



# United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة • 联合国环境规划署  
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE  
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

---

**Programa Ambiental del Caribe**

**Caribbean Environment Programme**

**Programme pour l'Environnement des**

**Unidad de Coordinación Regional**

**Regional Co-ordinating Unit**

**Caraibes/ Unité de Coordination Régionale**

---

14-20 Port Royal Street, Kingston, Jamaica • Tel: (876) 922-9267 to 9 • Fax: (876) 922-9292

E-mail: [rcu@cep.unep.org](mailto:rcu@cep.unep.org) • Web: <http://www.cep.unep.org/>

---

## **Message from the Coordinator of the Caribbean Environment Programme On the Occasion of World Oceans Day 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2011**

As we take time out today to celebrate our oceans, it might seem that the most significant ocean discoveries have been made. However, underlying the news about how much has been learned is the dawning awareness of how many mysteries remain. Less than 5% of the seafloor has been seen even once, let alone explored or mapped. What we do know for certain is that the ocean is vital to life on earth, and we need to take better care of the natural systems that ultimately take care of us.

Ongoing and emerging issues, such as biodiversity degradation, overfishing, eutrophication, ocean acidification and sea-level rise, are global, with universal impact. Marine pollution knows no geopolitical boundaries, runs the gamut of scientific disciplines, and affects different countries in different ways, making regional cooperation and maximum flexibility most important. As the Secretariat for the Cartagena Convention, the only regional legal framework for the protection and sustainability of the Caribbean Sea, UNEP's Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP), hosted by the Government of Jamaica in Kingston, has pledged to be the champion of this regional cooperation.

With the entry into force of the Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based sources and activities (LBS) on 13th August, 2010, CEP's Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution Programme (AMEP), has gained new momentum. Current initiatives include the Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CRew), a 4 year project that will focus on piloting revolving financing mechanisms and related wastewater management reforms in the WCR. Another project in development will focus on improved management of agrochemicals life cycles in the Caribbean and Central American regions, as a follow up to the very successful GEF project on reducing pesticide run-off to the Caribbean Sea (REPCar).

Ours is an ocean planet: 70% of it is covered by the seas, and it is in them that all life originated. Yet we have done far less to protect the marine environment than the much smaller part of the planet that is dry land. While almost 13% of the Earth's land surface is covered by officially designated protected areas, less than 0.6 per cent of the oceans are similarly safeguarded, even on paper.

CEP's Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Programme (SPAW), is presently assisting countries to meet marine conservation commitments by strengthening the management of marine protected areas (MPAs) through technical assistance and capacity building. Promoting species conservation, SPAW provides on-the-

ground expertise to address emerging threats such as marine invasive species (e.g. the lionfish), and technical support for mapping the distribution and habitats of threatened and endangered species such as marine mammals.

CEP's Communication, Training, Education, and Awareness Programme (CETA) raises the visibility of important milestones such as the entry into force of the LBS Protocol, by means of targeted environmental education activities. CETA recently launched a collage competition, inviting school children throughout the region to tackle the subject of land-based sources of pollution. Participating through their school class, environmental club, or local community, students are using the medium of the collage to come up with creative ways of visualizing concrete actions, such as participating in beach clean-ups, planting trees, carrying reusable bags, and recycling the plastic bottles which are so pervasive in the marine litter found along our coastlines.

The LBS Protocol Collage Competition and other CEP activities assist in preparing the students of today to become tomorrow's environmental stewards of our oceans. What better way to fulfill the promise of this year's Ocean theme: "Youth: the Next Wave for Change".

UNEP-CEP looks forward to continuing its mission of protecting our Caribbean Sea and sustaining our economic future, and to celebrating the ocean every day, by inspiring our youth, by motivating our communities, and by supporting our decision makers to ensure the effective management of our planet's precious marine resources.

Happy World Oceans Day.

Nelson Andrade Colmenares  
Coordinator  
Regional Co-ordinating Unit  
Caribbean Environment Programme  
United Nations Environment Programme  
Kingston, Jamaica

June 7, 2011