

What will Jamaica bring to the table in preparation for COP21?

By: Advira Shand

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It was boldly posited by Hon. Robert Pickersgill, Jamaica's Minister of Water, Land, Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change, that, "discussions on intended nationally determined contributions must be mindful of our contexts, development aspirations, national priorities, circumstances and capabilities towards emissions reduction. The adoption of a new instrument to replace the Kyoto Protocols must remain our goal because our future depends on it", during his speech at the opening of the Fifty- Third Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development on the Environment and Sustainable Development at the CARICOM Secretariat Headquarters in 2015. As defined by the World Resources Institute, Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) are post-2020 climate actions countries intend to take under a new international climate agreement which will be sired at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP21). In addition, Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, "will largely determine whether the world achieves an ambitious 2015 agreement and is put on a path toward a low-carbon, climate-resilient future". However, with just a month remaining before the submission deadline for the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions from states within the international community, the Caribbean region is lagging behind in their submissions.

At present, Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic are the only two Caribbean nations that have submitted their INDCs. In early 2015 it was revealed by

Albert Daley, the Head of the Climate Change Division, that Jamaica had retained the services of the National Renewable Laboratory, a United States- based enterprise to provide guidance for the country's INDCs. This move was viewed as a step in the right in the direction, as it is the hope among many Jamaicans that the country's policy-makers will formulate ambitious INDCs that are geared towards ensuring; reductions in emission of greenhouse gases and other unsafe environmental practices, effective climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, and sustainable development. Jamaica, as well as the wider Caribbean region, has become increasingly vulnerable to the unsavory effects of climate change. The region is plagued by widespread droughts, flooding, rising temperatures, unflattering dependence on fossil fuel, and severe and frequent hurricanes and storms, which have all posed a threat to its social and economic security.

In light of these issues, Jamaica's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions will mostly include plans to; create and institute policies which foster the usage of renewable energy, implement a strategy geared towards reducing the emission of GHG in the transportation and manufacturing sectors, implement robust national educational initiatives focused on educating the Jamaican populace about climate change and its effects, and pursue avenues where the country can garner adequate and secure funding for mitigation and adaptation initiatives. Undoubtedly, if these logical predictions come to pass Jamaica will be taking a decisive step towards attaining marked economic and social development and facilitating a global "climate- resilient future".

References

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