



USAID Eastern and Southern Caribbean Regional Climate Symposium

Session II: Climate Change: Current Impacts and Future Projections

June 16th, 2021, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. EDT

Post-session Summary

Background

The second session of the United States Agency for International Development/ Eastern and Southern Caribbean Mission (USAID/ESC) regional climate symposium took place on Wednesday, June 16th. It was moderated by Dr. Janice Cumberbatch from the University of West Indies (UWI) and featured climate specialists from the region, including Professor Michael Taylor from UWI, Dr. Cedric Van Meerbeeck from the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH), and Dr. Mark Bynoe from the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center (CCCCC). The virtual event examined how science and technology is being used to understand the human costs of climate change. The speakers underscored the significant amount of climate action the Caribbean region has undertaken through partnerships with private, public, and academic sectors.

Highlights

Professor Michael Taylor kicked off the virtual session delivering three key messages “**Wise up!** —the climate is changing and is proving challenging, **Heads up!** —the climate will continue to change and **Wake up!** —the time to act is now.” Professor Taylor highlighted how the Caribbean region is under a worst-case scenario and can no longer afford the cost of catastrophic climate change. He called for a strong mitigation and adaptation agenda and the need for it to be evidence-based and contextual to the challenges of the region. Dr. Cedric Van Meerbeeck then elaborated on what can happen if action is not taken through illustrative climate risk examples. He explained how the early warning systems CIMH are implementing, are providing people with information to prepare and adapt to extreme weather. He recognized the partnership of USAID in supporting regional capacity-building efforts for the last 10 years.

Dr. Mark Bynoe further highlighted regional responses including economic and social implications of climate change impacts in the region. He noted how the aftermath of recent hurricanes have impacted the long-term nutmeg market in Grenada, increased alcohol consumption and domestic abuse in Guyana, and increased housing loans in Dominica. “Social impacts are not as easily captured in reports [as economic impacts] and need to be incorporated.” He spoke of the importance of youth and women involvement in implementing climate efforts and nature-based solutions, highlighting how a mangrove restoration project became an important livelihood strategy for women in a Guyanese community.

Key takeaways:

- Development strategies must incorporate climate change issues with people at the core of the strategy.
- Capacity-building efforts should tackle current problems. Systems need to be built to provide solutions for the future.

- The Caribbean region has enough information, capacity, expertise, and examples to strengthen climate resilience. The time for action is now and the youth need to be involved as they have the enthusiasm and energy to support these efforts.

To learn more about climate issues in the Caribbean region highlighted by speakers, check out the following resources:

- [The State of the Caribbean Climate Report](#)
- [Climate Trends and Projections for the OECS Region](#)
- [Delivering Transformative Change 2011-2021](#)

The recording of the session is available [here](#) and the final symposium report will be available shortly after the Symposium 2021.

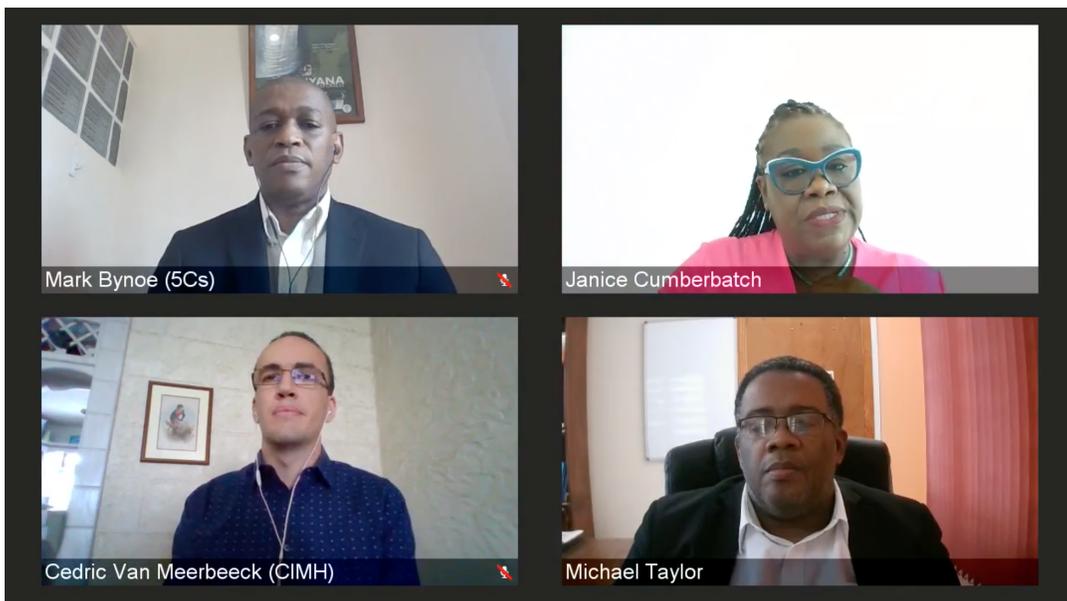


Image: Presenters and the session moderator during the Q & A (from top right to left: Dr. Mark Bynoe (CCCCC), Dr. Janice Cumberbatch (UWI) Dr. Cedric Van Meerbeeck (CIMH))