



Partnership Initiative for
Sustainable Land Management

PISLM High Level Meeting Fifth Session



"CARIBBEAN SIDS SHOULD BE GLOBAL LEADERS, ATTAIN SDG15"

**The Brix Autograph Collection, Port of Spain,
Trinidad & Tobago
23 – 24 March 2023**



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BPOA	Barbados Program of Action
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
COFAP	Council for Finance and Planning
COFCOR	Council for Foreign and Community Relations
COHSOD	Council for Human and Social Development
COTED	Council for Trade and Economic Development
CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
CST	Committee on Science and Technology
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GLSC	Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission
GSP	Global Soil Partnership
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFS	International Foundation for Science
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NAPs	National Action Plans
PISLM	Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management
PRAIS	Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System
RIOD	International Network of NGOs and CBOs to monitor the convention against desertification.
SAMOA	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SRAP	Sub-Regional Action Plans
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UWI	University of the West Indies
WCF	Wild Chimpanzee Foundation

BACKGROUND

The importance of integrated land use management in most Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is underscored by competing economic activities for the limited land space of these countries. As clearly outlined by the Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of SIDS, most aspects of environmental management in SIDS are directly dependent on, and influenced by, the planning and utilization of land resources, which in turn is intimately linked to coastal and marine management and protection.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) provides the global framework for addressing land degradation and sustainable land management issues in SIDS. Given the scope of this instrument, which, if used effectively, could significantly contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) objectives, poverty eradication and food security.

To enable Caribbean SIDS to respond to these challenges, the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) was formulated as a part of the Technical Programme of the Caribbean SIDS Programme – an initiative that was adopted at the 14th Session of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean held in Panama in November, 2003 and formalized at the 25th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) [Environment], held in April 2008 in Guyana. PISLM provides a framework for assisting Country Parties with the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNCCD), and with addressing the land management component of the Barbados Program of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy (MSI) in Caribbean SIDS.

The PISLM has as its major components: the elaboration of National Action Plans (NAPs), the establishment of a Regional/Sub-Regional Platform for the implementation of the UNCCD, including the building of complementarities with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs); the elaboration of integrated Sub-Regional Action Plans (SRAP); the development of methods and tools for monitoring and measuring land degradation; the training, research, capacity development and policy analysis; South-South Cooperation; targeted Global Environment Facility (GEF) interventions; and the harmonization of Public Policies on Land Degradation and Land Management.

In order to facilitate the operations of the PISLM in an effective manner, a number of institutional modalities are necessary. These include:

1. Ministerial Oversight: PISLM High Level Meeting

2. PISLM General Assembly: Comprised of UNCCD and BPOA Focal Points in the participating Country Parties
3. PISLM Task Force
4. PISLM Support Office
5. Network of Civil Society Organizations in support of the implementation of the objectives of the PISLM
6. Network of Regional and International Agencies and Organizations
7. A PISLM Expert Group

Policy directives for the PISLM are provided from a number of sources including: (a) Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean; (b) the CARICOM Minister of Environment (COTED) [Environment], The Ministers under whose portfolio the Convention falls, and the Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD through its regional processes.

The PISLM High Level Meeting

The objectives of the PISLM High Level Forum were as follows:

- High level dialogue to promote sustainable land and soil management practices as a climate change adaptation strategy,
- Identify areas of action and priorities moving forward,
- Explore the possibility of further collaboration,
- The adoption of decisions presented,
- Ministers to discuss and confirm the use of approximately US\$90M identified by PISLM for Caribbean SIDS to achieve said objectives.

Earlier in the week, National Focal Points were also tasked with developing draft decisions relating to integrated land management within Caribbean SIDS for tabling, discussion, and adoption at the Fifth Session of the PISLM High Level Meeting.

The Fifth Session of the PISLM High Level Meeting was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad, and Tobago from 23- 24 March 2023, under the chairpersonship of the Hon. Penelope Beckles Robinson, MP, Minister of State, Ministry of Planning and Development, Trinidad, and Tobago. A total of thirty (30) participants attended this meeting including the Ministers responsible for the UNCCD and the UNCCD national focal points of: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts, and Nevis. Representatives of the PISLM, IICAA, OECS, UNEP and CARICOM were also in attendance.

The meeting agenda comprised: Welcome remarks by the Executive Director, PISLM, Address from the Minister of Grenada and St. Lucia and the Chair of the 4th PISLM Task Force, Feature Address of Chair of the Fifth Session of the High-Level Meeting, Minister of Planning and Development, Trinidad and Tobago; plenary sessions with presentations to support and adopt the decisions drafted by the national focal points.

The main outcome of the High-Level Meeting was the adoption of the decisions presented (Appendix3).

There was a common call for collaboration among Caribbean SIDS in advancing the agenda for SLM and in having a collective voice in advocating for the region at regional and international forums.

Plenary Session 1: Decisions

Welcome by the Chair of the 4th PISLM Task Force

The Chair of the 4th PISLM Task Force welcomed the delegates to the Third Session of the High-Level Meeting. As Chair of the PISLM Task Force expressed satisfaction with the achievements of the Organization. He informed that earlier during the week, PISLM, National Focal Points for UNCCD and other relevant officials had met to discuss issues related to SLM in the region and had also benefited from training in negotiation.

In accordance with recorded conference regulations and agenda for the session and documents deliberation. Agenda PISLM 5/001 was adopted with unanimous consent.

Introductory remarks from Delegates

St. Lucia

I am happy to be a part of the session and happy to see the focal points and colleagues within the respective countries. We face challenges with respect to sustainable land management and understand the challenges we face every year with national disasters and soils that are supposed to be in watersheds in the rivers and governments must spend money to remove the silt from the rivers. There is a need to address the problems at the source, especially around this time of the year where small countries, including St. Lucia, are seeing very dry spells ahead. That is going to affect food production. UNCCD is approaching jobs on a pro-path basis rather than a reactive basis. There was a recently held meeting where we came up with policy options, global options, regional policy instruments and national plans to really deal with drought problems globally, regionally, and nationally. He was excited for the meeting and the projected budget of US\$ 90MM for the Caribbean. There is a need for financial resources to build resilience in the agricultural sector, especially for small islands like ours.

Barbados

A conference like this will bring focus to the cause of the problems. When we want to achieve reforestation, it is the land that is important, our soil, biodiversity. We have lost 100,000 insect species since the industrial era 200 years ago. We must know the effects of mapping our behaviour as it relates to the destruction of our soil. Not to mention, on the use of pesticides but not having proper legislation in place to control persistent organic pollutants. It is us as the policy makers to ensure that we can stop these activities that can destroy us all and then put measures in place for regeneration. We just started the process of Soil Care phase I, we are just about to realise it. The second part- land degradation by identifying the modality provider leveraging resources. We fully support PISLM as a strategic partner because the only way to have sustainable development is when we have partnerships as an integral system. The focus of this agenda aligns itself with our philosophy as it relates to the environment, food security and economic development. In Barbados, we have allowed our farmers to have a tangible stake in the industry to be able to reduce our carbon footprint. The plan is to establish a national botanical

garden and we would welcome everyone when it is realized. Thank you, colleagues, we pledge our continued support to this initiative.

Grenada

He was happy to be here, this project is coming at a time when we are now getting back serious about agriculture. The soil laboratory was destroyed in 2004. Farmers have been shooting in the dark, meaning they have been farming with no serious data, contents of the soils, nutrients etc. We welcome this project and register congratulations for the GORTT for hosting this HLF. In 1997, Grenada, acceded to UNCCD. Since then, we have been engaged in several policies and programs related to agriculture. We are presently putting together a land use policy; it is being reviewed because it does address land use with regards to agriculture in residential areas. It is one of the crucial things we are experiencing today and over the years. We are looking forward to working with PISLM and US\$90M.

St. Kitts and Nevis

It should be noted that the Ministry changed its name to the Ministry of the Environment. I am happy to communicate that Environment and Climate Action has become the central pillar. She was happy to be here. It is her first time being a part of PISLM- cannot account for before- as she was in previous ministries. They are currently reviewing documents for projects currently ongoing and new ones to embrace such as a national park. Right now, they are going through several iterations of this concept. There will be many more opportunities across the country. I wanted to let you know where we are, and we will continue to support this.

The Chair tabled the following decisions for discussion and adoption (see Appendix 3) for the full text of the decisions). Several presentations were made on each of the decisions prior to their discussion. Following are the comments and questions made in relation to each decision prior to its adoption.

Decision 01/PHLM.5 Country Specific SLM/ILM Initiatives

To support this decision Mr. Euan James, National Project Coordinator for PISLM Projects in Dominica delivered a presentation on “Review of Progress of 2 SLM/ILM projects in Dominica.”

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Background to the Commonwealth of Dominica and the devastating effects of Hurricane Maria.
- The importance of the need for resilience and sustainable land management after the island suffered the effects of Hurricane Maria.
- The Post Maria Project- First Project Funding started in October 2018 US\$1.7M with the establishment of landscape level planning, information, and coordination frameworks to support sustainable agriculture and sustainable watershed management in Dominica; Second Project Funding started in December 2019 US\$1.5M with the objective to strengthen resilience

in the landscape surrounding Morne Trois Pitons National Park through participatory forest rehabilitation and restoration; sustainable agricultural practices and the institutional strengthening, education and training to address land degradation.

- Land Use Maps were developed for five Parishes to support the projects. They were created with the use of GIS and uploaded to the Ministry's websites.
- Training was conducted to strengthen institutional capacity for Foresters, Extension Officers, 1500 Farmers and Community Members.
- DOMGAP Certification of Farms, 30 farms to adopt sustainable land management options with three plots allocated for demonstration training.
- There is Watershed Management Plans for La Plaine, Batali and Coulibistrie where 250 hectares of water shed will be restored.
- There are also plans to rehabilitate both government and private nurseries with the production of more than 10,000 seedlings annually.
- Progress includes the implementation of a Forest Plan where 500 hectares will be restored with 40,000 seedlings planted and 200 individuals engaged to support the SLM practices.
- Funds allocation included: US\$100,000 to the Division of Forestry for reforestation; US\$100,000 to IICA for SLM adoption of farms; US\$16,000 to DNYC for engagement of 500 youth in SLM adoption practices; US\$60,000 for tools, equipment and supplies for Government nurseries and reforestation.
- Development of an Environment Bill- progress made include consultations conducted with relevant stakeholders, the draft policy document is currently being reviewed with further consultation as required and the final draft bill would be presented to Cabinet for approval.

Discussion

Q (St. Kitts): How did you get people to work together? Can you share with us what were some of your actions to facilitate the work. I am interested in how it works.

A: Project Management is a unique profession. I have seen from institutions and even in the region, we find that Technical Officers are chosen for Project Managers, and this is a failure. In Project Management, we have a mantra, communication is 90% project management is 10%. You need to get people involved and bring them together as we did in the reforestation and agricultural projects. I brought everyone together and I asked them to develop or create their own Project Implementation Plan. They put in the work that was required and faced challenges of different dimensions.

Q (Barbados): Can you clarify the maps used?

A: The maps identified in the project were land use maps. Soil maps will be done for soil care.

Q (Grenada): The presentation identified stakeholders; can you identify some of them for us?

A: The list of stakeholders is very long, there was the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Planning, almost the whole government, especially Ministry of Environment, WASCO, because we had some watershed management aspect of the project, we had the solid waste team to work

with various agricultural groups and segmented groups. We wanted to enable farmers to have a better economic return from their Sustainable Land Management approaches, therefore, we will have programs on proper business and audit plans. We partnered with everyone as the project needed.

Q (St. Lucia): Congratulations on what you presented. You have been successfully implementing this project. Some of you know in the islands, we get several projects with challenges. What are some of the challenges you might have experienced and how did you overcome those challenges?

A: One of the fundamental challenges we noticed when we came on the project for it to be executed; were the technical documents which we were sent from technical people with figures etc. and was not transformed into a management document. This is one of the biggest challenges. We attempted to translate this technical jargon and information into a management document that could be understood by the people that would be carrying it out. There is a need to have project management unit regions where all technical people and stakeholders come together and transform this approved technical document into a management document that can be implemented. It is challenging to execute projects because most issues are organized from an operational framework. There needs to be better PM units within all your government and ministries to ensure that these projects that are fast approaching and are not handled as normal management.

Comment

IICA

A lot of development work has been done with projects, which are not finite, we cannot fix an entire country at once. There is a need for continuity of projects. There is no continuity in the national mechanisms. There is no way you can have a project on soil and not include people working with soil. Agriculture alone is not only about using soil, but we also have to go beyond that approach. I agree with Barbados and Grenada that soil does not degrade itself. The technology is there, it is foolproof and scientifically based. There is a lack of social aspect. We need to have a one soil approach in the Caribbean. At the last meeting we spoke about bringing everyone who is doing anything with soil. It is not just agriculture and farming, it is tourism, it is industrial, people building houses. If you look at Trinidad and Tobago, and you look at the mountains, you will see condos going up, they go up in an instant, because the technology is there to enable the construction of houses in a shorter time frame. However, when it comes to farming, it takes a decade to get one thing done. We need to get everyone onboard, and those that are direct or indirect with soil, not just agriculture and farming, but forestry, housing, tourism, and industry.

Q (Barbados) Dominica has a lot of silica or sand for soil/hard pan. How were you able to overcome this? Because of your volcanic activities and hard pan what techniques were used? It is interesting to see all this change.

A: We have another Dominican who has done a lot of work on that. He has developed some manuals and we would be happy to share that with you to get some insights.

Decision 01/PHLM.5 was adopted by the delegates through consensus.

Decision 02/PHLM.5 CSIDS Soil Care Phase I

To support this decision Mr. Trevor Thompson, delivered a presentation on “Review of Progress of CSIDS Soil Care Phase I.”

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Soil care phase one project was approved by GEF in 2021- Took Caribbean 60 years to reach where we are today to start a soil survey for the Caribbean.
- The Caribbean has land degradation challenges with soil erosion, acidification and pollution, loss of soil life, soil fertility declines and disease infestation, deforestation overgrazing, inappropriate agricultural practices, climate variability.
- Most countries have set voluntary land degradation neutrality targets by 2030.
- Targets include:
 - To increase fertility and productivity of crop land.
 - To transform abandoned cropland into agroforestry
 - To implement soil conservation measures.
 - There must be rehabilitation of degraded land, degraded forests, increase forest carbon stock that is closely linked to climate change mitigation.
- Most countries have submitted LDN targets except St Vincent, Haiti, Bahamas.
- This project was conceptualized by the focal points funded by GEF, the implementing agency is the FAO, and the executing agency is the PISLM. The project covers 8 countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia covers 4 years project cost US\$ 8.1 MM with the Caribbean contributing approx. US\$ 25M to covers all aspects of the project. The focal area is land degradation.
- The project has 4 project co-indicators:
 - Restoring 29,000 hectares of land
 - Improving agricultural practices on 26,000 hectares.
 - Reducing GHG gas emissions, by about 5 metric tons
 - To impact directly with livelihoods improvements for about 6,000 people across the eight islands.
- The project has five (5) components.
 - Establish and update and strengthen national and regional soil information.
 - Improving technical capacity and coordination as a basis for improved decision making
 - Including sustainable soil management and sustainable land management
 - Increase national and regional capacity for soil analysis for the establishment of the Caribbean soil Lab network.
 - Establishment of a Caribbean Soil information system for monitoring soil health located at the central repository at UWI.
- Some accomplishment to date includes:
 - The collection of old soil data that exists in the eight countries in GIS format.

- The development of the sampling design methodology
- Survey of all the labs in the respective countries
- Registering of the labs on the global soil lab platform.
- Work has started for establishing the Caribbean soil laboratory network and the Caribbean Soil information system.
- The national soils survey for St. Lucia and Grenada has to be completed. This started in March and is expected to be completed on April 10th, 2023.
- The design has started for the sample maps for Antigua, Barbados, Belize and Jamaica.
- The procurement process has started for lab equipment for all the countries to strengthen their labs.
- It should be noted that St. Lucia has done their 4th sample for soil since 1960.
- Component two identifies resilience building to land degradation and responding to natural disasters and climate change through climate smart agriculture and enhanced soil risk management.
- There will be an emphasis on the impact climate change has on soil productivity through using climate smart practices on model farms to be established in Guyana, St. Lucia, Haiti, Grenada, and Barbados.
- Component four identifies the enhancement of food systems and alternative livelihoods through promotion of innovations in agriculture, livestock production and mobilization of the private sector. There is going to have work in Belize, St. Lucia, Caricou Grenada who is heavily dependent on livestock.
- There will be the establishment of a regional research advisory and capacity building facility on new adaptation technologies at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus. There is already a signed MOU with the Faculty of Science and Agriculture to support the work. UWI has given 25 acres of land for research, and an agricultural and aquaculture specialist have been recruited to further support the work.
- A lot of capacity building will be done for officers and farmers in the 8 countries identified.
- Component 5 talks about mainstreaming SLM and sustainable soil management, strengthening knowledge management, enhance training and capacity development and the building of financial capabilities to implement SLM and monitoring and evaluation under this component.
- There will be the strengthening of the indigenous peoples' network.
- There will be training of officers on an ongoing basis and people across the Caribbean.
- Assistance will be given to countries as needed. E.g., Belize wanted their National Land Policy to integrate their LDN targets for managing their land resources.
- Accomplishments to date includes:
 - Several people have been recruited for the project to include a land expert, climate smart and capacity building expert, livelihood agenda expert, land soils consultant and FAO has recruited a GIS consultant. The GIS consultant would assist with the digital soil mapping part of the process to develop soil maps and will allow countries to make policy and land management decisions.
 - Training- over 183 extension officers, GIS technicians, soil experts, lab technicians.

- Reporting to GEF is up to date with two 6-month narrative reports submitted and approved.
- The Regional Project Steering Committee met earlier this year with the launch of the Caribbean Soil Support Group and the sustainable land management framework group; the regional network supporting indigenous peoples.
- A soil care youth initiative was launched in January and the plan is to partner with the Youth Environmental Network to help mainstream soil care as a youth initiative.
- The plan is to also award five post graduate research scholarships in this project which is aimed at building capacity in the region of land and soils.
- There was a short video presentation on the CSIDS Soil Care Phase I Project. The following is a summary of the video:
 - Caribbean Small Island Developing States or CSIDS Soil Care Project is a joint venture by the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management. The PISLM, GEF, UN FAO and UWI are creating an enabling environment that is helping countries establish, implement, monitor, and report on the progress made towards achieving land degradation neutrality or LDN targets. The project commenced in September 2021 and encompasses several objectives that are not only aiming to address the barriers to achieving LDN but also climate resilience. The project is working with eight countries over a 48-month period with investments of US\$8,155,205 from GEF and co-financed in cash and kind from country governments, private sector, and NGOs.

Comments

Barbados

I am really impressed with everything that was said in the presentation and video. The region does have the resources. I would love to have not just the technical support but also the institutional support and those scientists that will have the knowledge base to buttress our efforts here.

Grenada

Grenada will benefit significantly from this project, so we welcome it. The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands Department, Extension Services, and the Agronomy Division will have the privilege of having this good scientific data for the agricultural sector. So, we are happy to be part and parcel of this project.

Caricom

There are specialist institutions such as UWI within the CARICOM rubric that CARICOM need to utilize better. CIMH does soil forecasting and early warning systems for five sectors, agriculture being one of them. They do a few forecasts every six months. The same way we utilize UWI, CIMH needs to be incorporated into the discussion.

IICA

The Caribbean has the technical resources needed. The difficulty sometimes is that we prefer not to use technical resources for whatever reason. I would urge colleagues, maybe the policy makers responsible for making decisions, that when you transfer knowledge it is important to use language that reflects what we want to achieve. Language is important and as Mr. James said communication is important. A lot of

farmers are experts and there is a need to get all parties on the team and the need for collaboration.

PISLM

Thank you to all that contributed, we take note in particular, CARICOM, IICA and the environment. When we come to phase II, I want to assure you that this deliberation will be taken into consideration as we take your points to craft the language. To put this decision into context, it is giving a specific mandate to the groups that Barbados identified that is the Caribbean Soil Support Group to provide the technical training through the Secretariat on soil health and fertility and any other related issues etc. With respect to the Caribbean Soil Lab Network, that network would be plugged into the global support network. There you would have access to all the best practices in lab technology and capacity building. The officer would bring it back to the country and nationalize the expertise received. A point to note, is that the project sites in St. Lucia and Haiti have been adjusted as requested and after review of the sites. The adjustments are in the annex which the forum has already read.

Decision 02/PHLM.5 was adopted by the delegates through consensus.

Decision 03/PHLM.5 CSIDS Soil Care Phase II

To support this decision Dr. Mark Griffith, delivered a presentation on “Approval of CSIDS Soil Care Phase II.”

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Essentially Soil Care II builds on Soil Care I; it is intended to strengthen the Caribbean SIDS with the necessary tools for adopting policy measures and reforming legal and institutional frameworks to ensure that losses and productive land is balanced by gains.
- The acquisition of net loss of productive land is achieved including through the restoration of degraded lands to productive uses.
- The presentation identifies soil care countries and non-soil care countries. Soil care countries refer to the eight countries participating in Soil Care I and the other countries are not joining at Soil Care II.
- The goal is to have all fourteen member states of the Caribbean Community to join. It is currently at ten.
- It is important to consider that GEF, in reference to all land degradation projects in the Caribbean from now on will need to reference soil care. It would be easier if all the members of the Caribbean community joined soil care II.
- First Component- is to have all the countries in our region to have soils analysis updated. This component targets non-soil care countries to bring them up to the level as far as soil analysis is concerned.
- The first objective is to get soil information into the database system. One of the problems faced under the global soil partnership is the absence of soil data for the region.

- The second objective is to identify several strategic interventions for the rehabilitation of degraded lands. The overriding framework to be achieved is Land Degradation Neutrality. This is a relatively new concept that has been promoted by the Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD.
- Most countries have completed the target setting process and are in a good position to move towards LDN and with the soil analysis taking place it will provide information on soil organic carbon.
- Third objective it to address land degradation neutrality from the perspective of soil and land resources and water management. The issue of drought is critical to the region, and this will be brought into focus in soil care II.
- The fourth objective is to continually promote innovation in agricultural systems. In this regard, reference is made to the facility on new adaptation technologies at UWI. There will also be the continuation of the development of knowledge linkages with the green blue knowledge transfer hub being developed by UWI.
- The final aspect of the fourth objective is to have a transformative LDN funding mechanism. Once this is achieved it will be the funding mechanism for the small island developing states.
- Component three focuses on flooding and drought to work with the existing entities and strengthen the Caribbean drought and precipitation monitoring network.
- Also, within the context of the facility for new adaptation technologies, there is potential work to explore the use of indigenous crop varieties that can sustain temperature changes.

Comments

Barbados

The Mauritius Strategy is very important as it relates to the sustainable development of our SIDS, from a national, regional, and international perspective. Move to make an amendment in paragraph three to **include soil care focal point.**

OECS

Thank you on behalf of the OECS for participating in this forum. At the last council of the Ministers with the responsibility of the environment in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in May/June last year, we also had the privilege of welcoming the participation of PISLM. I wanted to note that the indication of “Always yes” Party states through UNCCD have developed their LDN PSPs and national strategies for achieving their obligations. The OECS would have entered an MOU in 2022 to help formalize and accelerate collaboration in this regard. Ministers would have supported the decision for the soil care projects for the next year cycle.

Decision 03/PHLM.5 was adopted by the delegates through consensus.

Decision 04/PHLM.5 CSIDS The Five-Year Strategic Direction of PISLM

To support this decision Mr. Calvin James, Executive Director of PISLM presented the decision for adoption.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- The five-year strategic plan will enable PISLM to fulfil its mandate and will be able to attract the kind of resources needed to fulfil the expanded work being presented.
- This work began in March 2022, but it was not completed because of being given simultaneous mandated to draft and prepare PISLM establishment agreements.
- The decision was taken to pause the strategic plan for the completion of the establishment agreements which should be completed in June. After which the strategic development exercise will take into consideration what came from the establishment agreement which will come with the requisites of an organizational structure etc. It was more prudent to wait until a new organization is approved and then develop a strategic plan.
- The plan is in draft form with a vision to become the premier sustainable land and soil management intergovernmental organization by 2025. The mission is to analyze policies, provide solutions, capacity building and collaboration with Caribbean small island developing states to meet the obligations for SLM and soil health. The strategic terms identified were capacity building, creating synergies with other conventions, innovation, and sustainable food systems.

Decision 04/PHLM.5 was adopted by the delegates through consensus.

Decision 05/PHLM.5 Capacity Building Services

To support this decision Mr. Calvin James, Executive Director of PISLM presented the decision for adoption.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Upon receiving PISLMs mandates from 2008, we noted with concern the challenges that companies face successfully submitting their reports to the UNCCD Secretariat on time. To assist with this, the PISLM would then contact the countries through their focal points indicating the availability of funds and the deadline. Once the relevant parties have been selected, they will undergo an intensive three-day training course on how to use the portal for the UNCCD. PISLM conducts training and facilitates countries through the national coordinating bodies to strengthen that process. We currently have twelve parties, up from five, and this service has been requested for them. This year we were able to complete a three-week window exercise that would usually take three months. It is quite possible that we are the only region that has successfully uploaded data in mass. This data is important because it is going to serve as baseline data for the SDG accounting process for the UN and they would begin their counting exercise to see if by 2023 we have met our obligation under SDG 15.
- Through this decision we want to lock in success by updating the decision was given through the third session of the HLF decision 4 in 2018 where we had only 8 countries. This decision seeks to update that decision to include the countries that were not added to the process at that time.

Discussion

St. Kitts and Nevis

Q (St. Kitts): What is the role of the focal points for the country? I get the sense that they are paper pushers.

A: There is a lot of information on the UNCCD website regarding this. But the role of the UNCCD focal point is to ensure that the mandate of the convention is given the prominence it deserves in the territory where the focal point resides. And to support that work is the learning centers to establish the national coordinating body. The role of the national coordinating body is to mainstream SLM in the policy profile of that country. If a land use policy document is being developed some collaboration should take place with the committee where the focal point will ensure that the convention is nationalized. Secondly, the focal point is to report to the Convention on the progress made within a country. Several ministries will have an overlap of land use planning and the focal point has a bird's eye view of all land issues in the country and these can be mainstreamed and reported to the UNCCD. Thirdly, the focal point serves to educate the respective countries on the UNCCD.

CARICOM

We need to push forward for Suriname, Guyana, and Belize to be included as SIDS. Also, with respect to capacity building and negotiations, this is something CARICOM has been looking at seriously. We just came out of the process of negotiating a new international treaty on Biodiversity beyond Jurisdiction. This shows that there is a constant need to build the capacity of CARICOM negotiators. There is a push back against special vulnerabilities for SIDS. More and more countries are fighting for the place as being vulnerable. Therefore, there is a need to keep on training and re-training young negotiators and not so young negotiators. We currently have a project going on where the focus is on biodiversity and chemical based management conventions, and it is envisaged under the project to build the capacity of the negotiators. There is a need to have open training for all people who can properly set foot on the international stage in the name of their country.

Decision 05/PHLM.5 was adopted by the delegates through consensus.

Day 1 Wrap Up

The Chair thanked the participants for their input during day 1 of the meeting. He further reminded them of the press conference to be held at the end of day 2 for the Ministerial delegation to brief the media on the outcome of the Fifth Session of the PISLM High Level Forum.

Plenary Session 2: Decisions Continued Day 2

The Chair of the High-Level Forum called the meeting to order. He provided a brief recap of day 1 and briefly reviewed the program for day 2.

Decision 06/PHLM.5 Caribbean LDN Transformative Project

To support this decision Dr. Mark Griffith, delivered a presentation on “Approval of Concept Note for the Caribbean LDN Transformative Project.”

Highlights of the presentation included:

- A brief overview was given of the LDN target setting, concept note and core components of the project.
- It is important to note the significance of leveraging for the ministers and the policy makers.
- With respect to leveraging, reference is made to soil care I and the eight member states participating in that project where it came to US\$6M. Because we acted together, we were able to leverage another two million to make approximately US\$8M from GEF. Yesterday a plea was made for all fourteen member states of CARICOM to come on board and again that plea is being made because it enabled us to leverage additional resources over the resources we have.
- Leveraging becomes a very important component of the regional transformative project because GEF requires a programmatic approach. In this regard, several studies and feasibility studies would be required for member states, and they will be required to fund these studies. The plan is to strategically use some of the resources that were allocated to soil care I and II to help defray those costs.
- It is important for all countries to come on board because it is a regional transformative project and there are currently ten countries and four countries have not committed. It is a viewpoint that they should not benefit from this.
- Most of the member states have gone through a process to set the LDN targets and completed the process except for two.
- The LDN target setting process helps countries identify voluntary targets and that is a prerequisite undertaking the LDN target setting process.
- The Executive office of the Partnership Initiative developed an initial concept note- an initiative on harnessing land degradation neutrality to enhance climate smart SLM, climate resilience and sustainable food security. Food security was included because of Covid 19.
- The components of the transformative project include:
 - Component 1- these deals with the country level interventions in support of sustainable climate resilient land management for enhancing food production and supporting land degradation. This component looks at the promotion of climate change resilient farming.
 - Subcomponent 2- focuses on enhancing food production and creating sustainable livelihoods and rehabilitation and the transformation of degraded land.
 - The next subcomponent focuses on linking food production and rehabilitation of land to the private sector.
 - Subcomponent 3- focuses on enhanced cooperation of sustainable climate resilient approaches supported by smart farming technologies, market intelligence or agri-business or agri- entrepreneur support and mentorship program.

- The aim is to enhance the non- productive lands into productive entities but focus on getting the youth more involved in agriculture and SLM issues.
- Component 3- focuses on the implementation of ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation. Some members have indicated the need to restore some degraded forests into forested areas. This component targets those countries who wish to further expand their acreage. This is particularly oriented to Haiti to contribute as a region to the rehabilitation of Haiti’s landscape.
- Component 4- focuses on the LDN regional resilient climate agrifood and land rehabilitation policy framework. This has to be integrated into the CARICOM OECS framework.

PISLM

This decision is requesting that we move forward on the decision that was made at the third HLF where the Secretariat was mandated to set up a of the LDN process. All Caribbean countries have identified their LDN targets, except for one. This will allow us to have eight soil organic carbon maps and the database ready. All others should be ready by 2025 and this would allow us to start the transformative process in 2025. To give some further background, this process started in 2020. The accredited entity identified at the time was not aligned with our mandate but now IICA and the governments of Antigua and Barbuda have agreed to be the accredited entities. Negotiations are still ongoing to work out the details of the arrangements.

To summarize, this decision is mandating the Secretariat to move forward and with this new formulation and the updated concept note as we continue working with the UNCCD focal points, the GCF focal points, the nationally designated authorities of the respective countries so that the exercise can be completed and begin the project documents and complete Phase II and we can roll out the transformative project.

Comment

Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago was not involved in Soil Care I but will be involved in Phase II and wish to pledge \$1.5M

Decision 06/PHLM.5 was adopted by the delegates through consensus.

Decision 07/PHLM.5 Resource Mobilization for Land Degradation

To support this decision Dr. Mark Griffith, delivered a presentation on “Approval of the sub-regional strategy for the mobilization of resources LD.”

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Some background information was given where reference was made to the decision of the high-level meeting in 2011 where the Secretariat was mandated to develop and implement innovative financial mechanisms. A part of decision 6 was to endorse specifically what was put forward in

terms of the partnership initiative, developing financial mechanisms to support the activities of the partnership. Once the UNCCD made the decision for the LDN as a process as their contribution to the achievement of the SDGs, it provided a good context for the development of an initiative in the region focusing on land degradation, neutrality and attempting to identify funding mechanisms for enabling countries to implement or transform the economies or land management into land degradation neutrality where you have balance between any degradation versus bringing back degraded areas into productivity. Going back to soil care 541 there are specific references made to establishing the funding mechanism. The fund would be the depository for resources that are developed within the context of LDN. Those resources would be available to stakeholders, in particular the small farmers which are to a large extent at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing resources from traditional sources. It seeks to transform the management of land, in particular agriculture and embracing the whole notion of Climate Smart Approaches. It also speaks to possible areas of capitalization of the fund, and it refers to the possibility of having a regional bond. It talks about voluntary contributions from government. There are a number of instruments which our member states are members of such as GEF and Green Climate Fund and the adaptation fund etc. that can be used to leverage in order to support regional research advisory and capacity building facility on new adaptation technologies at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus which has a great potential for us to utilize.

- The feasibility was conducted, and it was the conclusion that if member states are going to implement or take LDN seriously, there is a need for financial mechanisms.
- The fund is recommended to have three components:
 - The first is to have an investment component, in which the portion of the funds will be invested probably by a professional investment firm to facilitate the growth of the fund. There would be a need to put a mechanism in place to monitor that decision to choose a professional investment firm.
 - The second element of the fund is proposing a climate resilience program. This can be the operational part of the fund in which a set of resources are allocated that can be used on a continuous basis by member states. For example, there might be a loan facility to which loans could be provided to small farmer and women owned businesses. There could be a capacity development facility where there is continuous training of people and then there could be a climate resilient applied research development aspect.
 - The third element of the fund would be a technical assistance facility as new technologies and approaches are introduced; there is a need to provide the necessary technical assistance to the stakeholders, farmers etc.
- The fund is estimated to be about US\$70 to US\$100 M broken down into these three elements.
- In terms of governance of the fund and how it is monitored, the high-level ministerial body will serve as the high-level assembly for the fund. The already established modalities in the partnership can be used, such as the task force mechanism may be the policy council that will meet more often with member states to make decisions and carry out the policies of the high-level ministerial body with respect to the fund. The secretariat would serve as the secretariat to the financial mechanism.

- This body would need to decide on how the resources of the fund would be invested. This can be done by a legal entity; it can be a registered company coming out of the member states. And a decision would have to be made on where the fund would be housed. This gives an overview of the structure of the fund.
- Where will this money come from? And do we have the capability to raise money in the region? To achieve this, the recommendation is that each member state out of the 14 member states contribute 300,00 of their star resources.

PISLM

This presentation is a recommendation through soil care phase one for the establishment of the funding mechanism for the region. Decision 7 seeks to take the implementation of the recommendations in incremental steps. This is for 2023, where the executive director is to report to the ministers through the task force on the progress of the framework for the establishment of the fund. The fund would be actualized initially from the sources identified in the study, the GEF allocation commitments made from countries for soil care phase II or from any other sources country parties may identify. This would be used to capitalize the fund and the structure recommended would be implemented and other areas of resource mobilization would be through GCF, the private sector to avoid leaning on governments for capitalization. Because governments are not at this time in a position to support capitalization of this fund. But they are in support of funds such as these to support the implementation of sustainable land management.

Comment

St. Lucia

I am recommending that there should be a component for grants for farmers.

A: Yes, grants would be included in the funding as well.

Barbados

We support the need for mechanisms to offset the financial burden. There is a request for more discussion for soil care research, capacity building and new adaptation techniques to use GEF and other resources.

Trinidad

We look forward to the feedback from August to get updates as it relates to the framework, the institutional framework for the fund.

Caricom

Under this mechanism we are seeking to craft something indigenous to the region where we are going to say this is how we want to approach the financing of millions in a proactive way to fund the things that we see important to us as countries to access resources that have been put aside for us and we haven't been able to capitalize on because of capacity constraints, because of the administrative rules that you have to jump through to get these funds. That larger international organizations and large NGOs and international NGOs are set out to access early access in our name and I think it is incumbent upon us to try to get these things to work.

PISLM

If you look at the number of funds in the region it would probably be worthwhile to bring these like-minded people together for collaboration where we can ensure that they reach and benefit from the work that our agencies do. There is a committee already established so through that some forum can be set up. Barbados' suggestion is welcomed, and we will present all countries the prospectus or the regional advisory capacity facility on new adaptation technologies. This decision is for the executive director to submit quarterly progress reports to the Ministers and to the UNCCD. This decision was presented back in 2011 and we are now in 2023.

Decision 07/PHLM.5 was adopted by the delegates through consensus.

Decision 08/PHLM.5 Institutional arrangement of PISLM

To support this decision Mr. Calvin James, Executive Director of PISLM presented the decision for adoption.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- This decision serves to strengthen the institutional arrangement of PISLM. Some background information regarding PISLM in 2005 when the meeting was hosted by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago there was this feeling that this body would be a policy/lobbying group for the convention that would create synergy among the country parties implementing the convention. By 2018 there were significant gaps and PISLM quickly evolved into providing capacity support, developing policy instruments etc. It started off as a non-profit organization and as the project portfolio expanded, we realized that we needed to take advantage of the facilities provided for the establishment agreement in 2019. This was put on pause because of COVID and so PISLM was unable to carry out its mandates.
- In summary, this decision is for the establishment of the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management as an established entity. To facilitate that process, countries came forward, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Government of Grenada, Caricou and Martinique and the government of St. Lucia. These countries established a working group made up of their focal points and foreign affairs and their counter parts in foreign affairs. In the reference document the governing structure has changed, there will no longer be a high-level forum, there will no longer be a task force but an executive committee, there will be an advisory committee and the secretariat. Also, when the establishment agreement comes into being, the headquarters will be in Grenada and the office if Guyana will remain the operational center and offices in Trinidad and Haiti. On behalf of the host countries, Dominica, St. Lucia and Grenada, Decision 8 is put forward for the acceptance of the establishment agreement. This will then go to the Attorney General's Office and then adopted by the respective cabinets.

Comments

Grenada

We are happy to know that the headquarters will be in Grenada.

OECS

Congratulations on this evolution now there will be clarity in terms of this new establishment and the relationship between OECS and Caricom and less ambiguity and uncertainty of terms so we can continue to work together.

Decision 08/PHLM.5 was adopted by the delegates through consensus.

Decision 09/PHLM.5 Cooperation with other Institutional Partners

To support this decision Mr. Calvin James, Executive Director of PISLM presented the decision for adoption.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- This decision formalized the process by which the Caricom secretariat is updated on all our deliberations.
- Request to bring decision 5 to the next COTED environment which is capacity building services for their adoption.
- Also, to bring clauses 3 and 5 of decision 2 to be brought to COTED; Also bring clauses 3 4 and 6 be brought to Agriculture.

Comments

Barbados

We welcome the effort in establishing a Caribbean regional environment and agriculture and COTED.

Decision 09/PHLM.5 was adopted by the delegates through consensus.

Closing remarks

The Chair thanked all the delegates for their participation and contributions throughout the two-day sessions. He iterated that it was fruitful discussions and looked forward to further collaboration as the Caribbean moved forward in meeting its obligations under the UNCCD. He read the Chairmans's Report for the delegates, and it was unanimously adopted.

Appendix 1: Meeting Agenda

Thursday 23 March 2023

- 09.00 – 10.00 Opening Ceremony:
- Welcome Remarks: Calvin James, ED, PISLM
Remarks: Dr Renata Clarke, FAO Caribbean Representative
Address: Minister from Grenada
Address: Minister from St. Lucia
Address: Chair PISLM HLF
Feature Address: Minister of Planning and Development
- 10.20 – 10.40 ORGANIZATION OF WORK:
- a. Adoption of the agenda and housekeeping rules, Chair of the 5th Session of the PISLM High Level Forum
 - b. Round of introductory remarks from Delegates
- 10.40 – 11.00 WORK OF HIGH – LEVEL FORUM:
- Session 1: Review of Progress of 2 SLM/ILM projects in Dominica
Objective: Sustainable land management, as a developmental technology, offers major opportunities for both the environment and the people. For many small island developing states, the challenge of achieving SLM comes down to short-term benefits over long-term sustainability, the latter of which is most needed and crucial to achieving food security and to improve climate resilience. The Commonwealth of Dominica has partnered with PISLM to deploy significant SLM technological assets to reverse land degradation and increase the livelihood potential of its populace.
- Presentation: Mr. Euan James will give a brief presentation on the SLM/ILM Project being executed in the Commonwealth of Dominica
- Proposed Action: That the 5th Session of the PISLM HLF adopt Decision 01/PHLM.5
- 11.00 – 11.30 Session 2: Review of Progress of CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase I
Objective: Sustainable Land Management, Biodiversity, Agriculture and Forests are all optimized through Sustainable Soil Management. In the Caribbean SIDS managing soils and ensuring soil health has become a critical strategy to ensuring Food Security, strengthening eco-service priorities and for managing our standing tree stock.
- Presentation: Mr. Trevor Thompson will give a brief presentation on the Progress of CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase I
- Proposed Action: That the 5th Session of the PISLM HLF adopt Decision 02/PHLM.5

- 11:30 – 12.00 Session 3: Approval of CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase II (US\$15M)
Objective: Sustainable Land Management, Biodiversity, Agriculture and Forests are all optimized through Sustainable Soil Management. In the Caribbean SIDS managing soils and ensuring soil health has become a critical strategy to ensuring Food Security, strengthening eco-service priorities and for managing our standing tree stock.
Presentation: Dr Mark Griffith will give a brief presentation on the Status of CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase II
Proposed Action: That the 5th Session of the PISLM HLF adopt Decision 03/PHLM.5
- 12.00 – 13.30 Lunch
- 13.30 – 14.00 Session 4: The Five-Year Strategy Direction of PISLM
Objective: Taking into consideration the various emerging trends to the sustainable development of Caribbean SIDS the PISLM must develop the appropriate suite of tools and competencies so as to assist Caribbean SIDS in navigating through these challenges.
Presentation: The Executive Director of PISLM will give a brief presentation
Proposed Action: The 5th Session of the PISLM HLF adopt Decision 05/PHLM.5
- 14.00 – 14.30 Session 5: Capacity Building Services Objectives: PISLM was formulated to inter alia:
- i. Facilitate and co-ordinate the development of Caribbean positions on sustainable land and soil management and serve as an authoritative technical source for Caribbean countries to, inter alia, fulfil their responsibilities under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Barbados Programme of Action.
 - ii. enhancement of national capacities to meet the obligations under the UNCCD, BPOA and MSI/BPOA through on-going teaching, training, and collaboration.
- Presentation: The Executive Director of PISLM will give a brief presentation
Proposed Action: The 5th Session of the PISLM HLF adopt Decision 05/PHLM.5
- 19.00 – 21.00 Dinner & Long Service Award Ceremony

Friday 24 March 2023

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- 10.00 – 10.20 Session 6: Approval of Concept Note for the Caribbean LDN Transformative Project (US\$80M)
- Objectives: This initiative harnesses Land Degradation Neutrality to enhance climate smart sustainable land management, climate resilience and sustainable food security. Caribbean SIDS face several interconnecting concerns; the adverse impacts of climate

change on one of the most vulnerable regions of the world; addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular the concerns relating to food security which remained a major challenge and now exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the underutilization and loss of productive lands. This initiative will enable the Region to implement activities which will help reduce vulnerabilities to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Presentation: Dr Mark Griffith will give a brief presentation on the status of the Caribbean LDN Transformative Project

Proposed Action: The 5th Session of the PISLM HLF adopt Decision 06/PHLM.5

- 10.20. – 10.45 Session 7: Approval of the sub-regional strategy for the mobilization of resources for LD Objectives: Land Degradation Neutrality is a relatively new concept and none of the Funding Mechanisms which currently exist in CSIDS do not address Sustainable Soil Management (SSM), Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and the LDN, substantively. Presentation: Dr Mark Griffith will give a brief presentation on the sub-regional strategy for the mobilization of resources for Land Degradation Proposed Action: The 5th Session of the PISLM HLF adopt Decision 07/PHLM.5
- 10.45 – 11.00 Break
- 11.00 – 11.25 Session 8: Institutional Arrangement of PISLM Objective: Emerging challenges to the Sustainable Development of Caribbean SIDS due to Climate Change, COVID 19 and the Economy provides an ideal opportunity for Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of PISLM to meet the new demands for ensuring that country Parties meeting their obligations under the UNCCD, in the BPOA, LDN and SDG Presentation: The Executive Director will give a brief presentation on the evolution of PISLM from 2003 – 2021 Proposed Action: The 5th Session of the PISLM HLF adopt Decision 08/PHLM.5
- 11.25 – 11.40 Session 9: Cooperation with other Institutional Partners Objective: Emerging challenges to the Sustainable Development of Caribbean SIDS due to Climate Change, COVID 19 and the Economy provides an ideal opportunity for Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of PISLM to meet the new demands for ensuring that country Parties meeting their obligations under the UNCCD, in the BPOA, LDN and SDG Presentation: The Executive Director will give a brief presentation on the Cooperation of PISLM with other Institutional Partners Proposed Action: The 5th Session of the PISLM HLF adopt Decision 09/PHLM.5

11.40 – 12.00 REPORT OF THE SESSION

Objective: A draft report of the session will be prepared for adoption at the conclusion of the sessions, in accordance with established practice. Proposed Action: The HLF will be invited to adopt the report of its 5th session and authorize its Rapporteur to finalize the report after the session, with the assistance of the secretariat and under the guidance of the President.

12:00- 13:00 PRESS CONFERENCE

Appendix 2: List of Participants

List of officials attending the Fifth Session of the PISLM High Level Meeting (PHLM 5) “Caribbean SIDS should be Global Leaders, Attain SDG15” March 23-24, 2023		
1.	Name	Institution/Function
2.	Honourable Lt. Col (Ret'd) Joseph Harmon	Minister of State, Ministry of the Presidency, Guyana
3.	Mr. Kerry Joseph Belisle	Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development, Belize
4.	Honourable Desmond McKenzie	Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Jamaica
5.	Honourable Yolande Bain-Horseford	Minister of Agriculture Lands, Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment, Grenada
6.	Honourable Junior Cenanfils	Chief of Staff, Ministry of Environment, Haiti
7.	Honourable Ezechiel Joseph	Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries, Physical Planning, Natural Resources and Co-operatives, St. Lucia
8.	Honourable Raymond Ryan	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry and Fisheries, St. Vincent & Grenadines
9.	Honourable Colin O'Keiffe	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs, Antigua Barbuda
10	Mr. Calvin James	Executive Director, PISLM, Trinidad & Tobago
11	Dr Gaius Eudoxie	Soil Specialist, UWI
12	Mr. Lemuel Fitzgerald Providence	NFP, St. Vincent & the Grenadines
13	Mr. Trevor Emmanuel Thompson	NFP, Grenada
14	Mr. Eder Audate	NFP, Haiti
15	Mr. Jason Paul Williams	NFP, Antigua and Barbuda
16	Ms. Nataly Safira Plet	NFP, Suriname
17	Mr. Alfred Prospere	NFP, St. Lucia
18	Mrs. Elomina Francilla Adonis Girard	Reporting Officer, St. Lucia
19	Ms. Roseli Lynette Lisbey	NFP, Belize
20	Dr. Mark Griffith	Founder of PISLM/Advisor to the ED
21	Dr. Richard Cox	UNCCD Secretariat/Facilitator
22	Mr. Reginald Burke	CSO
23	Ms. Amrikha Singh	Programme Manager, Sustainable Development, CARICOM Secretariat



Picture 1: Hon. Penelope Beckles, Minister of Planning and Development, Mr. Calvin James, Executive Director and other Delegates of the 5th Session of the PISLM HLF.

Country Specific SLM/ILM Initiatives

The PISLM High Level Forum,

Recalling Decision 4 of 2003: of the Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean

Also recalling the guidance of the 25th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED-Environment), held in April 2008

Taking note of the two projects, “*Strengthening resilience of agricultural lands and forests in Dominica in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria*” and “*Sustainable Land Management in the Commonwealth of Dominica*”, where the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) is the Executing Agency with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) serving as the Implementing Agency and, with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF)

1. *Takes note of* the report of the Project Coordinator from the PISLM Project Office in the Commonwealth of Dominica.
2. *Notes with appreciation* the work of PISLM in supporting the government of the Commonwealth of Dominica in its re-forestation programs and sustainable Land Management agenda.
3. *Invites* the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management to continue its support to the Commonwealth of Dominica in programming its Global Environment Facility land degradation focal area resources to combat desertification, land degradation and drought and achieve their voluntary land degradation neutrality targets in the context of land degradation neutrality transformative projects and programs.
4. *Welcomes* the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Integrated Land Management (ILM) projects and policy initiatives being developed in Carriacou (Grenada) and The Bahamas, respectively, in collaboration with UNEP (as the GEF Implementing Agency) and with funding from the GEF.
5. *Encourages* Caribbean country Parties to utilize the services of PISLM in the development, and execution of their programs to combat desertification, land degradation, and drought.
6. *Requests* the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management to report on the implementation of this Decision as part of its next report to the 6th Session of the PISLM High Level Forum.

1. *Encourages* developed country Parties and invites other countries in a position to do so, multilateral financial institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations, and technical and financial institutions to:
 - a. Provide scientific, technical and financial assistance to help Caribbean country Parties requesting assistance to effectively manage the soil;
 - b. Establish equitable partnerships that encourage responsible and sustainable investments and practices by the private sector, which contribute to achieving effective soil management that supports the health and productivity of the land and its people.

2. *Directs* the PISLM Support Office to:
 - a. Work with UNCCD Focal Points and GEF Focal Points, in its capacity as the Executing Agency for the project, to develop and complete the PIF by the end of the fourth quarter of 2018,
 - b. Develop, in collaboration with UN FAO, and take the lead in developing and implementing strategic capacity building activities.

3. *Request* the Executive Director to report to the Chairman of the PISLM Task Force at least once per quarter in writing, advising on the progress made in implementing this decision. The said report shall be shared with all Parties concerned.

CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase 1

The PISLM High Level Forum,

Recalling the outcomes of the 2nd Session of the 4th PISLM Task Force Meeting contained in the report titled “Synergy between Land Degradation Neutrality – Target Setting Programme and Global Soils Partnership for combating Land Degradation in Caribbean SIDS.”

Also recalling Decision 03/COP.12

Further recalling Decision 01/PHLM.3

Recalling the adoption of the third PISLM High Level Forum to have PISLM facilitate eight (8) Caribbean SIDS country Parties (involved in CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase 1) develop voluntary national targets under the Land Degradation Neutrality – Target Setting Programme (LDN-TSP) as well as compile the necessary data for the associated indicators of which the core indicator is soil organic carbon content.

Taking into consideration that three deliverables of SOILCARE Phase 1 are, *inter alia*, the formation of the Caribbean Soil Support Group (CSSG), the formation of the Sustainable Soil/Land Management Framework Agreement Group (SLMFAG) and, the formation of the Caribbean Soil Lab Network (CARLAN)

Recognizing the usefulness that technical information plays in the implementation of sustainable land management technologies.

1. *Acknowledges* the work being carried out by the CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase 1 Project Management Unit in leading the implementation of this important project.
2. *Decides* to make the following project site changes in the CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase 1 project as listed in *Annex I*.
3. *Decides* to make the Caribbean Soil Support Group (CSSG), the Sustainable Soil/Land Management Framework Agreement Group (SLMFAG), and the Caribbean Soil Lab Network (CARLAN) standing subsidiary bodies of the PISLM to assist with technical information on land and soil issues and to serve as the science policy interface for PISLM.
4. *Decides* that the CSSG shall provide technical assistance, through the PISLM Secretariat, on soil health, soil fertility and any other soil related issues to the work being carried out by the Special

Ministers Task Force on Food Production and Food Security established by the CARICOM Secretariat

5. *Decides* that the Sustainable Soil/Land Management Framework Agreement Group (SLMFAG) will facilitate the mainstreaming of climate change adaptation in SLM by the integration of environmentally sound and climate-resilient measures with the view of strengthening and mainstreaming SLM, SSM, and Climate Smart Agriculture principles into those relevant Community policy instruments.
6. *Decides* that the Caribbean Soil Lab Network (CARLAN) will facilitate the mainstreaming of international best practice in the development, running and maintenance of soil labs in the Caribbean and, through the PISLM Secretariat, provide training and capacity building to soil lab experts and technicians in the Caribbean.
7. *Requests* that the CSSG and CARLAN, through the PISLM Secretariat, prepare appropriate modalities, criteria, and terms of reference for their role in supporting the work of the Special Ministers Task Force on Food Production and Food Security
8. *Requests* that SLMFAG, through the PISLM Secretariat, prepare appropriate modalities, criteria, and terms of reference for their role in supporting the work of the Sustainable Development Unit of the CARICOM Secretariat.
9. *Requests* that the PISLM Secretariat convene a Regional Project Steering Committee meeting of the CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase 1 project (within the next 3 months of the Decision being adopted) to authorize the changes outlined in this Decision.

Changes in project sites for St Lucia and Haiti in the CSIDS –SOILCARE Phase 1 project

St Lucia:

Project Area:

Component 2: Addressing the drivers of land degradation through the rehabilitation of land and soil degraded areas and the promotion of integrated landscape management and restoration and the identification and implementation of livelihood alternatives for communities. The Project area was changed from **Choiseul in St. Lucia; a relatively dry area with relatively low rainfall which has suffered from poor agricultural practices overtime resulting in heavily eroded soils to D’abande, Saltibus Choiseul.** This area suffers from bad agricultural practices and is heavily eroded.

Component 3: Resilience building to land degradation, natural disasters and climate change through climate smart agriculture and enhanced drought risk management:

Project Area:

The Project area was changed from **Bois Den Jacmel**, an intensely farmed agricultural area where extensive land degradation is occurring, to **Grande Riviere, Dennery at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College Agricultural Division.**

Component 4: Enhancement of food systems and alternative livelihoods through the promotion of innovations in agriculture and livestock production systems and mobilization of the private sector in support of LDN Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF):

Project Area:

The Project areas changed from **Cendre de FEU/Sarot Bexon**, an agricultural area consisting primarily of abandoned banana farms in which farmers are trying to identify alternative crops to sustain their livelihoods **to the Roseau, Quarter of Anse La Raye** an agricultural area consisting of a number of abandoned banana farms in which farmers are trying to identify alternative crops to sustain their livelihoods.

Haiti:

Component 2

Project Area

The Project Site was at **Lac Azeui of Fond Parisien in North between Cornillon Grand Bois, and Fond Verette.** The new project Site will be the **Marion River watershed**, the area of which is estimated at approximately 21,592 hectares.

Component 3,

Project Area:

The second site was the **Rio Marion Watershed (target area: 7,000 ha)**, is changed to **the Samana River watershed**, the area of which is estimated at approximately 15,203 hectares.

CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase II

The PISLM High Level Forum,

Recalling Decision 01/4TF.2, Decision 01/PHLM.3 and Decision 01/PHLM.4

Further recalling Decision 8.4 of the 103rd Session of the COTED (Environment)

Also recalling OECS/COM/22/09/5.13

Acknowledges the work done by the PISLM Secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to develop, via a consultative process, a sub-regional project titled *Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Multicountry Soil Management Initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and Sustainable Food Systems: Phase 1 (CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase 1)*

Welcomes the support and collaboration of FAO to serve as Implementing Agency for CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase 2

1. *Invites* Caribbean country Parties to:
 - a. Endorse the sub-regional project titled *Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Multicountry Soil Management Initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and Sustainable Food Systems: Phase 2 (CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase 2)* as an essential pillar for the sub-region in meeting its obligations under the UNCCD, SDG 15.3, Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway); and
 - b. Allocate the necessary resources from their GEF 8 STAR Land Degradation allocation to support the financing of *CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase 2*.
2. *Encourages* the GEF Secretariat to provide additional resources to CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase 2, particularly through its Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)
3. *Directs* the PISLM Secretariat to:
 - a. Work with UNCCD Focal Points and GEF Focal Points, in its capacity as the Executing Agency for the project, to complete the PIF and PRODOC for *CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase 2* by the end of the fourth month of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024 respectively.

4. *Requests* that the Executive Director reports to the Chairman of the PISLM Task Force at least once per quarter in writing, advising on the progress made in implementing this Decision. The said report shall be shared with all Parties concerned.

The Five-Year Strategic Direction of PISLM

The PISLM High Level Forum

Recalling Decision 01/4TF.1

Further Recalling Decision 05/PHLM.

Taking into consideration the Decisions of the 25th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED – Environment)

1. *Takes note with appreciation* progress made by the PISLM Secretariat in applying the guidance provided in Decision 05/PHLM.4 in the drafting of the Strategy.
2. *Approves* the strategic orientation of the Secretariat as contained in *Annex I* to this Decision.
3. *Requests* the Secretariat to continue assisting, through the Strategy, the Caribbean Parties which are members of PISLM.
4. *Requests* that the Secretariat complete the drafting of the Strategic Plan by the end of 2023 and an update be given to the PISLM Taskforce once per quarter in writing until completion of the Strategy.

Capacity Building Services

The PISLM High Level Forum,

Recalling Decision 4 of 2003: of the Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean (2/PSRHM 1), Decision 6.3 of the 37th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED – Environment), 3/COP10 and 15/COP12,

Also recalling Decision 04/PHLM.3

Taking into consideration the role of the PISLM Secretariat as a mechanism to facilitate exchanges of experiences and good land management practices between participating states, and for stimulating the replication of appropriate approaches, tools, and methodologies throughout the region,

Recognizing the need to streamline the services carried out by the Secretariat to improve the capacity, efficiency, and efficacy of the Caribbean UNCCD National Focal Points,

1. *Decides* that the Caribbean country Parties listed in the annex to this Decision consent to the PISLM Secretariat to:
 - a. serve as the Executing Agency regarding facilitating the preparation and submission of the PRAIS reports on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
 - b. build the capacity of the Caribbean UNCCD Focal Points in negotiating in the organs of the UNCCD.
 - c. prepare Caribbean SIDS to negotiate on sustainable land management issues within the BPOA and the SAMOA strategy.
 - d. provide National Action Plan (NAP) Alignment Services to Caribbean SIDS
2. *Calls on* the PISLM Secretariat to collaborate with the UNCCD National Focal Points and the GEF Focal Points to facilitate the implementation of this Decision.

Annex 1

PISLM as Sub-regional entity in charge of preparation of Reports at the National and Sub-regional

Country	NO	Yes	Comments
Antigua and Barbuda		√	
Barbados		√	
Bahamas			Open for negotiations
Belize		√	
Cuba			Open for negotiations
Dominica		√	
Dominica Republic			Open for negotiations
Grenada		√	
Guyana		√	
Haiti		√	
Jamaica		√	
St Lucia		√	
St Kitts and Nevis		√	
St Vincent and Grenadines		√	
Suriname		√	
Trinidad and Tobago			Open for negotiations

Caribbean LDN Transformative Project

The PISLM High Level Forum,

Recalling Decision 11/COP12, 2/COP12, 3/COP12, 9/COP12, 11/COP12 and 12/COP12

Also recalling Decision 06/4TF.1 and Decision 05/PHLM.3

Taking into consideration the mandate given to the PISLM Secretariat at the UNCCD COP13 by Caribbean SIDS to develop a sub-regional Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Transformative project.

Also taking into consideration that the 3rd Session of the 6th PISLM Task Force mandated the PISLM Secretariat to serve as the Executing Agency for the Caribbean sub-regional LDN Transformative Project

Acknowledging the work already done to date in getting this project concept note developed

1. *Endorses* the sub-regional project titled *Caribbean Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Transformative Project* as an essential pillar for the sub-region in meeting its obligations under the UNCCD and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15.3
2. *Requests* the PISLM Secretariat and the confirmed Accredited Entity(ies) enter into a cooperation agreement for the development and execution of this project, with the understanding that PISLM shall serve as the executing agency.
3. *Requests* that the UNCCD National Focal Points and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) National Designated Authorities (NDA) collaborate with the PISLM Secretariat and the Accredited Entity(ies) to develop the project proposal for submission to the GCF Secretariat.
4. *Directs* that the Executive Director reports to the Chairman of the PISLM Task Force at least once per quarter in writing, advising on the progress made in implementing this Decision. The said report shall be shared with all Parties concerned.

Resource Mobilization for Land Degradation

The PISLM High Level Forum,

Recalling Decision 02/4TF.1 which calls for the establishment of a reserve fund to combat land degradation, desertification, and drought in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (CSIDS)

Further recalling Decision 01/PHLM.3

Taking into consideration that one deliverable of CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase 1 was a Feasibility Study for the Establishment of a Regional Funding Mechanism for the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) to support Sustainable Soil and Land Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (CSIDS)

1. *Noting* the recommendation contained in the document PHLM.5/DD005, further reaffirming Decision 02/4TF.1, *agrees* to the establishment a **LDN** Transformation Financial Mechanism for the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) to support Sustainable Soil and Land Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States
2. *Agrees* that the **LDN** Transformation Financial Mechanism be designed as an investment, capacity development fund for new adaptation technologies, and applied targeted research.
3. *Agrees* that funding sources include, *inter alia*, contributions from governments, the CSIDS private sector, philanthropic sources, multi- and bi-lateral sources, the mobilization of resources through innovative means, the issuing of “Regional Environmental Bonds,” and the marketing and sale of services and products of the PISLM/SOILCARE Regional Research, Advisory and Capacity Building Facility on New Adaptation Technologies (RAC/NAT Facility)
4. *Agrees* that the **LDN** Transformation Financial Mechanism be initially capitalized with a contribution from each of the participating countries’ GEF-8 STAR Country Allocation commitment to CSIDS – SOILCARE Phase 2 or from any other sources that the country Parties may identify.
5. *Authorizes* the Executive Director, from the 1st of August 2023, to take all necessary measures, with others as appropriate, to develop the institutional arrangements in this Decision in an expeditious manner so as to ensure that the administrative, procedural and legal aspects are implemented.
6. *Requests* the Executive Director to prepare and submit quarterly progress reports to the Ministers responsible for UNCCD through the PISLM Task Force.

Institutional Arrangement of PISLM

The PISLM High Level Forum,

Recalling Decision 01/4TF.1 and Decision 01/PHLM.4

Welcoming the Decisions of the 25th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED - Environment) which, inter alia “Agreed that the PISLM should be used as the framework for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Land Management components of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI)/BPOA in Caribbean SIDS, to the extent practicable, and also urged all Member States and relevant regional and international organizations to support and participate actively in this initiative, particularly as it seeks to address issues relating to rural development and poverty alleviation in the rural sector in the Caribbean SIDS”

Acknowledging the support of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in hosting the PISLM Support Office from 2009 to 2014; as well as the technical and financial inputs from the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, the Scope/African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) Program, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Further acknowledges the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for offering to host the PISLM Secretariat in 2019,

Notes that the Governments of Saint Lucia, Grenada, and the Commonwealth of Dominica have sponsored the PISLM Establishment Agreement

1. *Endorses* the draft PISLM *Establishment Agreement*
2. *Encourages* the sponsor countries of the *Establishment Agreement* to present the finalized and signed *Agreement* no later than June 30, 2023, for the adoption by country Parties through their national processes.
3. *Urges* Caribbean country Parties to sign and ratify the *Establishment Agreement* at the earliest available opportunity.
4. *Decides* that the PISLM *Establishment Agreement* shall come into effect 30 days after the signing of the three (3) sponsor countries-
5. *Agrees* that the present establishment of PISLM be maintained until such time as the requirements of the new *Establishment Agreement* come into effect.

6. *Urges* country Parties to continue to use the PISLM Secretariat for technical support and as the Executing Agency for the development, implementation and reporting of their Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management national and sub-regional UNCCD portfolios.

Cooperation with other Institutional Partners

The PISLM High Level Forum,

Recalling Decision 03/4TF.1

Also recalling the relevant provisions of Decision COTED/COHSOD/2010/3/DSRC paragraph 7.1, in particular “*Requested the CARICOM Secretariat to lend support to the PISLM Task Force and PISLM Support Office in mobilizing funding for the operationalization of the activities of the PISLM.*”

Further recalling Decision COTED/Environment/2011/paragraph 6.1/subsection v: “*also request that the CARICOM Secretariat and other relevant CARICOM specialized institutions continue to provide technical assistance to the CNIRD/PISLM Support Office in the development and implementation of activities and programs in fulfilment of the goals and objectives of the SRAP.*”

Recalling Decision COTED/Environment/2011/paragraph 6.2/subsection iii: “*Request that a program of work be articulated by the PISLM/CNIRD Support Office, including the development of activities and outputs to be approved by the PISLM Task Force and submitted to the COTED for final endorsement.*”

Taking into consideration Decision 8.4 of the 103rd Session of the COTED – (Environment)

Also taking into consideration OECS/COM/22/09/5.13

1. *Decides* that Decision 05/PHLM.5 be presented to COTED (Environment) for adoption.
2. *Decides* that Clauses 3 and 5 of Decision 02/PHLM.5 be presented to COTED (Environment) and to the OECS Council of Ministers for Environment for adoption.
3. *Decides* that Clauses 3, 4 and 6 of Decision 02/PHLM.5 be presented to COTED (Agriculture) and to the OECS Council of Ministers for Agriculture for adoption.
4. *Directs* the Executive Director to transmit Decision 09/PHLM.5 to the CARICOM Secretariat through the relevant departments for inclusion in the next COTED (Environment) and COTED (Agriculture) meetings,
5. *Directs* the Executive Director to transmit Decision 09/PHLM.5 to the OECS Commission through the relevant departments for inclusion in the next Council of Ministers for Environment and Council of Ministers for Agriculture meetings.

6. *Urges* the PISLM Secretariat to continue strengthening existing strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders, building on established and new cooperation initiatives with relevant international agencies and bodies as listed in the annex to this Decision.