



# Global Water Partnership Caribbean

*"Water Crisis in the Caribbean: The Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Response"*

## The 6<sup>th</sup> High Level Session Ministerial Forum



Caribbean Ministers and representatives at GWP-C's 5th HLS, held in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands in October 2009.

The 6<sup>th</sup> High Level Session (HLS) for Caribbean Ministers of Water takes place on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in Grenada, under the theme *'Water Crisis in the Caribbean: The IWRM Response.'* It presents the opportunity to bring attention to water resource issues affecting the region, particularly in light of the recent drought experienced in several Caribbean countries from late 2009 to April 2010. The drought, which has been linked to the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and a sub-tropical high pressure system over the North Atlantic, is not the first to impact the region nor would it be the last based on expected patterns of climate variability. However the frequency and severity of these climate variability events may be exacerbated by the impacts of climate change.

In 2005, Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) along with its partner the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA) held its first HLS for Ministers with responsibilities for water management in the region. Each year since 2005, GWP-C and CWWA have successfully brought together Ministers and policy makers to this forum to engage in discussions on critical issues on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and provides the necessary technical information to support decision making and policy development.

The 6th HLS will take place under the auspices of the Honourable Joseph Gilbert, Minister of Works, Physical Development and Public Utilities of Grenada. GWP-C's newly appointed Chair, Mr. Trevor Thompson who has worked with the Ministry of Agriculture of Grenada for the past 25 years and CWWA's President, Mr. Cyprian Gibson will also be presiding over the meeting.

This year's forum aims to advance the efforts of the previous session held in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands in October 2009. At the end of the last HLS, three (3) Caribbean Ministers of Water – The Honourable Irfaan Ali of Guyana, the Honourable Carlisle Powell of Nevis, and the Honourable Joseph Gilbert of Grenada all signed a proposal to include water resource management as a key sector to be addressed at the highest political level in the region.

The Ministers also recommended that a Regional Action Plan (RAP) for water be urgently developed within the context of a common water framework for the Caribbean; and that the RAP adopt IWRM and include strategies for resource mobilisation, capacity building and data collection and management in collaboration with Ministries of Finance and Planning.

In building upon the HLS' past achievements, this year's forum seeks to identify strategies for water crisis management and mitigation with the goal of increasing understanding of these issues among the political directorate and gaining support and commitment for relevant actions at the national and regional level.

The Global Environment Facility – Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management (GEF-IWCAM) Project is supporting this year's HLS by facilitating the participation of one Minister from each of the project's participating islands. These islands include: Antigua and Barbuda; The Bahamas; Barbados; Dominica; Haiti; Jamaica; St. Kitts and Nevis; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and Trinidad and Tobago.

In addition to the Ministers, other participants expected include, representatives from the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH); the Caribbean Community (CARICOM); the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB); the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI); The University of the West Indies (UWI); the Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management (IWCAM) Project; and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).