

# enviro focus

The Newsletter of the Environmental Protection Department **Issue 4: March, 2009**

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Design & Print:  
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## From the Director

The Environmental Protection Department is pleased to publish the fourth issue of our EnviroFocus newsletter, which is one of the media the Department uses to inform the public of its programmes, projects and activities.

The articles in this issue focus on some of the Department's ongoing initiatives to improve environmental management in Barbados. These include the:

- marine litter programme;
- chemicals management project; and
- visit to the Environmental Management Authority in Trinidad to learn about environmental management in that country.

I would like to take this opportunity, however, to highlight other activities that the Department has undertaken in its continual effort to safeguard the environs of Barbados.

The Department was pleased to host a seminar on "Building Healthy Structures" in 2008. In an effort to increase compliance with Health Services (Building Regulations) 1969, the seminar sought to educate persons in the construction industry of the requirements of the regulations relative to the submission of building development applications.



In November, 2008, the Department in association with the Barbados Port Inc, other government agencies and representatives from the oil and gas industry conducted a simulation exercise. The purpose of the exercise was to test aspects of the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP) to ensure that the plan is effective and efficient. The NOSCP aims to prevent or, where prevention is not possible, mitigate and minimise the adverse environmental impacts of oil pollution.

We welcome your feedback on the work of the Department and our newsletter which we hope is both informative and engaging. During 2009, the department will focus on educating the public on its role as well as environmental issues affecting the island. The EPD will keep you informed about these educational activities as they arise.

Please remember to utilize environmentally friendly practices and continue to keep the environs of Barbados healthy and clean.

# Progress of the Marine Litter Programme

The National Marine Litter Monitoring Programme was developed to:

- collect and analyse data on marine litter for use in decision making;
- educate the public about the effects of marine litter; and
- encourage better litter disposal practices.

This programme commenced in January 2008 and culminated with International Coastal Cleanup Day activities in September. During the course of the year the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) gave a series of community talks and participated in the Environmental Expo organised by the St. Andrew Parish Independence Committee. The EPD also published a marine litter monitoring guide and the 'Litter buzz' newsletter, which

are vital to public education and training in conducting monitoring activities.

There was focused activity in the Shorey Village community because of its proximity to the Morgan Lewis Beach, which has been monitored by the EPD for three years. The other sites monitored in 2008 were:

- Brownes' Beach (by the Sunshine Optimist Club);
- Enterprise Beach (by the Ministry of Tourism); and
- Long Beach (by the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN)).

The articles of litter collected in the 2008 monitoring activities included over 1000 bottle caps, broom heads, paint cans, chairs, bottles, ropes, nets and plastics. The main types

of items found at Morgan Lewis Beach were pieces of hard plastics, caps, lids, rope and foam products. At Brownes' Beach items such as caps, lids, plastic bags, disposable eating utensils, straws and food wrappers were most common while rope, building materials, caps, lids, fishing nets and plastic beverage bottles were the most common litter items at Long Beach.

On International Coastal Cleanup Day, September 19, 2009, the EPD will host its annual beach cleanup at Morgan Lewis Beach, St. Andrew. Anyone interested in participating should join us and help keep our island clean and safe for future generations. Groups interested in adopting and monitoring other beaches should contact the EPD for further information.



Volunteers Removing Refuse from Long Beach

# Did You Know...

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- Almost 90% of litter floating across the world's oceans is made of plastic.
- 70% of the world's marine litter input sinks to the bottom and is found on the sea bed, from shallow coastal areas to the deepest parts of the ocean.
- 6 million tonnes of litter enter the world's oceans every year, weighing as much as a million elephants.
- 86% of all marine turtles are affected by marine debris.
- It takes 450 years for a disposable diaper to decompose at sea.
- An aluminium can takes between 80-200 years to decompose at sea.



Disposable Diaper

# Learning from Each Other

Between January 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009 the Director, Deputy Director and two officers of the Air and Noise Pollution Section of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) visited the Trinidad and Tobago Environmental Management Authority (EMA). The purpose of the visit was to observe the twin island republic's approach to the management of various environmental issues, particularly air and noise pollution. Trinidad and Tobago has had an Environmental Management Act for over ten years whereas Barbados is in the process of developing similar legislation. This trip was useful in determining the effectiveness of the EMA's practices in various areas of environmental management.

EPD personnel were exposed to presentations covering various aspects of the operation of the EMA, including the application process for the Certificate of Environmental Clearance, which is required for activities such as building development and landscaping; and the Noise Variance, which is required when individuals and/or companies intend to breach the noise pollution standards.

During the visit, the EPD officers also toured an ambient air quality monitoring station located in the Point Lisas Industrial Park, where a large number of local and international companies are based. The visit included a tour of Atlantic LNG, the sixth largest LNG (liquefied natural gas) plant in the world.

The officers were given the opportunity to observe the operation of the Environmental



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Commission (EC), which is a court dedicated to the resolution of all environmental matters. The EC was established under the Environmental Act, 2000, and currently has jurisdiction over noise pollution, environmentally sensitive areas, environmentally sensitive species and the Certificate of Environmental Clearance.

The officers also accompanied the Environmental Police (EP), who are an elite team of police officers trained in environmental monitoring. The time spent with the environmental police focused on the investigation of various types of noise complaints.

The trip was useful since it provided the officers with an understanding

of some of the challenges that exist in the regulation of environmental issues within a similar small island developing state. Distinct parallels exist between Barbados and the twin-island republic in terms of the culture, urbanisation and environmental problems. The time taken to observe Trinidad and Tobago's approach to managing their environment was extremely valuable and the team returned to Barbados with knowledge that can be applied to our local situation.

The Environmental Protection Department wishes to thank the Government of Trinidad, Tobago, particularly the Environmental Management Agency and the Environmental Commission, for facilitating the visit.

# Strengthening Chemicals Management in Barbados

## Chemicals...

...we use them everyday in one form or the other. We use them as fuels and lubricants in our automobiles, to kill pests so that we can sleep better at night, and even to clean our clothes; but how many of us realize that these chemicals can have an impact on our health and the environment?

When we think about the impact that chemicals can have, we must first consider the effectiveness of systems used to minimise the risk to human health and the environment from the production, use, storage and disposal of chemicals.

The Environmental Protection Department, with the assistance of the United Nations Institute for

Training and Research (UNITAR), is spearheading a project to strengthen the systems, which exist in Barbados for the management of chemicals from manufacturing or importation through to disposal. The project is being implemented under the framework of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

SAICM is a policy, which outlines international action on chemical hazards. It supports achievement of the goal to ensure that by 2020 chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health.

The project, which is scheduled to be completed in November 2009, has three main components:

- Updating the National Chemicals Management Profile;
- Preparing a National Capacity Assessment; and
- National Priority Setting.

The preparation of a National Profile is meant to identify:

- problems or potential problems related to chemicals which exist in a country; and
- the mechanisms that are available to address those problems.

One issue that has been identified locally is the need for increased control over the importation of chemicals. Improving the ability to control the types and quantities of chemicals imported would prevent toxic, hazardous or ozone depleting substances from entering the island.



Additionally, the importation of substances that might be difficult to dispose after their usefulness, or that may act as precursors for hazardous substances would also be controlled.

Building on the information in a National Profile and other sources, the capacity assessment is intended to document and evaluate Barbados' ability to deal with various areas of chemicals management.

The priority setting component is intended to allow government and other stakeholders to reach agreement on a selected number of priority topics under chemicals management that require urgent actions and identify ways to address them.

By undergoing the process of SAICM, Barbados would be able to, among other things:

- identify priority areas for chemical management;
- strengthen enforcement and encourage the implementation of national laws and regulations regarding chemicals management;
- develop and implement sustainable strategies for the sound management of chemicals throughout their lifecycle; and
- minimize the risk to human health and to the environment throughout the lifecycle of chemicals.

In so doing, we can ensure that future generations come to know a quality of life that equals or exceeds that which we know now.



# SAICM Caribbean Workshop

The Government of Barbados through the Environmental Protection Department and in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Organization of American States (OAS) hosted a regional workshop at the Grand Barbados Hotel from March 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

The aim of the workshop was to increase the awareness of participants with regard to the chemicals and hazardous waste challenges in the Caribbean and the opportunities available to improve the management of chemicals in the region. While the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) was the central focus of the workshop, other relevant international chemicals agreements and initiatives were also discussed.

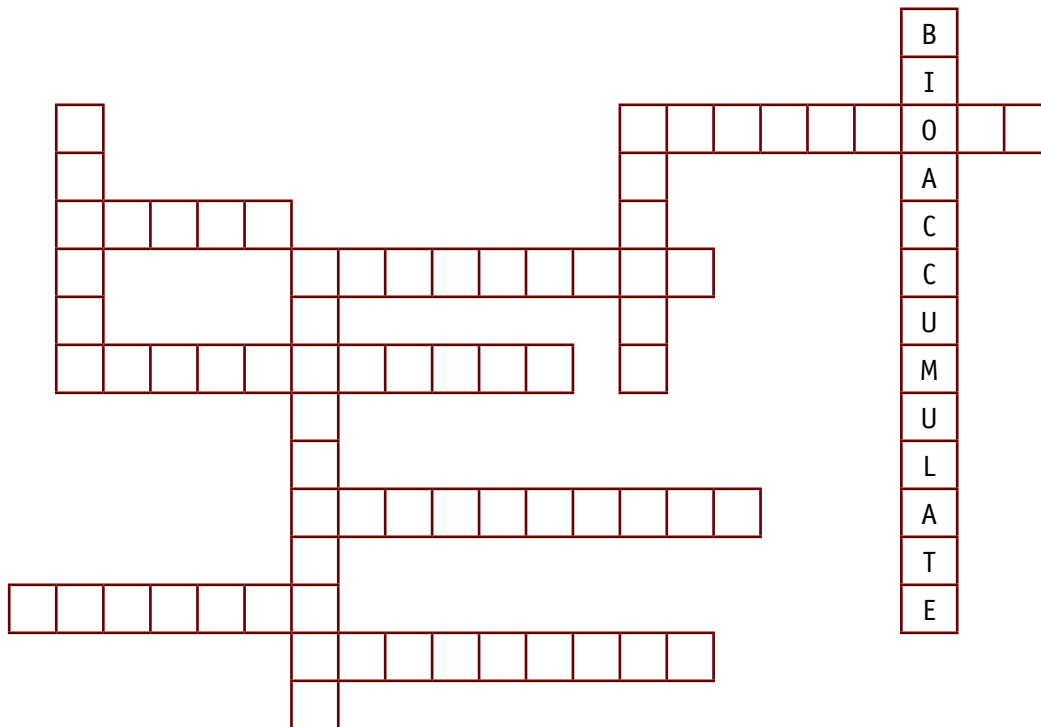
Participants benefited from, among other things, increased awareness of funding opportunities for

projects and initiatives geared towards chemicals management and implementation of the SAICM in the Caribbean. Matters relating to the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent; the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs); and regional strategies for implementation of the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal were also discussed.

Countries represented included Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. Barbados was represented by persons from the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture and Health as well as the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).



*Our environment has always supported us – let us return the favour!*



**Instructions:**

After reading the paragraph to the right, use the words highlighted in bold to fill in the blanks above. We have started the puzzle for you.

Minimising pollution of the air, sea and land are important to preserving our island as the inheritance of **future** generations. A number of international agreements and policies exist to help to **control** or eliminate such pollution. The **Stockholm** Convention is one of these international agreements. This Convention aims to protect human **health** and the **environment** from persistent organic **pollutants** (POPs). POPs possess **toxic** properties, resist degradation and can **bio-accumulate**, that is, the accumulation of a substance in an organism or food chain over time. Countries that are signed on to the Stockholm Convention are encouraged to implement measures to reduce or **eliminate** the intentional or unintentional production or use of POPs and to reduce or eliminate releases from **stockpiles** or wastes. In these ways the environment would be protected from the impact of an extremely **hazardous** class of chemicals.

## ON SERVICE



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