



National Environmental Education Committee  
In Collaboration with  
Environmental Foundation of Jamaica  
Commonwealth Foundation

National Climate Change Forum for Civil Society  
*"Getting the Facts so We can Act!"*  
November 8-9, 2007  
Hilton Hotel, Kingston Jamaica

Executive Summary



### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The National Environmental Education Committee (NEEC) wishes to acknowledge and thank the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica and the Commonwealth Foundation for their support of this national forum. Thanks go also to the organizing committee, consisting of NEEC and EFJ representatives and to all the presenters, facilitators, performers, and other assistants at the two-day event. The NEEC would also like to show its appreciation for the presence of the media who have demonstrated their willingness to share the issues related to climate change with the Jamaican people.

National Climate Change Forum for Civil Society  
“Getting the Facts so We can Act!”  
November 8 & 9, 2007

Final Report

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 8 and 9 2007, approximately 150 representatives of Jamaica's civil society (CS) – both rural and urban – as well as government planners, public servants, local government representatives, scientists, and donor representatives came together at the Hilton Hotel in Kingston, Jamaica, to discuss how Climate Change (CC) is likely to affect the country – especially as one of the world's most at risk Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The National Forum was organized and coordinated by Jamaica's National Environmental Education Committee (NEEC), in collaboration with and supported by the Commonwealth Foundation and the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ).

The objectives of the National Forum were:

- To bring civil society into the national planning process for Climate Change mitigation and adaptation;
- To raise Civil Society's awareness about the issues related to Climate Change;
- To provide Civil Society input into Jamaica's national preparatory process led by the Meteorological Service, the National Climate Change Focal Point (NCCFP), for meeting the country's obligations to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – particularly in light of the meetings to be held in early December in Bali, Indonesia;
- To identify roles and responsibilities that Jamaican Civil Society would likely have in the preparatory and adaptation process;
- To explore opportunities for community-based CC initiatives;
- And to draft a Civil Society framework for action for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In terms of 'raising public awareness,' an objective which was central to both days, the Forum specifically sought to ensure that the Civil Society participants were brought fully up-to-date and informed, in terms of: (1) Jamaica's obligations; (2) the activities of Jamaica's National Climate Change Focal Point; and (3) the country's own preparatory process within the context of global Climate Change considerations. In this respect, the Forum was very fortunate to have Professor Anthony Chen (Professor for Applied Atmospheric Sciences, University of the West Indies) and a member of the Nobel Peace Prize winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – as its keynote speaker. Also very significant was the participation of, and presentation by, the Minister of Health and Environment, the Honorable Rudyard Spencer – indicating the importance with which the Government of Jamaica is considering Climate Change for the country as a whole.

Professor Chen set the stage for the two-day public awareness process that focused on the likely impact Climate Change will have on Jamaica's coastal zones, health, biodiversity, energy, economy (especially tourism), agriculture, official national planning processes, built environments & human settlements, and disaster risk mitigation planning – through a series of expert panel presentations and discussions. Technical and scientific experts from these fields presented scenarios that focused on the likely impact for each of these sectors.

In addition to the technical presentations, the importance of ‘communication’ in Climate Change, and the need to use culturally relevant methods to engage Civil Society, were also stressed through highly creative and dynamic approaches. The song, “*I Don’t Want to Wash Away*”<sup>1</sup>, the community publication ‘*Voices from Mocho*’<sup>2</sup>, and a special luncheon presentation on Communication and Climate Change, stressed the importance of communication, and reinforced the need to engage the most vulnerable and marginalized in climate change decision-making, as well as the need to use appropriate tools to get the climate change message out to civil society.

Interesting opportunities for civil society to pilot community based projects within the global framework were also presented by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) – as Jamaica was chosen out of many countries to be part of GEF’s global pilot programme for community-based climate change adaptation initiatives.

These technical presentations – which laid out Jamaica’s likely risks, costs, and vulnerabilities (both past, present and future) – provided much ‘food for thought’ among the civil society participants in their Day 2 working discussions as they proposed concrete ‘actions’ for the National Focal Point on CC and for civil society to take home for community action. This was the most important part, and purpose, of the Forum.

### ***Civil Society Forum Recommendations for a Framework for Action***

In consideration of the civil society recommendations from both panel questions and discussions and working group recommendations, and in terms of the technical representations that were submitted, the National Forum resulted in the following recommendations:

#### ***First and Foremost:***

Civil society collaboration with Jamaica’s National Focal Point for Climate Change – especially in view of the country’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Communication preparatory process to the UNFCCC (to be completed by September 2008), now more than ever, needs to ensure principles of good governance and transparency. At the moment, it is not clear how civil society interacts with this important panel. An outcome of the Forum should be a suggested set of civil society representatives, including vulnerable groups (youth, women, poor, rural and urban, and so on), who can engage with the Focal Point, so that their voices are formally included. The NEEC and the Jamaican Environmental Advocacy Network (JEAN) can help to facilitate this engagement and help to identify appropriate representatives.

In terms of the technical considerations, the following major recommendations were also made:

#### ***Coastal Zone Considerations***

- We need to commission ‘Jamaican specific’ scientific studies that will clearly show us what the coastal zone implications will be for our country so that we do not model on external data, but plan for the future based on country specific, scientific data

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<sup>1</sup> Written by the NEEC’s Chair – Marolyn Lucy Gentles, and performed by PANOS ‘youth journalist’ Tameisha Allen and Nicholas Shelton.

<sup>2</sup> Oral history documentations on Climate Change done with the community of Mocho together with PANOS Caribbean

- We need to acknowledge, that our coastal boundaries, realities, and resources – will change with CC. Sea level will rise. Properties will disappear, coastal communities will be uprooted and current investments (Mega hotels, airport reconstruction, parts of downtown Kingston might also disappear);
- We also need to acknowledge that our coral reefs and coastal resources – as we know them now – will be affected by sea level rise and coral bleaching

### ***Fresh Water Resources***

- We need to recognize that fresh water will become more and more of a contested resource in the future
- We need to ensure that water conservation and water conservation technologies become a priority and incorporated into all built environments
- We need to link with the ‘planning of human settlements and built environments’ to ensure that building codes change – so that water conservation and catchment strategies are legally required in every home and building
- Implementation of water quality monitoring systems that engage CS

### ***Health***

- We need to educate the public on the likelihood that diseases such as dengue and malaria will increase in the future
- We need to educate the public in the skills of eradicating and minimizing these illnesses
- Need also to improve both Port Health and Quarantine facilities
- And improve public health infrastructure

One strong recommendation that came from Ms. Huntley from the Ministry of Health and the Environment (MOEH) were the need for “Inter-sectoral” Adaptation Measures including:

- The need to establish waste management and sanitation monitoring systems
- We need to put in place early warning systems as well as epidemic warning systems and reinvigorate the ‘vector control’ system – including visits by ‘Health Inspectors’ in both home and business places
- Enhance Disaster Preparedness Programmes by adding Climate Change safety considerations

### ***Biodiversity***

- We need to acknowledge, that a large part of our endemic biodiversity (and Jamaica is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> globally in this regard), is in danger. We will have to adapt to new climactic realities – and we might have to brace for entirely new ‘species.’
- Scientific strategies need to be developed now to try and preserve as many of our endemic species as possible

### ***Energy***

- We need to find the ‘political will’ which has been missing for the past 20 or so years, to embrace alternative energy technologies instead of carbon-based energy sources.
- We need to allow alternative technologies to link with the official electricity grid – an opportunity which has so far been denied on any economical basis

- Pilot initiatives such as the Wigton wind farm, need to be replicated on a viable economic basis, and further pilot experimentation done with local communities and built structures
- Hydrogen fuel cell technologies also need to be developed and piloted at the community-level
- As a sunshine island, we urgently need to promote solar energy resources
- Also as an island, we need to explore and promote technologies Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) technologies, particularly in light of the fact that the ocean's temperatures will continue to rise
- As our competitiveness in the sugar industry wanes, we need to invest substantially in sugar-based ethanol – a sector in which we not only may be able to develop a competitive advantage, but which may also allow us to keep our current sugar workers employed
- We need to encourage and provide opportunities for Jamaica's engineers, technologists and scientists – to invent new and appropriate technologies for us and our region
- We need to create comfortable, safe, viable, affordable and efficient public transportation systems
- We need to mandate energy-efficient systems in the home, corporate and public environments and levy considerable fines for non-compliance
- In the interim, Jamaica also seriously needs to consider carbon-trading arrangements
- Most importantly, Jamaica – together with other SIDS in the Caribbean and elsewhere – need to lobby for the investment of billions of dollars in this sector

### ***Economy***

- We need to diversify our economic base and become less dependent on tourism – and/or focus on community-based tourism as well as non-winter based tourism
- We need to train our young people in new CC-based careers and to encourage the development of appropriate technologies for SIDS such as our own and through which we may be able to satisfy economic demand

### ***Agriculture***

- We need to see and plan for CC in the context of national food security – first and foremost
- We must explore new “CC-resistant” agricultural technologies now
- We must explore new “CC-resistant” crops for potential production and new agricultural markets
- We must build on our indigenous agricultural technologies
- We cannot assume that irrigation will be possible in the future – and need to develop new alternative water saving technologies that can be incorporated into existing farming systems
- We must develop contingencies and safety plans for the rural poor who are most at risk – the people employed in this sector (and who are still the majority of Jamaica's workforce) – who will be profoundly displaced. Training needs to take place immediately.

### ***Planning, Built Environments and Human Settlements***

- We demand transparency, and clarity on ‘where the buck stops’ within the development approval process so that environmental breaches can be avoided in the first instance and enforced in the second instance, and so that authorities can be held accountable
- We must PREPARE and PLAN now for the ‘worst case scenario’. In other words, we must stop SHORT TERM planning and embrace a LONG TERM PLANNING APPROACH that includes vigilant planning for CC
- We must adopt a ‘culture’ of safety and preparedness – risk preparedness, rather than crisis management
- The engagement of Civil Society in the 2030 planning process needs to be deepened substantially
- We must make use of the many ‘plans’, ‘policies’ and LEGISLATION that we already have in place and in which civil society has invested much time and effort, but for which we’ve seen little use or effect (for example, when it comes to the country’s unplanned settlements and ‘mega’ hotel sectors’)
- Although it is difficult – politically and socially – we must ensure that no citizen of Jamaica ever again builds his or her home in flood or disaster prone areas, as is the case now. This not only costs human lives and personal loss, it costs tax payers money that the country cannot afford.
- We need to create opportunities for encouraging the ‘best and brightest’ of our engineers, planners and architects to invent and design what is best for our country
- We need to reconsider current developments taking place along our shorelines, such as airport refurbishment and expansion, in the light of climate change realities
- The Parish Development Committees (PDCs) need to be strengthened and USED. So much work went into the formation of PDCs through ENACT and other development projects, but they are not fully utilized nor do they have sufficient authority to guide parish planning, let alone CC planning. For the sake of Good governance, the PDCs need to be strengthened not only as part of local government reform, but also in light of the urgency to address CC issues.

### ***Sharing of Best Practices***

The National Forum also resulted in the recognition that there was urgent need to promote new appropriate technologies across all sectors and also to garner existing best practices for each. In this respect, while promoting Jamaican best practices was certainly required, it was also recognized that the country could learn through sharing with other SIDS and especially sister SIDS in the Caribbean. Joint regional pilot initiatives, regional training sessions and regional conferences would go a long way in this regard.

### ***Public Awareness and Communication***

Throughout all the panels, discussions and working group sessions, the importance of communication and public awareness was confirmed. Evaluations indicated that civil society participants were especially appreciative of the technical ‘realities’ presented by the panelists and took home ‘information and knowledge’ that they did not have before. Replicating this awareness, in forms culturally appropriate for the general public (and for the non-literate) is critically important. Further workshops and training will be required to do so.

One very important recommendation in this regard, was made by the Honourable Minister of Health and the Environment, Mr. Rudyard Spencer, in his presentation when he suggested that Jamaica instate an annual National Climate Change week to be held at this same time every November.

But the importance of civil society vigilance and advocacy were also reconfirmed. Civil society cannot assume that just because it has been engaged in this dialogue and process to date, that right decisions will be made in the future. Civil society needs to be fully engaged at all steps of the planning and preparatory process for the 2<sup>nd</sup> communication to the UNFCCC, for 2030 planning and for GEF considerations.

Both Dr. Collins and Prof. Chen in fact made the strong recommendation that SIDS, such as Jamaica, should take a lead role in global advocacy to pressure the governments of Developed Countries to adopt measures to cut carbon emissions drastically and to provide the billions of dollars that will be needed to prepare SIDS technologically.

It was also suggested that ‘easy to use’ glossaries of CC terms and public awareness tool lists be prepared to assist CS in their responsibility to prepare communities.

But the professional media will also need to be given special attention to ensure that they cover CC issues as the news worthy events they are. For the mass media and CS as well, specific recommendations from PANOS included:

- sensitisation seminars for editors on climate change issues
- specialised training for the media to enhance the understanding by media professional of climate change
- There should be a deliberate effort to present people centred climate change stories
- Information sources, such as websites need to be reliable with easy access
- Creation of a public general awareness on climate change issues
- An image bank should be incorporated into websites that enables journalists to download and use images in stories on climate change. This will help combat low literacy levels in some countries
- Policy makers should invest in public media initiatives that will provide space and resources for journalists who want to cover key environmental issues.
- All stakeholders need to engage the interest of journalists
- There should be constant interaction between the people who have the information, the media and those affected.
- Policy makers should make available financial resources for capacity-building programmes for journalists
- The media see a role for themselves in engaging in climate change debates and should be encouraged to do so

### ***Emerging ‘Planning’ Junctures for Civil Society Engagement***

One of the critical outputs of the National Forum was the recognition that Civil Society needs to be fully engaged in ALL of the planning and preparatory processes for which there are currently opportunities. These include:



- Most importantly, the National Focal Point on Climate Change (NFPCC) – 2<sup>nd</sup> communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (due September 2008) and in the socio-economic study that is to be conducted as part of this preparatory process;
- The 2030 planning process (The next draft is to be prepared for January to March 2008 with a view to tabling the plan in parliament in April 2008).
- The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) socio-economic baseline data collection for the Vulnerability Rating Assessment (VRA) process

### ***Roles and Responsibilities for Civil Society in Jamaica***

Most importantly, the Forum also recognized that civil society has clear roles and responsibilities, and can take very clear actions at the community level, in helping to make Jamaica more aware of climate change implications, to engage civil society in decision-making, and – as the front line guards – to help prepare local communities to become prepared for the new climate change realities.

Within this context, it was also strongly recommended at several junctures during the Forum that Civil Society has a particularly vigilant role to play with respect to lobbying and advocacy and that CS within all the SIDS of the Caribbean region should liaise and join forces to demand compensation from developed countries to address CC.

Civil society also has an important role to play in spear-heading technical adaptation ‘pilot projects’ at the community level. Community-based and community-driven pilot activities need to be initiated in all sectors to be affected by CC so that best practices can be gathered and new mitigation/adaptation practices and technologies replicated and put in place before the CC crisis is full-blown. Pilot initiatives should be initiated with the GEF global initiative, but should also not rely solely on these funds. Other resources need to be urgently obtained and solid working partnerships with private sector and research entities forged as soon as possible.

In addition, the Forum also noted that Civil Society needs to play a strong role in the socio-economic study which will be conducted in the new year (2008) by the NFPCC to inform its second communication to the UNFCCC. Input into the design, types of questions to be raised and addressed should be informed by civil society representatives from the current Forum.