



CANARI launches coastal community vulnerability assessments to build resilience in Trinidad and Tobago

Port of Spain, April 16, 2024 – In a groundbreaking initiative to address escalating threats posed by climate change, the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) recently launched a series of comprehensive assessments to understand the impacts and challenges of rising sea levels, coastal erosion and extreme weather events resulting from climate change across vulnerable coastal regions in Trinidad and Tobago. Under the project “Integrating digital technologies and participatory tools to support coastal community resilience in Trinidad and Tobago (Tech4CoastalResilience)”, these assessments will help equip these vulnerable communities with the tools and knowledge necessary to confront climate change-related challenges head on.

Kicking off in Mayaro, Trinidad, on January 30, 2024, the inaugural workshop focused on assessing the community’s vulnerability to climate change and determining its priorities for building resilience. The workshop brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including more than 25 community members such as including fisherfolk, rural women producers and community-based organisations.



Also in attendance were hotel and tour operators, the Mayaro Village Council and key local and national government agencies in Trinidad. Using participatory geographic information systems (PGIS) and a historical timeline, participants collaborated to map out the impacts of climate change, assess vulnerabilities and identify strategies for bolstering resilience in the Mayaro community, including for the fisheries and tourism sectors. Based on these assessments, critical insights into priorities for adaptation were also identified.

Mayaro residents and other civil society and government representatives map the impacts and vulnerabilities occurring in the area.

Credit: CANARI

Emphasising the socioeconomic importance of safeguarding local sources of income against climate change and related disasters, Mayaro resident and representative of the Trinidad and Tobago Chapter of Disabled Peoples’ International, Justin Jarvis, highlighted that, “Oil and gas is the spine of our economy but agriculture, including farming and fishing, that is the heart. It gives us food and nutrition security and livelihoods. We need to find ways to strengthen these livelihoods in the face of climate change and other changes in our community.”

Acknowledging the urgency of the situation, Acting Senior Fisheries Officer, Fisheries Division, Ricardo Mieux, also welcomed the assessments, stressing that, “The adverse impacts of climate change on fishing and coastal communities in Trinidad and Tobago are irrefutable. As such, the Fisheries Division is pleased to partner on the Tech4CoastalResilience project and strives to utilise innovative technologies and provide technical assistance for practical solutions that will impact positively on local livelihoods.”

The assessments in Mayaro marked the beginning of a broader initiative, with four additional workshops slated for coastal communities, including Carli Bay and Matelot in Trinidad and Castara and Scarborough in Tobago. The findings from these assessments will inform further work under the Tech4CoastalResilience project to identify priorities for action and build coastal resilience.

The workshops are being facilitated by CANARI in partnership with the Fisheries Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries and Department of Marine Resources and Fisheries, Tobago House of Assembly under the Tech4CoastalResilience project. The project aims to improve the technical capacity and resources of coastal communities and key management agencies to use innovative technologies and tools to address data gaps and enable a more inclusive and informed approach for building resilience. The project is supported by the “Harnessing Innovative Technologies to Support Resilience Settlements on the Coastal Zones of the Caribbean (HIT RESET Caribbean)” programme. HIT RESET Caribbean is funded by the ACP Innovation Fund, OACPS Research and Innovation Programme, which is implemented by the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and financed by the European Union (EU).

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For more information on HIT RESET Caribbean and this project, visit:
<https://canari.org/technologies-4-resilience-tt/>

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

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