UNCCD High Level Opening Cermony
May 9th Sofitel Hôtel Ivoire, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

Heads of State and Governments during the opening ceremony

Namibian President Hage Geingob (L), Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari (C) and Democratic Republic of Congo President Felix Tshisekedi (R) are seen during the opening ceremony of the COP15

Scenes from Gender Caucus

GRULAC Meeting

SUMMARY OUTCOMES:
• Panama was elected as the member on the CRIC Bureau
• Argentina and Dominica were elected as members on the COP Bureau
• Mexico was elected as the member on the CST Bureau
• Members of the CRIC contact group will be decided in later sessions of the GRULAC
• St. Lucia was identified and endorsed to sit in the Budget Contact Group
• Ecuador was elected as the next Chair of GRULAC while Brazil was elected Vice Chair.
• Argentina, Ecuador, Trinidad and Tobago and Brazil registered positions on the scheduling of COP 16 which will be decided after further consultation.
• The Moroccan representative, from the Africa group, approached Nicaragua, Chair of GRULAC, about joining forces in negotiations on the Drought Protocol. However, the Chair that there was a lack of information on the Protocol and give a commitment on the recommendation of Morocco. However, Dr. Gaius Eudoxie from Trinidad and Tobago who currently sits on the IWG for drought agreed to deliver a presentation on the Drought Protocol to GRULAC regional meeting tomorow.

GCF Meeting

On May 9th, the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management organized a meeting between the Ministers present from the Caribbean region and members of the Green Climate Fund Secretariat. This meeting served to inform the attendees and the GCF of the national priorities of the countries present as it relates to land resources and to receive guidance from the GCF on the best process forward for accessing funding for the region's LDN transformative project.

Delegates present:
- Honourable Alfred Prospere - Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Rural Development, ST. LUCIA.
- Honourable Cozier Frederick – Minister of Environment, Rural Modernisation and Kalinago Upliftment. DOMINICA – Chairman
- Honourable Vickram Bharrat – Minister of Natural Resources. GUYANA
- Honourable Nelda Tulcey – Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining. BELIZE

GCF Representatives
- Mr. Kabishi Tshilumba – Regional Manager Africa, Division of Country Programming
- Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren – Director of External Affairs
- Chris Dickinson - Ecosystems Management, Senior Specialist, Division of Mitigation and Adaptation.

The Ministers underscored the need to address the drivers of land degradation in the Caribbean; those being agriculture, forestry, and mining activities. Food security was cited as the main theme of the Caribbean's development agenda. It was noted that at the last Heads of Government Meeting of CARICOM, one of the major action items was to cut the region's food importation bill by twenty-five percent by 2025 (25 by 2025 initiative). This is to be achieved through the implementation of integrated, climate smart, sustainable, and economically viable food production systems in the region.

The GCF was apprised of the region's multi-country LDN Transformative Project entitled 'Caribbean Small Island Developing States Initiative on Harnessing Land Degradation Neutrality as a means to Enhance Climate Smart Sustainable Land Management, Climate Resilience and Sustainable Food Security.

The Ministers committed to engaging the region to obtain wider commitment for the project from other country parties and ensuring that the CARICOM food security initiative '25 by 2025' concept is built into the project concept as well as having an 'indigenous peoples' approach.

The GCF provided some guidance and committed to working with the region to access the resoures necessary for the achievement of its LDN Targets and fulfilling their obligations under SDG 15.3 by 2030.

The PISLM indicated that **it** stands ready and committed to continue engaging country parties of the Caribbean subregion in the areas of sustainable land management and sustainable soil management.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification