



Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre

Contact: Tyrone Hall

Tel: (501) 822-1104

Cell: (501) 630-8615

Email: thall@caribbeanclimate.bz

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Caribbean Launches the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report on Climate Change. What does it mean for the Caribbean? By Dr Kenrick Leslie, CBE

The Caribbean's response to Climate Change is grounded in a firm regional commitment, policy and strategy. Our three foundation documents - The Liliendaal Declaration (July 2009), The Regional Framework for Achieving Development Resilient to Climate Change (July 2009) and its Implementation Plan (March 2012) - are the basis for climate action in the region.

The Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) underscores the importance, scientific rigour and utility of these landmark documents. The IPCC's latest assessment confirms the Caribbean Community's longstanding call to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C as outlined in the Liliendaal Declaration. At the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) Meeting in 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark, the Caribbean Community indicated to the world community that a global temperature rise above 1.5°C would seriously affect the survival of the region.

In 2010 at the UNFCCC COP Meeting in Cancun, governments agreed that emissions ought to be kept at a level that would ensure global temperature increases can be limited to below 2°C. At that time, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), which includes the Caribbean, re-iterated that any rise in temperature above 1.5°C would seriously affect their survival and compromise their development agenda. The United Nations Human Development Report (2008) and the State of the World Report (2009) of The Worldwatch Institute supports this position and have identified 2°C as the threshold above which irreversible and dangerous Climate Change will become unavoidable.

Accordingly, the Caribbean welcomes the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report prepared by over 2, 000 eminent scientists. It verifies observations in the Caribbean that temperatures are rising, extreme weather events are occurring more frequently, sea levels are rising, and there are more incidences of coral bleaching. These climatic changes will further exacerbate the limited availability of fresh water, agricultural productivity, result in more

erosion and inundation, and increase the migration of fish from the Caribbean to cooler waters and more hospitable habitats. The cumulative effect is reduced food security, malnutrition, and productivity, thus increasing the challenges to achieving poverty reduction and socio-economic development.

The report notes that greenhouse gas emissions, the cause of Climate Change, continues to rise at an ever increasing rate. Unless this trend is arrested and rectified by 2050, global temperatures could rise by at least 4^oC by 2100. This would be catastrophic for the Caribbean. However, the report is not all gloom and doom. More than half of the new energy plants for electricity are from renewable resources, a trend that must accelerate substantially if the goal of limiting global warming to below 2^oC by 2100 is to remain feasible.

The IPCC AR5 Report should therefore serve as a further wakeup call to our region that we cannot continue on a business as usual trajectory. It is an imperative that Climate Change be integrated in every aspect of the region's development agenda, as well as its short, medium and long-term planning. The region must also continue to aggressively engage its partners at the bilateral and multilateral levels to reduce their emissions. The best form of adaptation is reducing emissions.

Inaction is simply too costly! The IPCC will adopt the Synthesis Report of the AR5 in Copenhagen, Denmark in late October 2014. Caribbean negotiators are already preparing to ensure that the most important information from the report is captured in the Synthesis Report.

Learn more about the implications of the IPCC AR5 Report by watching the live stream of the Caribbean Launch on October 13 via caribbeanclimate.bz and track live tweets via #CaribbeanClimate.

Dr Kenrick Leslie is the Executive Director of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, the regional focal point for Climate Change.

The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre coordinates the region's response to climate change. Officially opened in August 2005, the Centre is the key node for information on climate change issues and the region's response to managing and adapting to climate change. We maintain the Caribbean's most extensive repository of information and data on climate change specific to the region, which in part enables us to provide climate change-related policy advice and guidelines to CARICOM member states through the CARICOM Secretariat. In this role, the Centre is recognized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Environment Programme, and other international agencies as the focal point for climate change issues in the Caribbean. The Centre is also a United Nations Institute for Training and Research recognised Centre of Excellence, one of an elite few. Learn more about how we're working to make the Caribbean more climate resilient by perusing The Implementation Plan.

###