



For Immediate Release

Jamaica's Coalition for Forests launches national campaign

Kingston, October 4, 2023 – The Coalition for Forests in Jamaica is launching a national campaign targeting local government actors, forest management agencies and key Ministers and Members of Parliament to increase the budget allocation for forest conservation and management; to promote incorporation of participatory budgeting and public finance management approaches by the Government of Jamaica at every level; and to ensure that the value and economic benefits of civil society's work on forest conservation and management are recognised and supported by the Government of Jamaica.

The Coalition for Forests is an alliance of 27 civil society organisations (CSOs) in Jamaica working together to engage in collective analysis, advocacy and dialogue to promote participatory budgeting for the forest sector. This will lead to strengthened citizen engagement in and support for sustainable management of forest ecosystems and biodiversity in Jamaica to benefit livelihoods, socio-economic development and human well-being.



Members of the Coalition for Forests, Jamaica (Credit JCDT)

The Coalition for Forests recognises that participatory budgeting is a process of advancing democracy by increasing citizen engagement in government decision-making. This supports inclusive governance and opens up a path to helping marginalised citizens and communities increase the share of public spending that benefits them or addresses their needs.

At a workshop held recently to engage key government agencies, Coalition members were vocal in calling for an increased role for civil society in decisions about budget allocation for forest conservation and management in Jamaica. These CSOs feel that they have a right to have a voice in the process given the significant contribution they are making.

A small pilot study by the Coalition found that in 2022, seven of its members contributed over JM\$100 million (US\$646,000) to forest conservation and management and supporting hundreds of forest users in local communities. In the Cockpit Country, the voluntary contribution of the Local

Forest Management Committees (LFMCs) and the Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency (STEA) was over JM\$8.5 million (US\$55,000) in 2022, exceeding funds given to them by the Government of Jamaica and other funders.

Coalition members are advocating for increased budget allocation by the Government of Jamaica for forest conservation and management to benefit Jamaican people, environment and economy. They also want more funding to go towards supporting the important work being done by CSOs which are delivering results on the ground. David Walters, Executive Director of JCDT, noted that, “CSOs need to be part of the [forest budget] conversation. It’s not a competition. Partnership between CSOs and Government presents a stronger case for funding on the global stage.”

Over the coming months, the Coalition will engage with local government actors, forest management agencies and key Ministers and Members of Parliament as part of the FY2024 budget process. This work will include a Town Hall meeting and Expo in November to bring together key stakeholders from the public, private and civil society sectors to engage in dialogue on how Jamaica can increase funding for forest conservation and management and embrace participatory budgeting approaches which recognise the value of civil society’s contribution and their right to have a voice in decision-making processes.

The Coalition for Forests is being supported under the project *Building civil society awareness and capacity to engage in participatory budgeting and financial management for the forest sector in Jamaica* with support from the European Union (FED/2021/428-620) which is being implemented by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), in partnership with the Caribbean Coastal Area Management (C-CAM) Foundation and the Jamaica Conservation Development Trust (JCDT). The use of participatory budgeting approaches with the forest sector in Jamaica is being piloted with the hope that this can be expanded to other sectors and countries across the Caribbean to enhance inclusive environmental governance.

Coalition for Forests members are:

1. Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (CCAM)
2. Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)
3. Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI)
4. Clarendon Parish Development Committee Benevolent Society
5. Cockpit Country North Local Forest Management Committee
6. Constitution Hill Local Forest Management Committee
7. Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ)
8. Hanover Bee Farmers’ Co-operative Society Limited
9. Jamaica Accountability Meter Portal (JAMP)
10. Jamaica Coffee Growers Association (JCGA)
11. Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCDT)
12. Jamaica Environment Entrepreneurs' Advocacy Network (JEEAN)
13. Jamaica Environment Trust (JET)
14. Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement (JOAM)
15. Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment (LIFE)
16. National Conservation Trust Fund of Jamaica (NCTFJ)
17. Nature Preservation Foundation
18. Negril Area Environmental Protection Trust (NEPT)
19. Northern Rio Minho Local Forest Management Committee
20. Rise Life Management
21. Sawyers Local Forest Management Committee Benevolent Society
22. Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency
23. Spring Dunrobin Local Forest Management Committee
24. St. Thomas Environmental Protection Association (STEPA)

25. The Nature Conservancy (Jamaica)
26. The Sustainable Livelihood Network Ltd.
27. Watermount Community Development Committee

For more information on this project and work of the Coalition, see: <https://canari.org/green-economy/jamaica-participatory-budgeting/>

END

About C-CAM: The Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM) was established in 1997 to promote coastal conservation in Jamaica. C-CAM promotes sustainable development and conservation of the natural environment in the Portland Bight Protected Area. The organisation's approach to natural resources management is based on the maximum involvement of communities through co-management based on the best available scientific and social information. For more information, see <https://ccam.org.jm/>.

About JCDT: Established in 1988, The Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCDT) is a nongovernmental organisation and charity with a mandate to conserve Jamaica's natural environment. The JCDT's mission leads the organisation to protect and restore forests in the Blue and John Crow Mountains using approaches that facilitate sustainable development in rural mountain communities. For more information, see <https://www.jcdt.org.jm/>.

About CANARI: The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working across the Caribbean for 30 years, including in Jamaica. 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, Resilience and Participatory Governance. For more information on CANARI, see: <https://www.canari.org/>.

For further information, please contact:

Nicole Leotaud, Executive Director, CANARI at Executive.Director@canari.org