

## GWP-C Empowers Caribbean Media and Youth to Share Knowledge on IWRM and Climate Resilience

In December 2014 in Trinidad, the Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) under its Water, Climate and Development Programme (WACDEP) decided to do something novel by bringing together for the first time Caribbean journalists, communications practitioners and young professionals from environmental youth organisations to provide them with training on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Climate Resilience.



Caribbean journalists, communication practitioners, young professionals and some representatives from the GWP-C Secretariat are seen here at the first-ever, GWP-C “Media and Youth Workshop on Water Security and Climate Resilience.”

In recognising the critical importance of both media, communication practitioners and youth in building awareness on key development issues such as water security and its relationship with climate resilience, GWP-C felt that a two-day workshop (held on December 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014) was a good avenue to bridge these groups, who would not usually have the opportunity to share information with and learn from each other.

More than thirty (30) regional participants comprising of journalists in areas of print, television, radio and web-based media; public relations specialists; communication officers; and focal points of Environmental Youth Organisations mainly from GWP-C’s partner, the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN). The over 30 participants were from thirteen (13) countries which were: Antigua, Barbados, The Bahamas, Belize, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Another youth organisation and GWP-C Partner at the workshop was the Caribbean Student Environmental Alliance. Also represented at the workshop was GWP-C’s partner, the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) of The University of the West Indies (UWI) and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC).

Ms. Judy Daniel, GWP-C Chair gave the opening address at the workshop which provided participants with an in-depth understanding of the work of the GWP-C and the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and its efforts to involve the media and youth in its work. Dr. Natalie Boodram, Programme Manager of the GWP-C WACDEP who also spoke at the opening, from the very onset explained to participants the context of the workshop and the expected outcomes in bringing together Caribbean media,

communications specialists and youth in one forum to sensitise them about water and climate resilience.

By consensus from participants, the unique workshop achieved its seven (7) objectives which were to:

- Provide training on key concepts such Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), water security, climate change, climate variability, climate adaptation, climate resilience and the link between IWRM and climate change.
- Raise awareness about water security and climate resilience with particular focus on the Caribbean region and the role of the media and communication professionals and youth in disseminating information.
- Assist media and communication practitioners in identifying and developing interesting news and features on IWRM, climate change and related issues.
- Familiarise media and communication professionals and youth with the work of the Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) and its Water, Climate and Development Programme (WACDEP) for the Caribbean.
- Obtain inputs from media, communication practitioners and youth on innovative and creative ways of communicating information on IWRM and climate change to various target audiences.
- Promote dialogue and knowledge exchange between media, communication practitioners and youth.
- Generate feedback from media, communication practitioners and youth on ways to empower other practitioners in their field to share knowledge and build awareness on water and climate change issues in the region.

There were various highlights of the workshop but very crucial was the opportunity for the youth representatives to get advice and guidance from the journalists at the workshop on how best to share information on their work on water, climate change and other environmental issues. Similarly, the media was able to learn a lot about work being undertaken by youth in the areas of water and climate resilience that would not normally make the headlines.

Also important were the relationships established between youth oriented groups within the GWP-C network to better manage their environmental resources. For example, the Caribbean Student Environmental Alliance has committed to a stronger relationship with the CYEN, including encouraging their young high schools members to join the CYEN when they graduate. Additionally, young researchers at the CERMES have committed to provide technical support/information to the CYEN members. This showcases how youth amongst themselves can partner to further their work.

Participants were also immersed in a real-life environment to add to their knowledge of key concepts learnt with a field visit to GWP-C's partner, the Fondes Amandes Community Re-forestation Project (FACRP) where they learnt first-hand about watershed management, rainwater harvesting practices, climate change adaptation and more.



Scenes from the field-trip at the Fondes Amandes Community Re-forestation Project (FACRP) where journalists, communication practitioners and youth representatives were able to engage in a real-life setting to learn about watershed management, climate resilience, rainwater harvesting practices and more.

Crucial for GWP-C was also getting inputs from both the youth and journalists on ways in which GWP-C could continue to engage them even after the workshop in building awareness on water and climate change issues in the region.

### Immediate Outcomes

- Since the two-day training workshop, high profile articles by the journalists present at the workshop have been written about the work of the youth groups at the meeting and have referenced GWP-C and the Global Water Partnership (GWP).
- Caribbean media and youth representatives better understand key concepts such Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), water security, climate change, climate variability, climate adaptation, climate resilience and the link between IWRM and climate change.
- Caribbean media and youth professionals are aware of various tools and resources developed by the GWP-C to support building greater awareness on water security and climate resilience in the region. They are also more familiar with the work of the GWP-C and its WACDEP.
- Journalists in attendance at the workshop who were not members of the GWP-C Journalists Network on IWRM have been added to the Network.
- Since the workshop, GWP-C has already seen an increase in articles on water and climate related issues from journalists that attended the workshop and through its social media

channels and direct e-mails has also recorded an increase in interest and activity from young professionals from various Caribbean environmental youth organisations.

---