

OPENING REMAKS

Japan-CARICOM Public Symposium on Climate Change and Biodiversity

Organized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs - IDB Asia Office – United Nations University

September 2, 2010 - Tokyo, Japan

Your Excellencies, Ministers of Foreign Affairs from CARICOM member countries. Mr. Shuji KIRA, Parliamentary vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Konrad Osterwalder, Rector of the United Nations University.

The Caribbean region is very important for the IDB and Japan. I had the opportunity to witness first hand the workings of this close relationship during my years as Executive Director of the Bank representing Japan from 2001 to 2005. Now as representative of the Bank in charge of the IDB office in Asia, I'm honored for the opportunity to cooperate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations University in this timely event on Climate Change and biodiversity a quite relevant subject for the region.

In the environmental area, the focus of IDB activities in the Caribbean region have been in the areas of Climate Change, disaster risk and coastal zone management.

Although not all CARICOM members belong to the IDB, at the **regional level**, there are important initiatives which incorporate the wider Caribbean region, including the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States where the

Bank works through the Caribbean Development Bank. Among those initiatives, I can mention:

1. **A pilot program for climate resilience**, of a US\$60 million grant and concessional financing facility under the umbrella of the Global Climate Investment Funds. It will show ways to integrate climate risk and resilience into core development planning.
2. **The Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management**, under preparation in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

In addition, the bank has approved a grant to support the preparation of the **Caribbean Sustainable Energy Development Road Map**.

As for operations at the National Level, I can mention the following:

- **Guyana** – In addition to continuing investments in water and sanitation, the Bank will provide technical assistance in the areas of capacity development in the environmental area among other actions.
- **Suriname** – Activities focus on: a) environmental and forestry management, and b) water system rehabilitation. For example technical assistance in the area of integrated coastal zone management, water supply and renewable and bioenergy options.
- **Jamaica** – Technical assistance to promote energy efficiency and conservation in public sector buildings, via small and medium enterprises, including pre-feasibility of wind and solar options.

- **Barbados** –A set of interventions regarding sustainable energy and coastal zone management. The Bank is the major development partner in financing investments in water and sanitation.
- **Trinidad and Tobago** –Technical assistance to mainstream climate change into national development policy. My office has also supported the country efforts in promotion of business opportunities among Japanese organizations last April.
- **The Bahamas** – In addition to operations in the water and sanitation and energy sectors, the Bank has a set of technical assistance in the areas of energy efficiency and renewables.

Regarding Haiti, let me expand on our activities. Initial interventions after the earthquake, aimed to provide immediate relief, for example, redirection of resources from existing loans to necessary cleanup activities, re-establishment of electric power in Port-au-Prince and undertake urgent provisional repairs to the southern port. This initial stage also included grants, for example, to support the continuity of microcredit, the distribution of remittances and the maintenance of business activities of small business. My Office has also had the honor of successfully supporting Haiti high level missions in Japan and Korea last July, obtaining highly positive results.

In the mid-long term, the Bank will support Haiti, through a debt free and “Grant only” relationship¹, where the key elements are the debt cancellation of the debt with the Bank for almost \$500 million, conversion of undisbursed

¹ “Debt Free” and “Grant Only” apply exclusively to Sovereign Guaranteed operations.

amounts to grants as well as allocation of \$2.2 billion dollars in grants until the year 2020.

IDB is also taking a leading role in donor coordination activities, such as, the creation of the Haiti Interim Reconstruction Commission. My office is making its best efforts to improve the partnership with the Government of Japan, and in particular JICA with whom there are several joint activities under study.

WRAP-UP

Finally, I would like to convey my congratulations to the CARICOM-Japan consultation meeting members for fruitful deliberations. I'm confident that they will further strengthen the already good relations between the parties.

Also, please allow me to thank all participants to this Symposium for taking time off their busy schedules to attend.

Thank you for your attention