



# REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING ON ACCESS RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN

## GAPS IN IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION FOR FULL APPLICATION OF ACCESS RIGHTS

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AUGUST 24<sup>TH</sup> 2015  
COCO PALM HOTEL

# **ORGANIZATION**

- 1. Information and Statistical Capacity**
- 2. Participation of citizens**
- 3. Access to justice**



# DATA COLLECTED, RECORDED ON AN ONGOING BASIS

Data and information has been traditionally been collection to support decision-making by policy makers

Economic Data: import, export, labour force, financial data, central government budgetary operations, investments, GDP (includes all major economic sectors e.g transport, tourism, agriculture, minerals etc)

Social data: housing, welfare, gender, crime, health, education, population

Environment: fisheries, energy , water consumption, coastal processes, air quality, water quality, waste generation/disposal, agricultural land use, forest cover, meteorological

# CHALLENGES

National Governance Mechanism ( can address issues relating to “turfdom”, overlapping responsibilities, multi-disciplinary nature of sustainable development)

Human , technical and financial resources

Awareness/ attitudes towards information use

Formats, frequency, accuracy

Continuity (especially as it relates to projects) especially as it relates to the ‘newer’ statistics



# SUCCESSSES

As it relates to environmental statistics

The pioneering countries producing publications regularly starting more than 15 years ago, are Belize, Suriname and Jamaica.

In later years, and with assistance through a project “Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Statistics and Indicators for Conference Follow-up in the CARICOM Region”, jointly carried out by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the CARICOM Secretariat between 2000 and 2003 (covering the areas of social/gender and environment statistics, with a supporting component of information technology), several other countries (including Grenada, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Suriname) in the region have also started producing environment statistics compendia.

Several Member States in the region have organized workshops or seminars at the national level in environment statistics, increased inter-agency collaboration and have published environment statistics compendia on a regular basis.

# SUCCESSSES

<http://www.caricomstats.org>

Standing Committee of Statisticians

Regional Statistical Work Programme for the Production of A Common Core of Quality Statistics

“Statistics is not only important for policy-makers but also for providing information to the Citizens of our Region. Our citizens require appropriate statistics to hold their governments and all serious stakeholders, accountable.” –Dr. Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada

# LESSONS LEARNED

Need for continued/sustained investment in national statistical system  
(infrastructure/plant, technology, training)

Advances in technology can make the job easier

Governance structures are critical ( institutional and legislative frameworks)

Keep the lines of communication open (the informal network)

Build on existing positives (eg well trained technicians, modern ICT infrastructure)



# PARTICIPATION

## Town Hall Meeting On Lab Construction

Published on June 17, 2015 by **Theresa Blackman**


(FP)

In an effort to sensitise and get feedback from members of the public, a town hall meeting has been planned to discuss the proposed erection of a laboratory complex, administrative offices and other ancillary buildings for the Barbados National Standards Institution and the National Agricultural Health and Food Control System.

It will take place on Tuesday July 14, at the Divi South Winds Hotel, Graeme Hall, Christ Church, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The meeting is a requirement of the Town and Country Development Planning Office as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that was conducted in relation to the project.

In this regard, the EIA report can be viewed at the Town and Country Development Planning Office, The Garrison, St. Michael; the Public Library, Fairchild Street, Bridgetown, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management until Tuesday, July 14.

*theresa.blackman@barbados.gov.bb*





# PARTICIPATION



**GUARDIANS OF OUR HERITAGE**

The Future Center Trust Invites You to Attend

## Town Hall Meetings

**Hard Facts on the Cahill Gasification Plant**



**FEATURED SPEAKER: Prof. Paul Connett *Lawrence University***

**OTHER PANELIST: Lennie St. Hill *Former Chief Town Planner***

**Mark Hill *Innovator/Scientist***

**WHERE: Lester Vaughn Secondary, St James, Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2015**

**St James Parish Church, St James, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2015**

**TIME: 7:00pm CONTACT: 246-249-9100 OR 246-625-2020**

**The Event is open to the Public**

**PETITION PAGE: <https://goo.gl/UYvYH6>**

# PARTICIPATION

## COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

Let's talk about our energy future

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Cahill Energy's team of leading experts in engineering, environmental sciences and public health will join members of the community at an open house to provide the facts about our waste-to-energy project in Barbados.

**DATE:** Wednesday, July 22, 2015

**TIME:** 7:00 P.M.

**LOCATION:** Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, Flamboyant North Room  
(Two Mile Hill, BB11093, Barbados)

Cahill Energy's waste-to-energy project will bring new investment, jobs and leading environmental technology to Barbados. It is our commitment to help you understand what this project will mean for you and the future of Barbados.

# PARTICIPATION




# PARTICIPATION

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) ensures that the public has access to information on the activities of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The Act is designed to support the following tenets of governance: transparency, accountability, equality of access, and empowerment and increased participation. Any citizen or non-national can request a copy of any document from a public authority, such as a government ministry, department or statutory body. Some public authorities and documents are exempt from the Act, but even exempted documents can be released when it is in the public's interest to do so. Members of the public can apply for access to official documents or to review their own personal information held by any public authority

# PARTICIPATION

## Summary Messages

- Mechanisms exist- Multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder committees with representatives from the Major Groups included in national planning and policy groups e.g farmers, women, fishers, academia, business sector, unions (Note the existence of the Caribbean Union of Fisherfolk organisations)
  - Principle of participation has been incorporated into National Development Strategies and National Sustainable Development Policies
  - MEAs implementation as well as EIA legislation require participation and multi-stakeholder representation.
  - Resources and capacity remain problematic (small pool to draw from). Need for specific services to allow Civil society to engage as fully as they would like to-legal administrative etc.
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# ACCESS TO JUSTICE



Source: Trinidad Newsday Newspaper

# ACCESS TO JUSTICE



Source: Corpwatch

# ACCESS TO JUSTICE

*"In addition to protests and marches, the Civil Rights Association together with the Chatham/Cap-de-Ville Environmental Protection Group are pursuing legal channels to stop the construction. Maharaj, the lawyer on the case, is preparing to file public interest litigation to prevent the government from taking any further steps until it puts in place proper regulations.*

*Maharaj charges that the government signed the agreement with Alcoa without first obtaining the approval of the relevant regulatory bodies, in this case, the Environmental Management Agency. Moreover, in 1984 the parliament had designated the entire Cedros Peninsula, including the proposed smelter site, as agricultural and forest land. The government, therefore, must seek parliamentary approval before allowing industrial use. Also, according to Maharaj, the smelter will violate draft pollution rules that are before the parliament. Maharaj told Corpwatch that, "Alcoa has admitted in their application that the smelter would discharge hazardous substances and dangerous vapors, and they have not demonstrated how these substances will be disposed off."*

*If the local courts side with the government and Alcoa, activists may appeal the ruling in the Privy Council in London. Although nominally independent, the constitution of Trinidad and Tobago still retains the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London as the highest court of appeal.*

*"The government is resolved to accommodate Alcoa in its desire to build its smelter plant at Chatham/Cap-de-Ville," said local environmental activist Ishmael Samad. "And the judiciary, which is supposed to be independent, could well be influenced to render a judgement in favour of the government. Therefore the Privy Council in England, our final court of appeal, is our only hope."*



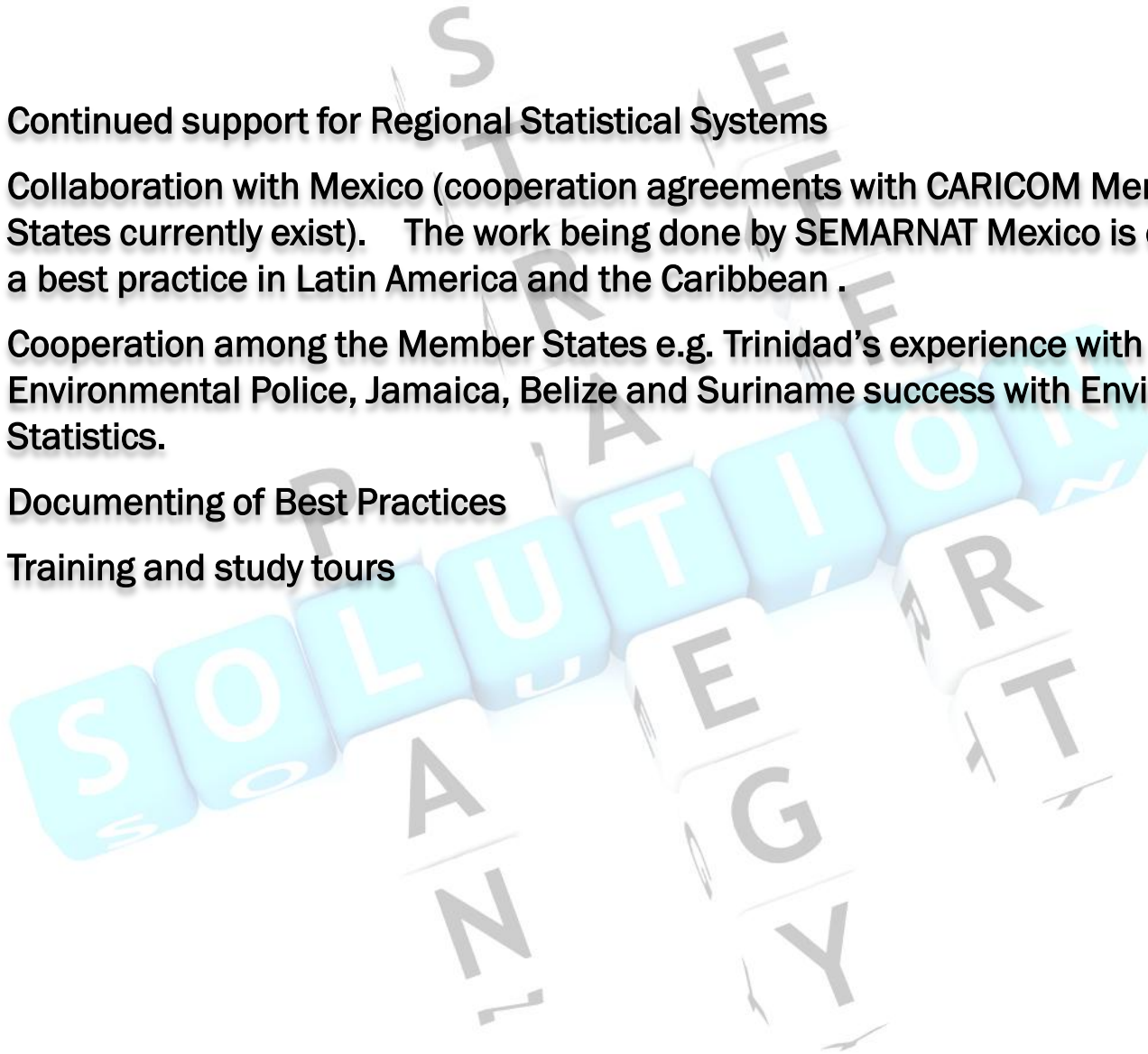
# ACCESS TO JUSTICE

## Summary Points:

- Strong institutions are critical (e.g. TCDPO, EPA, Fisheries, Agriculture)- they ensure a level playing field- however they must be allowed to do their jobs impartially.
- Knowledge and agility of laws are required-Citizens are not aware of their rights and privileges until something goes wrong.
- Meaningful participation can negate the need to resort to the courts of law which can be costly and time consuming.

# POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Continued support for Regional Statistical Systems
- Collaboration with Mexico (cooperation agreements with CARICOM Member States currently exist). The work being done by SEMARNAT Mexico is considered a best practice in Latin America and the Caribbean .
- Cooperation among the Member States e.g. Trinidad's experience with Environmental Police, Jamaica, Belize and Suriname success with Environmental Statistics.
- Documenting of Best Practices
- Training and study tours



**THANK YOU!**