



**December 2, 2008**

Compilation of all the answers and comments included to date in the virtual forum on the second main theme of the [Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain](#), "Promoting Environmental Sustainability" (Paragraphs 39-47), **open from November 17 to 26, 2008.**

**Sub-themes:**

1. [Climate Change](#)
2. [Natural Disasters](#)
3. [Environmental governance](#)

In addition to this compendium, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat will prepare a summary-report of all comments and recommendations made by the participants (both in the English and Spanish fora). This report is distributed to the National Secretariat and OAS member States in order to contribute to the process of negotiation of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

#### **1. Climate Change (Paragraphs 39-40 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)**

39. All social and economic development depends on the conservation and protection of the environment. We, therefore, reaffirm our strong commitment to sustainable development, as set out in the [World Summits on Sustainable Development in Rio](#) in 1992 and [Johannesburg](#) in 2002, the [Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra of 1996](#), the [Declaration of Santa Cruz +10 of 2006](#), and the [Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations](#).

40. We commit to take the necessary steps to ensure the eventual stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will not incur a risk of serious changes in the Earth's climate and weather systems.

*(Claudia Salazar - Monday, November 17, 2008)*

Greetings to all Participants!

Welcome to the Summits Secretariat third virtual forum on the main themes of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain. To open the discussion on the paragraphs on Climate Change, I would like to invite Ms. Carolina Peña, Energy Specialist of the OAS Department of Sustainable Development.

I take this opportunity to thank all of our DSD Colleagues for their support and contributions. We encourage all participants to contribute to a fruitful and informative discussion!  
Regards, Claudia

*(Carolina Pena - Monday, November 17, 2008)*

Thank you Claudia and welcome to all participants.

On regards paragraph 40, it is very difficult to determine what is "necessary," who gets to decide, and how will the decision be enforced? Also, there are some scientists that claim we have already passed a tipping point - that we are already headed to serious (and perhaps irreversible) changes in the Earth's climate. I would suggest the following changes:

"40. The OAS member States commit to work collaboratively in developing and implementing the necessary strategies and technologies that are needed to ensure the eventual stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will mitigate serious changes in the Earth's climate and weather systems, and that assures all peoples a just and sustainable standard of living."

(Carolina Pena - Friday, November 21, 2008 02:14:08 p.m.)

First of all, we need to have a clear understanding of the components of sustainable development which are healthy environment, social justice and economic growth. In addition, sustainability must now be evaluated in a global context, thus we need to move to an era where each of us takes responsibility for our individual demands on energy resources, food and space.

I should recommend that paragraph 39 should be changed to:

“39. All just and sustainable social and economic development depends on the ongoing conservation, management and protection of the environment from the local to the global scale. We therefore reaffirm our strong commitment to sustainable development, which incorporates and balances the needs of the individual, the community, the region, and the world, to have a healthy environment, social justice, and economic growth, as set out in the World Summits on Sustainable Development in Rio in 1992 and Johannesburg in 2002, the Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra of 1996, the Declaration of Santa Cruz +10 of 2006, and the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.”

What is the opinion of other participants?

(Claudia Salazar - Sunday, November 23, 2008)

Thank you very much Carolina!

Now that you mention the need to address sustainable development from a global perspective, I would like to share with all participants a series of documents related with climate change and migration, sent by our institutional partners from the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), the International Migration Organization (IMO).

Here are some highlights from these important documents:

*“Environmental degradation and climate change pose significant challenges to human security and sustainable economic and human development...”*

*“Increased migration can contribute to further environmental degradation, but it can also be a coping mechanism and survival strategy for those who move. Adequately planning for and managing environmentally induced migration will be critical for human security. What policy options exist for these purposes? And how do they relate to other policy fields?”*

1) Discussion Note (attached) presented by the IMO Council on November, 2007.

2) IOM's Migration Research Series No. 30 “Migration, Development and Natural Disasters: Insights from the Indian Ocean Tsunami” <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/cache/offonce/pid/1674?entryId=14556>

3) Migration Research Series No 31 (MRS) “Migration and Climate Change”.  
<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/cache/offonce/pid/1674?entryId=16561>

4) MRS N°33 “Climate Change and Migration: Improving Methodologies to Estimate Flows”  
<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/cache/offonce/pid/1674?entryId=17120>

Best to all participants!

Claudia

[iom migration and environment discussion note en.pdf \(46.919KB\)](#)

(Andy Paul - Friday, November 21, 2008)

It is very important that we address and discuss issues relating to climate change. However, what are we as citizens doing to address these concerns? There are many practical ways that we all can get involved in. I want to suggest to our Governments, especially those in the Caribbean to look at a UNESCO programme called Sandwatch. It is a beach monitoring programme that involves data collection. This programme can also give data on rising sea levels. Governments need to have a second look at climate change and how it affects us. We need to lobby our policy framers to have climate change high on their agenda.

(Andy Paul - Friday, November 21, 2008)

Governments have agreed to stabilize greenhouse gases. However the problem lies in its implementation. WE hav had enoug talk, it is TIME FOR ACTION. We should pressure/lobby this upcoming conference for ACTION. WE WANT ACTION. TIME FOR CHANGE (Obama). Time to build cars that are energy efficient,

cars CNG compatible. If we are really serious, CNG stations should be readily available and car made or imported should be CNG compliant. Is only then can we make a dent into saving our environment.

*(Claudia Salazar - Friday, November 21, 2008.)*

Thank you Andy!

The point that you are bringing up is both timely and appropriate. Countries do need to take some actions and they realize that all of these issues are urgent and require their immediate attention.

In fact, this is why this time it is not only a 'Summit Declaration' like it was in the past (which for the previous 4 Summits was accompanied by a Plan of Action). This time, the National Secretariat, Trinidad and Tobago, proposed a Declaration of Commitment which represents not only the intention of the governments, but intends to outline a way forward – action!

Do you think this could be enough? Do you think it would also help to continue to engage social actors in activities like this forum, where an effort is being made for further engagement throughout the process? (Including this preparatory phase, and most importantly - through its implementation).

What else could be done to work towards more action in all fields?, what could social actors do to contribute to this?

Best regards, Claudia

*(Andy Paul - Monday, November 24, 2008)*

Claudia, this is very simple. The reality is that most people do not know about this forum. We can get our schools involved in this debate. Nothing so far, as far as I am aware, has been advocated with the media. Can there be some sensitization of this upcoming event and the role we as citizens can and should play? Why not have schools participation in a mock session or even debates? Environmental issues are the "in thing" now. Climate is the buzz word. I recently came from a Sandwatch? Climate Change Workshop, where we had school children and teachers from 10 Caribbean islands. There we were taught how to use various media, such as, story telling, drama, internet, video to spread the news of climate change. Can't a similar thing be done as a lead up to this very important conference? Can UNESCO assist in this area? I am willing to assist. Why not organise a Side Event to the OAS Conference where young people can come and discuss these issues and make a declaration to the OAS Leaders on what the youth want? Think about it.

*(Claudia Salazar - Monday, November 24, 2008)*

Greetings to all participants!

I would like to share with you several contributions kindly sent to me by Mr. Abe Fergusson, an active participant of the forum and a young advocate for the environment in Trinidad and Tobago and in the region:

- Natural Disaster Youth Summit Monthly News: <http://ndys.jearn.jp/news/newsletter008.html>

- Children Speak Out on Climate Change (attached)

Thank you Abe!, Thank you all for your participation!

Best, Claudia

[children air their views on climate change.pdf \(41.192KB\)](#)

*(Andy Paul - Monday, November 24, 2008)*

I am wondering if we are really serious about these two articles. May I submit, that the best vehicle or the best programme we have for sustainable development is a project called Sandwatch. This programme is coordinated under the umbrella of UNESCO. It seeks to change lifestyles, it is inter-disciplinary and above all it is a flagship project in this Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 - 2014).

Additionally, Sandwatch provides the framework for school student, with the help of their teachers and local communities, to work together to critically evaluate the problems and conflicts facing their beach environments and to develop sustainable approaches to address these issues.

*(Sergio Daniel Paz - Tuesday, November 25, 2008)*

Please see the attached file. Hope you enjoy reading it.  
[comments of climate change oas.doc \(22KB\)](#) (doc text below).

Climate change:

Comments: I work as a volunteer writing newsletters every 15 days and as a youth ambassador for iEARN. For me this is an opportunity to know what is happening in the world by visiting many web sites. I am going to tell what I can see, that maybe people in general don't know.

It is really important to assume that we are not living in the last century's Earth because of human activity. I am not saying something new, but people sometimes think some things can change, but they ignore how lethal was the industrialization progress. Governments of affected countries, which are in general poor countries (Asiatic or African) can only work on giving solutions to people, talking about short periods...but what we have above our heads is going to keep with us for a long, long time. And what is it?...CFC gases, and related to this we have the greenhouse effect.

Temperature is increasing everywhere; it is because heat is taking position from the Ecuador line to both south and north poles.

Small changes in the environment of a region can produce big changes in the life of the habitants. Thousands of people have been displaced from their homes, where they lived for many years, now they are kilometers away from there and probably never come back because their region can be considerer "dangerous zone". Nowadays people from affected regions are moving their lives to other places and we have to think what does this mean. This means more people trying to get a job, energy of the zone may not be enough to supply the new residents plus the old ones.

Other example is that as the paragraph 39 says, economic development is seriously affected if there is an area being drowned often, for example. I re-wrote news that show people living in camps and being transported by boats, obstructed roads, many hunting diseases...The point is that all of this affect people who has to work...maybe in a factory, maybe in a transporting company, etc. So economy is one of the principal affected themes.

This is what I wanted to share, but there are more things to say. So in paragraph 40 it is necessary to act, of course. I think this paragraph shows a strong position...and despite of the fact that "take necessary steps" requires a lot of money and hard work, if we really take conscious of the topic, it will be possible to decrease bad effects in the atmosphere.

To sum up I want to say that it is true the fact that some governments take the situation seriously, like Philippines and Nepal governments. But as I said, the Greenhouse effect is something strong, that causes the things I mentioned, and now it is too late to be shamed. Our new policy has to be strong and efficient...and time is an important factor we should not waste.

*(Claudia Salazar - Monday, December 01, 2008 1:24:31 PM)*

Greetings to all participants!

I am pleased to share with you this comment, sent to me via e-mail by a participant from Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Merle Baker. Institution: Ministry of Education

Recommendation: Re- Climate Change

In agreement with the components of the IAD suggestion to support all contributions from regional and sub-regional institutions to combat climate change, that decision has now become a very urgent need, especially for island states. The change in climate has been evidenced by devastating changes in weather patterns; more rain, hurricanes, floods, rising water tables, erosion of top-soil manifested in land and mud slides, all leading to loss of life, agriculture and property.

I recommend that the most necessary project is one which addresses drainage. That is, any development of water drainage systems that can clear the existing water-courses and/or develop a new drainage network to clear flood waters and the water from the highlands to the sea quickly and efficiently. The system has to be

two-way, as it must consider the attendant rise in tidal movements. As a consequence, it must cater for the maintenance of barrier reefs and the construction of other barriers to help to relieve adverse counter effects.

Additionally, there is a need to develop technology to use the knowledge of geology and geography to determine the extent of damage that has already impacted and will be impacted on the rock and soil components because of climate change. This information is necessary to provide information on the security and safety of existing and future buildings and structures in some locations.

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## 2. Natural Disasters (Paragraphs 41-43 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)

41. We will strengthen our mechanisms for the sharing of early warning information on natural disasters, for disaster planning and preparedness, and for managing and coordinating response and relief programmes following a disaster.

42. We instruct Ministers and High Level Authorities responsible for Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the specialised national and regional disaster organizations, to develop, by 2011, a cooperation system within the Americas through which they can collaborate, share information, develop models of good practice, and ascertain which areas of human settlement and sections of essential industrial and transport infrastructure are at risk, and to then ensure that they are either protected or relocated.

43. We will introduce stronger planning and zoning measures to ensure that any future residential, commercial or industrial developments are not located in vulnerable areas, and we will facilitate better access to education, training, land, credit, and housing to ensure that poor people are not trapped in vulnerable areas by the fear of losing their livelihoods.

*(Claudia Salazar - Monday, November 17, 2008.)*

Greetings to all Participants!

Welcome to the Summits Secretariat third virtual forum on the main themes of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain. To open the discussion on the paragraphs on Natural Disasters, I would like to invite Ms. Rosa Trejo, Natural Hazard Specialist of the OAS Department of Sustainable Development (DSD).

I take this opportunity to thank all of our DSD Colleagues for their support and contributions.

We encourage all participants to contribute to a fruitful and informative discussion!

Regards, Claudia

*(Rosa Trejo - Tuesday, November 18, 2008)*

Natural Disasters are the result of a “dysfunctional” relationship between *Human-kind* and the *Environment*. It is not the natural phenomenon that causes disasters, but the interference of human activities with a dynamic environment. People settle on seismic prone areas and landslide prone slopes, and on the path of low-pressure systems –cyclones and tropical storms. People settle on low-lands prone to floods, and change evapo-transpiration ratios, as they slash and burn natural vegetation coverage, cover roads with asphalt and concrete, and replace forest with crops. They change hydrological regimes by altering aquifer recharge and discharge areas, and by exposing soils and changing erosion and sedimentation processes.

And it is not surprising to note that those most affected are those living in extreme poverty. In the Americas, they are those living in international border areas, far from the capitals and even farther away from national development plans; as well as are those indigenous people, who have been isolated, culturally, socially and economically from national development plans. In this segment of the society, subsistence economies prevail, where communities depend heavily on local natural resources and ecosystems. Thus, while they are already highly vulnerable to natural hazards, each disaster results in further **environmental degradation** and, consequently, in poorer and more vulnerable communities; which, in turn, leads to a vicious circle of **poverty – disasters – environmental degradation** – and back to more and higher indices of poverty and more disasters, each time more catastrophic.

Are paragraphs 41-43 of the Draft Declaration proposing how to tackle this “vicious circle of poverty-disasters-environmental degradation”?

(Paul Saunders - Saturday, November 22, 2008)

I applaud the intent of para 41-43. Moreso para 43. However, as history has taught us there needs to be more action than words!! This intent has been on the cards for some time now and many countries have not yet found a way to successfully achieve this. In the Caribbean it has been a particular challenge. Recently in Trinidad and Tobago, heavy rains resulted in landslides which killed two persons. The homes were built on slopes that were unstable. The Minister of Planning Housing and The Environment publicly declared that these homes were built in areas not fit for development. She indicated that her Ministry would be making greater efforts, to correct the errors of the past and make things different. This declaration should be applauded and we await the actions to match the words.

We most certainly should be learning from other countries, and implementing the lessons learnt. Do countries/ governments have the political will? Talk is easy.

(Grace Roseman - Monday, November 24, 2008)

Which came first? the chicken or the egg? The poverty or the degradation? It seems to me that economic decline and social breakdown are key agents to the origin of the natural disasters with which we are faced. The poor resort to building homes and/or practicing low-grade cultivation on our hillsides, squatting in our forested areas, mangroves and on our coasts, populating our flood plains, resulting in an increase of massaced slopes and forests, landslides, flooding, diseases especially water and insect borne, loss of livelihood, lack of necessary agricultural land and on and on...

The penniless are stressed and increasingly absent from the home due to either frustration or the unending drive to accumulate funds to make ends meet. The family breaks down, values and priorities shift from love, nurturing and respect for each other and their environment to those of selfishness, carelessness and basically *getting* at any cost.

Let us first attend to what appears to be the root of the problem, POVERTY, and what we can do *now* to alleviate it. Also are we doing enough for those that have already lost and are still losing so much because of these disasters?

So while the commitments in the Draft Declaration are quite impressive, we must begin by dealing with the present. Immediate implementation is needed!

As a member of the IEARN and past participant of the Natural Disasters Youth Summit (NDYS) 2008, I strongly support my youth ambassador in our bid to increase sensitivity to disasters and our environment as a whole. As the NDYS Declaration states:

*" That as a Global Village we must resolve to create an awareness to disasters, risk management and the adaptation to global climate change, by forging strong ties between youths and professionals and integrating all countries in an international partnership for this common purpose: "One Village; One Effort, THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW."*

*We, The Youth, have a voice and this is our time. We Speak Out!*

Grace Roseman, IEARN, Trinidad and Tobago

(Abraham Fergusson - Monday, November 24, 2008)

Good show Grace,

Yes! poverty is one area needing urgent attention as can be seen we need to take care of it because when if floods or attending landslides and block the road way, all rich and poor suffer.

Thank you for your support, Abe

(Wilkferg Vanegas - Tuesday, November 25, 2008)

Dear Colleagues,

Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt thanks for all of your interest in this important topic and for taking the time to share your valued opinions and expertise on the matter at hand.

Please see below for my comments on the Natural Disasters section.

41. We will strengthen our mechanisms for the sharing of early warning information on natural disasters, for disaster planning and preparedness, and for managing and coordinating response and relief programmes following a disaster.

This paragraph should emphasize the need to strengthen information sharing mechanisms with the objective of promoting disaster management as a fundamental aspect of planning, and not address specific mechanisms or events such as early warning systems.

In the same token, we should not continue to promote response coordination and relief programs after a disaster as the objective of the activities and programs to be developed. The main objective should be risk reduction, which may be achieved by integrating Risk Management into policy planning and development, which would in turn include the improvement of response mechanisms.

Ultimately, we must promote planning that revolves around Risk Management in all of our countries and in all sectors of society, which is the best mechanism to reduce the socio-economic impact of natural disasters.

*(Wilkferg Vanegas - Tuesday, November 25, 2008)*

42. We instruct Ministers and High Level Authorities responsible for Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the specialised national and regional disaster organizations, to develop, by 2011, a cooperation system within the Americas through which they can collaborate, share information, develop models of good practice, and ascertain which areas of human settlement and sections of essential industrial and transport infrastructure are at risk, and to then ensure that they are either protected or relocated.

Currently, the majority of institutions specialized in disasters, both at the national and regional level, have broad experience in responding to disasters, however even though their mission statements or objectives dictate that they should strive to promote disaster mitigation, there are still very few activities being undertaken and experience is limited. This is caused by the fact that the majority of people who work in the area of risk management have mostly worked in disaster response, which is why they will most likely continue to be engaged in this aspect. In this regard, and considering the complex system required to achieve 'Sustainable Development', we should involve the institutions responsible for finance and planning at the regional, national and local levels, regardless of the fact that many times they will have limited experience in this subject.

On the other hand, the establishment of a cooperation system within the Americas by 2011, should not attempt to create new agencies, networks, or websites. Conversely, further use and coordination of established mechanisms should be promoted, such as the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM), which was recognized by the OAS General Assembly held in Panama on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007. By developing and promoting financial tools for its operation and sustainability, this network could become the ongoing hemispheric mechanism to strengthen hands-on/practical collaboration among intergovernmental agencies in the area of disaster mitigation, particularly through the sharing of technical information and best practices, through the [Regional Disaster Information Center](#) (CRID), among others.

To "share information, develop models of good practice, and ascertain which areas of human settlement and sections of essential industrial and transport infrastructure are at risk, and to then ensure that they are either protected or relocated." (as it appears on par. 41), should not be the main goal of this coordination mechanism either. Its objective should be to share information and determine which risk management mechanisms are most appropriate according to the particular characteristics of each community, including risk-transferring mechanisms such as insurance, cost-benefit analysis, response or rehabilitation funds, regulations, planning and technologies, among others. All of the above involve the identification of "which areas of human settlement and sections of essential industrial and transport infrastructure are at risk", which would then facilitate the formulation of strategies to "ensure that they are either protected or relocated."

*(Wilkferg Vanegas - Tuesday, November 25, 2008)*

43. We will introduce stronger planning and zoning measures to ensure that any future residential, commercial or industrial developments are not located in vulnerable areas, and we will facilitate better access to education, training, land, credit, and housing to ensure that poor people are not trapped in vulnerable areas by the fear of losing their livelihoods.

It should not be overlooked that a great percentage of the population of the Americas lives in high-risk areas, as such, this planning and zoning measures should not only aim for future developments but should also be agreed/coordinated with the private sector through “public-private partnerships” which would allow these families to be re-inserted into socioeconomic activity, and not just the provision of mortgage or agriculture loans which become hard to pay back for most of these families.

(Claudia Salazar - Monday, November 17, 2008)

This comment was sent to the educational portal via e-mail by Mrs. Marilyn Duncan, member of the iEARNtT project, Trinidad and Tobago:

RE: Natural Disasters (Paragraphs 41-43 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)

It is true, we cannot change the weather even as the climate changes. However, we can change our attitude towards how responsible we are and what we can do about the ill effects of climate change, by having a comprehensive Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management Plan. Our country needs proper legislation for Disaster preparedness and Emergency management, law enforcement, and penalties in place where and when the law is not obeyed. Our leaders, and heads of communities, business environment, schools and families will realise that disasters come without much notice, if any; and being prepared saves lives and prevents damage to property.

We have the resources, expertise and manpower. All we need do is to utilise them properly. Put the plan in to action and mandate all companies, schools and individuals to be on the alert. Have biannual drills to ensure that everyone knows what to do when these events occur.

Cuba's experiences during this hurricane season is an excellent example of Disaster preparedness and Emergency Management. Our history does not prepare us mentally for such disasters even though there was an earthquake, 8.0 on the Richter Scale in 1799 which caused much devastation.

Recently, the experience of flooding and the damage it caused was well managed. I applaud the agencies involved for prompt the clean up; and regarding the collapsed bridge, the timely manner in which the Baileys were erected. Yet, the problem of transportation/ traffic remains a major concern and should be addressed in mitigation measures.

Thanks for listening  
Marilyn

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### **3. Environmental governance (Paragraphs 44 - 47 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)**

44. We will also work towards promoting sound environmental governance by strengthening national environmental laws and building institutional capacity to manage environmental resources in accordance with our sustainable development priorities.

45. We also support further dialogue and cooperation under the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#), including the commitments on long-term cooperative action established in Montreal in 2005 and in the [Bali Road Map of 2007](#), and commit to work towards a global agreement at the UNFCCC Meeting in Copenhagen in 2009.

46. We renew our support for the [Inter-American Programme for Sustainable Development \(IAPSD\)](#) and instruct the Ministers and all other authorities responsible for sustainable development to gather in 2010, under the auspices of the OAS, in collaboration with the PAHO and the international financial and development institutions concerned with sustainable development, and with the participation of the academic community and civil society, to assess the achievements of the Programme to date, and to propose, where appropriate, new goals for a renewed IAPSD, with a particular focus on the integrated management of both domestic and shared water resources, prevention and mitigation of disasters, forest and fisheries management, sustainable agricultural management and rural development, ecosystem and biodiversity protection, natural resources



management, urban environmental management and the treatment of hazardous wastes. We will give special attention to the most vulnerable areas, including low-lying coastal regions and small island developing states.

47. We also direct the Ministers and all other authorities responsible for sustainable development, in conjunction with the World Bank and the IDB, working under the auspices of the OAS, to undertake a comprehensive review of the potential impacts of climate change for all the nations of the Americas by 2011, and to formulate national Plans of Action for the management and mitigation of these impacts, with special attention to the needs of people likely to be displaced or to lose their livelihoods. We further instruct that each of these national reviews be used to inform the development of a Regional Strategy for the Management of Climate Change Impacts, to be formulated jointly by the World Bank and the IDB by 2013.

*(Claudia Salazar - Monday, November 17, 2008)*

Greetings to all Participants!

Welcome to the Summits Secretariat third virtual forum on the main themes of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain. To open the discussion on the paragraphs on Environmental Governance, I would like to invite Mrs. Claudia de Windt, Chief of the Environmental Law, Good Governance and Policy Division of the OAS Department of Sustainable Development.

I take this opportunity to thank all of our DSD Colleagues for their support and contributions.

We encourage all participants to contribute to a fruitful and informative discussion!

Regards, Claudia

*(Claudia de Windt - Monday, November 17, 2008)*

Environmental Governance is the foundation for Sustainable Development. Paragraph 44 of the Declaration of the draft declaration of Port of Spain establishes that countries will work towards strengthening environmental laws and building institutional capacity. How can the OAS contribute to addressing these goals? Also, countries of the region face important challenges regarding enforcement and compliance with environmental laws, how can the Summits process support countries in addressing these concerns? Paragraph 46, calls for a renewed Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (PIDS), focusing on different areas of resource management. How can member States address in the context of the draft Declaration of Port of Spain the need for all actions related to sustainable development to be grounded on the rule of law and good environmental governance?

Key aspects of good environmental governance such as access to information, public participation and access to justice are reflected in the spirit of paragraph 47. How can the OAS address these issues to minimize the impact of climate change on vulnerable communities?

*(Abraham Fergusson - Thursday, November 20, 2008)*

Participating in this forum is quite meaningful to us in my country at this time as we take a closer look at climate change and the effects, to bring the message home - we have had rain for the past six days resulting, in flooding, landslides, broken bridges, teachers and students marooned, loss of lives, loss of homes, loss of hours in grid lock traffic jams, economic loss time away from work, school, and the list go on and on; affecting each and everyone so climate change natural disasters affect us all, in this country and throughout the region. it is everybody's business.

We are very pleased to be given the opportunity to carry forward the journey which began a long time ago - believing that:-

“Every school must be introduced to natural disasters and safety education” said the Director General of UNESCO: “it is time for a youth constituency within the international climate change regime “ it must become a reality - it is imperative for the voices of youth to be heard”

We of the Natural Disasters Youth Summit (NYDS) took the message and began the youth focus on holding meaningful summits giving youth the opportunity to research and speak; our last NDYS Summit 2008 was held in Trinidad and Tobago where 300 teachers and students declared in the NDYS Declaration 2008, (made legal by the capital city mayor) “ *That as a Global Village we must resolve to create an awareness to disasters, risk management and the adaptation to global climate change, by forging strong ties between*

youths" and professionals and integrating all countries in an international partnership for this common purpose:

"One Village; One Effort, THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW":

Note: a copy of the document was presented to the V OAS Summit Secretariat during the Florida Forum for Civil Society.

When we called for a "Youth Constituency within the Climate Change Regime of the Hemisphere of the OAS, we repeat - "it must become a reality, it is imperative that the voices of youth be heard:

Climate Change/Natural Disasters cuts across every aspect of life, Water; we need to understand the culture of water to be peaceful, cleansing, but can be destructive. we must focus attention on sanitation health issues Rural Communities - Coastal Erosion, Reefs, Mangroves, Marine life Poverty, and the environment to name but a few.

We call on all young and old alike to join the campaign on Climate Change Care for the Environment, and it will care for us Our message is quite clear:

Better Environment for Sustainable Development -with the hope that the environment would unite us all despite our political or other issues between nations with teachers as guides; children and youth as leaders we can- Change our behavior as individuals; Change in attitude to nature to influence change in policy by those who hold public office

IT CAN BE DONE - WE START BY DOING WHAT IS NECESSARY; THEN DO WHAT'S POSSIBLE, AND SUDDENLY WE ARE DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE - JOIN US

Abe Fergusson  
Youth Ambassador Natural Disasters  
Environmental "Warrior" Agent - National Award for Advocacy  
<http://www.naturaldisastersiearntnt.org>  
[natural disasters iearn tnt.url \(0.199KB\)](http://www.naturaldisastersiearntnt.org)

(Claudia Salazar - Thursday, November 20, 2008)

Dear Abe,

Thank you so much for sharing your experience with us, it is unfortunate that these storms continue to occur and in many instances get worse as an effect of climate change, and I am sincerely sorry that this is currently happening in Trinidad and Tobago. On the other hand, your level of involvement as an advocate for climate change is the type of action that, coming from social actors, may decisively contribute to its mitigation.

It is also important to note that climate change and the mitigation of natural disasters is at the forefront of the regional agenda, as it is reflected by the Draft Declaration of Commitment, which not only states the importance of the issue, but is also a regional call to action.

Paragraph 42 states:

*"We instruct Ministers and High Level Authorities responsible for Sustainable Development.....to develop, by 2011, a cooperation system within the Americas through which they can collaborate, share information, develop models of good practice"*

Do you believe that social actors should also be called upon to play a role in this system?, is the 2011 deadline feasible?, appropriate?

Thank you for your participation!  
Claudia Salazar

(Gia Gaspard Taylor - Saturday, November 22, 2008)

Joining the topic on climate change my take is to encourage our leaders by pushing hard for comprehensive climate change legislation as an essential step in slowing, stopping and/or reversing the catastrophic threats of run away global warming - this is critical

We need to declare WAR on plastics/styrotex they are very bad for the environment and human being –  
We need to create economic incentives to spur green energy innovations  
More and more learning opportunities to allow us all to be educated about the environment.

iEARNTnT, Secretariat.

*(Andy Paul - Monday, November 24, 2008)*

Correct is right Gia. WE need to declare WAR. We have become to docile with environmental matters. It is time for action. In fact, we need a revolution. However, my concern is we need to get to the companies who are making and selling these. What would assist us in this area is data. When we do beach cleanup etc, we need to have the data on plastics etc so we can target these companies, for them to address it.

*(Abraham Fergusson - Monday, November 24, 2008)*

Andy

We do have some data soon to be released as there are some work yet to be done, we cannot sit back and wait on the governments to do everything we have to take action to advocate, motivate speak out to have the message sent, not only for the Caribbean, but Brazil, Columbia, are now feeling the effects of the floods and landslides, loss of lives and communities- like the youth say the time for ACTION is NOW.

*(Abraham Fergusson - Monday, November 24, 2008 09:25:28 p.m.)*

Hi Andy

Great to have you onboard, you are now being you usual self "very active" and I do agree the Sandwatch is a wonderful opportunity to have all ages involved and learning to care for the environment, we know the problem and have offered solutions let us hope they leaders of the region take us at our word.  
Abe

*(Andy Paul - Monday, November 24, 2008)*

This is an area that Governments have to pay close attention. What are our policies/laws concerning development on our pristine beaches? There are too many adhoc development taking place on our beaches. In view of climate change, such poses very serious consequences. Do GOvernments have any programmes in place to check the rate of climate change, rising sea water levels?

May I suggest the Sandwatch programme to all our heads of Government. Seriously consider a Sandwatch programme in communities and schools so that we can better manage our regions" beaches. This is the way to go for sustainable development.

*(Yema Jaikaran - Tuesday, November 25, 2008)*

Fristly Andy, I believe that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago needs to have an understanding of what sustainability is about. Very few if ANY of our major national policies, concerning economic growth reflect any understanding of this term.

On the whole, it is my opinion that the fight against global climate change, is an attitude and what I mean by that, is that we can no longer stop the effects of global climate change, all we can do now is try to minimize it's impact now and for the future. Thus in our day to day living, there needs to be a tangible, visible shift in the way we perceive our environment, our needs and wants. Again on a national scale, the driving force behind this is governmental influence.

On an individual level, I believe if we target small groups within communities (using community centres, schools that are centres etc) and give basic training in what safety kits are, actually showing members of household how to create one. Demonstrate on a local level what simple things, such as replanting trees in gardens etc, can have on the larger picture; then we can start to change the attitude of people towards protecting their environment and themselves.

In short, I am suggesting ways of trying to get people to see themselves as part of the environment and vice versa and therefore be motivated to take care of it.

*(Andy Paul - Thursday, November 27, 2008)*

You are right Yema. It is an ATTITUDE! Safety is also attitude. If we can have programmes especially designed for our youth - school children, youth groups etc, using the media they are fascinated by, as

President elect would say, "Change will come." It is an attitude and the children are the best to start with.

We can use formats such as IT, video, story telling, journalism, drama to effect change. Do not underestimate the power of the creative minds of our youth.

*(Andy Paul - Thursday, November 27, 2008)*

What about our environmental laws? I am happy to know that this is included. However, I urge our Governments/Leaders to act on this. AS we say, "Who will guard the guards?" What are we doing about the implementation of these laws? When was the last occasion someone was charged?

Another point for our esteemed leaders to address. Are we environmentally compliant? Are our new developments, houses, buildings etc "green"? What infrastructure are we putting into place to facilitate such - energy saver bulbs, waste water, efficient use of water, electricity, etc. Are we thinking "green" in our buildings? Hope we consider these. Have a green future people.

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