

Practice good environmental habits cont'd

Look after the environment and it will look after you. The damage to the environment caused by human activity makes Caribbean countries more vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change.

- ◆ **Protect our trees.** Trees are important for removing the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Do not just destroy forests for construction and agriculture. If trees are removed for development, we should plant new trees to replace them. Trees are also important in preventing soil erosion.
- ◆ **Avoid unsustainable farming practices.** The misuse and over use of pesticides and fertilizers, over-cultivation on marginal lands, and inappropriate farming techniques on hillsides, all contribute to soil erosion and soil loss. Some of this soil ends up in inland water bodies (rivers, lakes, ponds); some makes its way to the marine environment. Pollution of water sources reduces the amount of fresh water that is available for domestic and commercial use.
- ◆ **Reduce or eliminate the use of chemicals in our homes and communities.** Chemicals poured down drains and toilets eventually run into our water ways and the sea where they can destroy the coral reefs.

Practice good environmental habits cont'd

- ◆ **Keep rivers and watercourses free of garbage and debris** to help keep wetlands and reefs healthy so they can play their role in protecting the coastline from storm surges and wave action.
- ◆ **Maintain and protect mangroves.** A healthy mangrove is a living barrier against storm surges and wave action. Destroying mangroves for the construction of roads, homes or businesses, dumping garbage in them, or cutting them down for fuel wood or agricultural stakes, all contribute to the weakening or destruction of mangrove forests. Their ability to support marine and bird life is affected and they are less able to filter land-based run-off and debris that enter the seas.
- ◆ **Maintain and protect coral reefs.** Pollution from activities on land – improper waste disposal and run-off from farming and industry – affects the health of coral reefs, as do activities in the sea. In addition to reducing the land-based sources of reef stress, it is important to ensure that commercial (fishing) and recreational (scuba diving, snorkeling and swimming) activities do not damage reefs.

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Practical actions that individuals and households can take to reduce their impact on the climate system



Adapted

**Addressing Climate
Change in the Caribbean:**
A Toolkit for Communities



Prepared under the Project:

Voices for
ClimateChange
EDUCATION

Reduce your personal vulnerability

You can take measures to reduce the vulnerability of your home, community and business to natural hazards in the following ways:

- ◆ **Prepare for hurricanes.** Have a plan in place to secure property, including a system for protecting windows and glass doors. This could be permanent storm shutters or having on hand 5/8" marine plywood cut to fit and ready to install. Know where your local shelter is and have an evacuation plan for your household.
- ◆ **Install straps** or additional clips to securely fasten roofs to buildings' frame structure.
- ◆ Regularly cut back trees and shrubs around buildings.
- ◆ **Keep up with routine maintenance** and keep rain gutters and downspouts clear of debris.
- ◆ If you live in a coastal or fishing community, identify where and how boats will be secured.



Reduce your personal vulnerability Cont'd

The Caribbean is expected to experience less rainfall, and this means less water will be available in some places.

- ◆ **Reduce domestic water consumption,** for example through the installation water-saving devices.
- ◆ **Plant drought-tolerant plants** in gardens and apply water conservation techniques such as the use of mulch to reduce evaporation.
- ◆ **Create a system and reuse water** that has been used in the home (except from the toilet) for plants (gray water recycling). If your water supply is not reliable, you can collect and store rainwater in tightly covered containers to prevent mosquitoes from breeding in your collected water.

Reduce your energy use

You can take several simple steps to reduce transport and residential energy consumption.

Transport

- ◆ **Drive less and drive more slowly.** Cars pollute more when they travel over 90km/hr.
- ◆ **Plan your schedule** carefully so that you reduce the amount of driving you do for daily activities.
- ◆ **Use public transportation.**
- ◆ **Buy energy-efficient vehicles** when replacing existing models.



Reduce your energy use cont'd

- ◆ **Do not idle car engines** (i.e., leave the engines running for longer than 10 seconds). Idling for longer periods uses more fuel than shutting off and restarting the car.
- ◆ **Walk, bicycle, take a bus or carpool** rather than using individual cars when this is practical.

Household

- ◆ **Switch off TVs, computers, lights,** etc. that are not being used and unplug items on "standby." Many appliances use electricity when they are turned off or not in use, including TVs, video and audio systems, computers, and chargers (for cell-phones and other electronic equipment).
- ◆ **Use electrical appliances with high-efficiency ratings** and select the energy-saving setting on your refrigerator and other major appliances. New refrigerators, for example, use 40% less energy than models made just 10 years ago.
- ◆ **Replace incandescent light bulbs with efficiency-rated** fluorescent ones. Energy-efficient light bulbs use 75% less energy and last 10 times longer than conventional ones.