

REMARKS BY
HON. DARYL VAZ M.P.
MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO
IN THE
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION
AT THE
THIRD NATIONAL COMMUNICATION PRESENTATIONS
OF OUTCOMES 1 AND 3
AND THE BIENNIAL UPDATE REPORT
TUESDAY MARCH 29, 2016
@ 9:00 A.M.
AT THE
MONA VISITORS' LODGE
U.W.I.

- Mr. Chairman
- Professor Anthony Chen – Consultant Outcome 1
- Professor Michael Taylor – Consultant Climate Scenarios
- Dr. Homero Silva – Consultant - Outcome 3 (Human Health)
- Dr. Conrad Douglas – Consultant (Coastal Resources and Water Resources)
- Dr. Donovan Campbell – Consultant (Agriculture)
- Mr. Albert Daley – Principal Director, Climate Change Division
- Invited Guests
- Ladies and gentlemen

I am pleased to bring greetings on behalf of the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation to this Third National Communication and Presentations of Outcomes One and Three, and the Biennial Update Report.

More and more, there is the understanding that Climate Change is a critical issue, so much so, that it has commanded the attention of the entire world.

A tremendous leap was made in Paris at the 21st Conference of Parties last year, when the new Agreement on climate change was adopted by 196 countries including Jamaica, that are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

But while we await ratification of the agreement, the increase in both land and sea temperatures continues unabated.

Last year went down in the history books as being the warmest year on record, since record-keeping began. However, this year already looks to surpass the records broken last year.

The United States-based National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA) has stated that February 2016 has set a new record for being the warmest month ever, with the recorded temperature for February 2016 at nearly 1.0 degree Celsius above normal.

Sea levels, measured by tide gauges and satellites, were also the highest ever recorded. Right here in Jamaica, even with the absence of a tropical storm or hurricane, a number of coastal locations were flooded by the sea.

With only a strong easterly flow, influenced by a strong high pressure system, parts of Southern Clarendon, Southern St. Elizabeth and sections of Falmouth in Trelawny were flooded by the sea.

The impacts of climate change are no doubt well known by the grouping of professionals and scientists here today.

We know that the shocks such as hurricanes, tropical storms, flooding, and drought cut across all aspects of life, and have the potential to adversely affect and disrupt our economy and society.

You have researched the science behind climate change. You have seen, first hand, many of the impacts of this global phenomenon.

You have assessed the physical, economic and social impacts of climate change. Some of you have argued the case for Jamaica and other small island developing states at fora around the world.

In fact, Jamaica has played a leading role in the negotiating process, as elected members representing the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Alliance of Small Island States , as well as the Group of Seventy-Seven and China on the various constituted bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Much has been done, but there is still much to do, particularly at the grass roots level, in terms of enabling and empowering the poorest and most vulnerable among us, including our women and children, to adapt to and cope with some of the intense and often devastating weather events associated with climate change.

The informal and agricultural sectors are usually the most impacted by natural disasters, therefore it is persons who are employed in these groups, who are disproportionately affected by the loss of livelihood following a disaster.

It is obvious that an effective adaptation process must include both the needs and the potential contributions of these groups. Community-based disaster preparedness and response plans that take the physical, psychological, social and economic vulnerabilities of persons employed in the informal and agricultural sectors into account, will help to reduce their vulnerability to disasters overall.

We are grateful for the work of our development partners, our non-governmental organizations and our community based organizations, who have been invaluable in partnering with us to assist with the planning and implementation of projects among our most vulnerable, to help them to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

I wish to state that this Government fully recognizes and appreciates the fact that we are all in this together. Our efforts must be collaborative and concrete. They must be underpinned by a true desire to make Jamaica climate resilient.

As one of the Ministers with responsibility to ensure that Jamaica's development path is sustainable and one of which we can all be proud, I offer the assurance that I am fully on board, and committed to the tasks ahead.

However, my team and I will need the support of the public and private sectors, Non-governmental Organizations, Civil Society, the media, the religious groups, in fact everyone at every level of society, to ensure that while we work towards achieving our goals to grow the economy, we are also taking steps to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

In closing, I wish for you all, a successful forum, and encourage you to share and learn from each other.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning.