



1 February 2021

Original: English

**Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management General Assembly
Fifth Session**

Held virtually via Zoom, 25 January 2021

Review of the work done by the 5th PISLM Task Force, Elect the 6th PISLM Task Force and provide general policy guidance to the PISLM for 2021-2022.

**Report of the fifth session of the Partnership Initiative on
Sustainable Land Management General Assembly Meeting, held
virtually via Zoom 25 January 2021**

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|----------|---|
| CRIC | Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| CYEN | Caribbean Youth Environment Network |
| ED | Executive Director |
| FAO | United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization |
| GA | General Assembly |
| GCF | Green Climate Fund |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GM/UNCCD | The Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |
| LDN-TPP | Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects & Programmes |
| LDN-TSP | Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme |
| NAP | National Action Plan |
| NFP | National Focal Point |
| PISLM | Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management |
| PRAIS | Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System |
| SIDS | Small Island Developing States |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |

I. Opening Session

A. Overview by the Executive Director of PISLM

The Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) Executive Director (ED) welcomed delegates and gave a brief overview of the day's session. He thanked those in attendance for the work done during 2019/2020 and extended his appreciation to the 5th PISLM Task Force for providing guidance that ensured a successful cycle.

B. Welcome remarks by Chair of the 5th PISLM General Assembly

The Chair of the fifth session of the Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) General Assembly (GA), Mr. Julius Smith, National United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Focal Point (NFP) for Trinidad and Tobago, opened the session and made a statement. Mr. Smith chaired the meeting in the absence of the substantive Chair, Mr. Trevor Thompson - the National UNCCD Focal Point for Grenada. The Chair noted the uniqueness of this session as it represented the first time that the PISLM General Assembly was being held virtually. The Chair reminded delegates of role of UNCCD NFPs, which includes selecting members of the PISLM Task Force. The Chair of the PISLM GA further reminded the assembly that the cycle of the 5th PISLM Task Force concludes on 25 January 2021. Therefore, the substantive work programme of this General Assembly would be to review the work of the 5th PISLM Task Force, review the work of the PISLM Secretariat for the period 2019-2020 and, select the members of the 6th PISLM Task Force for the period 2021/2022.

C. Welcome Remarks by Chair of the 5th PISLM Task Force

The Chair of the 5th PISLM Task Force, Mr. Enrique Monize, Guyana's UNCCD Focal Point (Acting) welcomed delegates and gave brief remarks. It was highlighted that effective implementation of the UNCCD could significantly contribute to the attainment of poverty eradication and increase food security. Recognition was given to the 5th PISLM Task Force's successful efforts in providing guidance to development of a project titled "CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase 1: Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) multi-country soil management initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and climate-resilient food systems¹." Mr. Monize extended gratitude to the PISLM Secretariat and its Executive Director, consultants, the Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD and other partners for their unwavering support over the years.

¹ <https://www.thegef.org/project/csids-soilcare-phase1-caribbean-small-island-developing-states-sids-multicountry-soil>

D. Round of Introduction from members/ Attendance

Representatives of the following sub – regional country Parties to the UNCCD, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the PISLM Secretariat attended the meeting:

Sub – regional country Parties:

Mr. Oraine Nurse – Antigua & Barbuda
Mr. Jason Williams – Antigua and Barbuda
Ms. Michelle Alvarez – Belize
Ms. Roseli Lisbey - Belize
Mr. Edgar Hunter – Dominica
Mr. Enrique Monize – Guyana
Mr. Trevor L. Benn – Guyana, Outgoing UNCCD NFP, Outgoing CRIC Chair
Mr. Andrea Mahammad – Guyana
Mr. Asib Mohamed – Guyana
Mr. Roland Austin – Guyana
Mr. Chetwynd Osborne – Guyana
Mr. Eder Audate - Haiti
Mr. Patrick Watson – Jamaica
Mr. Alwin Dornelly – St. Lucia
Ms. Rebecca Rock – St. Lucia
Mrs. Souraya Niles-Regis – St. Lucia
Mr. Randolph Edmead – St. Kitts & Nevis
Mr. Fitzgerald Providence – St Vincent and the Grenadines
Ms. Jiechel Kasan – Suriname
Mr. Julius Smith – Trinidad & Tobago

Regional Organizations:

Mr. Kareem Sabir – CARICOM Secretariat
Dr. Richard Blair – CARICOM Secretariat
Dr. Gaius Eudoxie – UWI St. Augustine Campus, Faculty of Food and Agriculture

International Organization:

Ms. Martina Duncan – Natural Resources Officer, FAO
Mr. Pedro Lara Almuedo – Programme Officer, Global Mechanism of the UNCCD

Civil Society Organization:

Mr. Reginald Burke – CYEN Regional Coordinator

PISLM Secretariat:

Mr. Calvin James – Executive Director
Ms. Rosanna Jaskaran – Administrative Officer

Mr. Remalio Persaud – Information Technology Officer
Ms. Alison Alfred – Project Manager (PISLM-Dominica Office)

Absent:

Mr. Trevor Thompson – Grenada

II. Organization of Work

A. Adoption of meeting Agenda

The meeting agenda and work schedule was adopted by unanimous consent.

B. Appointment of the Rapporteur of the General Assembly

Guyana was appointed to serve as Rapporteur for the 5th PISLM General Assembly by unanimous consent.

III. Work of the General Assembly

A. Report from the Chair of the 5th PISLM Task Force

The Report from the Chairman of the PISLM Sub-Regional Task Force contained in document *PISLM/GA_5.3* was presented to delegates. A summary of the Chairman's Report on the work of the 5th PISLM Task Force read as follows:

The 5th PISLM Task Force had an unprecedented term which included overseeing the development of the Caribbean's first multi-country Land Degradation project called "CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase1: Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) multi-country soil management initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and climate-resilient food system" which was completed and submitted to the GEF Secretariat the end of 2020; provided guidance for strengthening the capacity of the PISLM Secretariat and; lobbied to have Caribbean Focal Points sit on both the CRIC Bureau and the COP Bureau.

During the Period 2019/2020 two concepts were tabled but not carried through, namely, the development of a multi-country Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Transformative Project concept note and, the review of the PISLM Declaration of 2005. In the first instant the Green Climate Fund (GCF) ceased funding for multi-country projects and, in the second instance the PISLM Secretariat requested more time to engage in meaningful consultations.

Taking into consideration that all 13 countries of the Caribbean Community have now volunteered to developing their LDN-TSP as a methodology for meeting their obligations under SDG 15.3, the 5th PISLM Task Force recommends that the PISLM Secretariat be mandated to review and update its concept note on the Multi-country Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Transformative Project that was approved in 2019 and, that the PISLM Secretariat continue and complete its work on Decision 03/5TF.2.

Dominica thanked the Chairman of the 5th PISLM Task Force and Guyana for its sterling leadership over the 2019-2020 cycle and congratulated Guyana for the sturdy foundation it has laid, namely hosting CRIC 17, overseeing the development of the SOILCARE Programme and ensuring that the PISLM Secretariat's work was community-driven, in particular the novel approach of using the Secretariat to facilitate a multi-country approach, for example in PRAIS Reporting.

Dominica moved a motion to adopt The Report from the Chair of the 5th PISLM Task Force. The motion was seconded by St. Lucia. The Report from the Chair of the 5th PISLM Task Force as contained in document PISLM/GA_5.3 was adopted.

B. Report from the Executive Director

The Executive Director (ED) of the PISLM Secretariat congratulated Guyana for its sterling work as Chair of the PISLM Task Force over the previous two cycles which has laid the foundation to take PISLM to the next level. He further thanked Guyana for Hosting PISLM via a Host Country Agreement with PISLM

The Report on the accomplishments for the 2019/2020 PISLM Work Programme contained in document *PISLM/GA_5.2* was presented by the ED to delegates.

The ED indicated that the capacity of the PISLM Secretariat has been strengthened through the modernization of its Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), which were approved in 27 July 2020. The new SOP strengthens the Secretariat's anti-fraud, anti-corruption, anti-bribery, human resource and cyber policies. There was also the filling of the post of Administrative Officer in October 2020. In addition, the PISLM Secretariat has digitized its accounting procedures.

The ED reported that the PISLM declaration of 2005 was reviewed and it was recommended to the Task Force to take into consideration the new realities of the Caribbean and that PISLM has evolved from a project into a stand-alone inter-governmental organization. The review of the agreement establishing PISLM will be presented to the incoming Task Force as an agenda item for action.

The ED also reported on the “*CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase1: Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) multicountry soil management initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and climate-resilient food system*”, a multi-country project to be implemented in 8 Caribbean SIDS in collaboration with FAO of the United Nations. The project is being finalized by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and PISLM is in the final stage of negotiating a contract with the implementing agency - FAO. Talks with countries commenced about CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase2.

Gratitude was expressed, by the ED, to Dominica for reposing trust in PISLM in executing two GEF land degradation projects: 1) Strengthening resilience of agricultural lands and forests in Dominica in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, and 2) Sustainable Land Management in The Commonwealth of Dominica Project.

The ED noted the success of the multi-country approach to PRAIS reporting employed during the last reporting cycle and expressed hope that the methodology would continue with the next Task Force.

Country Parties thanked the ED for his presentation and affirmed their participation in the LDN TSP Process with appreciation of support received from PISLM Secretariat and the GM and notes the success of the PRAIS reporting facilitated by the PISLM Secretariat. Country Parties also thanked PISLM for serving as an executing agency with UNEP as implementing agency on two projects in Dominica, and in the development of the SOILCARE project.

Jamaica enquired as to the status of negotiations between PISLM and FAO as it relates to issues raised during the validation exercise for the SOILCARE Project.

The ED reminded delegates of the issues, namely: **1)** countries’ control over the work products derived from the SOILCARE project, soil maps in particular, **2)** the mode of disbursement of funds and **3)** national consultants are recruited for in-country capacity building. He informed delegates that negotiations are well on the way between FAO and PISLM and both parties have acknowledged the points raised during the validation workshop of the SOILCARE Project and have agreed that these points will be considered during the negotiation process.

UWI made an intervention enquiring about the overall human resource development noting that PISLM has increased its mandate and a work programme to look at project development and implementation and whether there was a plan for the sustainability of the human resources within the Secretariat. PISLM is a country-driven agency that works with states to build capacity. The Chair proposed that the idea of expanding PISLM be examined in the upcoming cycle as it is potentially a critical issue.

FAO made an intervention thanking country Parties for their engagement in the SOILCARE Project and expressed anticipation of the next stage of the process. (*see Annex 4*)

St. Vincent and the Grenadines moved a motion to adopt the Report from the ED on the accomplishments for the 2019/2020 PISLM Work Programme. The motion was seconded by Jamaica. The Report on the accomplishments for the 2019/2020 PISLM Work Programme as contained in document *PISLM/GA_5.2* was adopted.

C. Report from the Caribbean Representative of the CRIC Bureau

Mr. Trevor L. Benn, the Caribbean Representative on the CRIC Bureau, made an oral presentation to the General Assembly and adopted by the delegates. Mr. Benn reported that the nineteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 19) to the UNCCD is scheduled to be held virtually from 15-19 March 2021. The session will be truncated due to the issues associated with hosting such a session virtually, given the tedious nature of the conference, particularly associated with contact group meetings and the related intergovernmental negotiation process. Country Parties will meet over the 5-day period for two hours per day at times which are provided on the UNCCD website for guidance. Meetings of affected country Parties of the Convention's Regional Implementation Annexes will also be held virtually and commence in February 2021.

The official documents of CRIC 19 are now available² and the agenda for the meeting comprise six (6) items as follows:

1. Opening of the session
2. Organizational matters
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda and schedule of work
 - (b) Appointment of the Rapporteur of the Committee
3. Effective implementation of the Convention at national, sub-regional and regional levels
 - (a) Update on the implementation of the voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and related implementation efforts
 - (b) Update on the operationalization of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund
 - (c) Update on the implementation of the Drought Initiative and related implementation efforts
4. Interim report of the intergovernmental working group on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the UNCCD

² <https://www.unccd.int/official-documents/cric-19-bonn-2021>

5. Adoption of the report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to the Conference of the Parties
6. Closure of the session

The Caribbean Representative emphasized that there will be no contact group meeting for CRIC19 but stressed country Parties' completion of LDN processes at national and sub-regional levels is an important issue that should be addressed. The Caribbean Representative noted that Country Parties were lagging in the work mandated by the COP on LDN Transformative projects, however, the Caribbean seems to be leading the way with the SOILCARE Project. Additionally, the Representative urged Country Parties to follow regional conversations beginning in February 2021 to determine what are the positions being put on the table and those which the Caribbean would be willing to support.

The Chair of the GA requested that the ED facilitate a CRIC19 Caribbean Workshop to ensure the Caribbean's position is formulated before CRIC19.

IV. Election of the 6th PISLM Task Force:

A. Appreciation to the outgoing members of the 5th PSILM Task Force & UNCCD Focal Points that retired during the 5th Cycle

The ED joined the Chair in expressing appreciation to the outgoing 5th PISLM Task Force comprising Guyana, Belize, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and Haiti. Thanks were also conveyed to Mr. Alfred Prospere of St. Lucia, who retired in 2020, for his service not only in representing St. Lucia but the Caribbean at all levels of the UNCCD and PISLM. Thanks were expressed to outgoing Chair of the PISLM Task Force Mr. Enrique Monize, and previously Mr. Trevor L. Benn, for the work done in ensuring that the cycle is closed on a high note.

B. Election of the 6th PISLM Task Force

The Chair handed over this segment of the meeting to the ED who served as the elections officer for the elections process.

The following member states were elected by unanimous consent to form the 6th PISLM Task Force to serve from 2021-2022:

1. Dominica (nominated by St. Lucia; seconded by Trinidad & Tobago)
2. St. Lucia (nominated by Dominica; seconded by Belize)
3. Belize (nominated by Dominica; seconded by Jamaica)
4. Jamaica (nominated by St. Lucia; seconded by Dominica)
5. Antigua and Barbuda (nominated by Belize; seconded by Jamaica)

Standing “Committee” members on the Task Force include: CARICOM Secretariat, FAO, UNEP, UNCCD and UWI as standing committee members.

Ex-officio members include Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana (previous and current PISLM Secretariat host countries)

Civil Society representation: Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN)

The ED commended best wishes to the new Task Force and pledged the Secretariat’s readiness in working with the Task Force.

V. Plenary Session I:

Due to the several challenges facing Caribbean SIDS, what further Services are required from the PISLM?

Dominica made an intervention calling for consideration in light of COVID-19 of an appropriate response as PISLM which seeks to encourage, facilitate and promote sustainable land use activities, resilient livelihood options and opportunities and sustainable infrastructure to support green recovery and future resilience in Caribbean SIDS. Dominica called on PISLM to provide leadership necessary for transformative response to COVID-19. Dominica stands ready to support this effort and work closely with PISLM Secretariat in undertaking such a mission and called on all Caribbean SIDS to contribute in like manner.

The Chair proposed convening a working group to discuss the modalities by which the upcoming agenda could be advanced. The Chair charged Dominica with developing a draft/framework concept of an appropriate approach for further discussion leading to the development of a finalized plan which can be adopted by the Task Force within one month.

The GM/UNCCD Representative suggested perusal of the content of the renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) being concluded between UNCCD and

CARICOM Secretariat, as relevant elements to advance in the implementation of post COVID-19 recovery efforts may fit well under the joint action framework foreseen in this MOU, for which PISLM was designated as the implementing body. The MOU is in the final stages of signature as it is to be countersigned by CARICOM Secretariat.

The Chair suggested that the Task Force wait on the finalization of the MOU to gauge how closely PISLM's approaches align with it. However, Jamaica proposed, and it was agreed that the Task Force, proceeds with conceptualizing post COVID-19 activities as what would be developed would not diverge greatly from the MOU and further, future adjustments could be made.

CARICOM noted that the legal review of the MOU is now completed and the document is with the Office of the Deputy Secretary General for final review. The ED of the PISLM Secretariat acknowledged the work being carried out by the CARICOM Secretariat and thanked the CARICOM Secretariat for their continued support.

UWI made an intervention proposing that PISLM and member states work more closely with other stakeholders in land management particularly in the areas of land use policy and physical planning for harmonized implementation across the Region ensuring integration of policy, legal and technical aspects leading to built-in sustainability.

Belize made an intervention in support of UWI's intervention and proposed that the Task Force look at different approaches for the implementation of the LDN Targets for countries that have completed the process, and for continued support to country parties for reporting obligations. Other areas of support include Monitoring and Reporting and seeking funding sources for regional LDN transformative projects.

The Chair urged country Parties to become familiar with each other's National Action Plans (NAPs) and understand the SLM priorities of the various countries to support coherent formulation of a sub-regional approach for SLM and/or LDN.

VI. Plenary Session II:

Briefing Session from GM/UNCCD

Mr. Pedro Lara Almuedo, Land Use and Climate Change Officer of the GM/UNCCD, in his capacity as Team Lead of the LDN-TSP and Regional Lead for TSP and TPP work in Latin America and the Caribbean briefed delegates on the work of the GM/UNCCD conducted in the sub-region, in collaboration with the PISLM Secretariat, during the last cycle.

He noted that despite the COVID-19 challenges the GM support to Caribbean countries for the LDN TSP and the development of LDN Transformative Projects and Programmes (TPP) leading to LDN implementation has effectively continued.

A majority of countries have now completed LDN target setting at the technical level, with some countries only left to validate their reports. Barbados is a newcomer to LDN-TSP with advertisement of a consultant initiated to support the TSP. The Bahamas remains the only country that has not started the TSP. However, the door remains open for Bahamas to receive support from the GM and contacts have been initiated in this regard.

In terms of TPP, in June 2019 the GM launched an open call for EOI with specific selection criteria for countries interested in developing TPP with support from the GM. As a result of the response of UNCCD NFPs to this call, the GM is currently engaged in two national projects in the Caribbean, in Grenada and the Dominican Republic, both of which are in the stage of concept note proposals aimed at the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

There is also the multi-country exercise. In December 2017, UNCCD signed a LOA with PISLM to develop a LDN Project concept note aimed at GCF. This concept note was delivered in 2018 with a budget of US\$12M. Eleven countries were involved, having a regional level project component and a country specific component under which Guyana and St. Lucia defined country specific interventions. However, when the concept note was completed, the GCF changed their internal policies for pursuing multi-country proposals. Consequently, the process was put on hold.

In December 2020, the GM successfully re-engaged the GCF in informal consultations to gauge the timing of resuming this process, to which positive feedback was received from the GCF secretariat. Based on this, the process has now been resumed with the idea of scaling up the country-specific component of the proposal for a more ambitious project; given that the majority of countries now have set their LDN targets. With more countries envisaged to define country-level interventions, the project which could easily reach a budget in the range of US\$50-100M.

The idea of relaunching the multi-country LDN Project initially developed in 2018 was welcomed by delegates as one of the key priorities for PISLM and the work of the Caribbean subregion during the 2021-2022 biennium. For this purpose, the GM reconfirmed its commitment and continued support, putting in value the solid work previously done and building synergies with the SOILCARE project.

In this regard, the GM is currently in the process of recruiting a specialized consultant to support this work with Caribbean countries during 2021-2022 in direct coordination with PISLM.

As part of this consultancy, during the first half of 2021, the specialist consultant will undertake a situational analysis in order to assess potential and recommended GCF accredited entities that Caribbean countries may consider engaging for this project.

GM/UNCCD called upon the remaining countries which have not completed yet the LDN-TSP to do what is possible to finish the process as soon as possible, as it is critical for countries to have LDN Targets validated and adopted at the national level and that national LDN reports are endorsed by the respective authorities, as these are key reference documents that will strengthen the case for this GCF proposal.

Jamaica made an intervention thanking the GM/UNCCD for its presentation and looked forward to stronger and greater work with the GM/UNCCD.

Dominica thanked the GM/UNCCD for their presentation and expressed the hope that PISLM would have a substantial role in executing this new initiative.

Antigua and Barbuda and St. Vincent and the Grenadines thanked GM/UNCCD for its presentation and support received. St. Vincent pledged to finalize and validate its LDN-TSP for endorsement by Cabinet during the coming weeks.

Haiti made an intervention enquiring how the GM/UNCCD can continue supporting countries that are still finalizing the LDN-TSP, particularly in the final phase where stakeholder consultation is needed in light of COVID-19.

A virtual validation workshop was suggested as the best way of conducting this process. The GM continues to support countries participating in the LDN-TSP and budget is still available to support in-country workshops if local public health situations allow.

The Chair made an intervention, in his capacity of Trinidad and Tobago delegate, indicating that the identification of extra-governmental funding should be a priority for the Task Force and stressed the importance of Monitoring and Evaluation, which is mostly dependent on remote sensing.

VII. Closing Session

The Chair in his concluding remarks underscored that identification and mobilization of extra-governmental funds for LDN and SLM Programmes should be a priority for the 6th

PISLM Task Force and stressed the importance of Monitoring and Evaluating the progress made, particularly under the LDN-TSP, which is mostly dependent on remote sensing. He noted that while the official timeline for achieving LDN is 2030 ways must be found of monitoring and evaluating this progress. He urged that should county Parties come across solutions to these issues, to firstly ventilate them with the PISLM. The Chair expressed anticipation of the product of the working group in terms of draft ideas as proposed by Dominica. The Chair wished the Task Force and country Parties a very productive 2021-2020 biennium.

The ED informed that the report and the policy framework will be finalized by the Chair and presented to the Task Force. This will form the first policy input to the Secretariat for the 2021-2022 cycle. The ED expressed the hope that through the SOILCARE Project the high-level forum can be constituted, which will form a significant part in the oversight of SOILCARE. It is anticipated that this will be established by the end of the first quarter of 2021. The ED thanked delegates for their participation in the General Assembly and looked forward to working with the 6th PISLM Task Force.

Annex 1

Group Picture

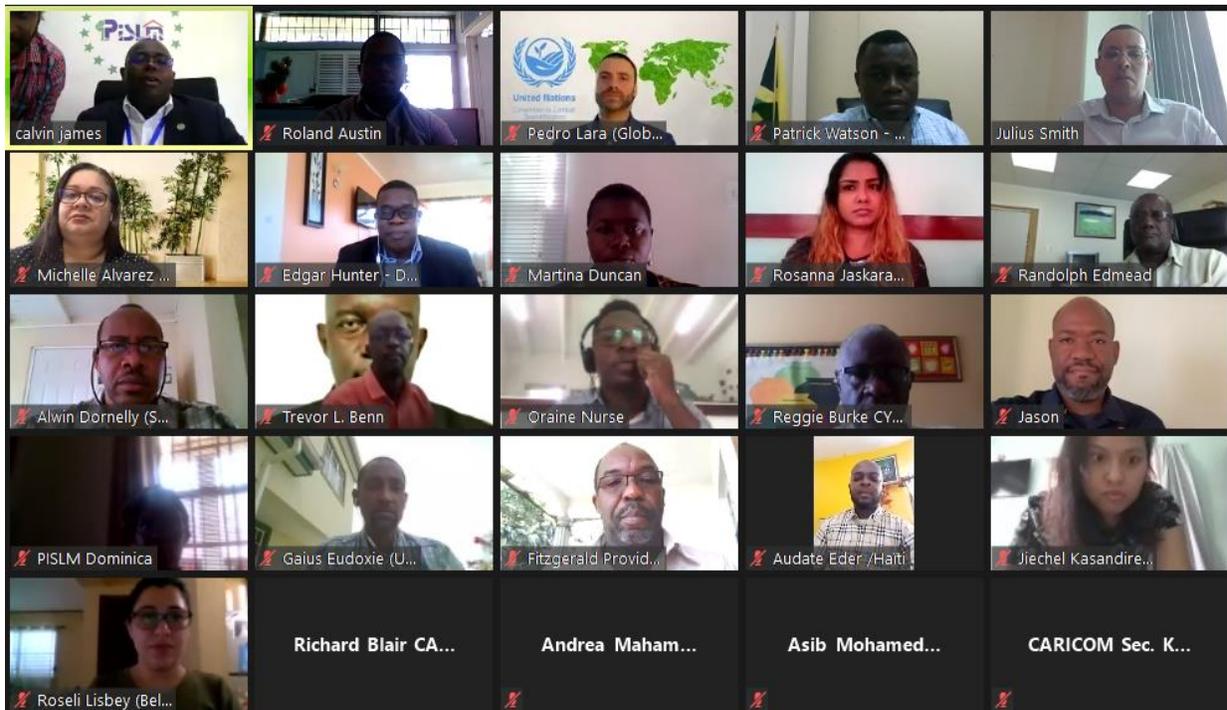


Figure 1: A snapshot of some participating delegates in the virtual 5th PISLM General Assembly

Annex 2

Welcome Remarks by Chair PISLM GA

Mr. Julius Smith UNCCD National Focal Point for Trinidad and Tobago

Permanent Secretaries, National UNCCD Focal Points, Chair of the PISLM Task Force, Executive Director of the PISLM Secretariat, Partner Agencies, Civil Society, ladies and gentleman Good Morning, and welcome to the 5th Session of the PISLM General Assembly. This session is unique because it's the first time in the history of the PISLM that the General Assembly would be held virtually.

The role of the UNCCD Focal Points who are members of the PISLM Assembly are as follows:

- i. The provision of information on activities at the National level on ongoing activities, including the implementation of the NAPs. Based on the information provided by the NFPs the PISLM Support Office will work together with the NFPs to provide technical backstopping and assist in mobilizing resources;
- ii. Work in collaboration with the PISLM Secretariat towards the production of a sub-regional action programme, within the context of the UNCCD;
- iii. Provide guidance
- iv. Select members of the PISLM Task Force

Today, it is my hope that we would provide sufficient guidance for the work of the PISLM Secretariat and that we would select the 6th PISLM Task Force.

So, let's prepare to have a robust and productive session and point PISLM in the direction that builds on the gains from the last cycle.

Annex 3

Remarks by Chair of the 5th PISLM Task Force

Mr. Enrique Monize, Commissioner/CEO – Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission, UNCCD National Focal Point for Guyana

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen

- It gives me great pleasure to welcome you most cordially to the Fifth Session of the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) General Assembly (GA), which seeks to review the work done by the Fifth PISLM Task Force, Elect the Sixth PISLM Task Force and provide general policy guidance to the PISLM for the next two years. It is truly an honor to share this experience with my fellow UNCCD focal points from Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- In my capacity as Chair of the Fifth PISLM Task Force (2019-2021) along with the other members, we strive to provide operational policy guidance to the Caribbean sub-regional grouping of the UNCCD taking into consideration the policy directives which are provided by the various Ministerial Bodies.
- The UNCCD provides the global framework for addressing land degradation and SLM issues in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Given the scope of this instrument, which, if used effectively, could significantly contribute to the attainment of the objectives of poverty eradication and food security in line with the Convention’s mandate.
- We certainly need to recognize our successful efforts during the fourth and fifth PISLM Task Force as affected country parties of UNCCD in collaborating to implement a project titled “CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase 1: Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) multi-country soil management initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and climate-resilient food systems.”
- The CSIDS-SOILCARE project, which is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), has approved the Project Identification Form (PIF) in June 2018 and the eight participating Caribbean countries have initiated and completed nationally driven processes through the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) to develop the full project document, which was submitted to the GEF in December 2020.

- Gratitude is also extended to the Executive Director of PISLM, Consultants, the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD and other partners for their unwavering support over the years.
- I take this opportunity to thank the PISLM Support Office under the auspicious guidance of the Executive Director, for organizing this General Assembly and wish all participants utmost success throughout this period.

I thank you.

Annex 4

Remarks by the FAO Representative

“FAO thanks the countries for entrusting us with delivering the SOILCARE project and the PISLM for the positive engagement thus far in developing the project, while ably representing the views and requests of the countries.

FAO remains committed to supporting the countries of the region based on needs and requests and SOILCARE is a major priority in our work programs for all participating countries in the coming years.

We look forward to moving on to the next stage of the process.”