



## Regional Workshop on Climate Vulnerability in Marine Coastal Zones: Caribbean and Central America

### Concept Note

#### **Background**

Costa Rica recently assumed the presidency of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), an international cooperation initiative for developing countries deeply concerned about growing vulnerabilities due to global climate change. As a part of its tenure on CVF, Costa Rica is seeking to stimulate intra-regional cooperation for dealing with climate change vulnerabilities many of which are shared among countries of the region.

The Caribbean and Central American Regional Workshop on climate vulnerability in marine coastal zones will provide an opportunity for government and technical experts to pool and exchange experiences and views on the state of the impact of climate change for the region and to explore enhancing collaborative responses to building resilience in a regional and international perspective.

#### **Objectives**

- Pool the expertise of specialists on climate change vulnerability in marine coastal zone ecosystems from government institutions of Caribbean basin countries.
- Identify possibilities for enhanced regional cooperation to address climate change vulnerability and potential adaptation measures.
- Presentation of the outcomes of the regional workshop to the next full session of the CVF in Costa Rica.

#### **Focus**

One degree centigrade of warming is already affecting the countries of the Caribbean basin as heat, sea-level rise, and weather-related shifts are felt. Projected changes imply profound consequences in ecological, economic, social and cultural respects in the medium and longer-term. Effects span a wide range of important issues that go far beyond the region's recognized exposure to extreme weather events. Other key issues include land and marine biodiversity loss, coastal erosion, water stress, health impacts, and economic costs such as declining outdoor labour productivity or air conditioning/cooling costs, as well as fisheries, agriculture and tourism sector losses

(see Table below). A world four or five degrees warmer - entirely possible by 2100 without significant increases in the global ambition of current policy actions - would see extreme heat thresholds breached with severe impacts for biodiversity, human health and economic prosperity. As such, the Caribbean zone stands out as one of the world's regions with the most at stake in the global effort to tackle climate change.

Against this background, the workshop may focus on addressing a range of important questions, such as:

- What are the principal climate change risks for the Caribbean and Central America especially in ecological and socio-economic terms?
- To what extent are different consequences of climate change understood and being effectively responded to?
- What forms of regional cooperation already exist to address the impact of climate change? How could such cooperation be expanded among different national institutions and through existing or new channels?
- Could increased regional cooperation enhance possibilities for e.g. increasing awareness of the importance of climate risks and the need to prioritize responses, for sharing policy knowledge, or for leveraging international support such as through triangular assistance programs between countries of the region?

Table: Contemporary Regional Climate Change Impacts

*Headline concern areas for the Caribbean and Central America*

- |  |   |                          |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| • Biodiversity stress                          | • Water resource stress                   | • Agriculture            |
| • Drought & land degradation                   | • Health: heat-related and other concerns | • Forestry sector        |
| • Weather extremes: floods, landslides, storms | • HVAC cooling costs                      | • Fisheries sector       |
| • Coastland erosion                            | • Labour productivity stress              | • Hydro power generation |
|  |   | • Tourism sector         |

**About the Climate Vulnerable Forum**

The Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) is an international partnership of developing countries highly vulnerable to a hotter planet. 20 governments from all key regions of the world including least developed, Small Island and middle-income countries have participated in the Forum's policy, advocacy and knowledge exchange activities to date. Initiated by Maldives in 2009 as a non-exclusive cooperation initiative seeking an enhanced response to addressing global climate change, several other governments have since chaired the Forum. With Costa Rica assuming the presidency of the CVF following the tenure of outgoing Chair Bangladesh, the Latin America and Caribbean region will now host the CVF for the first time in 2014. The Caribbean/Central America regional workshop would be the first CVF regionally focused activity.

For more info on the CVF visit its website at: [www.thecvf.org](http://www.thecvf.org)