

CAN TELEVISION TELL THE ENVIRONMENTAL STORY?

**REPORT OF THE SEMINAR "VISUAL MEDIA AND THE
ENVIRONMENT"**



**Can Television Tell the Environmental Story?: Report of the
Seminar "Visual Media and the Environment"**

[Organised by: The Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication (CARIMAC)
University of the West Indies, Jamaica; Sponsored by: UNEP, The Caribbean
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WELCOME

Beverly Miller
Acting Director
Regional Coordinating Unit
Caribbean Action Plan
United Nations Environment Programme

The recent UNCED Conference provided an unprecedented watershed of media coverage on environment and development issues.

In light of the decisions taken at UNCED with respect to the importance of increasing public awareness, it is timely that this seminar has been convened for decision makers working with the visual media. Nature offers a wealth of opportunities to the visual media.

During this workshop, CARIMAC, CCA and UNEP hope to gather additional information that will assist decision makers in media, (such as yourselves) to use environmental information as the vehicle for effecting the required attitudinal change

Presently, information on environmental issues is competing unfairly for media coverage.

The challenge is to make media coverage on environment and development issues as attractive, popular and pervasive as the coverage of the Olympics and to become as commonplace as the food and beverage advertisements.

The goal of UNEP's Caribbean Environment Programme is to achieve sustainable development of marine and coastal resources.

In order to achieve this goal, the Caribbean Environment Programme implements the following regional Programmes:

- Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife - SPAW;
- Education, Training and Awareness for the Management of Marine and Coastal Resources in the Wider Caribbean Region -ETA;
- Marine Pollution Assessment and Control Programme for the Wider Caribbean Region -CEPPOL;
- Integrated Planning and Institutional Development -IPPID;
- Regional Programme on Information Systems for the Management of Marine and Coastal Resources in the Wider Caribbean -CEPNET.

The basic need to accomplish sustainable development in the Wider Caribbean Region is to develop a change in attitude. We at the Caribbean Environment Programme - CEP -feel that the most efficient way to effect this change at all levels of society, is through the visual media. It gives me extreme pleasure to welcome you to this seminar and Jamaica and I wish you every success with your deliberations over the next few days.

INTRODUCTION

Professor Aggrey Brown

Director

The Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication - CARIMAC

On behalf of CARIMAC, I offer a particular welcome to non-Jamaicans and hope that the work of the conference will not prevent participants from enjoying Jamaica. It is the first conference of its kind to bring together the peoples of the wider Caribbean under the auspices of CARIMAC.

This circumstance made it very appropriate that this conference has to do with the human environment. There is no real difference between the problems of the peoples of the wider Caribbean. They have in common, backgrounds of diverse ethnicity and culture.

It is to be hoped that this first venture will be followed by others, deepening the exchange of ideas and expanding opportunities for closer linkages and working collaboration between regional institutions.

The struggle for daily sustenance is a common factor to all, whatever their background; our countries are all at the point where the people still have to struggle. The focus is primarily on the physical environment, but there are aspects outside of the physical environment to which attention must be paid; such as the spiritual.

The struggle for survival has brought us together to deal with the material for this conference and the question is whether we can find creative ways to deal with the issues which confront us. In particular, we need to discuss here, what is the appropriate role for the media- and in particular the visual media in protecting our environment?

Television is becoming the dominant medium in the region; radio is still dominant but is fast being overtaken and by the turn of the century, television may well be the dominant medium.

Realising this and realising that the issues which tend to focus our attention on the destruction of the environment lend themselves to visual treatment is the reason we chose to emphasise television in this seminar in seeking to find workable solutions for these problems.

Television and the media themselves have no mandate to fix what society has destroyed, but we cannot separate ourselves from the need to marshal and mobilise our people to deal with the challenge of our environment. In doing this, we will not be doing anyone a favour but ourselves.

We needed to present the issues raw and naked to our people to help them find solutions and help them deal with the problems of the environment. The issues confronting us have not arisen because of faddism, or because of an environmental bandwagon. CARIMAC has been involved and concerned with these issues since at least 1976. Generally, throughout the world, a rising consciousness of the environment increasingly focuses mankind's attention on these issues.

CARIMAC is particularly grateful to UNEP, the Caribbean Conservation Association - CCA and PANOS and particularly to Calvin Howell of the CCA, and to Beverly Miller and Jan Voordouw of UNEP.

It is also appropriate to acknowledge the tremendous leadership given by Dr. Marjan de Bruin who has taken the responsibility to deal with conferences and issues dealing with the environment. At CARIMAC there are severe demands on teachers and since there are so few people, many have had to double up on responsibilities. She is normally responsible for Print and I want to acknowledge the magnificent work she has done since taking on the responsibility for the environment.

CARIMAC is also very grateful for the responsibility accepted by all the resource persons and it is appropriate to mention Mrs. Berl Francis, who has been associated with CARIMAC over a number of years, was responsible for the introduction of Public Relations into the curriculum and who has taken on a new role as coordinator of this seminar.

Finally, I would like to provoke the thought that 'sustainable development' might be a tautology. If development is about anything it is about people, and if it is about people it has to be sustainable, and we have to focus on people; so 'sustainable' may deflect our attention from what we have to accomplish.

Chief Seattle said that when we spit upon the earth we heap contempt upon the Creator and upon all things; that when we destroy our environment when we are no longer able to enjoy the whistling of the birds and our cities become filled with smog, we have arrived at the end of living and the beginning of survival. Most of us have been struggling for survival for centuries, not because we have destroyed our environment but because others have used our environments for their own purposes.

I hope the conference will be fruitful.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THE CARIBBEAN

Byron Blake
Director
Economics and Industry
CARICOM Secretariat

The quality of the environment - Caribbean and global - has now emerged as a major concern. Ameliorative and preventive actions have not matched the concern however, partly due to insufficiency of resources - financial and technical - and partly due to vested interests.

There has nonetheless, been some action at global, regional and national levels.

In this paper I will highlight some of the major environmental issues or concerns in the Caribbean and indicate some of the steps towards dealing with them.

This focus on environmental issues of prime concern to the Caribbean is neither to suggest that these issues are uniquely Caribbean nor to deny the global interrelatedness of environmental issues, nor to indicate that fundamental solutions to many can be achieved by purely Caribbean effort.

The selected focus is to assist manageability of a vast subject and to highlight the importance of local action even as we think globally. The renewed concern for the state of the environment has led to the frequent use of the terms such as 'environment' and 'sustainable development' with little attention to precision in meaning. *This* is partly a result of the difficulty of defining certain phenomena and partly because of the number of definitions which abound. Dr. Naresh Singh, Director of the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI), in a paper on *The Dimensions of the Environmental Issue* defined the environment as follows:

"The environment is natural and built. It comprises the air, the land, soil, water, living things and built facilities; most importantly the linkages among these such as matter, energy, information flows and associated relationships."

This definition of the environment is embracing and complex. It has not, however, been as confusing as efforts at defining "sustainable development". There is a multitude of definitions and descriptions for sustainable development. These include:

- ... development that provides for the needs of the present without jeopardizing the prospects for the generation yet to come" -*Bruntland Report.- Our Future.*

Environmental issues in the Caribbean

"Sustainable development is about being fair to the future. It is about leaving the next generation a similar or better resource endowment than that which we inherited." -*David Pearce of the London Environmental Economics Centre.*

"There are limits to our capacity to survive devastations of the **Planet's life** support systems, we need to come to terms with this reality of one earth if we are to optimise our prospect of making it secure and habitable for all. -*Rampal in "Our Country, the Planet. "*

Against these definitions and postulates it is now generally accepted, that our present rate and mode of extraction, level of consumption and distribution in the region and globally, place our resource endowment in a condition worse than the one we inherited.

The convening of the first CARICOM Ministerial Conference on the Environment in 1989 was an acknowledgment of this. The objectives of that conference included:

"Achieving increased appreciation of the significance of the issues and needs relevant to management and protection of the Caribbean Environment and of the relationship between Environment and development. - **Port-of-Spain Accord, p. 1.**

What are the significant environmental issues? The First CARICOM Ministerial Conference on the Environment identified 14 priority issues to be addressed in the quest for the protection of the Caribbean environment. These issues were:

1. Orderly land use planning and coordination;
2. Housing and human settlements;
3. Degradation of the coastal and marine environment;
4. Prevention and mitigation of oil spills;
5. Liquid and solid waste management;
6. Management of toxic and hazardous substances including the control of agri-chemical residues;
7. Dumping of extra-regional, hazardous and toxic wastes in the region;
8. Water quality and supply;
9. Forest and watershed management;
10. Preservation of genetic resources;
11. Vector control;
12. Disaster preparedness;
13. Preservation of cultural, archeological and historical resources; and
14. Air pollution.

This is a long but not exhaustive list. It does not include issues such as climate change, global warming and sea-level rise. It, however, provides an appreciation of the magnitude of the problem.

The Ministers did not seek to detail causes of the problems. It should be obvious, however, that such a list of problems/issues would have a variety of causes.

Dr. Naresh Singh argued in the paper referred to earlier that the root causes lie in *"a value system which stresses maximal accumulation of material wealth rather than moral and ethical values, equity and social justice."*

More specifically, he highlighted:

- man's ability to produce waste faster than natural ecosystems can absorb and recycle them;
- Over-consumption and excessive waste generation due to affluence;
- Disregard for the intrinsic linkages between society and nature; o Poverty;
- Unequal access to natural resources;
- Technology and financial resources;
- Production patterns and structure of the economic output;
- Ignorance of how to do things better.

In order to facilitate discussion, we select four sets of the environmental issues highlighted by the

Ministers and discuss their causes and indicate solutions. Some initiatives toward the issues selected are:

- degradation of the coastal and marine environment;
- waste management;
- forest and watershed management;
- preservation of genetic resources.

We emphasize that this selection is largely arbitrary and does not signify a priority among the issues.

Degradation of the coastal and marine environment

The wider Caribbean consists essentially of islands and continental countries, some with significant coastal and marine areas. In addition to the 12 continental countries which border the Caribbean Basin, there are 13 island nations and some nine dependent countries, territories and departments. Many are multi-island states or countries. The small size and structure of most of the island states is coupled with the extensive marine area under their control arising from the 200 nautical miles exclusive economic zone. EEZs are, in many cases more than ten times the land areas which means that most of the Caribbean states are dominated by their coastal and marine environment. This dominance is revealed in: economic activity -

- Coastal agriculture, tourism, fishing, petroleum and natural gas production, sand mining;
- Settlement. The majority of the population lives on the coast. It has been estimated by Nurse that in Barbados 60 per cent of the population live within 2 km of the coast while in Guyana 90 per cent of the population live within 5 km of the coast;

- Sea transportation. The Caribbean sea is a major waterway for ships and tankers from Africa and the Middle East to North America; between Europe and South America and between Europe and the Far East - through the Panama Canal. The Caribbean hosts more than half of the cruise ships in the world each year.

Given the range of activities in the coastal and marine areas, it is easy to appreciate the many and varied sources of the threat to the marine and coastal environment. Singh and St. Hill (1988) identified the following;

- disposal of sewage and other liquid, solid and industrial waste, storm water run off, farm residue and anatomical waste on beaches and into the sea;
- agrochemical leachates;
- beach and mining;
- soil erosion;
- oil pollution from land and sea;
- coastal engineering waste including land reclamation, construction, marine outfalls, port facilities and artificial reefs.

Springer has argued that while land based sources of pollution pose the most serious threat to the marine environment, shipping and maritime activities, including harbour improvements, have caused serious damage to marine mammals, migratory species, corals, sea grass beds and mangroves.

A major issue in seeking to deal with the quality of and threat to the Caribbean coastal and marine environment, especially in the EEZ, is the lack of, or insufficiency of data.

There are data on some of the particularly 'hot spots' -- for example Kingston Harbour and some of the river mouths in Trinidad and Tobago.

There have also been some initiatives by individual states and regionally to improve the information base. These include:

- The establishment of the OECS Fisheries Desk and national Fisheries Departments linked thereto;
- CEHI'S coastal and marine monitoring programme;
- Establishment of the institute of Marine Affairs in Trinidad and Tobago (originally intended as a regional institute) and its monitoring programme around Trinidad and Tobago;
- The Caribbean Oceanographic Resources Exploration - CORE - project;
- Establishment of the Caribbean Community Ocean Sciences Network -CCOSNET.
- The Barbados Coastal Conservation Project (This project has recently received significant additional funding from the InterAmerican Development Bank),-
- The CARICOM Fisheries Resource Assessment and Management Programme;
- The Coastal Zone Projects within the University of the West Indies.

Institutions such as the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP, have also been active at the level of the wider Caribbean.

For a variety of reasons these activities have been sporadic and often uncoordinated. They provide spot or time-independent data but do not provide the time series data on which major management plans can be based.

The CORE project, for example, found that the Caribbean, in the open sea, was basically unpolluted. In view of the size of the research vessel, the scientists were unable to do significant nearshore work and therefore could not speak to the nearshore condition.

This, however, was the state in April/May 1990. We cannot be sure that that was the state in October/November 1990.

The need for systematic, long-term data from anchored stations is now recognised as urgent.

Fortunately, the technologies for such studies - remote sensing based on moored buoy systems and computerised mathematical modeling - are now available.

They are, however, expensive in financial and technical manpower terms. One of the motivations behind the establishment of CCOSNET was the possibility of optimising the use of the technical expertise in the various institutions in the region. CCOSNET has developed and is seeking support for a pilot project for a moored buoy ocean data acquisition system.

The Institute of Marine Affairs -IMA- as coordinator of CCOSNET, recently acquired on a short-term basis, the services of a Physical Oceanographer whose terms of reference include:

- Assessment of existing coastal oceanographic activities.
- Identification of research topics and application areas.
- Preparation of a plan for comprehensive coastal oceanographic research.

Coastal and marine issues, including climate change and global warming were given high priority by the Caribbean countries in the recently concluded UN Conference on Environment and Development -UNCED. Programmes and projects to address problems in these areas were also given priority in a regional outline programme for the environment presented to the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic development -CGCED- in June 1992. These initiatives need to be pursued and complemented.

Waste Management

Waste is a natural by product of all living systems and productive activities and, also, of excessive consumption. The CARICOM Environment Ministers in the Port-of-Spain Accord identified three categories of wastes among the 14 priority environmental issues for the Caribbean. These are:

- solid and liquid wastes (internally generated);
- toxic and hazardous substances including agri-chemical residues;
- dumping of extra-regionally generated hazardous and toxic wastes in the region.

The Ministers did not focus significantly on the large quantity of the various wastes - solid, liquid, hazardous and toxic - generated by the large cruise ships which ply the Caribbean Sea.

They also did not, at that time, focus on the large volume of hazardous and radioactive wastes transported annually across the Caribbean between Europe and Japan. These movements are significant although little information is available in the region on them. Greenpeace estimated that there were some 14 movements across the Caribbean in 1990. The relative contribution of these various categories and sources of waste generation to the overall waste problem is unclear.

What is clear is that, taken together, they constitute a significant and growing problem. The production system in the Caribbean -industrial, agricultural and tourism -generate a disproportionate amount of wastes especially in terms of materials, energy and chemicals.

Among the causes are excessive use, poor maintenance and lack of arrangements for systematic recycling. This is due in part to the North American influence on our life styles and consumption patterns coupled with our even more limited capacity for maintenance and recycling than that which obtains in North America.

The pressure to deal with extraregionally generated wastes, including cruise ship wastes, derives in large measure from increased pressure in certain developed countries, in particular the USA, for the "safe" disposal of the massive quantities of wastes being generated, but "not in my backyard".

There are increasing legislative requirements for companies, including cruise ship companies, to make provisions for treating the wastes they generate. These requirements, together with the 'not in my backyard' - NIMBY- syndrome have led to the phenomenon of garbage laden ships and trains travelling from country to country or state to state in search of places to deposit wastes.

Most Caribbean countries have limited facilities for the proper disposal and treatment of solid and liquid wastes. A number of countries have utilised landfills but their siting and management have been questionable.

There have, however, been some initiatives. Jamaica, for example, has recently undertaken an assessment of all the sewage treatment plants on the island, and has been seeking to upgrade the dumps around the country into proper landfills. CEHI has been working with its Member States to strengthen their national waste water and solid waste management institutions.

Several of the OECS countries have been negotiating with the World Bank, the mobilisation of resources for project/facilities for locally generated solid and liquid wastes.

This might be a *quid pro quo* for permitting/providing facilities for acceptance of cruise ship generated wastes. At the level of policy, the Second Conference of CARICOM Ministers on the Environment held in Jamaica "*recognised that the management of internally generated wastes, the dumping of wastes from cruise ships and tankers and efforts by extra-regional entities to Forest and export hazardous and toxic wastes to the region remain grave threats watershed to the environment and economic well-being of the Caribbean.*" consequently also agreed that:

- (i) Member States would develop and implement national policies on waste management which were in consonance with regionally agreed principles;
- (ii) Member States would exchange information and alert one another through CEHI, on initiatives by extra-regional entities and individuals to export hazardous and toxic wastes, including radioactive wastes, to the region;
- (iii) Member States would begin consideration of the feasibility of creating a Caribbean Environmental Protection Agency to establish, monitor and enforce environmental standards and laws.

Also at the level of policy and legislation, the Caribbean ACP States have committed themselves in the Lome IV Convention with the EEC to: "prohibit the direct or indirect importation into the territories of hazardous and radioactive wastes from the Community or from any other country. "

The CARICOM Ministers on the Environment requested the CCA and CEHI to obtain and disseminate to Member States information on any proposed shipment of hazardous and radioactive materials through the Caribbean.

Again the problem has been recognised and there have been some initiatives, but much needs to be done.

Forest and watershed management

Forests are complex natural ecosystems which are critical to the maintenance of ecological balance, to the sustainability of economic activity and to the stability of climatic conditions. Natural forests take several years to grow and mature. Most Caribbean countries were at some stage heavily wooded.

Some, for example Jamaica -'Land of wood and water' - and Barbados - 'The bearded one' - derived their names from that feature.

There are some countries in the English speaking Caribbean, for example Guyana, Belize and Dominica, which still have the bulk of their land area under forest cover.

Much of the forest cover, especially in the islands, has, however, been removed or is threatened. Haiti is the most often cited example, but Eyre (1987) estimated the deforestation rate in Jamaica at 3.3% per annum.

Removal of the forest cover has been linked to the reduced rainfall in several of the countries. It has also been linked to the reduction of biological species and of wildlife. Many causes have been advanced for the deforestation in the region.

Springer, citing Prasad (1991), identified as major causes:

- the permanent conversion to agricultural land either through slash and burn or charcoal production;

- migratory agriculture;
- expansion of a country's agricultural base through forest clearing;
- resettlement programmes and unregulated building and settlement;
- unregulated commercial forestry.

The problem of deforestation and some of its major effects are now widely recognised. The most obvious loss is in watersheds. There have been some efforts at reforestation. These have, however, been more demonstration than large scale, consistent activity.

All the CARICOM Member States have in recent years, under the auspices of the FAO Tropical Forestry Action Plan - TFAP - been involved in activities to assess their forestry resources and to develop projects aimed at more sustainable forestry management.

Major programmes developed for Jamaica, Guyana and Belize have already been submitted for consideration by the international donor community, while the programme for the Eastern Caribbean (including Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago) is to be considered in September 1992.

The TFAPs represent important initiatives but they have been externally motivated as part of the UNDP/FAO global strategy to combat the worldwide destruction of tropical forests. There are two important internally generated initiatives which need to be highlighted. These are:

- Programme for Belize (PFB); and
- Iwokrama Sustainable Forestry Programme in Guyana.

PROGRAMME FOR BELIZE is a nongovernmental organisation (NGO) project which has been established since 1988. It involves the sustainable development and management of 152,000 acres of forested land held in perpetual trust for the people in Belize.

The programme incorporates economic development projects as well as provides education and training opportunities. It has been recognised as already having significant successes.

IWOKRAMA SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY PROGRAMME is an international project located in Guyana. The programme, jointly administered by the Government of Guyana and the Commonwealth Secretariat evolved out of the offer by President Hoyte to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Malaysia in 1989 to make available approximately one million acres of Guyana's Amazonian tropical forest for a pilot project under Commonwealth auspices "to study utilisation of the forest on a sustainable basis and the conservation of species."

The project comprises the following elements:

- (i) establishment of a wilderness preserve;
- (ii) sustainable utilisation of designated areas;
- (iii) creation of an international Centre for Research and Training;
- (iv) creation of an International Environment Communication Centre.

The opportunities offered by this project for forestry management are enormous and will extend well beyond the borders of Guyana. The CARICOM Heads of Government at their meeting in

Jamaica in 1990 not only recognised the project but commended it to the international community for support. A key issue in terms of benefits, is the organisation of regional scientists, technologists and technicians to research and work on the project alongside international specialists. Systematic arrangements for the transfer of information generated will also be critical.

The timing of the Iwokrama Programme is opportune, since Guyana, in an effort to boost economic activity, is at this time promoting large scale commercial forestry. The approach, and the initial results of Iwokrama should be brought to bear on these commercial operations.

Preservation of genetic resources

The continental and insular Caribbean have significant endowments of terrestrial and marine biogenetic resources. Unfortunately, many of these resources have not been catalogued and it is feared that significant numbers are being lost.

A major challenge as recognised by the Environment Ministers is the preservation of genetic resources. Initiatives in the region in this area, have been minimal.

The University of the West Indies and the Caribbean Agricultural research and Development Institute (CARDI) have nascent programmes in seed collection. These programmes need to be significantly expanded.

The careless depletion of species together with developments in biotechnology which permit storage and manipulation of small quantities of tropical biological resources even in temperate climate threaten to place developing countries, such as those in the Caribbean, at a tremendous disadvantage.

For these reasons, some Caribbean countries took a strong interest in the international negotiations which led to the recently concluded Biodiversity Convention. Eight CARICOM States have already signed this Convention. It will be important for the other Caribbean countries to sign the Convention and for all to seek to ratify it as early as possible.

Conclusions

It should be clear from our discussions that fundamental to our dealing effectively with the major environmental issues confronting the region will be matters such as;

- public awareness and community involvement;
- human resources and institutional capacity;
- public policy and legislation;
- education.

The media has a tremendous responsibility to communicate both the problems and the efforts at solution. The first aspect is simple, since the problems when they become obvious are likely to be spectacular.

Many of the critical activities are likely to be long-term with only incremental results. These must also be communicated, however.

This is likely to call for media personnel with a deep understanding of the issues - an understanding which is only likely from devoting significant time to the issues we have looked at.

SOURCES, CAUSES AND KINDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Franklin MacDonald
Executive Director
Natural Resources Conservation Authority
Jamaica

The main global environmental issues include the greenhouse effect (which may lead to significant climate change), the depletion of the ozone layer, acid rain, marine pollution, land degradation and the extinction of numerous animal and plant species.

Island developing countries also face distinct environmental problems arising from their peculiar characteristics and in many cases exacerbated by poverty and population pressure. In addition, some islands and low-lying areas of other countries, are threatened by the prospect of rising sea level.

Jamaicans are deeply concerned at the serious deterioration in the environment and the threat this poses to the well-being of present and future generations of our citizens. Any delay in taking action to halt this progressive deterioration may result in permanent and irreversible damage to the fragile environment of this 'land of wood and water'.

The current threat to the environment, which is a common concern of citizens at all levels, and which affects a variety of sectors, stems essentially from past neglect in managing the natural environment and our resources.

The Jamaican environment has been significantly modified by the last five centuries of 'development', and has been impacted by the widespread deforestation, unmanaged disposal of industrial and other forms of pollution, (including unsafe disposal of waste and sewerage), the use of inappropriate agricultural practices particularly on hillside lands, and overexploitation of renewable resources including fisheries and forestry.

Several endemic species have been exterminated by the introduction of new predators and destruction of habitat.

Many of these environmental problems transcend national boundaries and interests, necessitating coordinated global, regional, and sub-regional efforts for their solution.

This is particularly true in areas such as the Caribbean which share many of the same problems and where there is the possibility of trans-boundary pollution on land and in the oceans, and atmosphere.

The need to protect the environment must be viewed holistically in a balanced perspective and due emphasis must be placed on promoting economic growth and achieving sustainable development including eradication of poverty, meeting basic human needs, and enhancing the quality of life.

To achieve sustainable development, economic growth is a compelling necessity.

Sustainable development implies the incorporation of environmental concerns into economic planning and policies.

The success of global and national environmental programmes requires mutually reinforcing strategies and the participation and commitment of all levels of society: government, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, the scientific community as well as individuals and families

The Port of Spain Accord on the management and conservation of the Caribbean Environment has identified a number of priority issues and problems across the region.

- orderly land use planning and coordination;
- housing and human settlements;
- degradation of the coastal and marine environment;
- prevention and mitigation of the effects of pollution - incidents/accidents (oil spills etc);
- solid and liquid waste management;
- management of toxic and hazardous substances including the control of agri-chemical residues;
- dumping / disposal of hazardous and toxic wastes in the Region;
- water quality and supply;
- forest and-watershed management;
- preservation of genetic resources;
- vector control;
- disaster preparedness;
- preservation of cultural, archaeological and historical resources;
- air and noise pollution.

Strategic approaches to the solution of the problems have included:

1. Promotion of public education and awareness at all levels to enhance consciousness and respect for the environment, and to encourage behavioural patterns conducive to its preservation.
2. Provision of training and development of human resources in order to produce the cadres of experts within the region whose vocation will be to undertake the many and varied facets of environmental management.
3. Formulation of policies and plans, including the requirement for environmental impact assessments, which are essential prerequisites to the rational management of environment.
4. Collection, management and dissemination of information critical to the development of policies, programmes and projects which must be implemented to address the identified problem areas.
5. Promotion of research based on the reality of the Caribbean situation and aimed at generating solutions to the environmental problems of the region.
6. Development of a legislative frame work adequate to the requirements of sound environmental management, and required machinery for law enforcement.
7. Promotion of the development of economic pursuits including small scale enterprises which are geared to the enjoyment and enhancement of the environment.
8. Harnessing all available political institutional, and community based resources relevant to the solution of particular environmental problems. Environmental problems in the region may have been exacerbated in the past decade by the lack of economic growth and falling incomes. This has led to a shortage of public resources for infrastructure investment, a focus on short-term priorities that has sometimes

resulted in adverse environmental consequences, (poor waste and sanitation systems) and pressure on watersheds and marginal land and inefficient fuel sources (such as wood and charcoal).

Jamaica's main environmental problems relate to its land use systems.

Improper farming techniques on the hillsides; development of steep and low-productivity forest land, and burning of charcoal have led to loss of vegetative cover in mountain areas.

The resulting degradation of the watershed habitat has caused:

- topsoil loss through erosion,
- downstream siltation,
- severe leaching of soil nutrients,
- river seasonality and flooding,
- pressure on endemic species, and
- low productivity of hillside agriculture.

All of these have contributed to other problems including increasing rural-urban migration. Other emerging issues include water resource management problems, including pollution of ground water and nearshore coastal waters with sewage and agricultural chemicals.

Some effects, including saline intrusion of ground water reserves are difficult to reverse. Surface water suffers- from industrial pollution. Coastal zones have suffered significant loss of wetlands and marine habitats due to port, housing and tourist development and associated pollution.

lacking - an appropriate environmental ethic

Drinking water supply problems, increased costs of water, declining attractiveness for tourism, and possible health risks could all become longer-term problems.

Rapidly urbanising areas including the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA) also suffer the beginnings of problems with air pollution in addition to the major waste disposal concerns (solid and hazardous), as well as high susceptibility to natural hazards such as hurricanes and earthquakes.

The pollution of Kingston Harbour due to the discharge of untreated wastes and leachates is now receiving urgent attention.

The tourist industry has an economic interest in preserving natural resources, which will be reinforced by regulatory action and support for eco-tourism through the creation of a system of national parks.[The Government has subsidized kerosene and certain inputs to agriculture as a means of easing hardship].

Jamaica must keep the delicate balance between population, resources, economic development and environmental management.

Among the major environmental problems are severe watershed degradation and its effects; coastal and marine resource depletion and degradation; pollution of surface and underground water; waste management deficiencies; air pollution particularly in the Kingston Metropolitan Region and the destruction of wildlife habitat.

Like most Caribbean countries, Jamaica appears to lack an appropriate environmental ethic.

Developing this ethic will take many years of education about the importance of natural resources and environment to the development of the individual and the nation. Additionally, the lack in the past of a cohesive institutional framework and limited financial sources, have seriously affected our ability to address these problems.

As an island state, we recognize the particular vulnerability to which we are exposed, inclusive of climatic change, transboundary movement of waste as well and the need to discharge our international responsibilities.

In addition, the emphasis placed on environmental conditionalities in accessing development funding, reinforces the imperative for countries like Jamaica to address these issues.

The current National Plan builds on initiatives taken in the past, including the following:

The Jamaica Country Environment Profile prepared in 1987, with financial support from US AID;

Phase one of The National Conservation Strategy (NCS) process - completed in April 1990 with successful National Consultations;

The National Five Year Development Plan which recognizes sustainable development as a major plank for progress;

The Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act has been passed and came into effect on World Environment Day, the 5th of June, 1991.

Specific Jamaican objectives

Formulation of policies to ensure that economic and social development are integrated with environmental management.

Environmental plans will set out the objectives and targets to be achieved.

Participation of the private sector, communities, trade unions, churches, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and all appropriate elements of the Jamaican civil society, to recognize and uphold their responsibilities in environmental management.

Expanding and deepening the understanding and appreciation of the relationships between environment and development at all levels of the formal and informal educational system.

Orienting environmental education and training to specific target groups and specific measures to achieve environmental objectives.

Including the "Polluter Pays" principle and the application of the best practical available technology among the basic responses to Jamaica's environmental problems.

The implementation of a wide range of programmes to solve environmental problems and to protect, conserve and rehabilitate the natural resources and environments of Jamaica.

The development of adequate human resources and capability generally to implement programmes and projects to improve attitudes and behaviour which are individually and collectively responsible, and oriented to action in environmental conservation:

- Urban and rural land is used in the most beneficial and sustainable way.
- The protection and conservation of plants and animal species including endemic species.
- Minimising the impact of natural hazards and other environmental emergencies.
- Allowing for global environmental cooperation and security with special attention to the needs of developing countries and the circumstances of vulnerable island states.
- Enhancement of the natural beauty of the island in natural areas, built-up areas, roadways, open spaces, coastal areas and various uses of land both publicly and privately owned. Protection of and the sustainable use of natural resources.
- To encourage the use of non-renewable resources including bauxite and limestone and other minerals for the greatest social and economic benefit of Jamaican people, while minimizing harmful environmental impact.
- To ensure that renewable natural resources are used in a manner consistent with sustainable development.
- Ensure good air quality in Jamaica.
- Ensure surface and underground water are in sufficient quantities and quality appropriate for human needs and ecosystem integrity.

SHOULD JOURNALISTS BE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES?

Discussion

MODERATOR - **Roderick Sanatan**

Sanatan: The focus is to see how we in the Caribbean (either individually or collectively) contribute both to cause and effect, and to some extent how we are contributing to the changes in environmental issues and their results. Byron Blake has set out at the macro level what kind of policy instruments have been looking at the problems of the environment and how we are putting things in place.

Franklin McDonald wants to identify by way of Jamaica how individually we can be responsible for looking at cause and effect and virtually lay down several charges to the media about how they should look at research of scientists, how they can build up consensus and how in their own right they can come towards some kind of brokerage or leverage role for society to improve on that.

The topic is in your hands to use your own example and experience against the data you have heard from them.

Hylton Braveboy: Just a comment. I notice that a lot of emphasis has been placed on the negative effects of waste. I think, if we have to maintain a sort of sustained interest among the population in the Caribbean and in most developing countries in the development of the environment, we've certainly got to show them that they can get something out of it.

They're concerned with living - money and so on, the money aspect of it. I'm looking at the the positive aspects of waste - recycling, for example. If you can prove that when the waste comes out, you can use it to further develop the -society, put more money into society, make an industry out of it.

For example in Trinidad and Tobago we have discovered that by recycling bottles, by recycling garbage we are developing a type of mini industry and I think it's working to some extent. If people can feel that well I'm getting something out of it, then it becomes beneficial all round.

Blake: Perhaps I should take first shot at that. I think we should recognize the fact that the process of production generates waste, and so the question becomes how much and how we deal with it.

Part of the how much becomes how we use the material - in other words, what is waste from one operation could become feed material for a second operation which is really what you are talking about - the recycling.

For example, if you look now at what is happening to bauxite production and the requirement for alumina, the volume of recycling which is taking place in that material has in fact reduced significantly the need for primary bauxite production.

Of course the bauxite producing countries tend to complain because they say the market is not growing, but the fact is that in an environmental sense the re-using of the product is important.

One of the problems over the last 50 years or so is that we have developed really wasteful systems -we use a thing once and we throw it away. In areas where that has built up sufficiently they have got into systems of

greater recycling. This is something which we need to get into. Because of our small volumes in some cases, it becomes a more expensive activity of course to recycle but it is important that that be done.

That also raises the question of what we call garbage and selecting out and not just throw everything out in the garbage bin. So all those are ways of beginning to look at things, beginning to deal with material.

Waste disposal systems in the Caribbean.. causing environmental damage

You also talk about major operations like for example sawmills. A large part of what they produce are imported raw materials but right now it goes out as waste. Nobody uses it. It is not provided to somebody else say for example the artisans or craftsmen who could use these to make into craft items which become important items. I think that this is a whole area which must be assessed to say that we can use materials much more intensively than we are currently using it, so that we are making less demand on the primary sources. Newsprint is one of the areas - the ability to recycle that is fairly significant, but quite often we really don't. We just throw it out and we get a new set.

MacDonald: Just a quick comment. I think there are a couple of points. One - recycling in its fullest sense, is normally facilitated by a society that is very aware of its environmental values. If you place no value on the dumping of waste material into the water table, then that's the easiest way of disposing of it.

Part of a recycling ethic must be a concurrent development of a wider environmental understanding. I think if you analyse many of the waste disposal systems in the Caribbean, you find that they are doing some environmental damage.

But that particular society either has placed no value on that aspect of the environment or is unaware of it. If you go and check where the hospital waste goes, or where chemical waste will go, you'll find its actually doing damage. There is an environmental cost which has not yet been entered into the National Accounting System.

One other quick point - the issue of looking at the way industrial plants conceive of waste. Here in Jamaica, for example, we have begun encouraging environmental audits. A lot of organisations that have begun this process have been surprised at how much money they can recover out of what they considered waste

The best example is the bauxite industry where because the government took a strong decision in the 70s that uncontrolled disposal of red mud into unlined pits was no longer acceptable, the companies were forced to look at how they could reduce this.

It has turned out to make money for them because by recycling the caustic soda, they have been able to reduce their hard currency requirements. Many of the local firms don't have that problem because when they have an environmental cost they simply add on to the price.

We had an interesting case of a big firm here (Seprod) which imports coconut oil from Dominica - which recently accidentally discharged 2 tons of that oil into the sea. The question is how can they afford to do this?

The answer is- because there is no strong consumer movement resisting the increasing prices, they simply tack that on to the price of the next batch they sell. So I think the environmental and consumer activities need to be linked because it is when people begin understanding the way in which their prices are arrived at that they begin demanding performance on the part of the private sector.

Beth Aub: I notice that in all the comments about the media there is no mention of the fact that coffee is causing a great deal of consternation in this country and the waste from coffee. I would be very happy to hear something about this because I find that there is a two-tiered system in this country.

One-is the vested interests - they don't want to acknowledge that coffee has any negative effects on the entire system of waste disposal and they don't want to admit that the hillsides are falling down.

The vested interests have got to the Press. Another thing - the bauxite companies replace roofs damaged by the bauxite dust. Where is the data on the lungs damaged by bauxite dust?

MacDonald: First of all I think this is a regional discussion and I could have specified a large number of local cases where there are issues which are on the table and are being resolved. I haven't tried to be exhaustive in looking at Jamaican interests because I feel that I would have imposed on the non-Jamaican group by picking out any or all of these.

The situation with regard to media investigative reporting on the environment is maybe something we should comment on, in that, clearly, part of the general mandate of the media is to undertake investigative reporting and deal with those pressures whether they come from the vested interests, or from the government itself.

I don't think that I need to defend you in this area. The media is capable I believe of looking after themselves. I believe, however, that in Jamaica there is a perception that some of the issues that are being put on the table may be perhaps being looked at in a particular perspective: I take the case of coffee.

The mandate of the media is to undertake investigative reporting...

The NRCA is concerned about the inappropriate use of agricultural chemicals in the coffee areas and in all the other areas in which agricultural chemicals are used in Jamaica; but is being dealt with as if it only exists in the coffee areas. We are concerned that the whole business of pesticide management across the island, in all the sectors in agriculture, is not being discussed.

We're hearing one set of information: that there is abuse of chemicals in the coffee areas. This is true, but it is also true that there are abuses across the range. So I don't think there is any need to defend the media. I don't think that's my function. I think that's your function - to fight for yourselves.

I think there's an obligation by the media to look at the whole set of issues and understand that the environmental agencies of government perhaps look at things in a less focussed way. We're looking at pesticide management full stop and we're putting in place institutional arrangements to control that situation. We're looking at degradation of watershed areas and we're putting in the necessary mechanisms to rehabilitate those areas which should have gone into coffee which can't, and also to safeguard other coffee areas.

I think that what we need perhaps is for the media in their discussion on environmental issues to really deal with all the issues in some sensible way rather than, it seems to me, taking on discrete battles to the exclusion of some of the other important considerations.

Mike: While the hot spot has turned out to be coffee the pressure didn't show up until the thing became much more intense. People are now cutting down trees and making large plantations rather than doing the coffee much more in line with, and using much of the natural forestry as shade.

Now if you remove that so as to get as many coffee plants as possible because one is trying to make as much money in as short a time as possible. I think that is part of the issue that has to be tackled because it's going to arise with the intensive export agriculture in a number of areas.

Consider the Windward Islands and the bananas. People are saying that they have to become more productive. Part of what they are saying is that you have to put in more fertilizers.

Granted, better use of and management of the fertilizers could also be a part of increasing productivity because right now they are used excessively and badly. But even after you've got down to that part of the message you're sending is for greater use of these resources on the hillsides. And that will create a problem. The issue of the vested interest - I recall in 1979 being part of a team which happened to be in Jamaica by accident but we went to look at the impact of the alumina production plant in Clarendon.

The media must be informed if it is to be able to inform

You could see it, there was no doubt; but the bauxite company immediately says "how do you know it's us? There is a sugar factory there etc." In that case people could say "But you know that sugar factory has been there for the last fifty years, you are here for the last ten, and it is now that we are seeing it." The key point is that neither the bauxite company nor the government is putting in any arrangement for monitoring the residues and the fall out from these operations. In fairness quite often you don't know the full level of impact until you've begun to operate and you begin to monitor. Up to a certain point, the industry knows and they could take care of some but they still wouldn't know the full thing.

Aub: But the information is not available. We get a constant run around.

Maxwell: I think it is a question that people in the media are not aware that this information is available or where it is available.

Question: It sounds like Mr. MacDonald is saying that the press is not comprehensive or that they are too narrowly focussed. what seems to me to be the problem is communication between your agency and the media to make sure that they get the information on the broadest level so they can understand what is important and what is not.

Maxwell: I think there is a wider thing but I don't know that it's up to a government agency to feed the media with information on the environment. I think the information is available for a more aggressive and investigative press.

Woolford: But it is a two-way street. You want to make sure that they get the information out in a way that you see as valuable but if they don't have access they are going to pick on what they can get and maybe exploit it in a way that you don't see as valuable. Communication is back and forth.

Stetson Babb: just a comment Mr. Chairman. I think she speaks to an important issue as it relates to media in the Caribbean and that's the pattern of ownership. That's what she was talking about when she mentioned vested interest, in that case the private sector.

But the reality is that many of the media houses in the Caribbean are either owned or controlled by government. Often there is complicity on the part of the public sector. The point is, can there be true investigative journalism under that structure of ownership. And how do we overcome these obstacles?

Blake: Dealing with the so-called hotspots: we have a situation in Jamaica where the hotspot is coffee, another is the encouraged settlement of people in watersheds in Barbados which 3 or 4 years ago was a real hotspot.

Those- are particular kinds of issues, they are sensitive and usually- there is a real tug-of-war over those. But on the way to getting there, you have quite often a range of things that are happening which in fact, if the information had begun to flow out when it was not yet as spectacular, you'd be able to make the point. And that will also allow people who have been working in that area to deal with some of the hotspots as well in a way that they can't be as covered.

There is no right to information in the English speaking Caribbean

The question of vested interest goes much beyond either the national or the regional arena. Internationally you have some strong vested interests. In some areas of industry - the pharmaceutical companies, some of the fertilizer producing companies and the cruise ship people. You're going to be up against this time and time again. But I think the more people who get into focussing on the area and begin to make it a kind of almost a full time kind of activity. You pick up a piece of information here, a piece there and then you begin to put it together to get the story -I think that is going to be important.

Babb: The media does have a large part to play in looking into environmental issues but is the media to undertake a position of advocacy or is it to reflect and report on the issues that occur?

You cannot absolve yourself of the responsibility as an individual who's the expert in the field, who has access to the information - from being the catalyst for change, for feeding that information to the media, for helping to use the media to get your message across. You are the expert in the field, you know the issues, you know what's happening, you know what message you want to get out. You now have to learn how to use the media to your benefit.

Maxwell: As a chairman of one of the environmental organisations, and a journalist for 40 years, one of the problems which we see is what is the information that you're going to give out? There is a mass of information which you can't simply occupy your time giving out. You can invite the media to come in, open your library, tell them that they can question people. You also send out press releases but they're not used. The media are not really interested in hard work.

Question: I think there must be a strategy. They must have an agenda - you must know what are the issues of importance. If there is no strategy then how do you expect the information to go out in an orderly fashion. That is where it has to start.

MacDonald: I think most environmental agencies in the Caribbean are populated by people who are sympathetic to getting the information out. Many of them are constrained by all kinds of rules and regulations to do with official information.

People should know that their individual actions can change the situation

Many of them publish the information in such a way that the the information is there; but, as John Maxwell says, many of the Press do not seem to be able to pick up on the information. That speaks to the need in the region to start developing the kinds of specialised coverage based on some objective information and positions about Caribbean issues.

There is another factor - if you look at the way in which the environmental movements in Europe and North America have developed - they developed largely on the basis of access to information.

In the English speaking Caribbean, there is no right to information on the part of the public or the press. That is one of the fundamental stumbling blocks in the way of an active environmental movement in the Caribbean. Because you don't have a right to the information.

I don't know what the position is in other countries but the Official Secrets Act effectively prevents information from being made available in a very explicit way. There is a lot of information made available indirectly but what you really need is to have a press sensitive to some of those issues.

The question of the Barbadian issue of the people on the watershed is duplicated in Jamaica and many other islands. That kind of taking over of land is traditional in many parts of the Caribbean.

Aub: Europe had no real awareness until the people took up the general issue of the environment. It wasn't the government. In Jamaica, when government was given funding from outside, the NGOs didn't have much power. Now the NGOs are getting direct funding and now it seems that government interference is being cut out. Now the government is worried about the NGOs operating without them.

MacDonald: When funding for NGOs is being discussed, there is a very careful issue to be looked at that; as you go through the Caribbean you're seeing NGOs populated by persons that do not look like Caribbean people, who do not get money from the Caribbean, and I have a real question about whether an NGO that is totally based on external funding and external ideas is sustainable in the context of the Caribbean.

I do not believe that the European NGOs depend on external financing, and I do not believe that the local NGOs who depend on some embassy are going to survive in this country or any part of the Caribbean.

Alejandro Parisca: Generally what happens is that in groups like this, with experts in journalism and the environment, we discuss problems, and crises.

My question is what about the layman?

The layman usually gets the impression that there is very little that he can do; in the crisis he gets no sense of the possibility of individual action being able to help.

Coming back to Mr. Braveboy's point I think that the media should also pick out positive actions now being taken, solutions that are happening.

And from that standpoint the layman can find a sense of hope; there are things that can be done which do not depend on the intervention of government or big business or international agencies.

We should let people know that their individual actions can help change situations.

Pandora's Electronic Box

Can television help save the planet?

Jamie Hartzell

TVE International

As both a filmmaker and an environmentalist, I stand on the interface between television and the environmental movement. I assume that as you have chosen to attend this conference, most of you are already in some way committed to covering environmental issues.

I would therefore like to talk more as an environmentalist and make the theme of my talk how effective a mechanism TV is in bringing about the changes called for by the environmental development movement. First I would like to show you a short clip that to my mind encapsulates television's

approach to the environmental problem, and is a good introduction to the ambiguous role of TV in forming public opinion.

This is a PSA produced for One World 19W ' a week of programmes on environment and development issues broadcast by the BBC as a follow up to the Bergen Debates. As part of the season, several well known advertising directors were invited to put their minds to producing a commercial designed to raise awareness of the environment. *[Video clip 'Home Y*

What exactly does that short public service announcement tell us about the state of the world's environment? The central message chosen is one of the most commonly used in environmental programming that the world is falling apart, is being environmentally devastated, and we as individuals are doing nothing to stop it.

This approach follows Rene Dubois' popular maxim "Think global, act local" and stems from a conviction that individual action is the only way to save the planet, and that TV is one of the better mechanisms for bringing change about. But in reality how good is TV in playing this role? And is this the way that TV can best raise awareness of environmental issues?

I chose that particular clip because of the setting that the director chose to put the message across. Imagine his thought processes:

"Let's see, how can I best illustrate an average European family totally ignoring what is going on around them? "

He could perhaps show them going shopping; or stuck in a traffic jam on a motorway. But no.

He chooses to show them watching Television. What's more they even seem to be watching some kind of environmental programme. I wonder if this contradiction ever occurred to him?

Probably not, for like most filmmakers, he or she rarely watches TV, except perhaps to collapse in front of it one or two hours before going to bed. So there you have it.

On the one hand television is seen by many as the most powerful mechanism for influencing public opinion ever invented.

On the other hand, it is seen, at least by some film-makers themselves, as the very symbol of inertia and lack of political will. So where does the truth lie?

My belief is that TV does have an important role to play. But with Public Service Broadcasting under pressure worldwide, and with funds for programme production dropping, broadcasters have no choice but to adapt to a new, more cooperative approach to programme-making on the environment, or indeed on any kind of issue based programming. There can be no doubt that in most countries of the world, television is the primary source of information for most people. There are now close to one billion TV sets in the world, one for every 4 people, and some 200 million video recorders. Twenty years ago television was a rich man's medium. No longer. About half of the world's TV sets are located outside Europe and the USA, and it is in these areas that television viewing is increasing the fastest, at ten times the rate of the OECD countries.

Television tends to generate a feeling of powerlessness... discouraging behavioural change

With satellite technology, television has the power to deliver a single message to millions of people at the same instant. One thousand million people worldwide were said to have watched the benefit concert to celebrate the release of Nelson Mandela two years ago. It is the only medium that can reach all corners of the globe and all walks of life.

In Europe, the USA, or here in the Caribbean, television dominates the social imagination. If an issue or concern does not appear on television, then it does not exist in the mass social consciousness. Television determines which issues will dominate the public agenda, which politicians will be elected, and which trends will be considered critical.

Yet as both a filmmaker and an environmentalist, I often ask myself if TV is such a powerful medium, why have so many of the changes we have been calling for over the last few years still not come about?

In Europe in the last four years, coverage of environmental issues has grown from almost nothing to up to 4 or 5 hours a week.

In addition to the standard documentary, environmental messages are common in the news and can now even be found in soap operas and game shows. If anything, the situation has got worse, not better. Why is there still no definite agreement on cutting back on emissions of carbon dioxide, given the now near certainty of the Greenhouse Effect and the huge number of television programmes that have been produced on the topic?

Why is recycling not yet a regular feature of British life?

Why are the tropical rainforests being cut down as fast as ever before? And why are debt and the terms of trade becoming more and more heavily biased against the developing countries?

News editors are worried ... about famine fatigue

I believe that there are two reasons. Firstly, the power of television to influence behaviour on issues as complex as environment and development tends to be overestimated. And secondly, the current style of coverage tends to generate a feeling of powerlessness, discouraging behaviour change. There is no doubt that TV can influence its audience. One only has to look at the huge amount of money spent by commercial companies on advertising.

It is hard to believe that companies would be prepared to spend millions of dollars on something that has no effect. Yet the fact remains that no one has yet been able to establish a direct relationship between television viewing and any form of behaviour change.

There is absolutely no definitive evidence that watching a programme that tells me we are on the brink of environmental disaster is going to make me do anything about it.

It is not difficult to unravel this seeming paradox. Television cannot bring about a change in behaviour. A television receiver is essentially a passive device. It doesn't buy or sell anything. It can't vote. It can't even turn itself on or off.

What TV can do is modify opinions and create expectations either of which are sufficient conditions for behaviour change. In advertising this works very well. If a viewer is left with the feeling that a new washing powder or a pair of training shoes is going to vastly improve his or her lifestyle, he or she is likely to go out and buy.

Similarly, they may choose to change the party they vote for as a result of a televised speech. But these are very simple and achievable actions.

When it comes to modifying public opinion on issues as complex as environment and development, and then getting people to go out and do something about it, it's extremely difficult to find any examples where TV has had a direct effect. Rather, TV is just one factor influencing our opinions, alongside the family, friends, the school and the workplace.

The greatest weakness of TV, however, is that it can leave its audience with a sense of powerlessness by creating expectations that the viewer feels it is impossible to fulfill.

The problems of Africa, for example, seem far from the European way of life, and it is in any case difficult for the viewer to feel that the problems are of concern to him.

The tendency is to despair, rather than feeling motivated to do anything about the problem. It is in this way that environmental programming has failed the environmental movement, and so in my opinion it has not had the impact on public opinion that it might have.

One of the greatest agents for generating a feeling of powerlessness is the news.

Despite not being a quiz show or soap opera, the news is still one of the most watched programmes on TV, and for most people one of their most important sources of information on what is happening in the world.

Over the last few years, news has become more and more receptive to environmental stories. Yet still many stories never reach the headlines.

To be good news, it has to be bad news. And the message has to be loud.

The silent emergencies, like the 4 million children who die from diarrhea diseases every year, or the 800 million people who suffer from hookworm, or the billions who go without clean drinking water, are problems that seem not to develop, and so do not make news.

And neither do the hundreds of small community initiatives around the world that play a hand in averting environmental disaster.

It was Michael Burke who first broke the news of the Great Famine in Ethiopia to an unsuspecting audience. In a way this was news at its best.

The story was unexpected, the pictures were horrific. Many people reached into their pockets, but the feeling of helplessness, of powerlessness to change such a terrible situation, increased. The famine in Somalia is not receiving the same attention. News editors are worried about *famine fatigue*.

Professionals researching into the impact of TV on public opinion have now agreed that they were asking the wrong question. The question is not "What does television do to people" but "What do people do as a result of watching TV" so long as they are given the opportunity. If TV is to bring about environmental change, the programme-makers should ask themselves the same question, and ask to what extent they are willing to allow environmentalists to participate in the process of programme production.

Multimedia allows broadcasters to achieve maximum effect

The thought that any other organisation might dictate the making of programmes strikes fear into the hearts of many commissioning editors. Yet in the UK at least, a dialogue between non-government organisations, or NGOs, and television, has been going on for several years. NGOs provide a number of services to TV stations, that enables them to quickly and cheaply assemble a story.

For instance, they provide quality research, guidance on when and where to film, and even sometimes assistance with reaching the location. In the case of news, some NGOs supply regular Video News Releases - complete 3 to 5 minute stories on issues that are of concern to them.

In today's difficult times, these services can swing the balance in favour of a programme being produced. And why not? After all, the NGOs are dealing with the issues on a day to day basis.

The key is only to ensure the NGOs role is confined to making broad recommendations on issues and approach, and not to involve them in the highly specialist area of programme production.

For the last two years, I have been working for a charity that has managed to steer a course between the Scylla of programme finance by interest groups and the Charybdis of maintaining editorial independence.

Television Trust for the Environment -TVE - was first set up by the United Nations Environment Programme and the UK's Central TV to act as a bridge between development agencies and broadcasters, with the stated aim of informing and mobilising public opinion.

Over the last 8 years, TVE has enabled the production of over 90 programme on environment and development issues, around one third of them made with the involvement of producers from the South.

These programmes have been sold to the European and American networks, and distributed free of charge or at cost to broadcasters and NGOs outside the OECD countries. One of TVE's greatest successes is to find a way in which a quality documentary can be exploited to maximum impact. For example, one documentary that I directed, *Jungle Pharmacy*, has been televised in close to 50 countries worldwide, and distributed to well over 200 NGOs; footage from the programme has been used for anything from pop videos to party political broadcasts. And it has been screened at conferences or political meetings to discuss the issues it Addresses.

It is precisely this multimedia use that enables a programme to achieve maximum impact. A classic example in the late 80s was TVE's *Inside The Poison Trade*.

This documented the progress of the *Karen B*, an Italian ship, that was discovered trying to dump toxic waste in Nigeria. Once the story was revealed, the ship was forced to move on, trying to dock first in Britain, then in South America, finally back to Italy, where it was grounded in the harbour with the **sailors remaining on board**.

The programme was broadcast throughout the European continent at the very time that the *Karen B* was trying to find a home. It was then distributed free of charge to Africa, where in Senegal the assis-tant director of television was sacked for allowing the programme to be aired.

Finally the programme was screened at a conference of the Organisation of African Unity, where as a result many leaders were persuaded to sign the Basel Con-vention, an international treaty against the dumping of toxic waste.

The main ingredient in TVE's formula is the possession of rights to the programme.

In return for their investment, TVE have withheld all the least profitable distribution rights to programmes and then exploited them. Broadcasters willingly accept the small loss of revenue this entails, if it ensures that environment and development programming can continue to be made.

With many of the world's most pressing environmental problems having their root in the imbalances between the developed and the developing countries, TVE has always attached a high priority to winning access to first world markets for filmmakers based in the developing world.

The most important of these initiatives was *Developing Stories*, a series of six programmes made for the 1992 One World Season under the complete editorial control of filmmakers in the developing world.

One World is a confederation of Public Service Broadcasters who every two years produce a range of shared programming on environment and development issues. The first One World was in 1990, the last at the time of the Rio conference and a third is planned for 1994.

Because TVE was able to offer developing stories free to broadcasters and NGOs in the developing world, the resulting programmes were broadcast in close to a hundred countries around the world, and are still be distributing to over 300 NGOs.

Developing Stories was unique in that it was one of the first times that filmmakers from the South had been given unfettered access to Northern airwaves. But *One World* was also unique, because it allowed NGOs and broadcasters the world over to come unite forces in the production of environmental programming.

Somehow the problems seemed so far away

Although it was far from plain sailing, the advantages to both sides were extensive. Clearly, the NGOs gained from the publicity involved, but at the same time they were able to themselves publicise the programmes widely bringing in bigger audiences for the broadcasters.

The production of written backup materials for use in schools turned *One World* in to more than simply a broadcast event. And through TVE's distribution service, many broad-casters gained access to programming that they could not otherwise make themselves.

In the developing world, TVE is now looking to build up further cooperation between NGOs and broadcasters by establishing a network of *Video Resource Centres* amongst existing NGOs.

These Video Resource Centres will act as focal points for building environmental awareness through the use of video.

They will also work closely with broadcasters in providing them with programmes and helping them to publicise beyond the simple wildlife film, and started talking about what we now refer to as environment and development, or sustainable development. I was working in the BBC's Natural History Unit at that time, and I remember how afraid the producers were that if they started introducing serious messages into their films, the audience would simply stop watching. The result was that you would get all the way through a 50 minute documentary on the White Rhino, and in the last 30 seconds, the presenter would warn that the animal was under threat from poachers and if nothing was done very fast the animal could be extinct. From the BBC's point of view, of course, this was a very safe option, because 10 million viewers would

find it very difficult to get up out of their armchairs, walk across the room and turn off the TV in the time before the end credits began to roll. But what was the audience to think?

Shouldn't they be doing something about it? Would there be a follow up programme on the threat to the rhino? Would there even be a rhino to make a follow up programme about? The programme gave no recipe for action.

It wasn't until the late 80s early 1990s, that the schedulers saw the problems as serious enough to make whole programmes about them. In fact it was possible to be very outspoken on the environment, as at that time, it wasn't perceived as a political issue.

But the difficulty was how to impress on people that these were serious concerns. A fifty minute documentary contains roughly the same amount of information as a one and a half page article in a semi-popular magazine like *New Scientist*, and even then it is difficult to ensure, when dealing with complex issues, that the audience will interpret the message in the way that the programme maker sees fit.

This is particularly dangerous with programmes that attempt to be objective sometimes to the point that two different viewers have almost exactly opposite views of what a programme is about.

Also somehow the problems seemed too far away. We were always hearing how in 30 years the rainforests, would have disappeared, in 50 years the seas would rise, or the country would be buried under plastic. It was all so far away and remote, nothing was happening NOW.

Worst of all the problems all seemed so BIG. *What could I sitting in my armchair DO about it? Even if I did care, it was hard to avoid that feeling of despair and powerlessness.*

This kind of programming tended to inhibit rather than further TV's role in the democratic process.

No one knows how to explain the idea of sustainable development on television
--

The viewer would sink back into his chair in a depression, concerned but incapable of acting. Finally he would exercise his ultimate power over the TV set he would change the channel or turn it off.

One obvious solution to this problem is to find a way of presenting positive messages, offering some kind of solution or hopeful message within the film.

The snag is that commissioning editors really are not very keen of this kind of programming, which can become rather tedious if not carefully done. One editor I know refers to this as the "Happy Peasant Syndrome". We see some terrible disaster taking place, such as deforestation,

which is eroding the livelihood of most of the local people, who are slowly being ground deeper into poverty. But then we come to the happy peasant who, with the assistance of the development agency who was so kind as to offer the film crew free transportation to the site, is now, smilingly, conserving wood with his economy stove, or cooking his food and feeding his cattle all from the one lucaena tree. Understandably, this kind of approach, is having some difficulty catching on.

Another solution was to admit that the problems were distant, but that if they were not of immediate concern to us, they certainly would be the concern of our children. And what kind of world would we be leaving them?

Let me show you a clip that carries this message very effectively.

[Video PSA of children]

Filmmakers who specialise in environmental programmes have both a strength and a weakness - they are usually highly committed to the issues they are covering. The weakness of this is that the filmmaker tends to overestimate how interested the audience will be in his programme, simply because he or she sees the issues as so important.

Very rarely has any filmmaker tried to portray environmental problems as a form of family entertainment. But I would like to show you a short clip from one filmmaker that had a good go.

[Video Clip: Can Polar Bears Tread Water?]

We cannot allow Governments to be the sole keepers of information...

Although sometimes it does seem to dazzle with information, it does provide an example of how environmental issues can be presented in a lively, even amusing way. It still manages to point to individual responsibility for global warming as well as presenting a recipe for action.

Programmes like the ones I have shown you are rare and increasingly expensive to produce. At the same time, the world, and particularly the LJK, is facing a recession, in which television particularly has been badly hit. At times like these environmental issues are a luxury rather than a priority. So after its initial successes, the environmental movement in the UK at least, has temporarily lost its way. The environmental movement is now pinning all its hopes on the idea of "sustainable development". I think this conference has been a little unfair on this concept.

We have heard at least two people say that the concept is tautologous, one of them himself an environmentalist. Yet that environmentalist also offered us two definitions that seemed perfectly reasonable and simple to understand. The truth is that everyone has a strong intuitive sense of what sustainable development means.

The problem is that the environmental movement has got ahead of itself. Surprised by the enthusiasm with which its ideas have been adopted by TV it is now unsure of what to call for next; there is a danger of the movement being overambitious in its claims.

A leading environmental writer, Lloyd Timberlake, recently said that "you cannot protect the environment by protecting the environment."

What he meant by this rather natty little phrase was that to tackle environmental problems we have to look much further than simple environmental concerns.

For development to be ecologically sustainable, it must be politically, socially and economically sustainable as well. We have to examine how the environment relates to issues such as human rights, politics and social justice. The difficulty is how to translate such complex concepts into terms that a viewing public can understand. And this is where the environmentalists are currently failing the filmmakers. The need for Television to explain the meaning of sustainable development is clearly there. It is simply that at the moment no one knows quite how to do it.

Apart from activities such as One World, which in any case may prove to be the last dying gasps of a species on the verge of extinction, what is the future for environment and development TV?

I firmly believe that one of the principal ways forward for issue based programming has to be to bring the cost of programme production down to a level at which many more people can participate in the production process.

Caribbean TV, for example, is almost entirely dominated by American programming. If the costs of programme production were brought down, couldn't more local programming be produced? And although local programming might not achieve the same technical quality as imported programming from the USA, would it actually attract a lower audience? Every filmmaker is aware that viewers like to watch films -that reflect their own ideas and culture, and that are of relevance to them.

There are two reasons why I now feel that this kind of approach can now succeed.

The first is the introduction of the light weight, easy to handle formats of Super VHS and Hi-8. The BBC Community Programmes Unit, have been highly successful with their series Video Diaries, where people with a story to tell are given a camera and some training and go out to make their own film.

The series has proved popular, and with it the BBC have proved that these formats allow the relative amateur to produce quality programming so long as he is given a brief training and adequate support throughout the production, particularly on the editing side. In fact many of the programmes have a new freshness and vigour that has caught the critics' eye.

The second reason why low cost programming is now a reality is the rapid expansion in the availability of the domestic video cassette recorder. In a few years it is possible that non-broadcast distribution could rival broadcast distribution for viewing figures. For the programmer, this offers a new opportunity. It is becoming easier to find production funding from chari-

ties and development agencies for low budget, educational programmes for non-broadcast distribution.

From the campaigners' point of view, the criticism of this kind of agency-led, non-broadcast programming has always been that it can only reach a small audience, and one that is already 'converted' to the cause portrayed.

...that would be like putting the fox in charge of the chicken coop

But in most developed countries the introduction of satellite and the subsequent increase in the number of channels available to the viewer has meant that television stations are under pressure to produce specialist programming in order to hold on to their audience, And as their audiences are smaller, they are on the lookout for programming at lower cost.

This model of more community based television is in fact already being tested in Canada, by a small network called Vision TV.

It is too early to measure the success of the project, but certainly audience figures seem to be rising.

Finally, there is one more type of programming that is crucial to the environmental movement

The watchdog, or whistle-blowing programme, that discloses serious abuse of law, the environment or human rights. This vital, democratising role of television, which has always been tenuous at the best of times, is now in distinct decline.

In the UK and in the USA, journalists are increasingly concerned with lifestyle, with the Royal Family, with who is sleeping with who.

The Government is less and less willing to allow criticism, and fewer TV stations are willing to take the risk. Yet it was this kind of journalism that brought down the Nixon Government, stopped plans for nuclear waste repositories and brought about bans on the slaughter of seals and whales.

This kind of programming again calls for a kind of dialogue, a partnership, this time between government and broadcasters. Governments must give broadcasters the freedom to criticise their ways, while broadcasters must ensure that their criticisms are both accurate and responsible.

This kind of relationship is essential to the practice of freedom of speech.

We cannot allow Governments to be the sole keepers of information. That would be like putting the fox in charge of the chicken coop.

MAKING PEOPLE IMPORTANT IN THE NEWS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Discussion

Moderator- Roderick Sanatan

Sanatan: By using a sort of negative in a sense, Jamie Hartzell went through a series of experiments which contribute to what he considers how television can work. And I think there is a theme about "Partners in Programming", and he gave us some of the elements in that partnership:

One he said was the issue of packaging and perhaps we now need the community conscious people and environmental interest groups to be the ones to work in that "packaging", not simply the people in TV or film making.

Then he gave us the dissemination issue. And the need therefore for looking at what he calls the multiple use of the media for taking the messages out from whatever is produced.

And then we're given some examples of the distribution issue - how it has moved wider than the so-called central networks. After that we were given a very interesting treat as to what are some experiments that point to good TV programming (occasionally we heard the word film-makers) and one was the development of the resource centres which I'm sure we'll hear more about - how that has been developing in our part of the world.

Then there was the whole approach to skills sharing between South and North countries. And then some ideas of the methodology used - whether it should be family entertainment, whether it should be forms of what is called blowing the whistle, or whether we should settle for more realistic visions of how much we really achieve by environment issues on TV.

So all in all we do have a sense of what can make TV programming work around new kinds of partnerships, as an issue. And I'm sure we have our own experiences and questions of our own we'd like to raise as to what are the possibilities out of this, especially in our context about the Caribbean, the audio/visual media and the environment.

Woolford: A recent experience I've had in Guyana with an NGO - talking about wildlife in Guyana - they came to do some shooting... the people who were involved in wildlife, the government and the exporters, came to our production unit and complained that the NGO was unfair. As usual, because of the idea that the journalist is the advocate you didn't believe the government side, you didn't believe exporters' side, you didn't believe the trappers and so on. The story got on to Fox TV and created quite a stir in Guyana and in the US.

How do you ensure that these NGO's are fair and accurate in their presentation? Because it turned out that the man I interviewed, the man who did the video had created and concocted a lot

of these situations to push his own advocacy in the programme in what he wanted to put forward. The pictures in fact told me an entirely different story from what he was advocating. How can we ensure that these little clips that they send to the TV stations are indeed accurate?

Hartzell: That is a concern and the responsibility lies with the person who is going to broadcast the clips that they receive to know that they are accurate. I did say that (NGC)s should only be able to advise on the broad sweep of programme production. I think when NGOs go about making programmes themselves it can get problematic.

The situation you describe is when Guyana wouldn't have broadcast that programme because it deemed it to be inaccurate. The question that you are raising is more one of what one broadcaster is prepared to accept in his country in terms of what it says about another, so that your controls aren't there. So I wouldn't necessarily put the responsibility for that down to the NGO but to the broadcaster who is prepared to transmit inaccurate information. Presumably you didn't transmit it yourselves.

Stewart Krohn: I'd just like to get some general reaction to what was a very wide ranging and interesting address from Jamie Hartzell from the point of view of someone who has to sit daily and concoct a newscast. You can talk a lot about programming, but I think in terms of sheer volume, the news programmes are the things that people most watch in the Caribbean, and they're the most cost effective.

In the first place, as we all know, TV deals best with the sensational. So right off the bat the bias is going to be against environmental reporting because by its very nature, environmental issues are highly complex and can be quite scientific and technical. So off the bat we're disadvantaged.

A good example of this occurred a few years ago - this thing when the whales were trapped under the ice. I mean, here was a perfectly vacuous situation which was supposed to be an environmental story.

The environment is not news in the Caribbean because it is not a political issue

Millions of dollars of scarce resources were devoted to it and it had nothing to do with an important environmental issue, but that is where TV works best. So we're at a disadvantage there.

Another factor we have to deal with is that the environment is not yet a political issue in the Caribbean.

I have never seen an election in the Caribbean that even remotely hinged on an environmental problem. And from the point of view of a news editor or a director of a TV station, if you don't have a juicy political element to a story, the chances that it's going to get on your newscast are very slim. So one of the problems is going to be until the environment becomes more of a political issue, again we have a built in bias against it.

The third thing I'd like to say is that what we have seen so far on the environment on Caribbean television tends not to be very people oriented and the one thing that I think Caribbean programming does best is that it is extremely people-oriented. And the environmental coverage has tended to be pretty animals and pretty trees and pretty mountains and pretty seas but if you can't bring the people into it, again it's another factor that militates against a lot of air time.

We try to use the rule in our station "everyone in the community gets their picture on the TV at least once a year." And if you're running round getting picture of mountains and trees and coral reefs, you're not getting people. So these are the things that need to be changed.

Different cultures, different audiences

The one more thing that I would add - I think we're all familiar with the series *Caribbean Eye*. It was a tremendously successful series, particularly because it was so people oriented. I think what you're pointing to, Roderick Sanatan also, is some kind of regional co-operation. If you're looking for solutions, one thing we could look at in terms of environmental programming would be a series modeled on or similar to the *Caribbean Eye* series that deals with the environmental issues of the Caribbean in a good people-oriented way.

Hartzell: I don't think the programme is an environmental programme if it hasn't got people in it. That would be a wildlife or a conservation programme. You can't separate environment and development anymore and I think that's been accepted.

Wildlife programming still has its place but in that case I would have thought it's probably more of a political issue. Perhaps protecting the howler monkey might not be interesting but if it concerns their fuel or water it would be of more interest.

Ricardo Sol: From the discussion this morning I was becoming a bit concerned as to where we are going.

We can speak of two negative perspectives: we can talk about environment and communication, and we can approach the environment very negatively speaking about its deterioration, all the threats, dangers etc., and we can also focus on communication equally negatively, We can speak of lack of communication and we can speak of control of communication. So how can we approach these two concepts in a positive manner.

Communication is today presented as something that can resolve everything. We always say that through information and through sensitizing the public and so on we can command solutions to problems. In terms of the environment we can also focus in a positive manner, speaking of bio-diversity, the better improved use of natural resources and so on. In short we are dealing with two very complex issues and we therefore need an equally complex strategy to deal with these complex issues.

In the camp of the communicators and the environmentalists we have actors who sometimes act in contradiction. I think what we need to do is to identify spaces where we can carry out concrete activities.

We can devise communication strategies for the NGOs or for peasant groups, for example, laymen. And there is another way we can communicate through TV programmes. If we are to consider commercial TV programming, well certainly in the case of Latin America, this is the primary type of TV programming. I think we need to identify those programmes which come under this heading or occupy this space. And then there are other types of programmes which can come under the state heading or public service TV.

Certainly in the case of Central American and some Latin American countries these (the second type of programming) do not occupy higher importance. I think we need to say that we need to separate the two spaces, the two different types of programming.

The environment as an adventure story

Parisca: We should start differentiating audiences. Previously Jamie compared European experiences and tended to translate them to our experiences. Obviously this will not function straight off. Not only are British audiences on average higher educated but also their problems with ecology are much more critical than they are on this side of the world where most countries (although they may have some crisis) are not yet at the point of crisis in the sense that there is still a lot of nature, there is still a lot of wildlife.

But on the other side our population has lesser formal education so the message has to be coded differently.

My experience has been that if I try to portray these problems in a very academic, scientific manner audiences will switch off. Unfortunately we have been trained that commercial TV is there for entertainment basically more than it is for education. However sad that may be, that's the case.

What we did to face this problem was to make our nature programmes into adventure programmes. In other words we incorporate human beings as participants and we place them in positions where they run different types of emotions that we use to hook the audience and once we have them then we can relay all the ecological message (being our objective) but we do not promote the programme as an educational or cultural programme, we promote it as an adventure programme.

It works. To our surprise. We started out thinking that the programme would be very elitist and might attract audiences in the upper class but to our surprise it is working very well in the lower strata of the society in Venezuela. Taxi drivers and peasants, people from inland are watching. There is a lesson there that obviously we must try and look for what it is that people like and not what we think they should like.

Sanatan: It sounds to be different in the state-owned stations as happens in most of the Caribbean countries now, how to do it in Latin America where you have more commercial type stations as Alejandro Parisca is telling us. And a new model introduced

by Jamie who is saying maybe we should go the way of the community type TV, either the programming level or the output level. That is one approach to it.

A second approach has been coming from Alejandro who is saying how do we fine-tune methodologies for reaching particular audiences or groups who we want to impact on. So there are really two discussions and we're running somewhere between them.

Babb: TV is pretty pictures but the pictures are worthless unless they tell a story about people. That's what we need to do - make the connection between the environment and the people of the Caribbean.

We show pretty pictures about the ozone layer and the sperm whale and the spotted owl. The problem in the Caribbean is that unless we show people how it connects with them, how it affects their livelihood, their ability to earn a living and their ability to continue living, you're not really making the point. And what we want to do is to produce programmes, to produce news on the environment that impacts on people, that connects.

As regards the structure of ownership and form for television - getting the message across is not just to send the message but it must also be received.

You want to make sure you make a point.

THE MEDIA AND THE ENVIRONMENTALISTS TRYING TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER

Claude Robinson
Director General,
The Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation

What I'd like to do this afternoon is to make some rather brief comments in headline form rather than make a formal presentation, because I believe that what you've heard for most of the day mostly covers the ground that we'll be going over this afternoon. And this will leave a lot more time to discuss the issues.

In talking about approaches to increasing awareness I think we should begin by defining some terms.

I presume that the topic meant awareness among viewers and other media users. But before that we have to increase awareness among media practitioners about some environmental issues and we have to increase awareness among environmentalists about media issues.

While in our lives we can't make rigid departments, in our functions and our roles, we have some primary responsibilities.

As a point of departure, there should be a lot more communication between those persons who are primarily involved in communication and the media and those persons who are primarily involved in environmental issues - so that each begins with some understanding of the other's concerns and some understanding of the problems they face in their day to day activities.

Then we also need to pay some attention to the complexity of the story.

The environmental story is intertwined, interconnected and it's complicated because it is so huge in its dimensions. It is also simple precisely because it affects each of us. And there therefore is no single story or no single theme or programme which can tell the whole story.

And, therefore, in talking about increasing awareness, we have to pay some attention to the need to break down the issue into manageable proportions. Not into sound bites alone but also not to try to put too many messages into individual packages. For instance we talk a lot about the over-consumption in the developed countries as a major contribution to environmental degradation. Over-consumption of food, fuel and other resources and the wasteful consumption of these resources is a major reason for the environmental problem.

In our part of the world, poverty is very much a reason for environmental problems.

By no means can we blame the poor.

It's no good talking about peasants cutting down hillsides for fuel wood without dealing with the underlying factors. In Jamaica for instance, both poor and rich live on the hillsides. The poor live in houses precariously perched and they live in fear when it rains.

On the other hand there are more affluent and beautiful homes on other hills.

Yet it is only the poor who 'live on the hillside', and their use of the hillsides get the blame for the problems and the same degree of concern about the way in which housing of higher income dwellers affects the watershed areas is not dealt with.

Perhaps we can explore that as we go along. Maybe it's because of the social and political power of one group as against the relative impotence of another group.

The same can be said about tourism. In most of the region, governments or investors spend large amounts of money inviting visitors to come to the region and so we develop large facilities. These impact sometimes negatively on natural resources and urban development. Ocho Rios is one good example of a town which has been totally taken over by tourism.

But again in dealing with a story of that kind, the media has to balance the positive inflows of foreign exchange that result from tourism against that kind of negative effect on the environment. Sometimes you may find yourself placed in a situation where as a practitioner, you may be accused of endangering the economy.

Recently we had a big debate in the press about coffee.

Do journalists endanger the economy?

Coffee is a major export in Jamaica. Most of it is grown on the hillsides around Kingston in the Blue Mountain area, and vast new acreages are being opened up for cultivation. Several questions have been raised: One is that the development is unsustainable because a lot of the natural vegetation has to be cleared for coffee.

There are people who say if you look at it in economic terms, the foreign exchange lost from forestry denuding is more than the gains from coffee exports. The point is that much of the story has been put in extreme contrast - it's either the environment or the coffee. You either leave the area pristine or you grow coffee for export.

There are no easy choices. And very often there is tremendous controversy. It doesn't mean that the journalist should avoid controversy, but one has to recognize the story for what it is.

New alliances more sponsors & co-productions more regional cooperation ..

There was a story run on JBC that was picked up by CNN, re-edited and an American voice used instead of the Jamaican reporter's.

This story ran on JBC without any ripples but the CNN story took on quite a different dimension politically in Jamaica.

This may very well be because the decision makers missed it on JBC because they were watching the dish.

Or more likely it was the fact that all of a sudden the story had a lot of financial and geo-political implications.

The point was made earlier that all public broadcasters everywhere are under tremendous financial pressure and we are no different from any of them. Yet we are expected to do good programming. And good programming includes programmes of this nature.

We have to begin to make some new alliances.

At the national level, the NGO community and the practitioners have to find new ways of funding programmes that increase environmental awareness.

Sometimes the media houses will want to consult on some story idea with the intention of being fair and balanced in the storyline but will retain editorial control. But we have to deal with reality and the consultants need their fees, and this makes the programme that much more expensive.

So we have to find sponsors, or the programmes can't be done.

It's not easy but I think that together we have to sit down and figure out how we can do these things. We have to make more use of co-productions.

We also need to work on programmes which have a life other than on television.

The number of TV monitors on the island is divided between regular TV programming, satellite dishes and VCR machines.

We need to use the VCR machines and make programmes, training programmes, which we can show to small groups. This may be a good marriage between the expertise available in the media houses and the knowledge available from the environmentalists.

My final comment - At the Rio summit we saw the Caribbean working together to formulate positions - we need to take this a step further within the CBU so that the CBU can go on to plan and execute a number of regional TV programmes using the model of cooperation that we see at the governmental level.

Within each media house, we have to recognize environment as a subject in its own right, deserving the same kind of specialisation that we give to finance, culture, sport etc., because as the world moves away from geo-politics as the determinant of relations among states to

eco-politics, what is bound to happen is that the media (news, features, advertising etc.) are going to be forced by these circumstances to pay greater attention to environmental issues.

So training of young journalists in the area of the environment needs to take place now.

THE CREATION OF AWARENESS : AN ENVIRONMENTALIST'S APPROACH

Calvin Howell
Director
The Caribbean Conservation Association

I want to start by thanking CARIMAC for giving the CCA the opportunity to collaborate on this very important media seminar. I'm convinced that we need to get the media managers sensitised to the importance of dealing with environmental issues, so I commend CARLMAC on its initiative - we are pleased to be a part of it.

The recently concluded UN Conference on Environment and Development highlighted the gravity of environmental issues and the task involved in addressing these issues. This task is so vast that even with an outpouring of financial resources and the best efforts of environmental experts and planners, very little can be achieved without the involvement of the media. I think it is important in creating awareness that people understand their own role in addressing these issues that awareness must be a precursor to positive environmental action.

I'd like to look at the question of creating awareness from the perspective of an environmentalist, (since the organisation with which I'm associated is involved in environmental conservation and has been for the last 25 years).

Most of the environmental issues facing the Caribbean region are pervasive issues, critical in some cases to the economic viability of the region. These issues are generally well known, so to chronicle them in this forum is not in my opinion necessary.

What I believe is necessary, however, is for the media practitioners to understand clearly their own role in bringing these issues to the attention of the public - and to approach that task in such a way that the average man on the street could become fully aware of the issues, understand his role on dealing with them and develop that sense of commitment which would translate awareness and understanding into positive action.

The differences in the approaches that media people adopt, is, in my opinion, what makes the difference between professionalism and mediocrity.

The first principle is that you must educate yourselves

Creating awareness of environmental issues must be a precursor to positive environmental action.

This is critical if economic growth or "development" as it is commonly referred to, is to be sustainable. Without adequate environmental protection, development is undermined; without

development, resources will be inadequate for needed investments, and environmental protection will fail. The two, environmental protection and development, can be likened to a two-edged sword. As journalists or news editors you are the swords-persons, wielding the swords, creating the awareness which is a pre-requisite to changing people's attitudes and eventually behaviour.

Mr. Robinson in his presentation approached the topic from the perspective of a media manager, hence his emphasis on making connections with the people.

For my part, I will examine the topic from the perspective of an environmentalist. But before I get into a discussion of techniques and approaches, there are a few general principles which I want to underscore, which might assist media practitioners, and which the CCA has found effective.

Principle number one is: educate yourselves. To write knowledgeably about any environmental topic, you must first spend time researching the environmental issues.

Too often the tendency is to concentrate on the political or social impacts of a particular issue without an adequate understanding of all the technical and other complexities surrounding it, or paying attention to the human interest component of a particular topic.

In addition to educating yourselves, as professional journalists or news editors you need to educate *your readers, your listeners and your viewers*. You need to help them understand how a single small action could have much greater and far-reaching effect. The role of the media is to do much more than inform - one of its critical roles is to educate.

And become watchdogs for the environment

However I think this is one area where the media sometimes fall very short on, particularly in reporting on matters relating to the environment. Hence along with the sensational side of an environmental story should come the why, the what, the long-term effects on people and the economy, etc.

The third principle is: become watchdogs for the environment. Investigative reporting demands that the professional media practitioner be fully informed of all aspects of the environmental issue. Know the background to the issue, which agencies should be monitoring it, what actions are being taken, the legal aspects of the issue and so forth.

It means finding out if all that should be done is being done and, if not, why not.

The fourth principle is : bring a balanced perspective to the issue.

Because environmental issues are usually complex, it is often difficult for a reporter to balance the various viewpoints. To do this, it is often necessary to consult experts, look at the scientific evidence, and weigh the facts.

In addition, some environmental issues often generate a high degree of controversy and emotionalism.

In such cases, the professional media practitioner must be careful not to inflame people or create a panic.

The fifth principle is: show your audience the relevance of the issue over time. In creating awareness about a particular environmental issue, it is important to show people how that issue will help or hurt them or have some impact on their lives over time.

To do this, a single article is usually not enough to cover an issue. This usually requires in-depth treatment over time, with attention being paid to the side issues rather than a one-shot approach. People tend to forget that environmental issues don't just go away once you report on them. These issues are there to stay, sometimes for a very long time.

Of these principles I would like to focus on two aspects: First is researching the issue: Gather information that can help you understand the various aspects of the environmental issue you are reporting on. Here NGO's like UNEP or CCA can be of assistance to media houses.

Understand how the various aspects interact and the social, political and ecological interrelationships of all factors involved. Your research should be thorough. It should help you understand technical information as much as possible. Consult publications and your local experts whenever possible. Visit the site if convenient to get a good mental picture. This would help to differentiate between fact and fiction as far as site conditions are concerned.

My second suggestion is: Avoid passive journalism.

Often, politicians and other players determine what reporters cover by stage-managing events. This type of passive journalism should be avoided. To create awareness of a particular condition, events should be followed up with more in-depth reporting over a longer period of time. You need to investigate environmental issues in depth; to track costs versus benefits of a particular environmental issue for its own sake as well as for your own information and education.

For example, it would be useful to measure changes which take place in behaviour, in the physical environment, or in the quality of life. Look for possible side effects that may result from environmental activity.

Such information usually helps to put environmental issues in perspective and helps people to understand how the impacts of an event can or will affect them. This type of public understanding and awareness is critical to long term management of the environment. We would have more people interested in what we report, and, more people tuning in.

We all need to adopt an "anticipate and prevent" rather than a "react and cure" approach to environmental reporting wherever practical. Most media practitioners react to events and report after some event has occurred. They rebuild the stories after the fact.

A pro-active approach allows the reporter to discover what the problems are and decide how he will cover them, rather than waiting for an event to take place. And here I refer you to Jamie Hartzell's ironic comment that "to be good news it has to be bad news."

Be innovative!

Avoiding the *What-you-think-people-want* syndrome

Creative approaches and in-depth balanced coverage make for responsible reporting.

For TV you need to make environmental programmes fun. One way to do this is to involve local popular theatre groups to help get the message across in a humorous or entertaining way -using local television personalities in programmes like the *Oliver at large* type of programme.

A common tendency is for journalists/reporters to carry stories only about the problems in the environment, without investigating and writing about possible solutions. While this type of writing can create awareness of an issue for a while, it can also turn people off the issue if they see no hope of solution. It is important also to avoid what I call the '*what-you-think-people-want-to-read-or-hear*' syndrome.

One approach is to find out

**Poisonous waste --
4,000 tons dumped illegally on a beach in Haiti
10, 000 tons more dumped --
Where?**

which agencies, international bodies or local NGOs are working on solutions to problems.

This type of information will come from persistence - going back to the issue to see what has happened. A case in point - the *Khian Sea* Toxic Ash Scandal - when in 1988 we had a barge floating across the Caribbean with about 14,000 tons of toxic garbage. Some of this was dumped on a beach in Haiti, about 4,000 tons.

In July this year, Greenpeace came out with the news that the US justice Department had announced indictments against two people who were responsible for shipping and dumping the Philadelphia incinerator ash on the beach in Haiti four years ago.

That's an incident I'm sure many reporters who might even have reported on this in 1988 would have forgotten. So the ash was dumped on the beach and was left there. That was not the end of the story - frankly it was the beginning of the story and a true investigative journalist would have somehow attempted to find out in the interim what had happened to that ash.

Let me just say that the story is not as simple as it was reported at the time. The barge carried the ash around the world for 27 months, offering to pay to less industrialised countries huge amounts of money to accept the cargo.

They offered it as construction material, as road fill and as fertilizer. The 4,000 tons of waste dumped on the beach in Haiti (in violation of Haitian law) was laced with toxic heavy metals, dioxins and it has remained on the beach in Haiti to this day. The infamous barge turned up later in 1988 in the Indian Ocean without the remaining 10,000 tons of ash. Here in the Caribbean we should have an interest in our brother because we are our brothers' keeper. We should be making a case for that toxic garbage to be removed from that beach in Haiti.

Journalists should develop a strategy of writing on positive aspects of the environment to counteract the crisis reporting that we tend to favour. The important thing is to strive for balance - don't overdo your emphasis on either aspect - planning is important.

Read, cultivate sources of information. CCA as a regional NGO, frequently collaborates with agencies like CARIMAC, the PANOS Institute, CAMWORK - to offer training seminars and workshops for media practitioners. A product of two such workshops in the past is the publication "Environment - the Media and the Message."

Another approach we find useful is to offer incentives, for example, the Caribbean Conservation Award- for individuals and organisations working effectively to increase awareness and generate positive action in environmental management.

We helped in 1991 to initiate the The Governor-General's Award for Environmental Achievement. The first awards were given out to 11 individuals and groups in Barbados at the start of the Environment Week 1992. Of the eight categories selected, one is for effective media reporting on the environment.

This year's winner in that category is Terry Ally of *The Voice of Barbados*.

One strategy that has a multiplier potential is to involve young people in environmental activities. First this ensures that the next generation of Caribbean people will grow up with a sensitivity towards environmental protection, and second this wins support for positive environmental action now. A case in point: CCA in collaboration with Shell Antilles and Guyanas Ltd. (Barbados based) launched a campaign in September 1991 to promote youth environmental projects across the Eastern Caribbean.

The campaign unfortunately involved only islands in which Shell Antilles maintains a presence - with the exception of Antigua and Montserrat which CCA undertook to support directly. The projects were restricted to school aged children and young adults between ages 5 and 25. Projects were in three categories: *Reduce / Reuse / Recycle*; Greening of the Caribbean (treeplanting and beautification); and Historic Preservation.

The result of the campaign surpassed our greatest expectations. Over 10,000 young people from Anguilla down to Grenada were involved in the projects - school children, boy scouts, girl guides, youth councils and so forth. Projects entered have tremendous potential for sound environmental management.

Greening of the Caribbean began to address problems related to the Greenhouse effect; Historic Preservation projects help preserve the region's historic heritage and offers tremendous potential for an alternative tourism product. An earlier project in 1990 concentrated on "what can we do" to make our country a better place to live. Projects like these offer opportunities for the media, since children usually make good subjects and create a "human interest" factor in all forms of media reporting. In the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle category for example, those projects addressed one of the biggest environmental problems in the region, that is, the management of waste.

The media need to be more pro-active and to do more than one-shot reporting

If we can get children growing up being conscious of the need to reduce their consumption, to recycle, to do things like composting, I think we could be well underway to beginning to solve that huge waste disposal problem that we have in the region. These projects offer opportunities for media reporting but I'm not aware of any media house that has picked this up and has reported on it. Here is an opportunity for positive reporting on environmental issues - and because most of the projects have a long life span, it is an opportunity to do serial reporting instead of one-shot coverage of a specific event or activity.

The important thing is that positive action is being generated and this action involves the future inheritors, the future caretakers of the environment - today's children. CCA for instance, supports such programmes as the Caribbean Film Festival by offering a prize for the best film on an environmental theme. We have recently produced some low-cost videos and PSAs for use on regional TV stations.

I was aware that this forum would attract media managers who are accustomed to doing very professional work and so I was a little embarrassed to bring the work that we have produced. But even low cost productions can be effective in increasing awareness.

And, for organisations such as ours which operate on a shoestring budget, I think as long as we can get the message across and create that awareness, I don't think we have to produce award-winning programmes.

I'd like also to mention an approach that is being used in Barbados that's been very popular in creating awareness which the CCA has nothing to do with really, This is the mini-parks project where a group of conservation and environmental organisations have gotten together and promoted the idea of each community developing mini-parks and clearing up the area. These are just some of the approaches that we have used in heightening awareness. They have been fairly effective.

Let me reiterate that what I'd like to see is the media fraternity taking a more pro-active role and doing more than just one shot or negative reporting on environmental issues.

DISCUSSION: DOES OBJECTIVITY REQUIRE NEUTRALITY?

Moderator - Roderick Sanatan

Sanatan: It seems to me what has been happening in the two discussions is that we haven't gone to any general theme.

Claude Robinson told us about certain kinds of apparent contradictions in how we approach our jobs. Part of the framework would be what we call the wider social issues. Are we reporting only on behalf of the poor and in a sense not about what the rich would be doing badly about the environment?

Are we endangering our own economy? - using the example from tourism. Another area he gave us in that framework is creating kinds of alliances that would assist us in moving the message.

I think Calvin also strayed in that area and gave us an example of networking and the use of the youth. That seen-is to be our framework picture for what we ought to do about awareness. Calvin himself spent a little more time identifying what he calls some principles we must look at: investigative reporting, a balanced view of the work, serial reporting and popular theatre. We need to pick out popular theatre because it is not often a theme used all through the region especially in the media.

Popular theatre is perhaps a poor name used in some parts of the Caribbean for popular educational forms called alternative media in the literature. They're not following the mainstream forms of radio, press and television. They're using popular forms of developing local consciousness. Because that has developed in the theatrical area particularly in the Eastern Caribbean, very often back in Central America - it is the way in which local communities, by way of engaging in a drama of the issue, become conscientised and take action on behalf of the issues, and in that sense environmental as much as many other matters in the Caribbean have used this form where local community effort has been able to produce some kind of change.

Question about the CCA providing help to researchers.

Howeth What was said is that there are more media houses calling for clarification or background information on specific environmental issues. And this is welcome.

Question: Does that mean that you can be accessed via computer and modem etc? Are you on-line?

Howell: We are currently working on developing our information management system.

Woolford: I was wondering when you were talking about educating others and regarding the issues - how can this be related to what John Maxwell said earlier - that's its all around me. I can see it going on.? And wondering whether there isn't a dilemma there in that sometimes the journalist feels that he knows what is going on because he can see it around him. And on

the other hand, he needs to be educated about the issue so that he can educate others. And what happens when he gets educated to such an extent that he becomes an advocate rather than a journalist?

Howell: That's an interesting question. I wish we could convert more journalists into becoming environmentalists. Then our job would be much easier. We haven't been able to do that yet.

I think many journalists tend to shy away from specific issues if they don't have the technical background or if they are not really *au fait* with the issue.

"Should I do this and risk my job?"

The help that they need is available - in just about every country in the region now there is some data bank of information on the environment. Even in the smaller countries of the Eastern Caribbean. The CCA along with Island Resources Foundation carried out a survey of environmental issues on 6 countries of the region. At the end of that process an NGO was left in each territory with a collection of data on every aspect of the environment that was reported on. So that they were able to enhance their own capacity through that project in building up their own data bank. And now many of them are making this information available for a fee.

So the information is there -it's just a question of knowing how to access it.

Robinson: Just a comment on that. I don't think there is necessarily a contradiction between the two points of view. The journalist sees something, for example, the denuded hillside. That's not the whole story and therefore if you simply write that, or photograph it, you have only a bit of the story. But then you need to say -'what's going on here?'

And it is in the process of finding out what is going on that you then have to deal with people who live in the neighbourhood as well as with the experts.

I also don't think that the danger that you apprehend is a real danger.

The journalist becoming an environmentalist is not a dangerous thing. Very often we shy away from advocacy in journalism, and for good reason.

Manchester: Sitting here and listening, it surely mobilizes my own thoughts to go back home and get things done but you're dealing with people coming from a particular kind of perspective - it's not easy. Should I do this and risk my job? It's an economic question and he has to survive.

Robinson: I think one of the ways we can deal with the problem of resources is that within the CBU and CANA and any other regional mechanisms - for example Wendy Thompson in Rio covering for CANA and therefore providing some coverage which the stations themselves couldn't do. And when I said that the CBU, could make a contribution within its own resources as well as with co-productions, I think there is a lot we can do to stretch the resource because essentially the issue is very similar throughout the region.

Too many journalists are intimidated by environmental stories

But you are right - very few newsrooms have the resources to specialize in any subject.

On the other point - of the political pressure which affects every major story - part of it is really how you tip-toe through the tulips.

We're always pushing back the frontiers. Every time you try something and you move away from it and you push back a little bit. We have to be realistic - we know that there are some things that you will not be able to do just the way you may want to do it. And then again what is a national responsibility in this sense? In the United States you may be asked to hold back a story on the Gulf War, in the National interest. In the Caribbean it may be about a hotel polluting the beaches which, if it got out, might mean the end of the tourist industry for two or three years.

I don't know any society in which there are no limits to freedom. The point is that frontiers are different from place to place.

Maxwell: I think a lot of us are intimidated by these stories. I remember looking up at the hillsides around Kingston 15 years ago and going to Professor Allan Eyre of the Geography department at UWI and asking him how much of this top soil goes into the sea every time it rains.

Then I went and talked to various other people. We came up with the estimate that every year Jamaica loses from that one watershed alone lands and production worth \$60-M.. There has never been a year in which the Jamaican Gross Domestic Product ever increased by \$60 million.

So that is a case where we are allowing ourselves to go into a poverty from which we cannot recover. That is a story. I don't know how questions of environmental advocacy compare. To me it's a question of national disaster and total human survival. When I talk about what happens because the UDC - a government corporation - argues with the NRCA years ago and bullies people into allowing them to build what are sewerage outfalls 1,000 feet instead of 1,000 yards from the beach. The fishermen come to me 10 years later and tell me that they can't catch mullet out there anymore.

These are stories which are so obvious that I cannot imagine how anybody can possibly be intimidated by them. I cannot see how any politician can stop you from doing them and I don't understand how you can describe it as advocacy if you decide to carry the story and embarrass whoever is responsible. Perhaps it is a bit too crude and simple.

Blake: Coming out of the discussion today we have two things: the Environment and the problems of the Environment and the problems of the media dealing with both.

Those who are directly involved in matters dealing with the environment will have to provide the material in a way which will allow the media to use it.

The information is not always there in a very usable manner. Often the information is a snapshot, not developed, and we need to continue to build the information base.

I want to ask Khron how much coverage has been given to the Programme For Belize which is a very low key programme because it is an NGO programme. Then I want to discuss the Guyana programme because the government is developing the programme but they think it is so good that they need not explain the programme so it got tied up with a number of other forestry programmes and you saw information developing and people taking positions in the press as if that programme was one to destroy the forest.

But the people who were managing it on behalf of the government did not think it necessary to explain the programme in a situation where you're having some major commercial projects and where people are objecting to those projects; and, since this is called a project, people see it in the same light as the commercial projects.

Now when you explain the Iwokrama project and what it is intended to do it is hard to understand how anybody could take issue with it and why the media would not carry news about it as an imp important and good development. You have a situation where on both sides you have a problem.

I remember we had a meeting here in Jamaica in 1990 on sustainable development. The media, particularly, was able to come and cover the opening, the politicians' speeches, but that was that. Usually the political statement is for the birds but when you get into the discussion which was open there was no interest.

Ricardo Sol: The environmentalist has a product to sell and the question is how to sell it. He needs to know what he wants to say and must clearly identify to whom he wants to say it. We have heard questions about how journalists deal with environmental matters. But there are other matters with which we are expected to deal.

This conference has brought together decision makers in television. The decision maker in television must come up with ideas for programming which he is sure will be able to occupy a slot for a long time. He can't base his planning on one video - that is his first problem. The other problem is excellence, which is necessary because of the competitive nature of television.

We need excellence we cannot accept non-professional work

We really need to consider three aspects of television: the audience, the advertisers and the programming.

We for instance, have extensive forestry. We are told we can only deal with it properly if we deal with it in depth and there we have to deal with our advertising agency. But is it really necessary to deal with these problems in depth? I believe we can deal with these problems in more general terms because other media exist who can deal better in depth with such problems. We think that we can deal with these problems in such a way it will have a greater effect. I think the issue is

very complex and we need to distinguish between the problems of the journalist and the problems of the environmentalist.

Miguel Schiebel: As a director, I need to be aware that if what I produce does not satisfy the public they will switch off. We do recognise the importance of sensitising the public to the problems of the environment, but we have to understand that there are other channels of information. We cannot accept non-professional work. For effective television we need continuity, interesting topics and fresh angles.

Robinson: Environmental reporting does not have to be boring. Much of the effectiveness of television has to do with the packaging and presentation. Even stories of serial murderers can be made to drop out of sight by a really good environmental story.

Agenda 21: A programme to involve all the world's people in sustainable development

**Ambassador Don Mills
Chairman,
Natural Resources Conservation Authority
Jamaica**

First let me thank the organizers and CARIMAC in particular for inviting me to speak. I really believe that the subject of your conference - the use of television in the area of environmental care - is of critical importance.

It has become more so as a result of the Rio Earth Summit and the vast range of activities leading to it and those taking place during the first two weeks of June in Brazil and elsewhere.

The summit and those activities in Rio were altogether extraordinary - unprecedented.

But the process did not begin there. It started with the decision by the UN General Assembly (*UN Resolution GA 44/228*) in December 1989 - to hold a world conference at the Summit level to deal with the very serious situation facing Planet Earth and the people who inhabit it as a result of the continuing degradation of the environment.

This is not to say that nothing in this matter had happened over the years. But in sum the situation was one which could lead eventually to disaster - to the point where the planet could no longer sustain life forms, including human life.

The Caribbean countries, Jamaica included, demonstrate this dual situation. We can see the results of efforts to improve our management of the environment; the development of public interest; of media coverage and of the activities of non-governmental organisations.

But we can also see the signs of weakness, of failure, of destruction and degradation. And so in the world at large the indiscriminate burning of fossil fuels and the emissions they put out are a major contributor to the greenhouse effect - the blanket being formed around the planet leading to a slow but persistent rise in temperature - global warming.

Results will eventually be disastrous. They will include drastic climatic changes and disturbances, as well as rising sea-levels which will cover coastal areas and will drown some small islands. Caribbean countries are very much at risk in this matter.

The use of such materials as chlorofluorocarbons - for example in refrigerators, in the production of foam and in the use of aerosols - is slowly eroding the ozone layer which protects the earth and living forms including humans from the dangerous radiation from the sun.

This has very serious implications, for example, in respect to cancers among humans and animals, the erosion of the immune system and the disruption of the food chain of the oceans.

The considerable amount of waste of all kinds produced by human activities in the home and factories and elsewhere poses a growing problem of inadequate means of disposal.

Household waste - sewage and **garbage; chemical** waste; radioactive materials; have become major sources of pollution and environmental degradation as well in some cases a source of tension between countries as some who produce waste dump it in the ocean or try to persuade others to acquire it.

In the news yesterday we heard of a ship, trying to stop in Colombia with a cargo of waste including radioactive and non-biodegradable material. This stuff was coming reportedly from the US, Canada and Europe. It was Nigeria it seems, that sent out the warning.

This is another case of attempts by some industrialized country interests to persuade developing countries to accept the poisonous waste they produce by inappropriate production and disposal processes.

The UN General Assembly resolution calling for the conference is a most unusual document. It was approved by consensus - all countries, North, South, East and West, agreeing. That is worth noting because it set the basis for the preparatory work and for the Rio Summit.

The document speaks to the continuing deterioration of the state of the environment and of the global life support systems -which could jeopardise the life- sustaining qualities of the Earth

- It states - all countries agreeing - that the major cause of this deterioration is the unsustainable pattern of production and consumption particularly in industrialized countries.
- It avers that poverty and environmental degradation are closely interrelated.

The conference was designed to put the world on a new path, towards a way of living that would allow the present generation to enjoy the benefit of development and the use of the Earth's resources- but without diminishing or destroying the opportunities for future generations to benefit in the same way.

The phrase which has come into the language to describe this concept is *sustainable development*.

As usual when such a major conference is being planned the UN set up a preparatory committee.

All that this means is that it was a committee attended by all members and observers and observer countries.

The committee worked for two years - debating and negotiating text drafted by UN officials on the basis of these debates. But a very unusual and far-reaching step was taken from the outset.

The UN has always allowed a certain amount of participation in the work of its councils and committees by non-governmental organisations of all sorts. At the first meeting of the preparatory committee a decision was taken to widen very considerably the opportunity for such organisations to be involved.

Hundreds took advantage of the new opportunity but in addition, a large number of other meetings on this issue took place over the two year period.

Individual governments; regional and subregional bodies (in our case CARICOM as well as the UN Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean) NGOs, scientific bodies, business organisations, industries, women's groups, youth organisations and so on.

Further, two international committees worked on parallel tracks, one drafting an International Convention on Climate change, the other on Biodiversity.

Some of the issues involved in the two conventions are reflected in the work of the preparatory committee and *Agenda 21* --the report of the Summit. The process then, was widespread and broad-based, covering a considerable range of issues and concerns, spreading across the world, involving almost every kind of organisation in the civil society and well as governments in the UN system.

One of the many steps taken in preparation was the holding of a meeting called the One World Group of broadcasters in Geneva in February 1991 towards the planning of an unprecedented campaign of TV programmes on sustainable development and the environment in support of the summit.

There were serious disappointments but outright disagreement would have been a global calamity

This meeting involved 28 companies covering Western and Eastern Europe, Japan, parts of South-east Asia and Brazil among others. CNN and others were of course very active.

The UN established what has been called a state of the art computerised system to provide instantaneous access to the UN Conference documents during the preparatory period before Rio - as well as other types of relevant information. All documents could be called up by anyone with a fairly simple computer and modern equipment.

NGOs also created a 'read and write' conference system, allowing conferencing across the world. A large number of individuals and organisations used this facility.

Before Rio I had briefing sessions with the Jamaica Information Services and Jampress and discussions with the head of JBC in addition to participating in other briefings and broadcasting.

My concern was that media in Jamaica should be aware of Rio and should join in process by

- showing material from existing studies - JIS, JBC, many on Jamaica;

- Picking up the material being beamed by satellite for the purpose of highlighting the issue during Rio and relay to Jamaica.

The objectives of this were: to raise the level of consciousness in Jamaica; to provide information; to link people here with the world and thus add to the whole dynamic of the process.

The summit itself was extraordinary. Never before had so many Presidents and Prime Ministers gathered in one place, to show their deep concern for the gravest danger facing mankind.

One hundred and seventy five countries were there, their delegations including ministers and officials. The UN agencies were all represented by their top people, among them Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali; Michel Camdessus, the head of the IMF who stopped in Jamaica on his way, the President of the World Bank, the Secretary General of GATT - and all spoke in the debates.

And among them, having attended the meeting of the preparatory committee over the period of two years and their own conferences, were the NGOs and others of the civil society.

They were there by way of the historic decision made after the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee and in larger numbers than in any previous meeting of any UN conference. The significance of this and its far-reaching consequences for the future of the UN system and for governance within nations has been fully acknowledged.

It would take hours to describe the activities of NGOs and other bodies, inside and outside the UN meetings. An examination of Agenda 21 demonstrates this.

There were the representatives of indigenous peoples from all over the world. They added colour and depth and legitimacy to the whole process.

In Rio we heard a procession of speakers: our Presidents and Prime Ministers - some of them in fact were very good.

And the final negotiation on the outstanding matters went on day and night - ending in agreement but not without some major compromises- for outright disagreement would have been a global calamity.

There were serious disappointments on the part of developing countries on some issues, but Rio must be judged on broader basis. It was a very special occasion.

The NGO forum - a gathering of thousands of NGOs and other groups in another part of Rio - was powerful indeed. Many persons from the Caribbean were there -and CARICOM NGOs worked hard on issues in concert with CARICOM delegates.

And the media, by then, worked in Rio on a twenty-four hour basis with their encounters, interviews, and addresses by special people, like Cousteau.

The three daily newspapers they and domestic policies required to put out - one by IPS - the press stories across the world, the radio and TV coverage brought much of the world together in a common consciousness.

The challenge to the media: to move from the concept of " environmental managmeent" to Sustainable Development

Agenda 21

- The Rio declaration - a set of principles to guide mankind in the future, in its relationship to Planet Earth.
- The set of principles on forests, not yet a convention, perhaps later.
- The two conventions: Climate Change signed by an unprecedented 153 countries on the spot and Biodiversity 154 signatories; both of them imperfect, but representing a most powerful political statement on the part of most of the world representatives.
- The international economic and domestic policies required to accelerate sustainable development
- The sectoral issues involved e.g. those relating to the atmosphere, the land and the oceans, the forests, etc.
- The role of the major groups women, youth, NGOs, indigenous peoples, trades unions, etc. 0
A comprehensive and detailed programmes covering a wide range of issues and concerns affecting development and the environment, nearly five hundred pages.
- Finally, the means of implementation, the money, the technology, the institutions, the information.

For each of the issues included in Agenda 21 is presented:

- The position and the basis for action
- The objectives of the programme
- The activities top be carried out
- The means, the money, technology, manpower necessary etc.
- Who is responsible for implementation, e.g the UN, NGOs, the private sector etc.

We now speak of ***Sustainable Development*** - a new concept in world affairs.

The challenge to the media -press, radio and TV is to ensure a full understanding of what is involved; to present it; to assist in the conversion process from concepts of "conservation" and "environmental management" to the concept of ***sustainable development***.

The challenge is to do better than has been done over the past twenty years. After Stockholm there was a considerable effort by governments, the UN NGOs etc., and the media too, but -in spite of that effort to raise consciousness of the problem, the degradation and damage continued.

The lesson is you have to go much deeper into the minds of men and women, you have to change:

- Hearts and minds
- Lifestyles
- Productive methods
- Pricing policies
- Taxation policies
- Institutions
- Educational systems
- Relationships within and between communities

An effective strategy should begin by focusing on resources, production and people health care, education the rights of women the role of youth and a democratic participation process
- Agenda 21

- Relationships within and between nation states
- Recognise global environment problems and dangers and help to deal with them
- Even as you deal with local issues, media should assist in a better understanding in the community of the media issue - the global dangers, and must publicise
- What other communities and countries are doing - for example the UNCED programme of exchange of materials - send them cassettes and they send you cassettes.

Media must continue to maintain the momentum, the level of consciousness, concern and determination to act, which the UNCED process and Rip attained.

UNCED paid a great deal of attention to operations of business and industry including transnational corporations and their impact on the environment.

The report concludes that "Business and industry including transnational corporations should recognise environmental management as among the highest corporate priorities and as a key determinant to sustainable development."

Some of the requirements from that section include increasing the efficiency of resource utilisation by increasing reuse and recycling of residues; the reduction of waste; more efficient use of energy; the adoption of cleaner production methods; the development of greater environmental awareness and responsibility; cooperation with workers and trade unions toward the continuous improvement of knowledge and skills required for implementing sustainable development.

The UNCED report states that education, raising of public awareness and training are linked to virtually all areas of *Agenda 21*.

There are three major areas in that programme, specifically designed for that purpose (Page 24, Chapter 36)

They are:

- Re-orienting education towards sustainable development
- Increasing public awareness
- Promoting training

It is clear that each of these areas offers interesting opportunities for the use of TV video and film.

Examples of the role of the media - TV and video in particular -coming from *Agenda 21*, (Chapter 12) include -

- Managing fragile ecosystems and combatting desertification and drought (fragile ecosystems include desert, semi and lands, mountains, small islands and certain coastal areas. That describes most of Jamaica and many Caribbean countries.) Note the impact of populations and tourism on coastal areas and mountains.

The programme outlined in *Agenda 21* stresses the need for popular support for public awareness and for the integration of environmental education into the curriculum of primary and secondary schools.

Presumably in all these matters the use of TV, Video and Film would focus on different audiences, e.g. the general public, the particular communities, schools, (by way of special video/film. support of curriculum specifications).

The greater the community control over the resources the greater will be the incentive for economic and human development

- Similarly in Chapter 14 Page 81, (Promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development.) there is a special programme entitled Ensuring people's participation and promoting human resources development for sustainable agriculture. It states that the greater the degree of community control over the resources over which it relies, the greater will be the incentive for economic and human resources development.

The objectives of this programme therefore include the promotion of greater public awareness of peoples participation and peoples organisations especially women's groups, youth, indigenous people, local communities and small farmers in sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Two of the major sources of serious environmental degradation are poverty on the one hand and the unsustainable patterns and consumption methods, and lifestyles, particularly in industrialised countries. The Agenda 21 programme in this regard states: "An effective strategy for tackling the

problems of poverty, development and the environment simultaneously should begin by focussing on resources, production and people, and should cover demographic issues, enhanced health care and education, the rights of women the role of youth and of indigenous people, local communities and a democratic participation process in association with improved local government."

On the other hand there are programmes designed to promote changes in unsustainable consumption patterns and production methods.

Altogether, I think that the venture constitutes a most formidable task. To achieve significant success will be very, very difficult, but to fail will be disastrous.

This poses a great challenge and a wonderful opportunity to the communicators - teachers, poets, songwriters, the media and others -and a special opportunity to those who work in television and related fields.

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS : CARIBBEAN PERSPECTIVES ON RIO

Krohn: The conference did not seem to address the problem of over-population?

Mills: Historically the developed countries have never really had a population problem. They simply exported theirs.

Howell: What were the recommendations for funding *Agenda 21*?

Mills: There were major battles about funding. The best estimates are that it would cost the developing countries \$ 650 billion yearly but a large proportion of that would have to come from outside.

Official development assistance now stands at \$60 billion. If it were doubled to 0.7 % GDP it would clearly still not be enough. Some modest promises were made in Rio.

Some industrialised countries want to tie the system to Bretton Woods system but developing countries feel they do not have enough power under that system, and they managed to change some parameters of the existing system.

How much money will go into the system is problematic as are the ground rules. Those among us who develop their projects, cost them and present them properly will be able to get them financed. Our own lack of design skills means that money has been lying down, waiting to be used.

The development agencies now have to go back to *Agenda 21* and work out the implications for them. Every agency with any impact on life and nature has to have its own image of sustainable development

Hartzell: There was much talk at the summit about the importance of the media. But in *Agenda 21* only two pages are specifically dedicated to media?

Mills: Public awareness is the theme of the whole thing although it is not directly addressed in the definitive chapter dealing with public awareness.

Hartzell: Most development agencies seem to attach a low priority to communications?

Mills: In many places there is a long distance between acknowledgement and practice in relation to public awareness. We in Jamaica believe that the NRCA should have the in-house capacity to produce its own public awareness programme just as we need our own legal department.

Ronald Abraham: Even if we all play our part we still do not have much impact on what happens in the world.

Mills: Pressures are building nonetheless; for instance because of Bhopal some rigorous new rules are being enforced. We need to insist that they be made universal and enforced.

Blake: On the question of policing the global environment, it's now clear that policing is largely on one side. There are proposals for new machinery within the UN system and developing countries will play a large part there.

In terms of resources the UNDP has established a 100 million dollar fund to be used within this calendar year and we are trying to see whether we can get some funds from it to start our own planning.

Maxwell: We appear to need to retrain all the economists so that they can more accurately determine the real value of real development.

Mills: Retraining is something that applies generally. It also applies to the media. I don't think that media is as aware as they need to be. The same is true in law - most lawyers have no background in this area and the legal system is going to be very seriously affected. Every manager and professional has to be retrained. Economists, for instance, have for long ignored the real costs of natural resources.

At the conference I became alarmed because developing countries did not appear to be equipped to handle the technical questions that are coming.

I spent some days at the World Institute of Development Environment Research in Helsinki to see research work being done there to prepare training programmes for university teachers of economics and we discussed the possibility of such training programmes in the Caribbean.

<p><i>Managers, professionals, all have to be retrained to deal with sustainable development & Agenda 21</i></p>
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Ricardo Sol: Few people know *Agenda 21* as a document and communications people should know that document. Institutions like CARIMAC should -take the lead in publishing these documents for the information of journalists.

Maxwell: The Biodiversity treaty sanctions the selling of genetic engineering products back to the developing world using materials taken from the developing world.

Mills: The system is loaded against the LDCs. From before work started on the biodiversity treaty it was clear that genetic material was being taken from the LDCs without recompense. We regard our heritage as part of our intellectual property and we believe that original species should be declared part of the natural heritage of mankind.

Babb: Wasn't Rio really speaking to the converted? Is there really a need for the retraining of journalists?

Mills: If you look at the Jamaican media there is a considerable amount of news about the environment in the newspapers, radio and television.

The question is how far this information has penetrated the hearts and minds of Jamaicans. A public opinion survey suggested that it has not gone very deep.

We may all be preaching to the converted, but I myself have gone through a profound learning process in the last two years.

CAPTURING THE ATTENTION OF THE AUDIENCE

Alejandro Parisca

Manager

Production & Programming

Radio Caracas Television

Stetson Babb

Acting Director

News & Current Affairs

Caribbean Broadcasting Co.

Barbados

German Vargas

Director

Radio Environmental Education Programme

Costa Rica

Parisca

Environmental Adventure

Venezuela's experimental, environmental television was the brain-child of William Phelps, owner of the television station.

Our first important job was to convince scientists that we were serious and when they took the idea seriously, it was possible to send out small teams to work on long-term projects with the scientists.

Each project takes about a year in scientific time and so we move our teams about among four projects at a time, to cover the development of the projects.

We are using the Hi8 system, which we transfer to 1 inch video tape because it considerably reduces our project costs. We recommend this system to others of us who cannot afford 16 mm. film.

We see ourselves as film-makers rather than as journalists. Our coverage of the environment is not news coverage, but a way of spreading the word to less informed people. We treat the environment as the essential and most important actor in our adventure stories.

One of our first programmes helped to determine our direction.

A girl had been kidnapped by the Amami Indians and she had lived with them for 20 years. She ran away from them and we used her story as the background for a story on the Amami.

Audience response was surprising. We found that our audience went across the spectrum: Upper class, middle class and working class; men and women; housewives, families, everybody watched our programme.

We have now developed to the point where we are actively seeking export markets. We have a small export market already and we are beginning to develop some expertise in this area.

We know for instance, which audiences will not buy dubbed programmes, we know that the Germans don't like programmes that are too wordy.

We are exploring the video tape markets, putting our programmes on videotape and we have been successful in selling them in Venezuela and in other markets.

We use a lot of promotion for our programmes, merchandising them; we print T-shirts and caps for instance, promoting the show.

We have collected a number of awards as well as audience attention, and now investment is being attracted to the programmes.

The National Geographic Society has teamed up with us on two projects, so it seems we have achieved high standards.

We are interested in co-production and in sharing our expertise and experience. And we now have a distribution company in Miami, so we can cooperate in marketing too.

Babb

Traditional Values

The problem of the television producer in news or current affairs is how do we get people to sit up, listen and stay tuned in?

My strategy revolves round what I call the three Ps -first is the People, the audience. Second is the principle of responsibility to Protect the the environment and third is the Problem of how to get people to connect.

We need to get people to understand what environment really is about. Many of us tend to talk about the environment abstractly, and it's always concerning somewhere else, someone else.

We need to get through to media practitioners that that environment story is the five old journalistic Ws and H. Who, What, When Where, Why and How.

Human beings are self-centred. Unemployment figures are just figures - unless you happen to be unemployed.

How do they get so many people to spend so much time to watch the Olympics? Marketing-finding an angle.

To me the Environment angle is life or death - which may sound macabre or sensational. But we need to employ shock therapy to get across the message that destroying our environment means death.

We in the Caribbean like to make issues complicated to impress people. We don't need to. What we need to do is to satisfy the public thirst for information. Let's offer practical solutions to people and let them understand their part in them.

Vargas

Peace among men

War against Nature

In Rio I was surprised to see that the world perceived Costa Rica in much the same way Costa Ricans see themselves.

Costa Rica has a very good reputation. We have many wonderful things. We have eliminated the army; health and education are good; illiteracy is only about 2%.

This perception is incomplete and defective. In Costa Rica we say "We have peace among men but war against nature."

Costa Rica is full of contradictions. We have only two things to accomplish to meet the *Agenda 21* goals, but we have irreparable losses in huge areas of forest; enormous amounts of fertile soil; many species of animals, and plants but Costa Rica is also one of the leading Central American countries in its legislation to protect the environment.

Most people do not know of these contradictions, and they cannot find out from the media. We have the highest index of deforestation in the region and one of the highest consumption rates for agrochemicals but the people don't know.

News is defined by the commercial interests of the enterprises which control the media. It depends on economics and 'ratings'. The prevailing concept is perfectly illustrated by the remark of Britain's Lord Thomson, that "News is the stuff that we have to put in to fill the space between commercials."

There is a problem of how news is defined. It is amazing how superficial and short news treatment of the environment often is. We can not deal with any environmental problem in 30 seconds. Another limitation is the imagination. Environmental stories are only news when the news is bad.

As I say in Costa Rica we have war against nature. Flooding is now a big issue in the country. There is flooding all over. This is because of the continuing destruction of the rain-forest. The

news does not look at how the flooding starts, it doesn't teach people to make the connections. If you don't make the connections people think they can't do anything to improve the situation.

There is a lack of historical inquiry as well as a lack of follow -up. Maurice Strong, director of UNICED, the Rio Summit, is building a hotel in a protected area of Costa Rica. There is no mention of this in the Costa Rican press.

Another problem is that news stories are so urban-oriented. Banana expansion in Costa Rica means reducing biodiversity because the rain-forest is being destroyed for plantations.

It was discovered that though the Geest company claimed to have permission to cut the rain-forest to plant bananas, they had no such permission. Because of this story there was a crisis between two government ministries but there was no real coverage of the problem of the rain-forest. It was a question of journalistic economics. It was cheaper to go to the Ministers' offices for that crisis than to go to the rain-forest to find out the facts about the real crisis.

The American idea is that there are two sides to every story. The environment has millions of sides, one for each of us. We have had interesting experiences producing material about the environment in Costa Rica. We made two series of 15-minute documentaries on the environment. They were not successful. We were successful however in an experiment, using fiction, a love story with the environment as background.

It is a very cheap radio programme and reaches all schools. Important questions were asked in the programmes, questions about connections. We were telling kids -"Go ask, ask at school, ask your parents" about the questions in the story. Nothing you do in the environment is neutral. With the success of that programme we are now producing a programme for the parents so that they can answer their children's questions.

Discussion

Why some programmes work and some don't

Hylton Braveboy: Alejandro has been very successful in his programme. Why has the programme been so successful?

Parisca: We believe that part of our success is that we listen to the feedback from our audience. We listen to the feedback and we find out what works and what doesn't. Since we approach the environment as an issue in these programmes, people develop opinions about the issue and you are able to evaluate your success in in changing behaviours.

Vargas: TV is excellent for putting things on agenda. You cannot expect immediate results. But the problems are now so urgent that we don't know whether when our kids are responsible for the environment there will be an environment left for them to protect.

Stewart Krohn: We've failed to provide the baseline education so that people can understand what we're talking about.

Babb: We need to show people that the environment affects them.

Parisca: People will not take care of what they don't know. If we let them know its importance to them, to humanity, the people will act to protect their environment.

Ricardo Sol: The problem in communication is vast and complex. We need to study carefully what we are going to do, what can we do in each of radio, press and television. We have to familiarise the public with the environment. if television relates the environment to the daily activities of everybody it may be a major instrument; but we cannot ask TV to solve all problems relating to environment. It can bring persons very close to the issue or can make persons depart from the issue. if television concentrates only on the major problems it can create distance.

The problem is that we need to bring people close to the problem. Radio can do other things to supplement the message from television, but radio has its own special problems. In Costa Rica for example, the people who direct the very popular call-in programmes are ignorant of the environment themselves and are unable to give their audiences any guidance on the subject.

Vargas: Much has been said about Khian Sea and its voyage. Why don't we also make the same outcry when ships load timber from the rain-forests to go to other countries. The twist we should give our efforts should be a combination at world level of forbidding the purchase of certain goods and at the same time creating solutions beside the creation of awareness.

Jamie Hartzell: I got the impression that German despaired of radio and TV and had decided to go it alone. Perhaps you should look at the possibility of developing material for all media.

Vargas: I organised a meeting about the destruction of the rain-forest for the Costa Rican media - radio, press and television. it was shocking for me to discover that all the television journalists invited said that cutting 500 acres of rain-forest is not news.

Sol: We may have to educate a lot of our television and and radio station managers.

Recommendations for action

After consultation among participants, the seminar made a number of recommendations for action.

Project for CARICOM Secretariat

CARIMAC and CAMWORK¹ should be asked to discuss media liaison activities for the CARICOM task force on the Environment for the post-UNCED process, perhaps coordinated by the CARICOM participants along with representatives - persons or institutions - of the regional media.

Project for the Caribbean Broadcasting Union

The CBU should be advised of the need to develop exchange programmes of material and production with environmental groups in the Caribbean and Central America. Explore media networking.

Projects for CARIMAC

1. To use 'extra funding' to publish the first issue of an Environmental journal for the Caribbean media.
2. A video series on the Environment, perhaps funded by CARIMAC, UNEP and the Caribbean Conservation Association.
3. To propose to the CBU, TVE and UNEP a co-production to take regional advantage of the Venezuelan experience.
4. Suggest to the CCA an annual award in conjunction with the CBU and CPBA2 for environmental journalism
5. CARIMAC to focus on multi-media workshops and productions involving young people from the Wider Caribbean.
6. To prepare a regional seminar on the legal aspects of the Environment in conjunction with regional professional organisations.

1 Caribbean Association of Media Workers.

2 Caribbean Publishers and Broadcasters Association.

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Ronald B. Abraham
Managing Director
Marpin Television Co. Ltd.
P.O. Box 382, Roseau
Dominica
Tel: 8094484107
Fax: 8094482965

Mr. Stetson Babb,
Acting Director, News & Current Aff-airs
Caribbean Broadcasting Company
P.O.Box 900, Bridgetown
Barbados
Tel: 8094292045
Fax: 8094294795

Mr. Hylton Braveboy
Government Television Unit
Information Division, Office of the Prime Minister
13/15 St. Clair Avenue, Port of Spain
Tfinidad
Tel: 809 622 1131

Mr. Guno Cooman
ATV Telesur,
P.O. Box 1839
Heilengenweg, Paramaribo
Surinam
Tel: 597420 098
Tel: 597479 260

Mrs. Cheryl-Ann Faessler
Ministry of Communications & Transport
Grand Turk
Turks & Caicos Is
Tel: 809 946 2180
Fax: 809 946 1120

Mr. Stewart Krohn,
Managing Director
Great Belize Productions
P.O.Box 679
17 Regent Street, Belize City
Belize
Tel: 50127 3146
Fax: 50127 4936

Mrs. Claudette Manchester
General Manager
ZIZ Radio & Television
P.O.Box 331
Springfield, Basseterre
St Kitts/Nevis
Tel: 809 4652521
Fax: 809 4655202

Mr. Alejandro Parisca
Manager
Production & Programming
Radio Caracas Television
Caracas
Venezuela
Tel:: 58241 5834
Fax: 58241 5834

Mr. Claude Robinson
Director General
Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation
5, South Odeon Avenue
Kingston 10
Jamaica
Tel: 809 926 5620
Fax: 809 929 1029

Mr. Miguel Schiebel
Director General
Sistema Nacional de Television/Canal 6
P.O.Box 1505
Managua
Nicaragua
Tel: 504266 0118
Fax 504266 6533

Mr. Ricardo Sol,
Director de programmacion
Canal 2
Apdo. 459-1150
La Uruca
San José
Costa Rica
Tel: 50631 2222
Fax 50631 0791

Mr. Dave Looby
Director General
ABS Radio/Television
Ministry of Information
Cross Street, St John's
Antigua
Tel: 809 962 0080
Fax: 809 462 4442

Mr. Enrico Woolford
Manager
GTV
Homestretch Avenue
Georgetown
Guyana
Tel: 592262 252
Fax: 592253 047

Resource Persons

Mr. Byron Blake
Director
Economics and Industry, CARICOM Secretariat
Bank of Guyana Building,
Georgetown Guyana
Tel: 59 226 7952
Fax: 59 225 7341

Mr. Franklin MacDonald
Executive Director
Natural Resources Conservation Authority
531/2 Molyneux Road
Kingston 10
Jamaica
Tel: 809 923 5155
Fax: 809 923 5070

Mr. Jamie Hartzell
Director
TVE International
Television Trust for the Environment
46 Charlotte Street
London
England W1 PI IX
Tel: 44 637 4602
Fax: 44 580 7780

Mr. Calvin Howell
Director
Caribbean Conservation Association
Savannah Lodge
The Garrison
St. Michael,
Barbados
Tel: 8094269635
Fax: 8094298483

Mr. Roderik Sanatan
Head
Communications Unit
CARICOM Secretariat
Bank of Guyana Building
Georgetown
Guyana
Tel: 592257758
Fax: 592267816

Dr. Peter Bacon
Senior Lecturer
Department of Zoology
University of the West Indies Mona,
Kingston 7
Jamaica
Tel: 809 927 1202
Fax: 809 977 1033

Hon. Don Mills
11 Lady Kay Drive
Kingston 8
Jamaica
Tel: 809 925 6870
Fax: 809 925 6870

Mr. German Vargas
Programa de Educacion Ambiental por Radio
CENADI - Ministry of Education
San Jose
Costa Rica
Tel: 506553421
Fax: 506553421

Coordinator
Dr. Marjan de Bruin
Senior Lecturer
Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication
University of the West Indies, Mona
Kingston 7
Jamaica
Tel: 809 977 0898
Fax: 809 927 5353

Rapporteur
Mr. John Maxwell
MAMNFORM
P.O.Box 762
Kingston 8
Jamaica
Tel: 809927 7888
Fax: 809927 5353