

Dominica

Date and Venue

Monday, 16th October 2000 – Fisheries Complex Conference Room, Roseau.

Participants:

Anthony Commodore	-	State Attorney, Ministry of Legal Affairs
Rob Douglas	-	Dominica Solid Waste Management Corporation
Anthony Drigo	-	Dominica Water and Sewerage Corporation
Kongit Gabriel-		Environmental Co-ordinating Unit
Oliver Grell	-	Ministry of Agriculture
Harold Guiste	-	Fisheries Division
Mark John	-	Head, Environmental Co-ordinating Unit
Urban Martin	-	Inter-American Institute for Co-operation in Agriculture
Fedeline Moulou	-	Dominica Amalgamated Workers Union
Henry Shillingford	-	Dominica Conservation Association
Luther St. Ville	-	Prime Unit, Ministry of Agriculture
David Williams	-	Forestry and Wildlife Division
Dr. U O'D Trotz	-	CPACC RPIU
Judi Clarke	-	CPACC RPIU
Dr. Leonard Nurse	-	CPACC RPIU
G. de Berdt Romilly	-	CPACC RPIU

Agenda: See Annex A2 (Dominica)

Commentary:

The following comments were made during the meeting by various participants:

- It is considered essential that Dominica improve its capacity to monitor climate changes.
- It is recognized that climate change impacts all sectors and activities, and should be reflected in the negotiation of all multilateral environmental agreements and in negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- A new *Planning Act* is being developed. Natural resource accounting report was initially prepared in 1990, and now forms part of the planning process. It is considered that Component 4 of the CPACC project will assist Dominica with the valuation of its natural resources and prioritizing development activities in a climate change context.
- Difficulties have been experienced in identifying appropriate adaptation responses in the face of scientific uncertainty. As an example, the main road to Rousseau is extremely vulnerable to

the threat from landslides that would in effect cut off the rest of Dominica from the capital. It is almost impossible to achieve any consensus on what should be done to reduce this vulnerability until the scientific certainty of such a scenario can be accurately presented to decision-makers.

- Only historical data is used for the purposes of conducting environmental impact assessments (EIA's) and the focus is on identifying the impacts of development projects on the environment. No attempt is currently made to look at the impacts of climate or other aspects of the environment on any proposed project.
- It was agreed that there was a need to develop a *National Climate Change Adaptation Policy* that would outline intervention options and an action plan for implementation. A consultation meeting with 30 stakeholders from various agencies and the private sector was convened on the 10th October 2000 to identify issues of concern and undertake initial prioritization for the purpose of completing the Issues Paper. However, difficulty has been experienced in prioritizing adaptation options since an assessment of options was undertaken in purely economic terms. Work still needs to be done on the costs of proposed intervention options.
- The process to develop and implement the *National Climate Change Adaptation Policy* should assist in ongoing attempts to preserve freshwater resources and introduce alternate energy sources. In this regard, it can be seen that there is a positive impact associated with climate change. It will also present an opportunity to introduce and enforce various building and environmental standards. However, a concern has been expressed about the impacts trade agreements may have on any proposed adaptation options, particularly the enforcement of various standards.
- The process to develop the *National Climate Change Adaptation Policy* should assist in the development of the *National Communication* which is still in the early stages of preparation.
- Although the National Climate Change Committee has not yet been established, there are a number of ongoing programs aimed at educating and sensitizing the public on a variety of environmental issues, including climate change. In this regard, it should be noted that some environmental non-government organizations have their own outreach programs that target schools and include material on climate change. A mascot/icon has been developed from Dominica's national bird the Sisserou Parrot. This popular character "Rou Rou" is used to explain the various environmental issues to children. These programs should be expanded to include climate change and adaptation.
- It was considered that obtaining support, consensus and buy-in from the public/private sectors is an essential part of the process to develop the *National Climate Change Adaptation Policy*. It was considered that the launching of Component 4 under the CPACC project presents an ideal opportunity to launch an extensive public awareness campaign on climate change. The government has some experience in undertaking public consultations for the Integrated Development Plan, and the Ecotourism Plan, and should be able to draw upon these experiences to develop the *National Climate Change Adaptation Policy* and Implementation

Plan. However, there is a need to ensure that the process is not tainted by the public perception that consultations are a waste of time since the issues have already been decided. Climate change is so wide-ranging and affects all levels of society. There is a need to initiate the “paradigm shift” in the ways government and civil society deals with climate change and adaptation. As part of the sensitization process, consideration needs to be given to developing promotional materials which graphically demonstrates the impacts of climate change on Dominica and the consequential effects on specific groups/sectors.

- It is considered essential that a presentation be made to Ministers and parliamentarians to sensitize to climate change issues and the need to develop and implement a *National Climate Change Adaptation Policy*. It is hoped that Ministers and other parliamentarians would then take the message back to the community level in their on-going consultations with constituents.

Development of Climate Change Adaptation Policy - Proposed Work-Plan:

- (a) It was agreed that a National Climate Change Committee would be established to co-ordinate the development of the *National Climate Change Adaptation Policy* and Implementation Plan.
- (b) Only one section of the Issues Paper remains to be finalized, and the document will then be forwarded for review and comment by the National Climate Change. This process should be completed in two weeks. Thereafter, the Committee would circulate the draft Issues Paper to various government agencies and departments to obtain their input and comments on any outstanding issues that should be included.
- (c) The National Climate Change Committee will prepare a public education and awareness campaign to support the development of the *National Climate Change Adaptation Policy* and Implementation Plan.
- (d) It was foreseen that a technical meeting would be needed to facilitate discussion on intervention options and discuss proposed management mechanisms before the Committee could go out to the public for consultations. This technical meeting should be held early January 2001. These sessions would result in the formulation of a Position Paper that would be submitted for broad-based consultation. Thereafter, the Climate Change Committee would undertake an extensive public consultation process leading up to the development of a draft Policy Paper.
- (e) It is anticipated that resources would be required from CPACC to assist with the costs associated with printing and disseminating the Draft Policy document, and in facilitating the public consultation process.
- (f) The Climate Change Committee would review comments submitted during the public consultation process, and make any necessary changes to the draft Policy document.

- (g) Once the draft Policy Paper had been formulated, the Climate Change Committee would undertake the development of an Implementation Plan.
- (h) The draft policy paper and implementation Plan would be submitted to CPACC RPIU for review by a panel of technical experts. Comments arising from this technical review will be submitted to the Climate Change Committee for consideration.
- (i) Once agreement has been reached, the Climate Change Committee shall submit the Final Draft *Climate Change Adaptation Policy* and Implementation Plan to the Minister and Cabinet for review and eventual approval.
- (j) The CPACC RPIU would assist in developing a video on climate change and adaptation, and distribute to each country for use in their public education and awareness programs.

Public Awareness and Education

The floor was opened for discussion on a public awareness and education program for this component.

It was noted that the Dominica Conservation Association already has a program in place for environmental issues. This however was focused at primary level students. Only recently has there been any public information about climate change, and this was in the form of articles in the local newspaper. It was also noted that the Natural Resources Management Unit (based in St.Lucia) had developed a public awareness program which is in use in Dominica, and that the National Emergency Preparedness Office (NEPO) has an ongoing program in which climate change can be included.

In developing the Desertification Policy some time ago, public consultation was used as a public awareness tool, and it was agreed that this experience should be drawn upon in the implementation of this component. More importantly, climate change issues will be addressed in the Dominica context and more specifically in terms of the effects on the lives and livelihoods of individuals.

Proposed Public Awareness and Education Activities

- It was agreed to incorporate climate change issues into the existing program from the DCA, and an attempt made to do the same with the other existing programs.
- It was suggested that public awareness be also addressed at the 'village' level, particularly in terms of climate change impacts on agriculture in light of the fact that any public awareness campaign needs to take into consideration problems of access to some media for some sectors of the population.

Public Awareness and Education - Next Steps

- The new Focal Point, Mark John, will select a committee and develop a program to support component 4. The resources needed to implement such a program will be identified, and communicated to the RPIU who have committed to assisting in this area.
- CPACC will develop a presentation for cabinet members, that the focal point will use to

address this group.

- The public awareness and education program will be implemented after the finalization of the issues paper.