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COLLABORATIONS THAT MAKE AN IMPACT

Impetus is a powerful thing. When a highly motivated group collaborates to make great things happen, and the question of exactly who started the momentum ceases to matter, the trajectory of a whole region can be changed for the better. For the PISLM, the collaborative momentum has already made a hugely positive impact on the lives and futures of the people in CARICOM.

As we come to a successful end of the Sustainable Land Management in the Commonwealth of Dominica Project, and forge ahead with eight landmark national soil surveys, reforestation and sustainable and Climate Smart agriculture work, we count it a blessing to see smiles on faces and new doors opening for our stakeholders. Indeed, the momentum is fueling much progress for the people of the Caribbean.



Partnership Initiative on
Sustainable Land Management

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NEWSLETTER

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ACCELERATING ACTION IN THE CARIBBEAN AT THE PISLM 5TH HIGH LEVEL FORUM

The PISLM High Level Forum was held in March at the Brix Autograph Collection under the chairmanship of the Hon. Cozier Frederick, Minister of Environment, Rural Modernization, Kalinago Upliftment and Constituency Empowerment of the Commonwealth of Dominica. Thirty (30) participants from around the region attended this fifth high level meeting. It featured ministers and UNCCD national focal points of 11 nations, including The Bahamas, St. Kitts, and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname. Representatives of the PISLM, IICA, OECS, UNEP, and CARICOM were also in attendance.

During the 3-day conference, nine (9) groundbreaking decisions were adopted. These include:

Decision two (2) assigned of mandates to the two support groups formed in December 2022 on World Soil Day (see our January 2023 newsletter for more information) and a recently formed

Caribbean Soil Laboratory Network.

Decision four (4). In this decision, the development of a 5-year strategic plan for PISLM, to be completed and submitted by the end of 2023 was approved.

Decision six (6) saw the proposal of the Caribbean Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Transformative Project aimed at using LDN methodology to avail approximately US\$90M to enhance climate smart SLM, climate resilience and sustainable food security in the Caribbean sub-region. PISLM was directed in this decision to finalize a concept note and other details to launch this project in 2025.



Hon. Minister Fredrick

Decision seven (7) gave the PISLM the green light to arrange for the establishment of an LDN financial mechanism to bring relief, opportunities and assistance to farmers, communities, youths, and indigenous people for mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management in the region.

The talks were rounded out with a dinner and a distinguished service awards ceremony. Previous UNCCD National Focal Points in Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada and Guyana were recognized for their contributions to the goals of Sustainable Land Management

In his closing remarks, Minister Frederick said that that there were fruitful discussions and that he looked forward to further collaboration as the Caribbean moves forward in meeting its obligations under the UNCCD.

From Left to Right: Lakeram Singh-Chief Technical Officer, Kiefer Jackson-Chief of Staff, Calvin James-Executive Director, Hon. Penelope Beckles of Trinidad and Tobago and Tricianna Maharaj-PISLM Liaison Officer

PISLM PARTNERED WITH DOMINICA FORESTRY DIVISION FOR INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FORESTS 2023 ACTIVITIES

There were big smiles all around as youth from four schools in the Portsmouth area immersed themselves in a tree planting exercise at the Portsmouth Public Library, organized by the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) and the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division. The activity was in celebration of International Day of Forests, this year observed under the theme "Forests and Health."

"In Dominica as a forest country, we respect the whole movement, so we hope to continue," says Bradley Guye, Forest Officer in Charge of Research, Monitoring and Environment Education.

"We would like to say thanks to PISLM for the support." Mr. Guye helped the students from the Portsmouth Secondary and Arthur Waldron SDA Secondary schools' Environment Clubs and students from the St John's Academy and Academix School of Learning to plant agro-forestry tree species to include Dominica's national flower, the Bwa Kwaib, as well as some fruit trees and ornamental plants. Although Dominica prides itself as the 'Nature Island' of the Caribbean and over 70% of the island is covered in forests, including 3 forests reserves, climate change has negatively impacted the forests.

The tree-planting event was therefore an important and impactful learning tool for students to know the benefits of forests. Combatting climate change by purifying the air, protecting watersheds, holding up the soil are some of the benefits of forests. The benefits are also socio-economic and even psychological contributing to poverty alleviation and emotional improvement through the "Strengthening Resilience of Agriculture Lands and Forests in Dominica in the Aftermath of Hurricane Maria" Project, the PISLM is pushing reforestation forward. Under the Project, the Division has received equipment worth over \$60,000.00 USD and government nurseries were rehabilitated for the propagation of about 10,000 new trees per year. The purpose of this intervention is to facilitate the reforestation of de-nuded (having no leaves on the trees) forests. Apart from learning about and planting trees, the students were also provided with a display of books on the environment available at the Library. They were provided with shirts commemorating the occasion and both the students and their schools were given trees to grow at home and on campus resp a display of books on the environment available at the library



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They were provided with shirts commemorating the occasion and both the students and their schools were given trees to grow at home and on campus respectively. As part of International Day of Forests activities, PISLM Dominica's National Project Coordinator Euan James and representatives from the Forestry Division and Dominica Water and Sewerage Company (DOWASCO) took part in a panel discussion on Dominica's Government Information Service (GIS).

The Division also held a primary school 4-H Club poster competition with prizes sponsored by the PISLM and with Miss Dominica2023 Adicia Burton joining the judge's panel. [Click here to see the interview.](#)

International Day of Forests is celebrated annually on March 21st by nations around the globe to highlight forests and raise awareness of their importance to sustainable livelihoods. IDF was established by a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on November 28

"Persons may see forests in the distance and think that they are far removed, but the forests' impact on our everyday lives is closer than many of us realize, and vice versa," said Euan James - Dominica National Project Coordinator. "We have to protect our forests in order to protect ourselves," he added

MISSION: DOMINICA 2023

Rosseau, Dominica

Members of the PISLM team traveled to Dominica during the first week of April for meetings and other activities on a one-week mission just before Easter weekend. The team, led by Chief Technical Officer Lakeram Singh, began the week with a Technical Working Group meeting. Representatives from the Dominica Water and Sewage Corporation (DOWASCO), the Forestry Division, the Dominica Bureau of Standards (DBoS), and the newly formed Dominica Chapter of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network attended. Dr. Davidson Lloyd, one of PISLM's two Watershed Consultants on the Dominica projects, presented his plan for the rehabilitation of the Batalie Watershed. The plan includes continued maintenance of the watershed using SLM best practices. A discussion ensued between the DOWASCO and Forestry representatives solidifying their commitment to collaborate to implement the plan.

On day two, National Project Coordinator Euan James held a handing-over ceremony to present completed Land Use Plans to the government and vital equipment to Dominica's farmers. Roseau, Dominica's Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Rural Modernization, Kalinago Upliftment and Constituency Empowerment Sylvania Burton was on hand to give opening remarks and accept the plans on behalf of Dominica. Kent Copiel, Technical Specialist at IICA Delegation in Dominica was also present to present the equipment and materials. Several local farmers were present to represent their cohort in acceptance of the gift.

After a day of site visits, the week culminated in a meeting of the Project Steering Committee, which was covered on Dominica GIS

[Click to view news report \(from 11:38\).](#)



Permanent Secretary Mrs Sylvania Burton with NPC Euan James

REGIONAL AGRICULTURE EXPERTS TRAIN IN DIGITAL SOIL MAPPING



St. Augustine, Trinidad

In connection with the recent launch of PISLM's Landmark Regional Soil Surveys under component 1 of the CSIDS-SOILCARE Project Phase 1, technical staff from the Ministries of Agriculture from 8 Caribbean nations have now received training in Digital Soil Mapping.

The training was provided as a collaborative effort by the PISLM Regional Research, Advisory, and Capacity Building Facility on New Adaptation Technologies (RAC on NAT), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (UN FAO), and The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus (UWI). This capacity-building workshop will help accomplish the objectives of components 2, 3, and 4 as well as the overall objective of the SOILCARE project.

The RAC on NAT establishment supported and facilitated all capacity building and training needs for this activity. Participants traveled from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, and St. Lucia to participate, while participants from Haiti attended virtually. Topics covered included training in R programming language and R Studio, as well as basic statistics, among other highly specialized skills.

The objective of the course was to provide participants with the fundamental knowledge and tools for the generation of Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) stocks and soil nutrient maps using the Digital Soil Mapping framework of the Global Soil Partnership. The course covered all the stages of mapping soils at the national scale, including sampling design and soil survey strategies, data management, data pre-processing,

data analysis, and results reporting. Dr. Marcos Esteban Angelini of the UN FAO Land and Water Division was the instructor. Dr. Angelini is stationed in Argentina and thus far has been the person responsible for designing the soil sampling surveys for SOILCARE beneficiary countries.

BARBADIAN AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER AND RESEARCH SCIENTIST SHERRY-ANN ALLSOPP SPEAKS ON SOILCARE DIGITAL SOIL MAPPING TRAINING

A Research Scientist with over 20 years' experience in the physical and life sciences, Mrs. Sherry-Ann Allsopp is the Project Assistant for the CSIDS SOILCARE Phase 1 Project in Barbados. The project is being executed from Barbados

Natural Heritage Department of the Ministry of Environment, National Beautification, Green and Blue Economy. She was one of the 15 delegates to attend the recent PISLM Digital Soil Mapping workshop, held at UWI St. Augustine April 17- 21st, where she learned to code using R. R programming language was created for statistical computing and graphics. Sherry-Ann shared some of her thoughts on the workshop and information on what's happening in Barbados.

Sherry-Ann: My first introduction to R was last week at the training. I have never done programming and R is a programming language that cannot be learned in a day or two but needs practice in order to get the full understanding and appreciation of it.

Rashida: What were your biggest takeaways from last week's training?

Sherry-Ann: My biggest takeaway from last week's training is that digital soil mapping is a tool which can be used to make predictions about chemical and physical soil properties, however the initial information which you input is of paramount importance or else the predictions can be way off.

Rashida: In what ways do you see this new skill set as an asset to the future of Barbados' agriculture?

Sherry-Ann: The use of digital soil mapping can assist farmers in deciding which crops and varieties of crops to grow in the respective areas of their fields, as well as aid them in deciding the type of fertilizers to apply to their land or nutrients needed in their soils.



BARBADIAN AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER AND RESEARCH SCIENTIST SHERRY-ANN ALLSOPP SPEAKS ON SOILCARE DIGITAL SOIL MAPPING TRAINING



"The use of digital soil mapping can assist farmers in deciding which crops and varieties of crops to grow in the respective areas of their fields"

According to Sherry-Ann, Barbados completed the Land Capability and Assessment Unit Sampling of Intervention Sites between the period April 3 to April 5th, 2023. Persons were trained initially in visual soil assessment as well as taking soil samples. There were many trainees. Individuals from Government Agencies such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Nutritional Security (Soil Conservation Unit), The Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (BADMC), Barbados Agricultural Management Company (BAMC), and the Environmental Protection Department were trained. In addition, PISLM trained students from the Barbados Community College's Associate Degree in Agriculture Programme and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute for Technology' Agriculture Division Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES). The farmers from farms which are intervention sites also participated.

PISLM'S SOILCARE SITE ASSESSMENT AND SURVEY TEAMS: A WELL-OILED MACHINE MAKING HISTORY IN MANY SPHERES



Grenadian Extension Officers in Lab with Soil Samples

As the national soil survey in Grenada and her sister island Carriacou has come to a close, the Antigua and Barbuda National Soil Survey commences. It was launched on the 5th June

Again, history was made, as the PISLM recognized the work of the pioneers who conducted the Soils and Land Use Surveys for the islands from 1959- 1960. These included K. C Vernon, H. Payne, and J. Spector, who worked with the Regional Research Centre of the British Caribbean at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture St. Augustine, Trinidad.

That institution is presently known as the University of the West Indies (UWI). Dr. Gaius Eudoxie, of UWI's Food Sciences Department was on hand to give remarks and is presently in the field with the Antigua Team conducting the survey. Being the PISLM's third survey this year, Project Manager Trevor Thompson et al are well-practiced and the launch went smoothly.

Messrs. Brent Georges and Jason Williams of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs, and Ms. Simone Dias, the PISLM's SOILCARE Project Assistant for Antigua and Barbuda, were also thanked at the launch ceremony for their work behind the scenes to make this happen. This work will impact a variety of public and private concerns, including forestry, agriculture and food security, the effects of climate change, govern

As the surveys continue, intervention site assessments have recently been completed by Land Expert Dr. Ronen Francis and his team in the St. Elizabeth and Trelawny areas of Jamaica and in the Corozal District of Belize.

PISLM'S SOILCARE SITE ASSESSMENT AND SURVEY TEAMS IN ACTION



Intervention Site Assessments in Jamaica



First Soil Sample in St Lucia



Soils in being air dried for shipment to Trinidad



Intervention site assessments in Belize

PISLM LEADS THE CARIBBEAN IN CELEBRATION OF UNCCD DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT DAY 2023

UNCCD recently announced the first annual Desertification and Drought Day celebrated on Saturday, 17th June, 2023 under the theme: Her Land, Her Rights. Celebrations are being planned involving collaborative multi-national PISLM events across the Caribbean region.

The global observance event, titled "Her Land. Her Rights: Advancing Gender Equality and Land Restoration Goals" took place at the United Nations Headquarters General Assembly Hall on Friday, 16th June 2023.

UNCCD Executive Secretary Ibrahim Thiaw said: "Of all the gender inequalities we experience in the world, the imbalance in women's access to fertile land remains arguably the most shocking. In every corner of the world, filling this particular gender gap remains an unfinished business. That's why on this year's Desertification and Drought Day we are mobilizing the international community to support women's land rights."

Women, who comprise nearly half of the world's agricultural workforce hold a vital stake in the health of the land and suffer most when land is degraded. Yet, discriminatory practices related to land tenure, credit access, equal pay, and decision-making often impede their active participation in sustaining land health. Today, less than one in five landholders worldwide are women.

This represents a missed opportunity: when they are given equal access to land, women and girls can increase agricultural productivity, restore land and build resilience to drought. Women invest more in nutrition, health and education which benefits their families, and wider society. PISLM will be hosting a webinar on June 17th to observe this day Called "PISLM/CYEN World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought: Building a healthy soil ecosystem for a sustainable future". If you missed the webinar, [Click Here](#) to see the replay.

“As a woman, artist, and climate and social justice activist, I believe it's vital to empower women and youth and promote gender equality in the fight against desertification and land degradation. Together, we can create a brighter, sustainable future.” - Inna Modja, Malian singer and UNCCD Goodwill Ambassador