



Sectoral Integration in Dominica

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1. Introduction

Dominica reported¹ that the work towards sectoral collaboration was greatly influenced by events of the moment, one notable being the impact of natural disasters. The passage of the onslaught of Hurricane Dean caused a diversion of attention as this ravaged the agricultural and transport sectors of society. It brought vividly to many (authorities and general public) the resultant impacts of disregard for the fragility and management of the country's biodiversity. However, it gave cause to reflect on the need to take due cognizance of the development trends that pay little attention to the issue of sustainable land management.

2. Coastal Vulnerability

Work on coastal vulnerability assessment with emphasis on storm surge, coastal erosion and coastal flooding hazards had been undertaken under a USAID/COTS project. This will definitely continue in the area of development planning as it will play a significant role in the preservation of the country's biological diversity.

The havoc wreaked by Hurricane Omar in September 2008 on the marine and coastal resources and physical infrastructure, was yet another eye opener to ensure that development thrusts do give due cognizance to natural processes and the manner in which the man's interaction with various components of the of the environment needs to be delicately planned.

Since these yearly occurrences continue to threaten lives, livelihoods, investments and biodiversity, government embarked on construction of sea defense structures to help reduce the impact of these storms. It currently is installing structure along the west and south coasts of the island where these threats are most prevalent. Notable in all these developments is modification in design for accommodation for biological processes to continue unimpeded such as, the yearly / seasonal migration of crabs to the shoreline for reproduction. The structures being erected make allowances from young crabs to find their way back to the hinterland after birth.

Dominica does not have a national hazard mitigation policy and plan. In the absence of that, supportive components of various projects have addressed issues that bring to bear positives on the conservation of Dominica's biodiversity. In the initial stages of the coastal vulnerability assessment, work focused on creating the necessary institutional framework for risk reduction by:

- (1) Conducting hazard mapping and a vulnerability assessment;
- (2) Developing a hazard mitigation policy; and,

¹ Dominica (2011). Dominica's 4th National Report to the Convention of Biological Diversity, 51 pp.

(3) Initiating the national hazard mitigation plan development process, based upon a model developed by CDERA (USAID/COTS review)

Based on the results of the finding of this assessment it is deemed that the Office of Disaster Management (ODM) will meet the various stakeholders as a way forward to nationalize hazard mitigation approach. The Disaster Management authority has been very proactive in reaching out to other agencies to deal with mitigation measures. In this sphere meetings with the media in the form of workshops to sensitize the different media houses on matters of disaster management have been regular.

3. Preservation of Species

The works of the Forestry and Wildlife Division, Fisheries Division and the Department of Tourism have been in tandem with the determination to see to preservation of Dominica's biodiversity while promoting the tourism product. Work initiated on maintaining and restoration of National Parks following the passage of Hurricane Dean was a prime example of what augurs well for the environment. The execution of the Waitikubuli National Trail project and the public sensitization aspect as well as community involvement are welcome as continuing vehicles of public education.

The continuing vigilance of the Divisions of Forestry and Fisheries to enforce observance of closed seasons for some terrestrial and aquatic species of flora and fauna and the involvement of community based groups in these endeavours speak volumes.

Works on the protection of wildlife as far as trans-boundary illegal trading of species were enhanced. A workshop under the auspices of CITES to upgrade and augment a level of stakeholders awareness on the status of that trade and the means to counteract any illicit activities was held. The workshop brought together all relevant government departments and agencies to deliberate on this issue.

The Forestry Division continues its work on the protection of avian species. There are laws that prohibit the capture of birds at all times. And likewise the Fisheries Division they both have closed and open seasons for hunting certain organisms.

The work of the Division of Agriculture as far as the control of alien species introduction has been commendable. It has always been quick in response to allay any introductions or invasion of alien species based on any suspicions or known occurrences of potential sources or avenues by which such could reach the State. This Division has had a good public relations reputation and collaborates very effectively with other agencies in hosting workshops and seminars as required. The Division has a full-time presence at all Air and Sea – ports.

The Division of Agriculture has also been involved in the area of genetic material pooling. It has over the years been involved in the setting up tissue culture laboratories and the introduction of specific strains of planting material.

4. Marine

The Fisheries Division became an affiliate of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) which was established in 1961 to enhance marine research, exploitation and development by facilitating the exchange of oceanographic data and information between participating Member States and by meeting the needs of users for data and information products. The Division held meetings of relevant government departments and civil society agencies to launch a major undertaking of this network; to develop a Caribbean Marine Atlas. This exercise will better equip the relevant stakeholders (inclusive of private sector entities such as shipping agents, etc.) with a readily available real-time database that can be used for management of marine resources.

There has been a focus on alternative means of energy as a future for Dominica. To this end the State has granted licences to two separate entities to undertake landbase geo-thermal exploration activities. This is being pursued with the view to reducing petroleum hydrocarbons usage in electricity generation and a consequential reduction in emissions. In addition it is envisaged that based on the amount of geothermal resources in Dominica, a considerable amount can be put it for sale to the neighbouring French Departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique.

The Fisheries Division collaborates with other sectors to control activities that impact on the marine biota. It partners with the Division of Tourism to regular activities that pertain to uses of the coral resources; extraction of coral from the sea is prohibited. It collaborates with agencies such as the DWA and the LAMA of the SSMR to regulate scuba diving activities and other water-sports which impact on the marine ecosystem.

5. Physical Planning

There have been commitments by Government to ensure that most development trends in the island are in sync with the dictates of the NBSAP. It is now a requirement consistent with the policies and supporting legislation (the Physical Planning Act No. 2 of 2002) that EIAs are prerequisites for all forms of physical development initiatives. This was further enhanced when Dominica hosted the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Regional Symposium on the Management of Environmental Impact on March 4-5, 2009. This symposium would make recommendations to governments following reviews of laws, regulations, policies and institutions that manage Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA). Such an event according to the Government Minister at that gathering, in addition to strengthening the aforementioned would strengthen public awareness and capacity building. This is evident of the government's desire to advance the process of Biodiversity responsibility.

The ECU among other government agencies are consulted for technical review of all such proposals, there are laws in draft for matters relating to harvesting, movement and ownership of biological material, to name a few.

6. Access and Benefit Sharing

There is a deep commitment by government to give greater attention to promoting the various aspects of the NBSAP particularly the rights of the Indigenous People as they pertain to their culture. Late last year Dominica hosted a regional workshop on Indigenous Peoples Right to Genetic and Biological Resources, it brought participants from the Wider Caribbean (inclusive of Haiti, Jamaica, Ethiopia, Philippines, Malaysia) together to deliberate on that subject area and to set in motion mechanisms that would see to the appropriate legislation to facilitate this. This workshop was preceded by four other zonal workshops leading up to the regional (Caribbean) consultation. This initiative was funded by the Christensen Fund grant, the ECU, the Small Grants Programme of the GEF, Edmonds Institute, Third World Network and Tebtebba Foundation. Some of the regional (Caribbean) representatives contacted Third World Network for help with ABS concerns. And the Edmonds Institute, in cooperation with the Tebtebba Foundation engaged a researcher to investigate biopiracy in the Caribbean.

Government has approved and granted manpower resources to the proposal for a project to see into putting appropriate legislation and mechanisms in place.

The issue of Access Benefit Sharing for particular interest groups in Dominica has been another area where progress has been made. Following the aforementioned regional meeting a local committee has been set up to work with various stakeholders to guide the process of setting up local laws compatible with the various international protocols.

Also the Caribbean Community primarily through the efforts of the its chief, continued to maintain close ties with the Tebtebba Foundation and continued to investigate how best to protect indigenous rights and the viability of Carib biodiversity and traditional knowledge. Efforts are afoot with funding from the Edmonds Institute, to ensure the carib people sustain their links to indigenous peoples in other places and continue to remain informed about international venues that affect their biodiversity and traditional knowledge. By extend funding is being sought to help the Carib people attend an ABS meeting of the CBD and to help the ECU sustain the meetings and work of the National Stakeholders Committee on ABS.

As of May 2009 a consultation organized by the FAO and the government of Dominica is scheduled in Dominica. It will seek to provide support for the TCP on Dominica's legal systems to develop laws governing access to genetic and biological resources and benefit sharing. The consultation will give recommendations on the best way forward and best practices in preparation of a draft legislation for Dominica's biodiversity.

7. Terminal Phase-out Management Plan of CFCs dependent refrigeration systems

As a signatory to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, Dominica is committed and obligated to undertake various activities, as stipulated within its country programme, in order to remain in full compliance with the Protocol.

The country programme has initiated a project entitled Terminal Phase-out Management Plan for the air conditioning and refrigeration sector. The objective of the project being to minimize the release of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) into the atmosphere during service and disposal of Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) dependent refrigeration systems and to recycle and reclaim a substantial part of the refrigerants through the provision of the appropriate tools and equipment.

On March 18th, 2009, the Environmental Coordinating Unit (ECU) in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programmes (UNEP), handed-over such appropriate tools and equipment to the Dominica Association of Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning (DARAC), preceding a training session for technician refreshers.

8. Biosphere Reserve

Another initiative to support the government's desire to realize the ramifications of the NBSAP is the move to begin the process of establishing biosphere reserves in Dominica in tandem with the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme. Earlier this year the Dominica National Commission for UNESCO authority and various government departments met under the tutelage of a UNESCO Consultant to advance this process of selection of specific areas for a biosphere reserve. These areas will be protected zones set aside for certain species, ecosystems, habitats and genetic pools for present and future generations.