda.
- Encourage countries of the Wider Caribbean to endorse and participate in the SCTLD Caribbean Cooperation Team.
- Develop, support, and enforce the implementation of preventative regional ballast water guidelines to reduce the potential for disease transmission.
- Develop national and/or local SCTLD monitoring and response action plans.
- Facilitate a coordinated and structured approach to regional capacity building.
- Identify and contribute funds to regional SCTLD initiatives.
- Improve stakeholder awareness.
- Facilitate the speedy implementation of best practice treatment interventions.
- Encourage partnerships for coral rescue and restoration.
- Facilitate information sharing about research initiatives and intervention approaches.

The Secretariat gratefully acknowledges the Swedish Ministry of Environment for their generous financial support which facilitated the development of this White Paper.

Download the White Paper: <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/publication/white-paper-stony-coral-tissue-loss-disease>



*Warmest Wishes for a New
Year filled
with Peace, Hope and Love!*

- From the IWEco Family

© Jonathan Delance

*Photo of the Red-legged Thrush
aka Chua Chua (Turdus plumbeus),
courtesy of Jonathan Delance of
the Dominican Republic.
One of many beautiful photos
from IWEco's countries to be
featured in our series of
Biodiversity Posters in 2022!*

Look out for them!

Stay safe everyone!

For up-to-date info on COVID-19: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>



SAVE THE DATE! - IWEco's 17th Partners' Webinar Tuesday 18th January 2022


'VETIVER—USE AND BENEFITS FOR LAND AND SOIL RESTORATION'

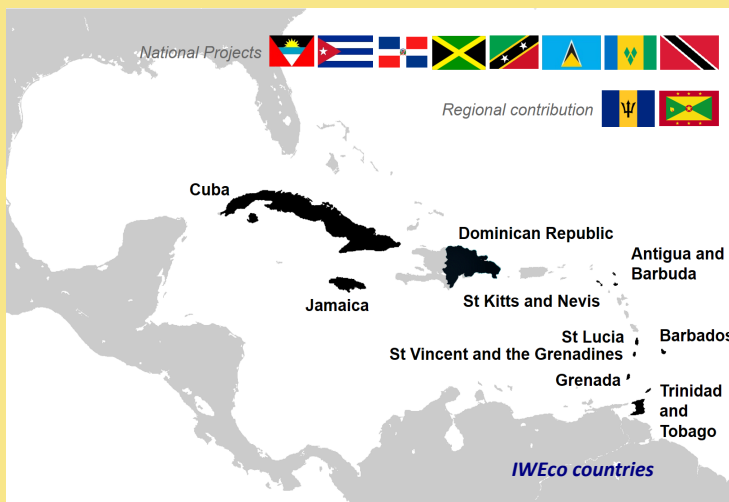
IWEco thanks its partners, both regional and national, for their contributions to this issue and for their continuing support.

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The IWEco Project is a five-year multi-focal area regional project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). UN Environment is the lead Implementing agency and it is hosted by the Cartagena Convention Secretariat.



*integrating water, land and ecosystems management
in caribbean small island developing states*

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