



CANARI and FAO Fight Back Against the Ongoing Threats to Caribbean Forests with a Viable Solution *Public Launch of the Caribbean Strategy for Climate-Resilient Forests and Rural Livelihoods*

For Immediate Release



Port-of-Spain, December 12, 2022 – This Wednesday, December 14th 2022 at 2:15 p.m. AST, the Caribbean Strategy for [Climate-Resilient Forests and Rural Livelihoods](#) (CSCRFRL) developed by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will be launched to the public. To ensure the continued climate mitigation and adaptation roles of forests, as well as protect their important goods and services, attention must be paid to ensuring the health and climate resilience of the region’s forests and this is the focus of the strategy that these two powerhouse environmental institutions will launch this week.

Regional Government leaders and officials, members of civil society and the media as well as vested/interested private citizens are all encouraged to attend and learn more about the strategy and how it can be applied to lessen the threats posed to Caribbean forests now and in the future. Interested parties can register [here](https://bit.ly/CSCRFRLlaunch2022) (bit.ly/CSCRFRLlaunch2022).

For more context, here is a breakdown of the facts concerning Caribbean forests and the development of this important strategy:

- **The importance of forests to the Caribbean region, its citizens’ livelihoods, and the region’s long-term sustainability**
Caribbean forests have a critical role to play in climate change mitigation and adaptation, in addition to providing communities with forest-based goods and ecosystem services as and supporting rural livelihoods. In terms of mitigation, forests are critical for carbon sequestration, while forests’ role in climate adaptation range from reducing soil erosion to source water protection. Caribbean forest-based livelihoods include ecotourism, the harvesting of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and the artisanal production of timber.
- **Strategic alliance between CANARI and the FAO**
Circulated widely and shared on CANARI’s [website](#), the CSCRFRL was [formally published](#) by the FAO in 2022. It is the result of a strategic alliance between the FAO and CANARI and was developed through widespread consultations with the region’s forestry stakeholders including government agencies, academia, civil society, and private sector. These

stakeholders identified and prioritised the forestry sector's climate resilience needs and identified strategies to address these needs, including past successful projects and programmes which could be scaled out across the region. Possible funding streams for Caribbean forest-related projects and programmes were also documented.

▪ **Key objectives of the strategy**

Resilient forest products, forest ecosystem services that aid in climate resilience as well as frameworks, tools, and mechanisms for climate resilience, are all key focal areas of the CSCRFRL.

1. Developing resilient forest products involves protecting forest germplasm, building the capacity of local entrepreneurs to adapt to a changing environment and identifying climate resilient NTFPs. As noted in the strategy, national or regional forest germplasm centres should be established, with a focus on important timber and NTFP species. The strategy notes that “efforts will also be made to consider the climate resilience aspect of any tree or forest germplasm bank, including resilience of the bank to natural disasters.”
2. Given the varying impacts of climate change on forest-based enterprises, entrepreneurs need to develop and implement relevant adaptation strategies including focusing on climate-resilient NTFPs and timber products. These would include those species that are resilient to the hotter, drier conditions and more intense storms the Caribbean is expected to experience, according to regional climate change scenarios.
3. Turning our attention to forest ecosystem services for climate resilience, there are three main aspects that the strategy focuses on: slope stabilisation; connecting protected areas using climate-resilient agroforestry; and creating urban green spaces. Slope stabilisation involves the use of species on hillsides to protect against landslides and erosion, which in turn, helps to protect the livelihoods dependent on use of those hills/species found there. Suitability of species would be based on drought tolerance and other climate-resilient factors as well as variables such as root depth and volume to ensure maximum stabilisation.
4. As guided by the strategy, the connectivity of forested areas needs to be enhanced, particularly between protected areas, to better facilitate species migration. This could be done, for instance, by using climate-resilient agroforestry between forest patches. Adding green spaces in urban areas is important too. Appropriate locations and species would need to be identified for the establishment of forest micro-patches in urban areas.
5. Knowing the value of forest ecosystems is another key part of achieving the goals outlined in this strategy. There is a growing movement in the region to conduct economic valuation studies to make informed decisions about how best to manage forest ecosystems. Take, for example, the Grenada national ecosystem assessment, a project being managed by CANARI, which focuses heavily on incorporating the results of an assessment into national decision-making and policy formulation. Ecosystem valuation studies are thus important tools that can be cited, for example, by forestry

departments, to justify requests for larger portions of the national budget. Regional and national and sectoral forest policies need to be updated to reflect and address climate change. These include frameworks and mechanisms to address sustainable forest management on private lands.

- **Implementation by FAO in partnership with national agencies and other key stakeholders**

The strategy is to be implemented by the FAO regional and national offices, working in partnership with national government agencies, civil society, academia, and other key stakeholders. Regional Civil Society Organisations like CANARI are also expected to assist in implementation.

About CANARI: The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit institute which has been working across the Caribbean islands for more than 30 years. Our mission is to promote and facilitate stakeholder participation in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean. Our work focuses on Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Equity and Justice, Participatory Governance and Resilience. For more information, see: <http://www.canari.org/>

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