



CTA-048-Protect Coastal and Marine Ecosystems- Caribbean

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Caribbean Strives to Protect Coastal and Marine Ecosystems



Coral colony off the Rosario Islands, Colombia | Photo: EFE

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The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is partnering with a number of governments as it strives to help boost the resilience of member states to climate change.

The CARICOM region, with its 15 islands, is considered one of the world's most important areas of biodiversity. The region is now moving fast towards the sustainable management of both marine areas and coastal resources.

A new partnership between CARICOM and the German government involves the protection of these precious resources from the impacts of climate change.

“Our story is about how we were able to set the boundaries in terms of the fisheries reserve. You realize now as ecotourism, as the product developed, we have more users of the area. We need to protect the reef. We need to protect the fisheries industry,” says Anthony Charles, representative of the Soufriere Marine Management Agency. That body is responsible for protecting over 12 kilometres of rich biodiversity, including mountains, rivers, active volcanoes and coral reefs.



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Charles says partnerships with friendly governments are crucial in continuing efforts to combat the challenges posed to these resources, particularly diminishing fish stocks.

“The generation of fisher(s) that we had 15 years ago is completely different to what we have today and clearly education, advocacy is very important because we realize it's not just the matter of the fishing industry, it's the protection and the sustainable use of our resources,” he said.

Representative of the German government Michael Freudenberg says the partnership with CARICOM is based on a commitment to develop renewable energy and energy efficiency.

“The Caribbean is particularly vulnerable to the observed and projected impacts of climate change because of its geographic location and reliance on natural resources for economic activities and livelihoods ... Germany supports regional cooperation as a tool to combine our efforts for the countries affected by climate change and under-development. Saint Lucia can bear witness, I think, to climate-related disasters and the effects of national resilience and national solidarity,” he said.

The experts say climate change is negatively impacting on the sustainability and resilience of the marine ecosystem, diminishing erosion protection and natural barriers that protect against storm surges and rising sea levels. This is impacting sectors like tourism and fisheries, which directly depend upon the quality of the marine environment.

The coastal and marine ecosystems of the Caribbean are among the most threatened in the world. CARICOM is hoping that by strengthening relations with friendly governments, it can ensure the prudent management and use of those resources.

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The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing”...Edmund Burke