

Report on International Day for Biological Diversity

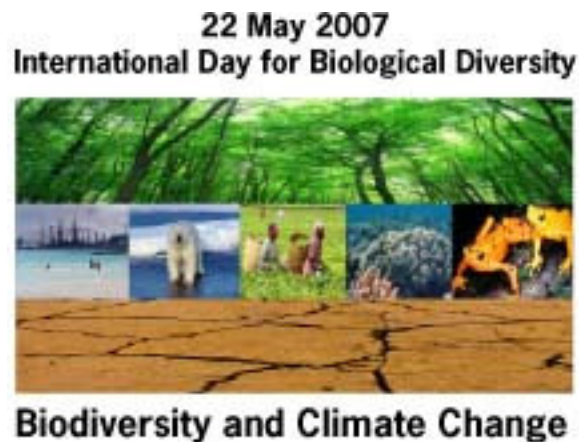


May 22, 2007

By
Sean Townsend
Senior Research Officer-JA-CHM

The Natural History Division of the Institute of Jamaica was designated the National Focal Point for the Clearing House Mechanism of the United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1999. As a result of this appointment the Jamaica Clearing-House Mechanism (JA-CHM) was established as a department within the Natural History Division. As such, one of the mandates of the JA-CHM is to facilitate the activities of the secretariat of the CBD. The commemoration of International Day for Biological Diversity is one such activity and is recognized yearly on May 22. This date was chosen as it coincided with date of the adoption of the text of the Convention in 1992 and has been celebrated every year since the ratification of the CBD in 2002.

The theme of the pervious year was 'Protect Biodiversity in Drylands' where as the theme for 2007 was '*Biological Diversity and Climate Change*'. This complements the designation of 2007 as the International Polar Year and coincides with United Nation's Environment Programme's (UNEP's) World Environment Day theme of Climate Change. Climate Change was also the main theme of other environmental awareness event for 2007 such as Earth Day.



Photograph 1: CBD Poster

This year the Natural History Division chose to commemorate this event in the form of a panel discussion. Person from various agencies were invited to participate and share their knowledge with the general public at this forum however, the main target audience were students from various secondary institution in St. Catherine and the corporate area. Sixty-seven (67) schools were invited however only six (6) schools sent representatives. A total of 77 individuals from 29 agencies were in attendance.

OPENING CEREMONY

The proceedings commenced at approximately 10 am under the guidance of Mr. Robert Kerr, member of the advisory board of the Natural History Division who welcomed everyone. This was followed by greetings delivered by our specially invited guests including Mr. Vivian Crawford, the Executive Director of the Institute of Jamaica, Ms. Leonie Barnaby focal point of the CBD in Jamaica, Mr. Jeffery Spooner on the behalf of the focal point of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Mrs. Alessandra Vanzella-Khouri from UNEP-Caribbean Environment Programme. During this session the official video greetings from Mr. Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary of the CBD was viewed.



Photograph 2: a) Mr. Robert Kerr, b) Mr. Jeffery Spooner and c) Mrs. Alessandra Vanzella-Khouri

A short film produced by the CBD was then viewed which highlighted the impacts of Climate Change on global biodiversity. This sensitized persons on the reality of climate change as it is not an isolated phenomenon affecting only one part of the world but its effects are global.

PANEL DISCUSSION

The panel consisted of 5 persons from various industries with the relevant expertise on this year's theme. The following topics were addressed:-

1. Biodiversity and Climate Change – Ms. Andrea Donaldson (*National Environment and Planning Agency*)
2. Impact of Climate Change on Jamaican Coast – Ms. Shakira Khan (*Marine Geology Unit, UWI*)
3. Climate and Dengue – Prof. A. Anthony Chen (*Physics Department, UWI*)
4. Jamaica's Energy Situation – Mrs. Constance Tyson-Young (*Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica*)
5. Findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 4th Annual Report – Mr. Jeffery Spooner (*Meteorological Services, Jamaica*)



Photograph 3: Moderator and Panelist (M. Creary, J Spooner, S. Khan, A. Donaldson, C. Tyson-Young and Prof. A.A. Chen)

Each presentation lasted for approximately 15 minutes and was followed by a question and answer segment between the panelist and audience. This section of the programme was under the guidance of Mrs. Marcia Creary from the Centre for Marine Science, UWI.



Photograph 4: Question from the Gleaner



Photograph 5: Students asking questions

This section created much enthusiasm among the participants and inspired many interesting questions posed by the students. This segment had to be discontinued, as the time did not allow for the full exploration of the facts presented. However the information conveyed proved beneficial to all.

Mr. Franklyn McDonald was then asked to say a few words on behalf of the Natural History Advisory Board and the proceedings were closed with the Vote of Thanks by Mr. Sean Townsend (SRO- JA-CHM).



Photograph 6: Mr. F. McDonald



Photograph 7: Mr. S. Townsend

The panel discussion was followed by the viewing of the Oscar winning documentary *“An inconvenient Truth – A Global Warning”* produced by Al Gore. A few member of the audience remained to view the film. All activities ended at approximately 4:30 p.m.

MEDIA COVERAGE

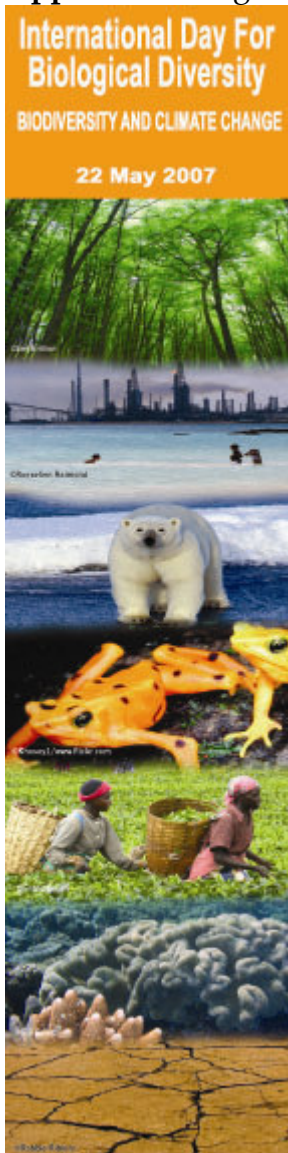
Simultaneously an outside broadcast took place facilitated by the radio station HOT102 on Dr. Donna Hope’s Programme between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. During this time many of the participants were interviewed including the Senior Research Officer JA-CHM, Ms. Leonie Barnaby, Franklyn McDonald, Marcia Creary, Robert Kerr, Karen McDonald-Gayle, Alessandra Vanzella-Khoury as well as the entertainers Mr. Dwayne Lytle and Mr. Cleon Golding. Journalists from two of the major newspapers (The Jamaica Gleaner and the Jamaica Observer) were also present and so the event was mentioned in article published in both papers covering many of the events which took place on the same day.



Photograph 8 : Interviews on HOT102

The timing of International Day for Biological Diversity is during the examination period of CAPE and CSEC students and therefore any activity aimed at these students will be poorly supported. Therefore, it is recommended that students from Grades 9 be the main target of biodiversity day activities not excluding the general public. Additionally, more funding is necessary to adequately publicise these activities in order to obtain greater support.

Appendix1: Programme





**International Day for Biological Diversity
Biodiversity and Climate Change**

May 22, 2007

Lecture Hall, Institute of Jamaica
10:00 a.m.

PROGRAMME

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Welcome | Mr. Robert Kerr Member Natural History Division Advisory Board |
| Greetings | Mr. Vivian Crawford Executive Director Institute of Jamaica Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif Executive Secretary of the CBD (pre-recorded) Ms. Leonie Barnaby National Focal Point CBD Senior Director, Environmental Management Division Ministry of Local Government & Environment Mr. Jeffery Spooner Focal Point Rep. Kyoto Protocol Meteorological Service, Division of the Ministry of Local Government and Environment Ms. Heidi Savelli-Soderberg Programme Officer for CETA, United Nations Environment Programme Jamaica |
| Presentation | International Day for Biological Diversity Video |
| Poetic Interlude | Mr. Dwayne Lyttle Programme Officer HWT-Junior Centre Mr. Cleon "Ras Jaja" Golding |
| Introduction of Moderator | Mrs. Tracy Commock Director, Natural History Division |
| Introduction of Panelists | Ms. Marcia M. Creary Centre for Marine Science |
| Panelist Presentation | Prof. Abraham Chen Environmental Physics- UWI Ms. Andrea Donaldson National Environment and Planning Agency Ms. Shakira Khan – Marine Geology Unit (UWI) Mr. Jeffrey Spooner- Meteorological Services Mrs. Constance Tyson Young – PCJ |
| Discussion | Open |
| Acknowledgements | Mr. Sean Townsend Senior Research Officer Ja-CHM Institute of Jamaica |

