



TUNZA



TUNZA / GEO for Youth Sub-regional Workshop for the Caribbean

**August 24th – 25th, 2007.
Georgetown, Guyana.**

As a part from the Regional Office for Latin America & the Caribbean (ROLAC) of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Tunza Strategy, as well as the continuing efforts to integrate this Strategy with the GEO for Youth Process in the region, a TUNZA/GEO for Youth Sub-regional Workshop took place in Georgetown, Guyana, between August 24th and 25th. This workshop was organized by the ROLAC in partnership with the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN), a UNEP partner in the GEO for Youth Process for the Caribbean.

The opening ceremony was in charge of Reginal Burke (Caribbean Youth Environment Network) and Cecilia Iglesias (TUNZA/GEO for Youth LAC). Both of them highlighted the importance of this Workshop to strengthen UNEP's presence in the Caribbean, as well as to share experiences, perspectives and opportunities for youth involvement in sustainable development.



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The workshop began by discussing the participant's expectations through a simply dynamic (expectations' wall). In that regard, most of them were looking for information about TUNZA, GEO for Youth, UNEP's work in the sub-region and opportunities for youth participation. A second group was interested in capacity building to enhance the impact of their work on the environment. Finally, the last group was interested in finding ways in which UNEP and the CYEN can better work together to enable youth empowerment toward a sustainable future for the Caribbean. These expectations were taken into consideration during the workshop but are also considered valuable input for the preparation of the second TUNZA/GEO for Youth Workshop for the Caribbean, which will take place during 2008.

Cecilia Iglesias delivered an institutional presentation about UNEP, covering the following topics: what is UNEP; brief history; mission statement; what UNEP does; UNEP around the globe and the ROLAC; UNEP's Strategy for LA; UNEP's Strategy for Caribbean; and UNEP's Divisions (with an emphasis on the DCPI and DEWA). A following questions session showed that participants were also interested in understanding the importance of UNEP in the eyes of other UN agencies; the benefits of partnering with UNEP; capacity building strategies; opportunities to obtain financial aid in youth-led projects; strategies to disseminate information to the sub-regions; and specific UNEP's projects in the Caribbean.



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Ms. Iglesias also presented GEO, GEO for Youth and TUNZA. In the first case, especial emphasis was put on explaining how GEO processes were the practical implementation of UNEP's mandate to keep the environment under review through a participatory, capacity building, assessment and reporting initiative. Also, the GEO for Youth ALC was presented, covering the following topics: the need for GEO for Youth; brief History; what is GEO for Youth?; objectives; methodology; outputs; Regional Action Plan; where do we stand?; and, where are we heading? Reginald Burke (CYEN Barbados) and Marcia Dolor (CYEN St. Lucia) presented the GEO for Youth in the Caribbean.

Since many of the participants were involved in the GEO for Youth process but most of them had little knowledge about TUNZA, the TUNZA Strategy was presented focusing on the following topics: what is TUNZA?; brief history; differences and similarities between TUNZA and GEO for Youth; lines of action (awareness building, capacity building, information exchange, and facilitating the involvement of young people in decision making mechanisms); the Tunza Youth International Conferences; the TUNZA Youth Advisory Council; and TUNZA activities in LAC.

After the TUNZA and GEO for Youth presentations and a short exchange of their own experiences with both initiatives, a group dynamic took place. The objective was to explore the weak and strong points of UNEP's interactions with the Caribbean Youth. Interesting issues came up that require special attention.



Participants during the group dynamics

Regarding the negative aspects, they agreed that, from their points of view, the main focus is primarily on Latin America and not the Caribbean (for example the GEO for Youth website is in Spanish and more resources are allocated in Latin America); there is a lack of communication between the two regions; UNEP does not efficiently utilise the CYEN to implement its programs and communicate with the Caribbean; and there is a need for a broader public relations strategy at the grassroots level. They also agreed that even though there is a need for a better interaction between the two regions, the Caribbean has different issues and require separate attention.

As for the positive aspects, they agreed that UNEP values the contributions of youth; has scientific information and other resources available for them; make a positive effort to include and empower youth; TUNZA and GEO for Youth unable capacity building; help building friendships so people are comfortable working together; and finally, these initiatives are resourceful, capable and influential.

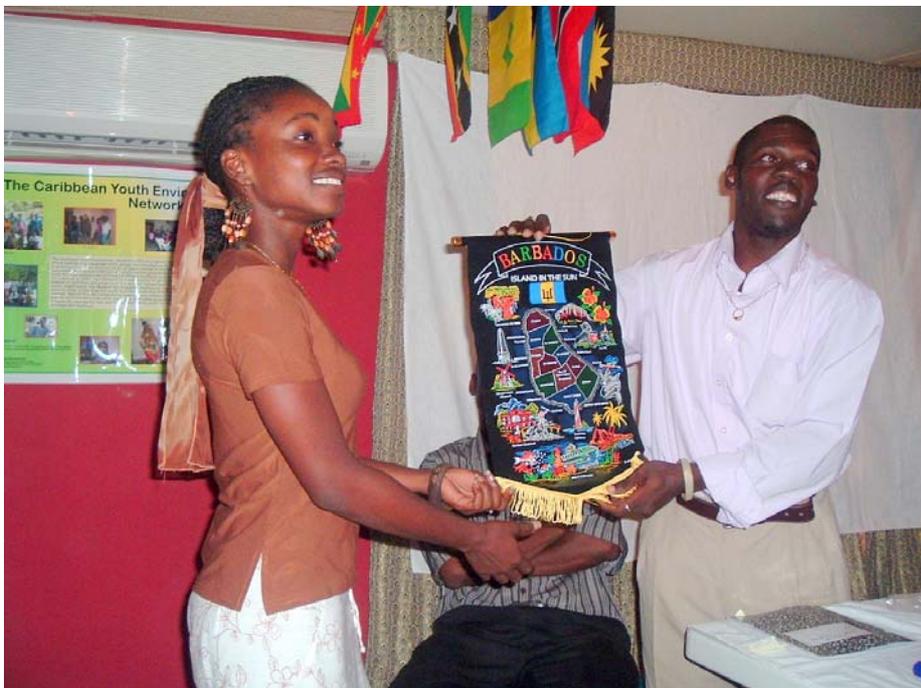
During the second day, we received Nicole Piggot, from the National Ozone Action Unit, Hydrometeorological Service (NOAU/HYMS). She explained the participants the basics of the ozone layer and its depletion, as well as the international efforts to tackle this problem. She explained the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, as model examples of international responses to environmental issues. Finally, Ms. Piggot showed the young participants what NOAU/HYMS is doing toward the phase-out of man-made Ozone Depleting Substances in Guyana.



Nicole Piggot, from the National Ozone Action Unit in Guyana

The final segment of the workshop was devoted to identify ways to improve the work of UNEP with the Caribbean Youth. The main objective of this dynamic was to reach a basic understanding of the most urgent and important steps that -from the perspectives of the participants- need to be taken in order to secure a better implementation of the TUNZA Strategy and the GEO for Youth Process in the Caribbean.

After this fruitful interaction, a closing ceremony took place.



Gifts exchange during the closing ceremony