



September 25 is Beach Clean-Up Day

Agencies involved in annual coastal cleanup activities associated with the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) campaign, led in Trinidad and Tobago by the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD), are expressing concern that debris collection data for the country continue to show upward trends.

The statistics on 2009 activities were released on Tuesday August 10, 2010 at the launch of 2010 ICC campaign which takes place at beaches and waterways nationwide on September 25.

ICC National Planning Committee (NPC) Chairman, Gina Carvalho, expressed concern that over 73,000 items of waste were retrieved from beaches and waterways in Trinidad in 2009 and she urged greater citizen action to prevent what she said was a growing trend.

The sentiment was endorsed by the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Environmental Management Authority (EMA), Dr Joth Singh, who said available information on the negative impacts of improper waste disposal needed to be converted into positive human behaviour.

He cited the need to promote greater awareness and education on the issue, but said this needed to be supported by more rigorous enforcement of existing legislation and the introduction of new and stronger laws.

The EMA's MD/CEO said the problem of waste was “not on an issue of aesthetics but one of human health and (threats to) aquatic life.”

He praised the main players involved in the annual ICC event and said the activity provided an ideal complement to the Clean-up and Beautify Trinidad and Tobago campaign launched in June by Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar which, he said, had earned broad support from state, private sector and community interests.

Dr Singh also said “clean-up” activities needed to be supported by positive fiscal support for recycling activities which, he said, were vital to overall waste management in the country. He said while it had proven financially-viable for one private operator to operate a glass recycling plant, there might be issues of “economies of scale” involved in a similar initiative in the area of plastic waste.

He said, in this regard, plastic recycling activities may need to be engaged at the Caribbean regional level.

Also addressing the ICC launch was CNIRD Executive Director, Calvin Smith, who said 2010 will be characterised by a “scaling up” of activities that included more beaches, more volunteers and the involvement of a greater number of agencies.

This year will mark 10 years of national involvement in the global campaign which itself observes its 25th anniversary in 2010.

NPC member, EMA Communications Officer, Nayantara Gayah-Hassan, described the event as “the largest volunteer event of its kind” and cited the fact that, worldwide, over 500,000 volunteers in 108 countries are involved.

In 2009, there were 1,510 volunteers in Trinidad and Tobago, gathering over 16,221 pounds of waste in 1,163 “jumbo” size garbage bags – and this is just for one day’s efforts. According to statistics, Chagville Beach is considered the most littered with 14,549 shoreline and recreational items collected in just three hours. Worldwide, 2,189,252 Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters were collected at the beaches making them the number one recorded item.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Environment, Mrs Veronica Belgrave, officially launched the 2010 campaign on behalf of Minister Dr Roodal Moonilal. She said the government was committed to the promotion of “environmental care” and added that a Policy of Waste Management which included a recycling programme was being developed.

The EMA announced at the launch that its own activities will move from Salybia Beach this year to the “more challenging” Manzanilla Beach where it will work with several other agencies to clean-up the east coast beach.

Courtesy the Environmental Management Authority



Caption 1: Dr. Joth Singh, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the EMA welcomes the organizers and sponsors of the 2010 ICC Media Launch held at the EMA. Seated (L-R) Calvin James, Local ICC Coordinator and CNIRD Chairman; Veronica Belgrave, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Housing & the Environment and Gina Carvalho, Chairman of the NPC.



Caption 2: Calvin James, Local ICC Coordinator and Chairman of the Caribbean Network For Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD); Gina Carvalho, Chairman of the National Planning Committee; Dr. Joth Singh, Managing Director/CEO of the EMA and Veronica Belgrave, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Housing & the Environment, all in favour of continued support for the ICC Media Launch.

Photos Courtesy the Environmental Management Authority