



Government Information Service

GOVERNMENT LISTENING TO YOUTH ON ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Government will continue to be receptive to the views and concerns of young people on environmental issues.

This promise was made today by Minister of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage, Dr. Denis Lowe, while addressing the launch of the “Global Environment Outlook (GEO) for Youth in the Caribbean” report at his Hincks Street office.

Dr. Lowe said: “The fact that our youth are given the opportunity to present their concerns about our environment and make proposals for the way forward is not viewed lightly by the Ministry, and you have my assurance that we have begun and will continue to review carefully the input of our future leaders.”

He said the Ministry would continue to develop policies and practices that protect all aspects of the environment, stressing that the contribution of the youth was valuable. He pointed out that the preparation of the document showed that “our youth care about and are interested in the environment and that they are willing to come to government and share their ideas”.

The GEO for Youth of the Caribbean project was started in 2003 through collaboration between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN). Young people from 14 Caribbean countries participated in the project, which showcases research, case studies, personal experiences and artistic contributions from over 150 young people who threw light on the present state of the Caribbean’s environment and proposed strategies to alter negative trends.

Dr. Lowe told the gathering that the initiative demonstrated the ability of the Caribbean islands to work together for the common good. “In a time when many are concerned about the commitment to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy – it is a source of inspiration to see that our young persons are able to articulate so beautifully, a common vision for our region.

“Secondly, a publication such as this gives our Ministry great hope for developing a culture for making informed decisions based on sound and relevant data

collection systems. While this may require a paradigm shift, since our region is constrained by a lack of current environmental data, the skills learnt by the young persons in the course of this exercise will equip them to conduct research and back it up with the necessary facts and figures,” he said.

Tonia Skeete of CYEN described the report as “a unique publication” that engaged young people on a number of human and environmental matters, from sustainable development and biodiversity to climate change. She expressed the hope that the launch would be an impetus for influential segments of Caribbean societies to take greater interest in environmental initiatives. **(SA)**