



## IYDD AND THE CARIBBEAN

### **Meeting for the Promotion of an environmental rehabilitation program with the participation of youth in the Caribbean States (Y&E Caribbean) under the framework of the Caribbean SRAP**

The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/Res/58/211 declaring 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. In celebration of the same the Caribbean country Parties to the UNCCD are implementing a series of activities approved during the X UNCCD LAC Regional meeting held in Sao Luis, Brazil in August 2005, as well as those adopted at COP 7 held in Nairobi, Kenya during October of the same year. The main objectives of the year is to highlight the serious threats that land degradation poses to sustainable development as it affects one third of the planet's land surface and around one billion people in over a hundred countries, and showing its interrelation with both climate change and the loss of biological diversity.

The promotion of the establishment of an environmental rehabilitation program with the participation of youth in the Caribbean States (Y&E Caribbean) is a sub-regional initiative within the framework of the UNCCD, designed to promote youth involvement in environmental issues while contributing to the formulation of a SRAP for UNCCD implementation in the Caribbean. It focuses on sustainable agro forestry and land management issues to address land degradation, drought and poverty with a view to foster youth employment while addressing these pressing environmental issues. The project proposal allows for systematic linkages between public and private institutions, academic and scientific centres, non-governmental and community based organisations, cooperation partners and international agencies, which through use of their respective capacities and comparative advantages can facilitate its implementation.

### **I. Background**

The countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region have always seen the need to promote sustainable forest and land management as effective tools for sustainable development. This is being done through the design and application of concrete programmes to address severe social and economic problems in particularly affected areas and among affected population including the youth.

The main causes of land degradation in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region are anthropic and climatic. Among those due to human action are deforestation and forest degradation (collection of wood for fuel, construction and other domestic and industrial uses), forest fires, overgrazing, expansion of the agricultural frontier and use of unsustainable agricultural practices. As concerns the climatic factors, frequent and long drought is the phenomenon that has the most severe impact and further exacerbates the anthropic causes.

The Caribbean countries concerned depend heavily on agriculture and consequently on land productivity for their economic survival. These states, all export one or the other agricultural product, which *inter alia* provide work for a significant part of their labour force. Deforestation processes in order to use land for the development of industries like sugar, tobacco and cotton has been a historical problem in this part of the world. With the decline of

the relative economic importance of these products, others appeared; including coconuts, spices, bananas and rice, and were similarly produced using unsustainable land practices. With the advent of globalisation, in order to maintain some share of their traditional markets these countries have been forced to open up new agricultural frontiers and add even more chemicals to the soil in a bid to maintain competitiveness.

The present initiative is in keeping with the current efforts to develop the National Action Programmes (NAP) to Combat Land Degradation and Drought in the countries of the Caribbean sub-region. This is a process in which all are involved including sub-regional bodies, like CARICOM and CARIFORUM, the national governments and numerous civil society organizations including those representing the interests of youth.

## **II. Objectives of the proposal**

The main objectives of the project proposed here is to share information and technical expertise, as well as to promote the development and implementation of instruments to combat land degradation and drought through a network of activities covering reforestation, forestation and land management in the Caribbean states parties to the UNCCD, by creating an enabling environment so as to:

1. Establish a network of Youth Environmental Groups in the participating countries, thereby supporting the participation of youth in and contributing to the solution of existing socioeconomic and environmental problems.
2. Manage communal forests in order to prevent further land degradation.
3. Create jobs for young people and at the same time promote environmental awareness and education, facilitating effective mobilization and support of the NGOs, the local communities and the private sector.

The network proposed in the project could also constitute an essential component of a strategy to mobilize national and international support (horizontal cooperation among others) that would allow for the sustainable development and rational management of the natural resources of the sub-region. The UNCCD Secretariat will also facilitate the design of the Sub-Regional Action Programme for the Caribbean under this framework.

## **III. Objectives of the meeting in Havana**

The UNCCD Secretariat has been requested to facilitate and support in co-operation with the host country, the organisation and holding of this meeting on the project, through the harmonisation of all existing information and the provision of technical and financial assistance. The meeting is scheduled to take place in early May as part of the IYDD activities and the outcomes of the meeting will be incorporated into the final project proposal.

The meeting will be a significant event where the following activities among others will be realised:

1. Clear identification of the network's operational structure and members (the Coordination Team, or CT), which will be selected from regional and sub-regional

organisations/institutions, specialised institutions, bilateral and multilateral partners, academic institutions (universities, research centres, technical colleges), NGOs and community-based organisations, as well as the private sector. The list, however, should remain flexible to accommodate possible changes;

2. Proposal of an appropriate institutional framework and arrangement for setting up the network's CT and for the implementation of the project, ensuring a sustained commitment on the part of all members to a common vision and under the coordination of the selected country manager;
3. Determination of concrete activities (national projects) for participating countries, in accordance with their respective capacities and comparative advantages in specific areas to be covered by the proposal;
4. Establishment an effective mechanism to ensure the timely sharing of useful information among all the participants in the project, including linkages with DESELAC;
5. Agreement on the overall programme of work, specifying short and long-term objectives, timetable and schedules for a 3 to 5-year period, and identifying in particular the priority initiatives for the biennium 2006-2007 and a pertinent financial strategy;
6. Identification of cross-cutting issues among other regional and sub-regional initiatives included in the LAC Regional Action Programme and activities emanating from the relevant COP and CRIC decisions, with the aim of ensuring effective synergies among the same at all levels;
7. Identification of potential donors involved in bilateral and/or multilateral funding to which specific proposals will need to be tailored in the appropriate manner;
8. Defining an effective mechanism for provision of the necessary assistance for preparing pilot projects, which ensure the integration of agro-forestry and soil conservation components, along with sustainable water management and poverty eradication as well as other related issues that maybe address through the implementation of the project.

#### **IV. Expected results**

The major outputs of the meeting will include the following:

1. The Y&E Caribbean Project would be fully operationalised from the institutional, financial and technical point of views at the regional level, and clear practical modalities for inter-institutional and inter-agency cooperation among all the relevant actors and partners involved would be defined, including those for the involvement of non-governmental and community based organizations=
2. The 3 to 5-year programme of work and plans for launching of priority agro-forestry and land management activities as identified by the countries would be agreed upon. This would be done after having addressed the direct and indirect linkages between this project and the NAP, SRAPs and RAP in Latin America and the Caribbean thus enabling a coherent and harmonized process at all levels. This process will take in account the third national reporting process for CRIC 5. Particular attention will be

paid to synergies with TPNs in the region, and existing initiative at the interregional level would be identified and strengthened. Attention will also be paid to the relationship with other sustainable development instruments relevant to agro-forestry.

3. A schedule of activities to be carried out in each country and their timetable of implementation along with their respective costs and financial strategies to ensure their sustainability will be agreed upon. This includes the activities to be carried out at the Training Centre in Las Tunas.
4. Agreement on the streamlining through DESELAC of a coordinated and dynamic communication flow and information exchange on valuable experiences, technologies and best practices, capacity building and technical and financial opportunities.
5. Increase awareness of agro-forestry issues in the framework of land degradation processes at political-institutional and civil society levels as well as within the scientific community. Furthermore, the network to be created is expected to help motivate and empower stakeholders to develop income-generating activities and markets to assist in the restoration and sustainable use natural resources, as well as in the alleviation poverty and the improvement of food security. This increase awareness is aimed at building a common vision between the initiatives, local stakeholders and potential partners so as to optimise possible inputs to the activities.

## V. Participation

The UNCCD Secretariat, in collaboration with the Cuban Government will facilitate the organisation of the meeting as part of activities in recognition of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. The meeting is scheduled to take place from 8 to 10 May in Havana, Cuba and will also serve as a forum for preliminary discussion on some issues of the XI LAC Regional Meeting. It is expected that representatives of all the countries involved in the project; delegates from country partners China, Spain and Venezuela; other donor countries and relevant stakeholders in particularly civil society will attend the meeting. The scientific and technical community will also be invited to send representatives, and so too international organisations and development cooperation partners that support the UNCCD process.

## **INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DESERTS AND DESERTIFICATION (IYDD)**

**Meeting for consideration of the proposal for an environmental rehabilitation programme with the participation of youth in the Caribbean States and the development of a Sub-regional Action Programme for the Caribbean**

**La Havana, Cuba 2006**

**8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> May**

### **Draft Agenda**

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### **Day 1 Monday 8<sup>th</sup>**

#### Activities to mark IYDD

- 08: 30 – 09: 30 Registration of participants
- 09: 30 – 11: 00 Official Opening Ceremony
- 09:30 – 09: 35 Welcome address CITMA - Cuba
- 09:35 – 09: 45 Address by UNCCD Executive Secretary
- 09:45 – 09: 55 Address by the Ambassador of China to Cuba
- 09:55 – 10: 05 Address by the Ambassador of Venezuela to Cuba
- 10:05 – 10: 35 Address by the Minister of CITMA and official opening of the meeting
  
- 11: 00 – 11: 25 Coffee Break

#### Session 1

- 11: 25 – 12: 00 Presentation on IYDD (UNCCD)
- 12: 30 – 13: 00 General presentation on the implementation of the UNCCD in the Caribbean (UNCCD LAC Unit coordinator)

#### 13:00 – 14:30 Lunch Break

#### Session 2

- 14: 30 – 15: 00 Presentations by countries
- 15: 00 - 16: 30 Discussion on UNCCD implementation in the Caribbean

### **Day 2 Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>**

Technical Meeting: Consideration of the proposal for an environmental rehabilitation programme with the participation of youth in the Caribbean States and the development of a Sub-regional Action Programme for the Caribbean

#### Session 3

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**UNCCD**

Postal address: P.O. Box 260129, Haus Carstanjen, D-53153 Bonn, Germany  
 Office Location: Haus Carstanjen, Martin-Luther-King-Strasse 8, D-53175 Bonn, Germany  
 Tel. (Switchboard): (49-228) 815-2800 Tel. (Direct): 815-2802 Fax: (49-228) 815-2898/99  
 E-mail (general): secretariat@unccd.int Web site: www.unccd.int

09: 00 – 09:10 Review and adoption of the agenda

09:10 – 09: 40 General presentation on the status of the project

09:40 – 10: 10 Questions and answers

10: 10 – 10: 40 Concrete suggestion as to necessary changes to the project proposal

10: 40 – 11: 55 Coffee break

11: 40 Discussion on modalities for the creation and procedure of the function of the Coordinating Committee

11: 40 – 12: 40 Discussion on partnership with such agency as UNEP, UNDP, GM and the GEF Small Grants Programme

12:40 – 14:00 Lunch

14: 00 – 15: 00 Discussion on Strategies for further resource mobilization including other possible sources of funding

15: 00 – 15: 15 Coffee break

15: 15 – 17: 00 Short presentations by countries of their national component of the project

17: 00 – 17: 30 Synergies with relevant ongoing initiatives

### **Day 3 Wednesday10th**

#### **Session 4**

09: 00 – 10: 30 Discussions on modalities for implementation at the national level (working in groups)

10: 30 – 11:00 Plenary session

11: 00 – 11: 15 Coffee break

11: 15 – 12: 00 Identification of the first five pilot projects

12: 00 – 12: 30 Training in Las Tunas, Cuba

12: 30 – 13: 30 Lunch Break

#### **Session 5**

13: 30 – 14:30 Presentation on the concept of a Sub-regional Action Programme (SRAP)

14: 30 – 15: 00 Specific role of the UNCCD Secretariat

15: 00 – 15: 30 General discussion on the SRAP

15:30 – 16: 00 Coffee break

16: 00 – 16: 30 Presentation and adoption of the main points of the final report

16: 30 – 17: 00 General wrap-up and closure of the meeting

