

## MINISTRY OF HOUSING, LANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT (ENVIRONMENT SECTION)



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Mr. Hamdallah Zedan
Executive Secretary
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
United Nations Environment Programme
393 – Jacques Street, Suite 300
Montreal, Quebec

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**CANADA** 

Dear Sir,

## Activities conducted to recognize International Day for Biological Diversity, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003

The Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment through the Environmental Unit organized a number of initiatives to recognize the importance of the above captioned day, as well as the relevance of the chosen theme to the country and the Caribbean region.

The main activity comprised a small scale, low impact trail hike and farm tour in the interior of the island for primary and secondary school children, and officials from the public (including the Poverty Alleviation Bureau) and private (including the Community Tourism Foundation) sectors.

The main objectives were to encourage education through interaction with the natural environment, and to highlight biological diversity, which can be used in a sustainable manner to generate income.

The participants also visited a biodiverse organic garden, which is managed by a small farmer, and got a chance to appreciate the associated environmental, social, recreational, medicinal, dietary, spiritual and sustainable economic values. At the farm, the participants also planted nine (9) fruit trees and enjoyed a vegetarian meal.

Other activities included the publication of an article entitled "Biodiversity Conservation – A Poverty Alleviation Strategy" in one of the main local newspapers; and the distribution of a brief school message to twenty five (25) secondary schools which was supposed to be read at their respective morning assemblies.

Please find the following enclosed for your records:

- The aforementioned newspaper article prepared by the Ministry;
- The aforementioned message distributed to the secondary school; and
- An article prepared by an environmental reporter.

Please note that the Ministry's title has been changed from "Ministry of Physical Development and Environment" to "Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment". The name of the Minister and Permanent Secretary as well as the Ministry's contact information are as follows: -

The Honorable Elizabeth Thompson (Minister)
Dr. Leonard Nurse (Permanent Secretary of the Environment)

Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, S.P. Musson Building Hincks Street BRIDGETOWN BARBADOS

Tel: (246) 467-5700 Fax: (246) 437-8859

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Please be assured that the Ministry is working assiduously to fulfill the obligations attached to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Yours faithfully

**KWAME EMMANUEL** for Permanent Secretary

(Environment)

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## MINISTRY OF PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

## MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR **BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY** Thursday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2003

The quest to conserve our limited biological diversity, the collection of plants, animals, small living organisms and their habitats, needs to be improved and sustained as it is considered necessary for prosperous growth as a nation.

The threats experienced by our natural environment are great in magnitude and are being addressed by the Government of Barbados, primarily through the Ministry of Physical Development and Environment, as well as Non-Government Organizations in order to encourage a "green" environment and to ensure that biodiversity is preserved for the enjoyment and use by future generations. This approach is the foundation of sustainable development, which is defined as economic growth that meets the needs and aspirations of the present population without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and aspirations. Examples of Government initiatives for the management of the natural environment include, but are not limited to, the recent development of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and the drafting of the National Sustainable Development Policy.

The theme for this year, "Biodiversity and Poverty Alleviation - Challenges For Sustainable Development", is one of great importance for small island developing states as they are normally characterized as poverty stricken among other things. It has been recognized that being 'poor' influences persons to conduct activities which result in biological diversity loss. Examples of activities include over fishing; extensive debushing of fragile, bio-diverse areas to facilitate physical development; and illegal disposal of waste into various habitats.

Recognizing the need for sustainable economic development, Caribbean leaders and environmentalists are charged with the huge responsibility of conserving biological diversity while at the same time allowing the population to use it to attain economic benefits. Teachers and students are therefore being encouraged to develop projects, which focus on ways to protect our biodiversity and at the same time generate an income. Examples of sustainable and educational activities are organic farming, participating in gully hikes and eco-tours, and the development of art and craft made from recycled or reused products as well as natural materials.

The Ministry of Physical Development and Environment is therefore encouraging all persons to get out outside and appreciate, value, and conserve nature. Your contribution to biological diversity conservation and its sustainable use, and your role as future leaders are paramount in charting a successful course for our country and the region as a whole. Remember, if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.