

THE
CLIMATE
CONSCIOUS

PODCAST



Caribbean Women
FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
IN CELEBRATION OF

Earth Day

21ST-24TH APRIL, 2022

CONFERENCE REPORT

Organised by:
The Climate Conscious Podcast & The Breadfruit Collective

With the support of Open Society Foundations

Written by:
Derval Barzey
Christine Samwaroo
Afeefa Richardson
Iyana Alleyne

Published June 2022

Acknowledgement

The Caribbean Women for Climate Justice (CW4CJ) team we would like to express deep gratitude to the Open Society Foundations (OSF) for providing us with a grant that helped to make the conference a success. We are grateful for the thirty-four (34) community co-sponsors who continue to do justice work throughout the Caribbean and the diaspora and supported our event by sharing within their networks. We are indebted to our panellists, moderators and poets for sharing their voices. Thank you to everyone who showed up and participated in the conference. We are happy that you all felt comfortable in the space and we are grateful for your perspectives and experiences.

Table of Contents

Message from The Climate Conscious Podcast.....	5
Message from The Breadfruit Collective.....	6
Executive Summary	7
Event Proceedings.....	10
Day One – April 21 st , 2022	10
Conference Opening	10
Panel 1: Human Rights and Climate Justice.....	11
Day Two – April 22 nd , 2022	20
Keynote Address.....	20
Panel 2: Invest in our Women, Invest in our Planet	22
Day Three – April 23 rd , 2022.....	26
Panel 3: Climate Resilient Communities and Economies.....	26
Film Screening	34
Panel 4: Planning for a Just Future	34
Day Four – April 24 th , 2022.....	40
Children and the Environment.....	40
Film Screening	43
Networking	43
Wellness Session.....	43
Closing Ceremony	44
Annex	46
Community Co-sponsors	46
Biographies	48

Message from The Climate Conscious Podcast

Two years ago on Earth Day 2020, The Climate Conscious Podcast was launched as an independent project for communication and advocacy on issues of climate change and environmental sustainability. Specifically, it set out to amplify Caribbean voices and perspectives on climate action and sustainable development. I had observed that the global climate conversation was dominated by the developed nations while the lived experience of small and developing territories was not being highlighted very much in the mainstream. And so, I set out to change this. On The Climate Conscious Podcast, we think globally but we always bring it home. We've explored a wide range of topics on the podcast, from energy to fashion. But today, we place the spotlight on gender and climate.

Why Caribbean women for climate justice? Well, our best efforts towards achieving sustainable development and improving the region's capacity to withstand natural hazards and climate impacts will all be in vain if they do not prioritize equality. We know that the climate crisis amplifies existing inequalities. Simply put, our women and girls are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis.

One of the main objectives for hosting the Caribbean Women for Climate Justice Conference is to initiate a regional alliance of partners and key actors for climate and gender justice; establishing a solid network for collaboration and also for influencing public policies and actions. We hope that beyond the conference you will continue to partner with us as we create a database of stakeholders who are working on issues of climate change and gender in the region.

The heartbeat of the Caribbean is its people – vibrant, creative, resilient. I am so inspired by the cohort of brilliant and dynamic speakers who have answered the call to address this issue. Through partnerships we unlock the potential of the region. I am grateful to Christine, Afeefa, and Iyana, of The Breadfruit Collective for believing in this vision. I can't thank them enough for their commitment and hard work. I am extremely thankful to the Open Society Foundations for graciously sponsoring this event.

What would the Caribbean look like if the needs of our women and girls are taken into consideration? That's the question we've come together to explore and find a pathway to this goal. By the end of this conference, we hope to have a clear idea and clear strategies for advancing gender equality and climate justice in the Caribbean.

Today we commence our exploration looking at human rights and climate justice as all our problems stem from systemic oppression, injustices, and the exploitation of people and resources. We hope to dismantle this model of development in favour of one that is equitable, sustainable, and resilient. Our people and our planet depend on it. I wish you an early Happy Earth Day and a fruitful conference.

*Derval Barzey
Founder & Host*



Message from The Breadfruit Collective

Hello Friends, and Happy Earth Month! What a beautiful way to celebrate with my fellow Caribbean climate advocates who do this work every day. It brings me much happiness knowing this is the outcome of what can happen when four young Caribbean girls come together with determination. Thank you for supporting us.

I am Christine Samwaroo, Founder of The Breadfruit Collective, an emerging NGO in Guyana that aims to take a whole of society approach in addressing the intersections of gender and environmental justice. The climate crisis is not gender neutral and therefore we must use a feminist framework. The violence that has been and continues to be done against us and the Earth are interconnected.

I fell in love with the Earth through gardening with my grandmother and I became a gender activist by protesting against domestic violence again with my grandmother. During the planning process of this conference, my grandma passed away. I remember coming home from her wake and having two tabs open on my computer, one with the funeral program I was helping my family create and the other, the conference invitation letter that I was editing to be sent out.

I say this because environmentalism is not new to the people in the Caribbean. And it is time we tap into our own ancestral wisdom. I stand on the many sacrifices of the women before me, who came and cared for the land, who lived within their means. And now I am privileged to be a part of the climate justice movement. With this, comes the duty to mentor and be of service to those younger than me. This is an intergenerational movement. One of justice. One, that is not fair. But Caribbean people, especially Caribbean women are resilient like the breadfruit tree. They overcome. They have solutions.

This conference means so much. We are creating our own space, forging solutions and supporting each other along the way.



The climate crisis is one I think about every day. I stay hopeful because even on a damaged planet, she provides and supports everyone I love. I am hopeful because this is what can happen when four Caribbean women come together. I know the next three days will be filled with wisdom, solutions, and inspiration. We have already been taking actions, just look at our speakers and community co-sponsors. This crisis means everything. It's the fight of my generation and I am committed to it and I am grateful to be in community with people who are also committed to it.

Christine Samwaroo
Founder & Managing Director

Executive Summary

The Caribbean has been defined as one of the most vulnerable regions to global climate change. With relatively small populations and economies, Caribbean nations make negligible contributions toward carbon emissions but continue to experience debilitating impacts. Hurricanes, sea level rise, droughts and flooding continue to weaken the region's economies and threaten the quality of life of its citizens, a clear example of climate injustice.

Climate impacts amplify existing inequalities at every level. The disparity in distribution of impacts relative to emissions contribution is observable between the Global North and the Global South. Within developing and emerging countries exist less conspicuous disparities that are being exacerbated by climate impacts.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an added burden. Already struggling to address issues of social injustices including gender inequality, weak infrastructures and recovery from recent disasters, the pandemic brought to light the clear vulnerabilities that these countries face.

Gender inequality continues to be a major concern in the Caribbean. Particularly, women and girls remain highly susceptible to gender-based violence and socio-economic imbalances. Data shows that gender inequality is intensified by climate related issues. Understanding the unique disadvantages that women and girls face as a result of climate change in the Caribbean, it is therefore important to centre their voices in all key decisions and policies. Adapting to climate change is paramount for the region and it is extremely important that all adaptation measures use a gender responsive lens.

It is in this context that the inaugural Caribbean Women for Climate Justice conference was hosted from April 21- 24th, 2022. The conference aimed to lead with a Caribbean focused lens by highlighting issues faced in the Caribbean by its own people using an intersectional framework. The event was hosted virtually and had over two hundred and fifty (250) registrants from over twenty-one (21) countries.

Panellists were invited to discuss issues critical to the overarching theme, share ongoing work related to climate justice, and identify recommendations or corrective actions for advancing gender-sensitive climate action. Emphasis was placed on including representation from Indigenous peoples, women, and youth in each panel. The conference brought together key stakeholders from across the Caribbean and diaspora to discuss the intersection of environment, gender and climate in the Caribbean. Throughout the conference, strategies, best practices, solutions and policy positions were proposed.

Four panels were executed:

The first was centred on '**Human Rights and Climate Justice**'. The panel explored the connection between climate justice and all other forms of injustice. It was noted that even Indigenous communities that utilise sustainable practices are feeling the effects of food insecurity and other

climate related disasters. Panellists noted how urgent the crisis is and that voicing their concerns does not mean that they are anti-development. They highlighted that development does not only mean buildings and roads. It is also important to think of the needs and services to citizens. Development must be informed and citizens must be allowed to speak up. It must not be imposed on communities. Development plans must think of the impacts seven generations down and not the only for the five-year election cycle. Furthermore, sustainability talks at the top must mirror what is happening on the ground. It is necessary to centre wellness, free migration between countries especially as a result of climate impacts. There must be greater investment in human, in renewable energy, and the way we deal with violence. The Caribbean of the future is where people of the Caribbean are celebrated, and our ecological and cultural heritage are safeguarded.

The second panel took place on Earth Day under the theme ‘**Invest in our Women, Invest in our Planet**’. It discussed and expanded on the Earth Day theme with a focus on investing in women. Some of the recommendations that came out included understanding the misconception of doing gender work; it is not easy and it deserves funding. Investing in women calls for transformation within our education systems, critical thinking and decolonization. It means investing and allowing a fair deal for everyone involved. With this kind of work it is necessary to set up a Climate Feminist Fund.

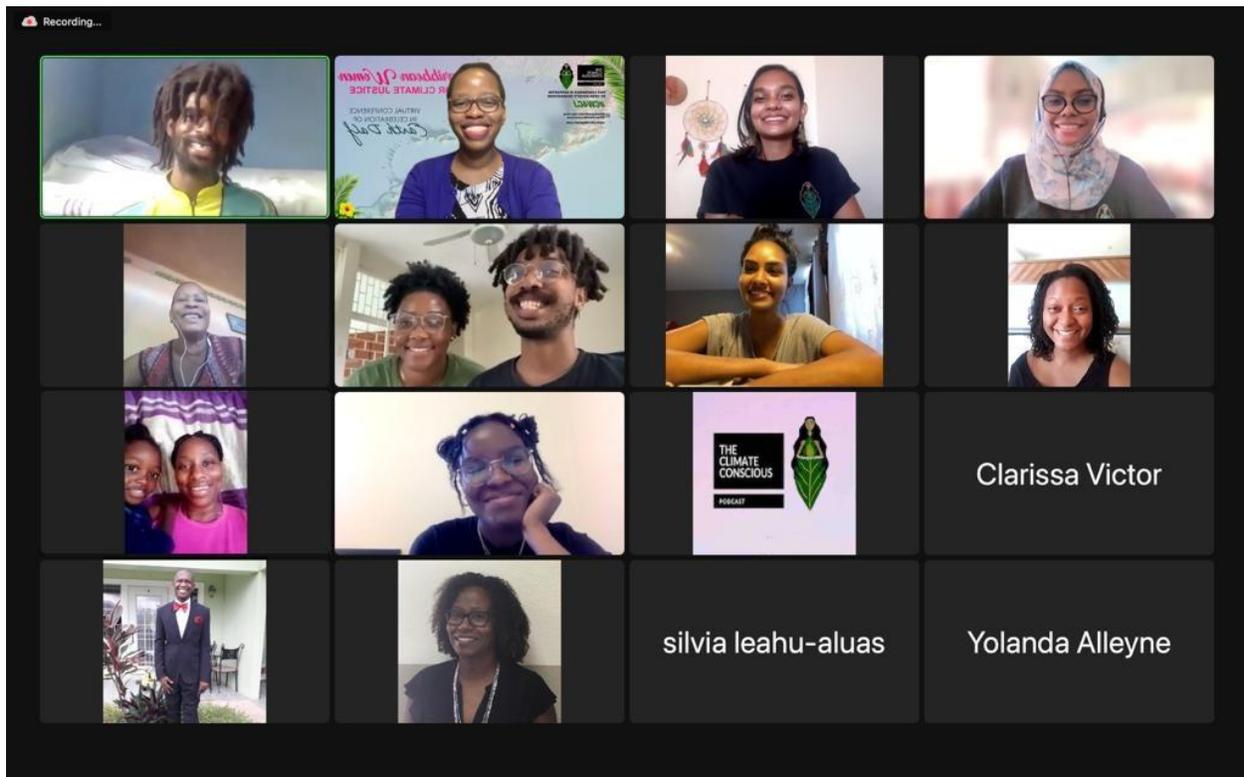
The third panel, ‘**Climate Resilient Communities and Economies**’, examined the relationship between various sectors within the Caribbean and climate change. The sectors examined were the Church, tourism, carnival and construction. From the discussions it was apparent that every sector both contributes to and is impacted by climate change. Given that the church plays an important role in our society, it is well placed to assist with building resilience to natural hazards and climate change, providing information, and other social services, and serving as disaster relief shelters. Tourism is a significant economic driver in the Caribbean. It was noted that more destinations are taking sustainable approaches and involving and empowering local communities, including women and youth. Including women enhances the tourism product. Diverse perspectives must be at the table. In the area of construction, it is time we started designing with nature instead of trying to close off our buildings from nature. We need to build smarter, utilising technology and digital tools if we are to be resilient. As a region when it comes to climate change impacts, we cannot over-prepare.

Lastly, the fourth panel, ‘**Planning for a Just Future**’, noted that we need to lead from the community level. Gender equality is much more than ticking a box. It is necessary to think about people’s lived experience, recognising that women are not a homogenous group. We must think about women who are disabled, queer, urban, rural, migrant, and from different classes. The panellists noted that although progress has been there is still so much more work to be done. Plans and policies need to be adaptable and flexible by knowing what our community needs. Areas of focus for building resilience should include education, health, home assistance, mental health. It was agreed that there are already enough policies but what is needed are resources on the ground, directed to where it matters most.

The conversation around having Caribbean voices in the Climate Justice space was echoed throughout. The idea of forming a regional alliance of key actors who are involved in policy, research, advocacy, and activism relevant to environment, gender and climate justice in the Caribbean was discussed as a possible next step.

Through research, the CW4CJ team learned of two groups working on climate justice in the Caribbean. The team engaged in conversation with both the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and the Caribbean Climate Justice Group. Both groups were welcoming and encouraged the CW4CJ team to collaborate, become involved in the regional dialogue, and contribute.

The inaugural CW4CJ opened a space for much needed dialogue on key issues around gender and climate justice. Based on the output of the conference and discussions that followed, this is the start of many engagements to follow.



Event Proceedings

Day One – April 21st, 2022

Conference Opening

Derval Barzey, Founder and Host of The Climate Conscious Podcast, opened the inaugural Caribbean Women for Climate Justice Conference. Together with Christine Samwaroo, Founder and Managing Director of The Breadfruit Collective, she welcomed everyone and noted how happy and pleased they were to be celebrating Earth Day 2022 in this way. Christine expressed gratitude on behalf of the coordinating team to Open Society Foundations for their kind sponsorship of the conference. She also thanked the many community co-sponsors from across the region and diaspora for their support in sharing the event.

Further opening remarks were delivered by Derval. She reflected on the beginning and story behind The Climate Conscious Podcast, noting that Earth Day coincides with its second anniversary. Having noticed that there is a lack of representation from Small Island Caribbean States in the global conversation, she created the podcast as a way to bridge that gap through amplifying Caribbean voices and perspectives on climate change and sustainable development. In her remarks, Derval noted that the climate crisis exacerbates existing inequalities, especially for women and girls. She highlighted that the conference aimed to find ways to address this and advance gender and climate justice in the region. She believes that through partnerships we can unlock the potential of the region and dismantle oppressive and unjust frameworks in favour of more equitable ones.¹

This was followed by further opening remarks from Christine. Christine shared her own story of becoming involved with gender and environmental work through her late grandmother. She noted that environmentalism is not new to the Caribbean and therefore, it is important to acknowledge the women who came before us, who did environmental and gender work, and who set the stage for us. She stated that the climate crisis is not gender neutral and therefore we must use a feminist framework to address it. Violence against women and the environment are interconnected. Christine stated that this work is an inter-generational movement and that the next few days will be fruitful. She mentioned that the current crisis means everything, it is the fight of her generation. She ended by sharing how grateful she was to be in community with people who are also committed to the work.²

After these remarks, the conference was officially declared open and the next segment of the evening was introduced.

¹ Read Derval's full message on page 5

² Read Christine's full message on page 6

Panel 1: Human Rights and Climate Justice

Caribbean countries have contributed minimally to global emissions of carbon dioxide, yet we are disproportionately affected by the warming climate. We are already experiencing effects, such as large-scale destruction of already fragile ecosystems and loss of livelihoods, resulting in climate refugees. However, the region is at a crossroad with countries like Guyana and Suriname whose intact forests are important carbon sinks but they continue to develop their oil and gas sectors, despite their ability to invest in large-scale renewables (solar, wind, hydro, etc.).

Harm done to the planet and its most marginalised people can be traced back to capitalism. Today, the effects of climate change are more pressing than ever. This is not an issue to be addressed in the future. It is time that people and the planet are centred in all of our development to prevent the replication of cycles that continue to harm us.

Objectives:

- Understand the linkages between climate impacts and human rights, women's rights, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Highlight the current extractive industries and their effects on future development within Caribbean countries
- Explore historical linkages to capitalism and enslavement, indentureship, genocide and the rise of climate change

Panellists:

- Immaculata Casimero, Indigenous and Human Rights Activist (Guyana)
- Sapphire Alexander, Youth Representative and Founder of Caribbean Feminist (Trinidad & Tobago)
- Rueanna Haynes, International Climate Law and Governance Specialist (Trinidad & Tobago)
- Sherlina Nageer, Human Rights Activist and Eco-Feminist (Guyana)

Moderator:

- Malene Alleyne, Human Rights Lawyer and Founder of Freedom Imaginaries (Jamaica)

Discussion:

Malene introduced herself and expressed gratitude for the invitation to be part of this landmark conference. She provided a brief background on the discussion, indicating the theme of the panel and highlighting that the discussion will focus on women's rights, human rights and Indigenous rights in the context of the climate crisis. She stated that climate change represents the foremost

threat to the representation of human rights today. The climate crisis is the logical consequence of a racial capitalist system built on ecocide and Indigenous dispossession. Climate change has devastating impacts on marginalised communities, including women. Women who experience intersecting forms of insubordination are even more vulnerable.

Malene introduced the panellists by sharing a brief biography of each person. She then invited each panellist to share about the work they are currently involved in and their perspectives on how human rights tie into environmental issues and climate justice, especially within their individual countries.

Sherlina responded first, indicating that she lives in Guyana and her academic training is in public health. Much of her work is focused around wellness, empowerment, and looking at various issues in an interdisciplinary way through a public health lens. Sherlina noted that while everything is connected, our work tends to get stuck in silos. Therefore, in all areas of her work (whether it relates to sexual and reproductive rights, gender-based violence, safe abortions, or animal rights) she focuses on connecting people and organisations. She is also involved in grassroots organising and policy change.

Sherlina stated that humans have been separated from the natural environment for a long time. As a result, we are now viewing the environment as something separate from us and this is part of the problem. She noted that this is part of the extractivist, capitalist model of our society which began by extracting humans from the natural environment. Her work involves dialogue with people to encourage them to share their experiences and helping them to understand that violence in all forms, whether economic violence or gender-based violence, is linked to the practices of how we treat the environment. These conversations focus on how people interact with each other and the environment but also recognising that the environment has rights too. We cannot talk about human rights and not talk about the environment. The same lens of justice and equity that we apply to people can also be applied to the environment. She stated that the environment is not just a resource for us to use. It is a necessary part of our lives and should be respected.

Immaculata spoke next and expressed her pleasure in being part of the discussion. She is a mother of four and belongs to the Wapichan nation. Immaculata currently works with the South Rupununi District Council (SRDC) and her job entails communication and having grounded information from leaders on a daily basis. She also works to educate Indigenous women so that they are well informed about climate change and its impact on their communities and feel comfortable sharing the knowledge with others. Immaculata noted that she recently participated in a women's conference which brought together almost ninety Indigenous women to learn about the impacts of climate change. From the conference, it was highlighted that Indigenous women are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity as a direct result of climate change. At the conference, Immaculata helped to educate women about new terminologies and ideas such as nature-based solutions and protecting biodiversity through sustainable actions. She noted that Indigenous people/women are the founders of nature-based solutions. They live in areas which are carbon sinks and so it is important for them to protect it. Immaculata highlighted that the SRDC has been working at the

grassroots level to conduct environmental monitoring, advocacy, and engage with the government to ensure their communities are protected.

Immaculata stated that, for her, centering human rights means valuing the environment over profits and that any development or industry (whether mining, oil and gas, or other) must be compatible with human rights. It also means informing people about their rights and allowing community engagement, especially for proposed activities on Indigenous lands. There must be an opportunity for input and protest when projects happen without consultation. Centering human rights means prioritising the rights of people over the interest of companies. It means being a global citizen and recognising that our actions have a ripple effect on the world as a whole. Immaculata noted that the climate crisis is inescapably global. Even though it originates outside of her Wapichan community, they are still affected and they still have a responsibility to help mitigate the crisis.

Sapphire joined the discussion, highlighting that she is a youth activist from Trinidad and Tobago. Her work centres around women's rights and feminism. She noted that her understanding of the climate crisis and climate justice is mainly through a feminist lens. There are no human rights without environmental justice. She stated that our basic human rights, such as access to food, water and safety are directly threatened by the climate crisis. From a feminist perspective, women and girls face the worse impacts of the climate crisis. They are the ones on the frontlines and are most at risk when disasters strike.

Rueanna spoke next, sharing her perspective from her work at the policy level, both regionally and internationally. She expressed agreement with the point highlighted by Sherlina on the need to make connections. Rueanna added that we need to make links between what regional governments are saying and what is happening internationally. Our countries cannot be left behind in the just transition. There is no just transition possible at the domestic level without corresponding action at the international level. She explained that our countries are on the fringes of the global economic playing field. They do not make the rules of the inhumane, capitalist system we are all part of. In a context where the leaders of the G20 and most economically powerful countries make decisions about whether or not they will continue subsidizing coal versus renewable energy, it is quite a task for our leaders to make a case that those decisions are having an impact on the daily lives of people in the Caribbean. At the international level, it is often a game of whose life is worth more. Larger countries use their population size to make a case for the need to continue development, which is usually a case for maintaining their practices of polluting. Rueanna emphasised that negotiations at the international level are very complex but human rights are always at the centre. It is the most powerful basis for action and the most powerful rallying cry. The linkages between human rights and climate justice form the backbone of her work at the regional and global level. She stated that our governments have much more work to do in responding to the crisis but even more to inform and educate.

Rueanna noted that she currently works with Climate Analytics Caribbean, a newly established office, where they seek to build the capacity of civil society organisations. Through their work they hope to clearly define what is meant by climate justice and understand what it means from a Caribbean lens so that this can then be taken to discussions at the international level.

Malene noted that it was interesting to learn about the negotiations at the international level and how countries try to maintain their polluting practices. She alluded to the Caribbean context where countries, such as Guyana, choose to embark on oil and gas development despite there being scientific consensus that fossil fuels are fuelling the climate crisis. When questioned, our governments respond by saying they have a right to development as well. There often seems to be a view that there is a trade-off between development and the health and well-being of people. Malene posed the following question to the panellists: what is development and how do we define development?

Sherlina noted that Guyana is a great example of what not to do. The trade-off of human development coming at the cost of the environment is the current reality in Guyana with the oil wealth being touted as our right to development and that we need it to catch up to the developed world. She indicated that in her work, through conversations, she tries to get people to think beyond the short-term benefits. What kind of world do we want to leave for the next generation? We need to think about the decisions we make and how they will affect us and the lives of the generations after us. She stated that not all development is good development. Development is more than a large bank account. Development should not just be short term but we need to think seven generations down the line.

Immaculata added that when we think about development everyone thinks it's about having good infrastructure (roads, building, etc.) but having proper services is not considered. For example, you may have a new hospital but lack staff and necessary medications. We all want development but development must be multi-faceted.

Development also brings destruction. Immaculata re-emphasised Sherlina's earlier point that humans are disconnected from nature. For us, everything is about money. We prioritise financial gains over the environment. All the development in the world won't save us if we follow an extractivist, western model of development. We are destroying the foundation of Mother Earth and we will bear the consequences of those actions. Nature must be in our minds when we think about development.

Malene agreed, noting that Indigenous knowledge can teach us a lot about what development should look like. We can learn a lot by including Indigenous peoples in our discussions and decision-making processes. She indicated that free, prior, and informed consent is a requirement in international law which mandates consultations with Indigenous communities for projects on ancestral lands. Malene asked Immaculata to share her experience with this process in her community.

Immaculata stated that in her territory, developmental plans are being made without proper consultation. Decisions are being made at the national level without any process of free, prior, and informed consent. Immaculata noted that development is being imposed upon the Indigenous communities. Currently, gold mining has been approved in the Marudi Mountain area but they are unable to receive a copy of the agreement between the company and the government. There needs to be effective community participation because the lives of people will be impacted. The

Wapichan people are working to protect the headwaters of the main rivers which flow through their communities. If mining continues in the current way it is done, five rivers will become polluted and this will affect more than just the Wapichan people but other Indigenous communities who utilise these resources as well.

Responding to the question on how we define development, Sapphire noted that as humans we tend to think about what can benefit us in the now instead of what will benefit future generations. As a youth she is very concerned about the type of world her children and children's children will have to live in; whether the Caribbean will even exist in the future. Sapphire agreed with Sherlina and Immaculata, pointing out that we tend to have a very Eurocentric approach to development, where we think that development must include physical infrastructure. This often leads to environmental degradation. She expressed that it is chilling to see the Caribbean invest so much into oil and gas while scientists in the global north are protesting for the end of fossil fuel investment. Fossil fuel investments take finances and human resources away from other sectors, such as agriculture and education, where they are most needed. Sapphire noted, "this does not make me very optimistic about the future."

Malene invited Rueanna to share her thoughts on the question of development from an international perspective. She noted that there seems to be a disconnect at the national level between what development should be versus how it actually is executed on the group, at the community level. How does this compare to discussions at the international stage?

Rueanna agreed that there is a massive disconnect between what is discussed and what is implemented. At the international level, regional leaders talk about sustainable development and integration of environment and social concerns into economic development. There are frameworks in place at the policy level. However, at the domestic level, it seems as though lip-service is being paid to the issue of sustainable development. Rueanna noted that one of the main reasons behind this is that many of our leaders can't see beyond a five-year horizon. They tend to set priorities based on what will guarantee their re-election.

Another reason, she highlighted, is the lack of education and understanding among citizens. Rueanna believes that we get the leaders we deserve. Leaders continue to be re-elected even though they do not prioritise the rights of the people. We therefore need to question what is happening in the minds of the majority that they are okay with a short-term vision for a lopsided type of development. This is a pressing concern. Rueanna noted that in order to change our understanding of development it must happen first at the community level. Even with civil society pressure it is difficult to see how governments will change their unsustainable practices if people's mindsets are not changed because it is the people that will re-elect them.

Continuing the discussion, Malene then posed an audience question from Silvia Leahu-Aluas. How viable would the Costa Rica model of economic development balanced with nature protection be for the Caribbean? Is there a particular country that you consider as a model for human rights and climate justice?

Sherlina responded, highlighting Belize as an example of a country which has oil reserves but was able to prevent this from being extracted through years of community engagement. Belize has centered blue tourism to preserve their waters, coral reefs and other ocean ecosystems, while still receiving economic benefits. She noted this as an example of what can happen when people mobilise together.

Sapphire added that Costa Rica is a great example of change being driven at the community level which ties in to the point made by Rueanna. She noted that the Costa Rica model was a combination of government innovation and a community which valued environmental justice and sustainable environmental practices. They chose to centre environmental protection over oil and gas exploration because the country as a whole understood the importance and value in doing this. Sapphire noted that the Costa Rica model of development will only work in the Caribbean if there is a transformation in societal thinking.

Malene agreed with the points raised and shared another audience question from Janelle Christian, directed to Rueanna in relation to her new role at Climate Analytics Caribbean. Janelle noted that often little or no opportunity is provided to civil society organisations and in particular Indigenous people from Guyana and the region to make a (independent) contribution at the international level. She enquired what support is available or will be provided to build capacity to have a strong regional collective in this regard.

Rueanna responded indicating that she transitioned from working at the international level to the regional level to specifically support addressing this. She noted that currently a lot of resources are not available but this is expected to improve. She encouraged persons who are interested in supporting this work (building capacity for a regional collective on climate justice) to reach out to her to be included in the discussions. It is important for us to create a space where we can learn from each other and collectively hold one voice to call for actions from our government and at the international level.

The discussion continued with an audience question from Sydelle Felicien. Do you believe that because the Caribbean has a lack of their own institutions, in that most of our institutions have been influenced by European standards, that we need to fit what we believe ‘development’ is to meet their standards, leading to the difficulties in the realm of climate change and sustainable development?

Malene shared her perspectives, re-emphasising that the climate crisis is rooted in a racial capitalist world order. These systems and practices were developed by our former colonizers, and therefore the forms of development created by these systems invariably lead to the subordination of people from formerly colonized nations and racialized communities. Climate justice, she added, must include the transformation of institutions, how we think about decision-making processes, and the transformation of forms of governance, which are still neo-colonial and colonial forms of governance which exclude Indigenous and marginalised communities.

Rueanna agreed with Malene and shared an example of how this works in practice. She explained that in order for countries to access funding from global donors, such as the Green Climate Fund, for an adaptation type programme which is usually rooted in development, they would need to provide a climate rationale for the project. In order to provide this, a country would need to have collected scientific data for the past thirty years or more and be conducting a large amount of analysis. As small island developing countries, who are already financially constrained, this is extremely difficult to fulfil. Discussions are now happening around the possibility of using Indigenous knowledge and lived experiences in place of the Eurocentric ideals around scientific data. Rueanna noted that this discussion is in its beginning phase and it is something that would be valuable for civil society to push for as it influences the ability of organisations to access these funds as well.

A question from Mikella Hosein was posed to the panellists. What challenges have you experienced as women advocating for human rights in climate change?

Sherlina indicated that human rights are often viewed as a foreign concept being pushed by organisations from outside the Caribbean region. Similarly, persons view environmental issues as a foreign idea that doesn't affect them and is not a priority for discussion. This has been the main challenge she has faced in her work when trying to have dialogue with people.

Immaculata noted that as an Indigenous activist, the main challenge she faces is being perceived as anti-development when speaking out on issues. The government tries to push their agendas, using politics at the community level and framing it as though this development is necessary for the community instead of actually listening. Immaculata added that it becomes difficult to then educate persons on the impacts and what should be done when the government shares contradictory messages and brands the activists as bad/anti-development.

Malene agreed with the points raised noting that there is a general stigmatisation of persons who raise any concerns about the environment or impacts of projects on their health, branding them as anti-development. She added that women especially are often framed as emotional and told to calm down whenever they raise valid concerns.

Sapphire agreed adding that the stigmatisation of being an 'angry woman' or 'too emotional' is common in the feminist space. Issues brought up by women are put on the back burner in favour of other things which persons deem as more important. She stated that even though gender justice and the climate crisis are intersectional, persons do not give women's issues priority. They deflect specific issues by saying that they need to focus on the wider picture. For example, saying they cannot focus on period poverty because they need to address overall poverty.

The next question was posed by Vidyaratha Kissoon. He enquired whether there were any concerns that the regression on environmental justice is also being connected to a reversal of progress on human rights? He noted that in Guyana gender justice is now on the back burner and the gender institutions are being undermined.

Sherlina responded, noting that this is very concerning. She highlighted that the government ministries are holding exhibitions and other events to promote women empowerment but they are not looking at the wider picture of intersection of women's rights with other issues. She emphasised the need for us, as civil society and citizens, to hold governments accountable and use our voices to ensure that issues are not separated but addressed collectively.

Rueanna agreed that this is very concerning. She alluded to the current invasion happening in Ukraine and the resulting policy response from the European Union and elsewhere. She noted that the European Union prides itself on being environmentally conscious but their first response when the crisis occurred in Ukraine was to double down on investing in oil and gas in other countries instead of investing in renewable energy resources. These issues are all interconnected. In the same way that a regression in one place drags everything else down, when we lift in one area, we lift in other areas as well. Rueanna further gave the example of how the Black Lives Matter protests increased awareness on the intersection of environmental justice and social justice issues and increased dialogue around climate justice.

Building on the discussion on human rights, Malene asked the panellists to share their thoughts on what the Caribbean of the future looks like when it centres human rights.

Immaculata noted that to have a Caribbean which centres human rights we need to first value our environment. It means not putting the environment at stake because as people we depend on the environment for our well-being. It feels like we are compromising human rights for profit. She added that, for her, it means ensuring that the rights of the people are not put at stake. A lot of times the information is kept at the national level while persons on the ground are not aware of what is happening. A Caribbean which centres human rights means providing persons with the necessary information for any type of development that is coming and not compromising the rights of the people.

Sherlina shared that if the Caribbean exists in the future, she hopes that it would be one without cruise ships, one where we would sell food to each other without the need to import from the developed states, where migration is free between our countries. If we are serious about human rights, we need to think about how we support each other, how we travel, how we share our resources, food, and land.

For Sapphire, she hopes that in the Caribbean of the future we would have more emphasis on environmental education. She hopes that we can lean in to ancestral learnings about the unity between people and the environment; place greater investment in human resources, such as social services and general wellness of the population; and place greater emphasis on renewable energy and sustainable development.

Rueanna added that a Caribbean of the future which centres human rights would be one where we don't think that the answer to crime is state violence. She alluded to her country, Trinidad and Tobago, where persons refuse to see the linkages between criminality and socio-economic or

environmental circumstances. She hopes that in a Caribbean which centres human rights we will move away from this.

Malene shared her perspectives, indicating that a Caribbean of the future would be one where the peoples of the Caribbean are celebrated and have space to develop and articulate their own vision of progress and well-being, one where our ecological and cultural heritage are safeguarded and protected. Malene believes that if communities of people who are commonly marginalized are given space to create their own visions of progress, then the human rights of everyone will be protected and preserved.

Wrapping up the discussion, Malene posed the last question to the panellists. What role does hope play in your work?

Immaculata indicated that we need hope in order to incentivize ourselves and others to transform the way we use, consume and think. We need hope to want to make a change. She highlighted that the recent Indigenous women's conference she attended gave her hope that women will be the pioneers of this change. Indigenous women have noticed the change in weather conditions which makes it especially difficult for those dependent on farming. They also noticed the changes in spawning cycles of fishes. Immaculata shared that being part of the conference and hearing the women raise these concerns gives her hope that there is space to discuss adaptation measures and work to mitigate the effects of climate change. It also gives her hope that the Caribbean will collectively experience a similar awakening of their environmental conscience and commit to mitigating climate change.

Sherlina noted that hope is not a word which she uses a lot. She stated that things are already bad and it is going to get worse for a lot of people. We are already feeling the effects. However, what keeps her going is knowing that as long as we are here, we must do whatever we can to make it less bad. As a Caribbean we have weathered so much in this region, from Indigenous genocide to enslavement, and we are still here. There are forces beyond our realm of understanding which do work. Humans do a lot of damage but the earth is resilient.

Rueanna admitted that she could not do the work she does if she did not cling desperately to hope. She added that this work is disheartening but in this specific moment Sapphire gives her hope. She is a young person who understands the issue and is doing what she can within her sphere of influence to advocate, and that is all we have. All we have are the people who believe that while we are here, we do what we can. In the context of the international discussion, all it takes sometimes is to convince one person to shift the limit of possibility.

Sapphire thanked Rueanna for her words and agreed that it can often feel like there is no hope. She highlighted that her generation grew up with that understanding of their future being impacted by climate change, while having to deal with multiple other crises all at once. Despite this, Sapphire noted that hope is at the centre of her activism. At times, hope is all we have. Hope is everything. It is what fuels her work, and it is what fuels her community.

Malene thanked everyone for sharing and noted that it is a powerful and inspiring way to end the discussion on the climate crisis.

A recap of the session was done by Christine followed by closing remarks by Derval which brought the session to an end.

Day Two – April 22nd, 2022

Keynote Address

by Ayesha Constable, Founder of GirlsCARE (Jamaica)

Ayesha noted that she would explore themes such as gender, climate justice and feminist activism in her keynote. She shared some reflections on how she grew up and became interested in this work. She grew up in deep rural Jamaica and often observed the women and the work that they did. The women from her community were often homemakers and farmers. They went to the farms every week day before the sun rose and on Thursday evenings they would go to the market in Kingston and then go straight into preparing the home and working in the church.

Ayesha noted that women are some of the hardest workers but also the poorest. The work is not properly remunerated. This is part of the unfair capitalist system. She reflected on the women and asked how were these women accessing sanitary facilities in spaces that were not providing that? Men can go and pee anywhere but women cannot.

She noted that recognizing the changes in her physical appearance, her interaction with men changed. Ayesha talked about the fun and how her experience of growing up in the country was intimately linked to the environment. However, she noted, when nature was working against us, it affected our sense of safety and what we could do. She became aware of the issues of race and class and underlying issues that define her experience as a young woman.

When she started her education at the University of the West Indies, at Mary Seacole Hall, it was an all-women hall. She worked as a residence leader responsible for programming. Many women expressed concern about their gender due to the social constraints of being a woman. Ayesha noted that here she began to streamline programs for mentorship, and she started climate research as a graduate student. She had an affinity for humanities because she wanted to explore climate science in a new way. This was a way to integrate the things that she was passionate about and build on the lessons learned and make connections; recognizing that her area of service would be in the climate justice and gender justice space.

Ayesha spoke about global engagement and perspectives and shared that countries that want to maintain the world order thrive off of subordination. Everyone may be equally interested in human

rights and equitable futures, however, there are other things at play. There are powers that do not support the agenda of Global South countries.

She reflected on gender and Caribbean history and shared that colonialism and slavery used monoculture agriculture that led to land degradation and water pollution. Only now the IPCC has recognised the effects that colonialism has had on the planet. She also spoke about the labour riots and the rise of labour unions. Ayesha reflected on the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS) which promised economic growth but has left countries in the situation that they now are in and again women are exploited and disadvantaged by these programs.

The keynote also reflected on the connection of COVID-19, Gender and Climate which has revealed the high vulnerabilities of women. Gender norms played a role in shaping the outcomes of COVID-19. One of the reports suggested the pandemic pushed back gender parity by 40 years; another said as much as 100 years. Ayesha shared that if we do not get this right then we are going to get climate change really wrong.

She spoke about GirlsCARE being a place where all of these conversations about the structure of the world can take place. It has connected mentors and mentees from across the Caribbean through building community and openly challenging some of the issues that are shaping our experience of the Caribbean.

Ayesha said that it is necessary to understand those who do not have a platform; the most vulnerable among us. It is necessary to speak about the nuance of experience and the unique history of the Caribbean. It is important to recognize the danger of a single story; we can't speak for everyone. We need to question governmental intentions e.g., some of them throw around "intersectionality" without truly meaning anything by it.

Ayesha noted that young women are the face of climate action in the Caribbean. Oftentimes the ideas of wealth and machismo that men associate with power are not present in this space. Men dismiss this type of work as not compatible. However, women want to know that they are leaving a safe space for children. Groups should pay young women for their work. A feminist future will be one where there is system change and no patriarchal violence. We would need the global and overarching change in our systems to arrive at practical solutions. There must be an understanding of the nuanced differences and create tailor made solutions/ the opposite of SAP. We would need to apply a Black feminist lens to climate change because Black women have been historically excluded but are on the front lines of this fight.

Ayesha highlighted the intersections of the issues, stating that there are many things happening at once. As a result, there is no single response and therefore no single individual will have a solution. All of us must come together to fight. It is necessary to politicize climate change. Young women must continue to show up and do this work and we cannot be afraid to get political. It is important to challenge neo-colonial ideals and she noted that the global north are not our mouth pieces. This work requires saying no to gender washing and green washing. We need to continue to change the

narrative. To collaborate, show up, speak up and to take up as much space as we need. She ended by stating that your expertise is grounded in the fact that you are a woman, and that is enough.

The keynote address was followed by a poem performed by Nikhil Sankar and entitled ‘People’s Power’.

Panel 2: Invest in our Women, Invest in our Planet

Caribbean women and girls face layered impacts of climate change. Caribbean women are confronted with the vulnerability of Small Island Developing States in addition to their lived experience of gender inequality. Gender inequality continues to be a major concern in the Caribbean, with women and girls being highly susceptible to gender-based violence and socio-economic imbalances. Recognising the unique disadvantages faced by women and girls, it is necessary to invest and build their capacities to adapt to and address the impacts of climate change. Despite being marginalised, research shows that programs and projects are more successful when women and girls are involved.

Objectives:

- Outline the gender perspective of climate justice, the challenges, the opportunities and benefits.
- Highlight the work being done in the Caribbean region at the nexus of gender equality and climate action
- Propose recommendations for advancing gender-sensitive climate action in the Caribbean region.

Panellists:

- Leisa Perch, CEO and Founder of SAEDI Consulting Barbados Inc. (Barbados)
- Auro Fraser, Regional Coordinator of Open Society Foundations (Guyana)
- Ashlee Burnett, Founder of Feminitt (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Andrew Campbell, Founder of Ebesowàna Natural Foods (Guyana)
- Alexandria Douziech, Founder of the Center for Plants and Culture (Guyanese Diaspora)

Moderator:

- Daphne Ewing-Chow, Caribbean Journalist and Senior Contributor at Forbes (Barbados)

Discussion:

Daphne opened the discussion and shared how grateful she was to be part of the conversation. She welcomed the panellists by reading each of their biographies and asked them to share about their work.

She welcomed Leisa first. Leisa noted that in her previous role she was involved in the United Nations system and it was always a challenge to get the conversation to centre people. She stated that it was also hard to get organisations to understand the role gender played in their work. She left the United Nations system and decided to create a space for herself, which she refers to as 'Activist Capitalism', through her consultancy group SAEDI. She shared that there is often a misconception that gender is easy. However, she added that we need to break it down into intersectionality and think beyond men and women and more about roles and responsibilities. She noted that this type of work needs funding.

Daphne asked Leisa what it is like to operate a smaller consulting firm as opposed to working in the United Nations.

In response, Leisa noted that as a consultant, the United Nations is one of her biggest clients. Now she is outside of the door as opposed to inside. She works with the World Food Programme and UN Women. Leisa shared that she is excited about bringing new thinking into the work and she gets to be the boss.

Daphne introduced Ashlee and allowed her to share about her work. Ashlee noted that she has been in the world of activism for the past eight years. She uses the arts and spoken word to educate people on gender justice. Through this it became clear to her that she had access to information that is gender transformative and this was the impetus for founding Feminitt. Ashlee explained that one aspect of her current work includes examining the education system to see how it addresses key issues of gender inequality. She believes that to achieve true transformation, we have to transform the education system. It is very important for people to be equipped with the information to make change. She shared that these issues are everyone's business. Ashlee highlighted the current work that Feminitt is involved in, for example, setting up of menstrual care banks. She believes that we have always had the answers to the issues we face right here in the Caribbean.

Daphne then introduced Alexandria and allowed her to share about the work she is currently involved in.

Alexandria noted that this work is very necessary. She stated that her work stems from her familial connection to the plantation system and crop system. Her work was born out of a frustration with existing institutions. She wanted to learn and share the perspectives of the labourers and people who work with land, Indigenous peoples, and people of colour. She noted that it is necessary to highlight the voices of those who have been marginalised in botanical conversations because plants are political. Looking at colonialism and today's unbridled capitalism, plants were/are the driving

force for extraction and corruption. Alexandria noted that she is trying to create a hub by distilling this information and making it accessible. Currently, her organisation – The Center for Plants and Culture - is a virtual space, unbounded by locale, which opens this topic to global conversation. The mission of her organisation is to foster and incite critical thinking. She shared that they are trying to create public programming, such as artist spotlights, workshops, and exhibitions. There is a current exhibition at UCLA, which looks at how inextricably linked botany is with the slavery. She added that she is working towards producing exhibitions that will travel.

Daphne thanked Alexandria and welcomed Andrew into the conversation.

Andrew shared that Mother Earth is critical. If a seed is planted anywhere it will grow but if it is cared for it will thrive. He shared that he was born in an Indigenous community, which is the largest reservation in Guyana, with a population of seventeen thousand Indigenous people from three nations. He noted that the Indigenous nation which he belongs to is commonly referred to as Arawak. However, Arawak is not the name of a people but the name of a food. The name was a result of a misinterpretation by European colonialists.

Andrew shared that growing up in Indigenous community was one of the best experiences. It provided him with an intricate understanding of the environment at a young age. Today, he spends most of his time working in remote locations in the jungle and forests. Andrew noted that some of the key persons that have shaped who he is today are women. He shared that he has worked with young people in the hinterland regions but there are many challenges; such as the lack of health institutions and educational limitations. He explained that persons often have to move to the city in order to advance their studies. Andrew added that he decided to start his own company and found diverse sources of income and provides a fair deal for everyone.

Following this, Daphne welcomed Auro into the conversation.

Auro noted that many of the institutions where he worked previously were not Caribbean centred. He mentioned that he was annoyed at the fact that many of those institutions had a Latin America and Caribbean department that did little for the Caribbean. When he began working at Open Society Foundations, he worked on a new strategy to talk about the Caribbean and highlight the issues experienced by the region. Through that, climate justice emerged as the defining issue for the Caribbean. Auro noted that Open Society Foundations tries to connect actors and find ways to amplify Caribbean voices. He shared that at the international level Caribbean countries and governments are fighting a David and Goliath battle for all of us. It is clear to see the discrepancies in the United States rhetoric at COP. He added that Caribbean civil society groups are not present enough on international stages. Often, the governments are not very helpful in terms of sustainability. Auro shared that Open Society Foundations believes that people should participate in the decisions that affect them. Open Society Foundations is working to fund feminists, Indigenous peoples, and coastal workers.

Daphne asked the panellists to share their thoughts on what investing in our women looks like in the Caribbean.

Leisa shared that we cannot expect things to just stop. There is a domino effect. Part of the investment is in leveraging the experiences of persons who do not get a big platform. She noted that when we say we want to be resilient, we need to acknowledge that women have been resilient for years and we can learn from them. She asked whether we are digging deep in terms of understanding what resilience means. How can we make land safe and accessible? Leisa shared that we need to look at access beyond money; because money is there that does not mean it can be accessed. She stated that we will not fix injustice until we deal with the issues of care work and time poverty

Ayesha joined the conversation and shared that resilience has become a curse word; as though it absolves responsibility to fix things. She added that resilience is dynamic and that women's resilience has been eroded by COVID-19. She noted that investing in women is investing in the whole of society. Women's rights are human rights.

Ashlee mentioned that human and planetary stability are one and the same thing. She noted that the language we use when speaking about the earth influences how we think about our world. She agreed with Leisa's point and indicated that less than 20% of women owned plots of land in Trinidad. She stated that investment without critically supporting women is a major barrier to climate action. Ashlee noted that when we think about education, we don't have adequate climate education. While there are many girls in the education system, it is important to note whether they are being empowered to take action and to really flourish in the agricultural sector.

Daphne agreed and added that the arts are a powerful way to educate persons and share knowledge. She agreed with Ashlee's point on the power of language and alluded to Auro's example of the region being referred to as 'Latin America and the Caribbean' but the Caribbean is often overshadowed by this.

Andrew noted that women have played a critical role throughout the ages in protecting our planet.

Daphne asked the group to reflect and imagine a world where women are empowered. She enquired what that does for activism around the environment and creating change around climate issues.

Auro mentioned that the climate crisis is not just a crisis, it's an opportunity to address structural inequality. He noted that we are talking about bolstering something that needs to be bolstered; it's not new. He shared that we need to give more attention to Caribbean feminists, e.g., through the creation of the Caribbean Feminist Fund.

Alexandria shared that part of where she sees the connections in investment includes an investment in decolonising our education. It is necessary to see yourself represented in history. She shared how rice came to the Americas through the enslaved black women. The Americas oversaw rice cultivation and this is the basis for the wealth in this country. She reflected that enslaved persons were wanted for their intellect. Their minds were exploited. Alexandria shared that Indigenous

women are the backbone of front-line communities, and she asked that we imagine the work they could do if they did not have their hands tied behind their backs.

Ashlee stated that CARICOM underestimates its power.

Leisa also followed and mentioned that we have to redefine regionalism. CARICOM is great but we should not rely on it too much, since it is still a political system. She shared that we don't have to separate ourselves with labels like the private sector, civil society, etc. A lot of work has to be done, but we can begin to redefine it.

Auro noted that Caribbean states and small island developing states have changed the international conversation around climate change. Within the region, solidarity is important. Our countries are small and can face retaliation. It requires sharing and learning that has always been the heart of Caribbean development.

Daphne shared her idea on regional approaches. Through LOOP, where she works, she looked at numbers on engagement with climate related articles and she noted that the numbers are poor. She noted that part of it has to do with the media and the way it is presented. She added that another part of it is that people are not educated enough to understand, and that we do have a far way to go.

Daphne thanked everyone for their contributions and brought the panel discussion to a close.

Derval provided a recap of the discussion, noting the key points highlighted.

The evening ended with a spoken word performance by D'Izrael Billy. Her poem was entitled 'Mother's Revolt'.

Day Three – April 23rd, 2022

Panel 3: Climate Resilient Communities and Economies

The Caribbean region continues to confront increasing climate vulnerability and the impacts of natural hazards. Climate resilience, disaster risk management and sustainable development are common themes that must be addressed holistically in the region.

The Blue, Green and Circular Economy are concepts that aim to work with the natural systems in an effort to achieve sustainable development targets. As we reorient our economic models towards

principles of sustainability, there is the opportunity to ensure that gender equality is situated as a central consideration, as opposed to being an add on.

As the Caribbean develops its various industries, it is important that resiliency and adaptation be centred. Although the Caribbean's contribution to greenhouse gases is negligible relative to developed nations, it is important that as we advance our development, and that we consider the planet and vulnerable and underserved people.

This panel looks at the current need to integrate sustainability, resiliency and gender inclusivity within various industries as we seek to balance the priorities of people, planet and economic activity. How can we make our economies resilient in a climate changing world?

Objectives:

- Outline why a gender-inclusive approach to development and resilience is crucial
- Examine how communities, institutions and economic sectors can promote equitable and sustainable development
- Outline opportunities for improving the socio-economic status of women through sustainable and regenerative economic activities
- Highlight the benefits of gender responsive resilience and recovery strategies

Panellists:

- Le-Anne Roper, Author and Sustainable Development Specialist (Jamaica)
- Marcelle Lawrence, Social Entrepreneur and Founder of Eco-Island Group (Bermuda)
- Danni Mclethie, Founder of Carnicycle (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Alyssa-Amor Gibbons, Architectural Designer (Barbados)

Moderator:

- Derval Barzey, Host of The Climate Conscious Podcast (Trinidad and Tobago)

Discussion:

Derval opened the discussion by introducing each panellist and inviting them to share the linkages between their sector and climate change.

Le-Anne, sharing from her experience authoring *Building Rock-Solid Resilience to Natural Hazards: The Church Edition*, pointed out that it doesn't matter what your sector is, you will be impacted by climate change. The church has an active role to play in responding to or taking action with respect to climate change. She stated that the church in our region is such an important part of our society that they are well placed to render the kind of assistance that is needed when tackling

climate change. Many churches provide social services in the form of disaster shelters and social outreach. Climate change definitely has an impact on how effective the church will be now and in the future.

Derval added that often when we think of the role of the church it is only the spiritual aspect but we can also see how the church can play a critical role in building resilience. She then followed up by asking Le-Ann to share on the role of gender equality in developing resilience.

In response, Le-Anne noted that gender equality is about equal access to resources and opportunities. She explained that when we speak about resilience, we are looking for the kind of equality that allows us to have protection and the knowledge that is needed to take action. Our gender should not prevent us from having access.

In the Caribbean, gender is situated culturally. Using the Church as an example, Le-Anne outlined how leadership roles are primarily held by males in the church with women having more administrative roles. If we are to have any chance of equal access then all voices should be at the table with an equal setting. She stated that different roles become important as we look at resilience. The issue is not just about voices being heard, but also the way they are heard. Decision making processes should be accessible to all, especially those who cannot be available at certain times due to their responsibilities, such as caregivers. Le-Anne added that there are clear examples of how men and women are affected differently by natural disasters. Women are more vulnerable when these events occur; for example, pregnant and breastfeeding persons have different needs than men. She noted that therefore, it is important to integrate gender equality in resilience planning, ensuring that certain segments of society with specific needs also have access to the resources that enable resilience.

Marcelle joined the conversation and acknowledged the impact that tourism has on the climate, contributing 8% of global greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions. She pointed out that people have to fly to get to the Caribbean. As a result of the climate change impact of the tourism industry, more destinations are moving to become more sustainable in their tourism practices. This includes empowering local communities and economies and having a positive impact on the environment. Tourism is dependent on natural assets, for example, beaches with clear water. If these environments are threatened, visitors will be less likely to visit. Marcelle noted that tourism provides thousands of jobs and contributes to the gross domestic product (GDP) of countries. In the case of Bermuda, it contributes 5% of the national GDP. Tourism is one of the most important economic drivers in the Caribbean.

Derval emphasized that it is critical for us to transform our model of tourism to be sustainable. She then asked Marcelle her thoughts on the ways in which gender equality would impact the development of resiliency.

Marcelle shared that she had created a programme that empowers young people to conserve marine resources. Gender equality is about empowering young women so that they have the same opportunities as men. She noted that the marine environment is critical to most Caribbean

countries; key to our cultural identities and livelihoods. It is important that women's voices are amplified and heard, and especially women of colour. She added that their ideas on sustainable development and sustainable tourism are necessary and important and therefore women must be at the table. If not, we fall into the trap of creating solutions without having diverse input. Marcelle noted that sustainable tourism requires unique perspectives of young people, women, and Indigenous people to be included in decision-making.

Derval highlighted the key themes brought out in the discussion so far: Access, Leadership, Culture, Voices, Table. She added that CW4CJ is an example of women building their own table to amplify their voices.

Next, Danii provided an overview of Carnicycle and the concept of Sustainable Carnival. She explained that the aim of Carnicycle is to bridge the gap between Caribbean culture and sustainability. Carnival events produce significant quantities of waste. Carnicycle is the first company to focus on recycling Carnival costumes in the Caribbean. She indicated that they empower people and bring awareness to what sustainability means for Carnival, exploring how Carnival can connect to different sectors to become more sustainable. Danii noted that education influences change.

Danii further explained that Carnicycle focuses on costume recycling and upcycling as well as what sustainable practices can be introduced to Carnival. Carnival involves significant plastic usage and other synthetic materials. Measures to reduce plastic and other waste include: costume recycling, and developing the circular economy for costumes. Most people throw away their costumes after use, making it a linear process, although producing the costumes is a very energy intensive process. She noted that Carnival costumes are considered fast fashion. Carnicycle is making the process circular by incorporating reusable costume features and bringing the production of costumes in-house; recycling the costumes for other carnivals. Danii highlighted that they have collected and recycled over 200 costumes; contributed to 3 dissertations and sold recycled costumes to over 250 people.

On the role of gender equality, Danii reflected on the fact that climate change exacerbates the issues that we are currently facing with inequality. She acknowledged that a lack of resources for women is a big issue for the region. As a solution to the issue of access, Carnicycle redistributes bras from Carnival (used only once) towards vulnerable and low-income women who have no access. She noted that with climate change, access to resources in general is becoming harder e.g., shipping costs. Diversification of economic activities in Trinidad and Tobago by expanding tourism and making carnival more sustainable will ultimately benefit women.

The fourth panellist, Alyssa, highlighted that design and construction contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions; up to 46% according to some datasets. She noted that it is important to ensure that cities and communities have systems in place to become resilient. For example, we are facing more frequent and intense hurricanes, therefore resilience has to be more than just surviving. Being in the built environment has to be about the response to climate change. She explained that we need to think about the infrastructure that we are putting in place and what that will mean for

the future. How are we using a building across its lifetime? Allysa stated that we must ensure that we consider the best way to create efficient infrastructure.

In her view, 'Net zero' is not the best option; as it allows you to use as much energy as you want as long as you make up for it. Instead, she noted, becoming as efficient as possible should be the aim. Every aspect of the building process must be evaluated, down to the paint used. Micro-solutions add up. She indicated that we must build smarter; make use of digital innovation; measuring twice, cutting once. We are fighting for our lives. Allysa noted that our systems must be reoriented and redesigned to be in alignment with our environment.

Derval agreed that we want to thrive, not just survive. She invited Allysa to share her view on gender equality.

Alyssa highlighted that before addressing gender inequality, we need to talk about global injustice. Regarding gender inequality, we need to focus on the disproportionate responsibility that is placed on women. Women in the Caribbean are culturally expected to keep things going. Women have to fill the gaps that keep a household running especially in Brown and Black households. There is a need for more support to be given to women and girls to help with the burden of responsibility placed on them. Alyssa added that we should seek to move past vague terms and put faces and voices to inequality. Also, sustainable development is an opportunity that can be used to create jobs for vulnerable people.

A general discussion followed.

Derval asked Marcelle for her recommendations on creating equitable, inclusive and resilient communities.

Marcelle responded that since everyone is going to be impacted by climate change, everyone should be involved in addressing it. She said that we should be including persons from many different backgrounds in the conversation for decision making and developing solutions, including people of colour, Indigenous people, and young people. She also pointed out that those being impacted the most by climate change, contribute the least.

Derval asked Le-Anne about the lessons that can be learnt from previous climate disasters that have impacted the Caribbean region.

Le-Anne made the point that, firstly, the past is not always going to mirror the future. Things have been devastating in the past but science is telling us things will become even worse in the future. Secondly, an event does not always have to result in a disaster. The disaster happens when there are not enough safeguards in place. A disaster is a disruption in how we are able to function, in our capacity to adapt and cope. When we look at the lessons, the first is that in some instances disasters are not inevitable. Appropriate measures can be taken. She noted that we have examples of the efficacy of early warning systems. Given the projections of stronger events, and increasing intensity we must consider that what may have worked in the past, may not be effective in the future.

Le-Anne encouraged that we must consider how we could prevent or reduce the extent to which it becomes a disaster. It is important to consider what is likely to be inevitable and determine what can be prevented. The second lesson is that we cannot over prepare, having seen a Category 1 storm turn into a Category 5 storm overnight. Thirdly, together we can be stronger and better. She shared that when we are working together and being in community then we are all in a better position to be resilient. Strengthening collective support is important.

In response to Derval's question on how the region can better prepare for climate impacts, Alyssa recommended a dramatic change in our mindsets on how we design and build in the Caribbean. Closing our building off from nature will not serve us well. Global/cold weather type of design is incompatible with our local conditions.

Alyssa explained that the region should be designing smarter, utilising digital tools to understand how our buildings respond to climate impacts, figuring out how to survive hurricanes, through experimentation, iterative design, and 3D simulations to understand which solutions work. We can't play God, but we can figure out how buildings respond to certain weather conditions. She shared that after the abolition of slavery in Barbados, there was no land for the formerly enslaved to buy. Chattel houses came out of this, a need to move to where work was. These houses also had design elements that helped to withstand hurricanes. This design, she noted, is counter-intuitive to 'bracing' for a hurricane, but this might be precisely what we need. We must embrace the wind and let it blow through. We don't need the closed off design elements of the North. We are putting people into space yet we can't figure out how to make sure everyone survives/thrives on this planet. Let's do better!

Derval asked the panel about coming up with Caribbean-centered models of development and design?

Danii pointed out that a sustainable future includes access to technology that makes our lives more convenient without sacrificing the environment.

There was a question from the audience by Ayesha Constable on biblical prescriptions for the division of roles of men and women in the church and possible implications for decision making on climate based on this division.

Le-Anne responded that there are no biblical prescriptions based on gender. The Bible can be viewed as prescriptive and also as providing principles. The Bible has not been prescriptive about gender roles. She states we must also take into account the cultural context of the Bible. We pull on the principles of the Bible. The Bible states clearly that we must do our best to protect those who are vulnerable, as a general prescription. This supports ensuring decision-making processes are responsive to the vulnerable.

Another question came from the audience to Marcelle on the unique experience that a woman may have that should be accounted for in sustainable tourism.

Marcelle responded that sustainable tourism encompasses empowering local communities, sustaining the economy and protecting the environment; being inclusive of women's perspectives in the tourism industry is also key. Women bring unique experiences. In Caribbean communities, women are keepers of culture, folklore, artisans, storytellers. Their involvement in tourism brings a different perspective which the tourists enjoy.

Derval posed another audience question by Silvia Leahu-Aluas to the panel about how we can ensure the equal and just distribution of jobs in climate solutions along gender and socio-economic lines.

Alyssa recommended access to training as key to empowerment, allowing persons to be equipped with the necessary tools. Men feel empowered to apply for things they are not qualified for whereas women might be more reserved if they don't feel one hundred percent confident in their abilities. In comparison, women apply for less things than men if they feel they do not fulfil every requirement.

Le-Anne added the need for a change in mindset as we have preconceived ideas about jobs and roles for women and men. Gender equality in the labour space will create more diversity and balance in the sector.

Danii highlighted that only 3% of engineers are Black women, which is very low. There must be more diversity and inclusion strategies in businesses which will benefit everyone. She noted that the diversity, equity, and inclusion trend is not yet observed in the Caribbean. She stated that there should be a focus on diversifying businesses in terms of race and gender, which will foster more innovation and productivity.

Marcelle also highlighted the lack of diversity in the marine environment especially in Bermuda, and especially for people of colour and women of colour. She has been working to increase the number of young children of colour in the marine space. She expressed that people protect what they love; the hope is to expose and build connections between Black Bermudan children and the marine environment.

There was an audience question on initiatives planned by Carnicycle for Carnival 2023.

Danii shared that Carnicycle is excited for Carnival 2023 and will resume their recycling campaign for Trinidad Carnival 2023. Their goal is to triple the number of costumes collected from 2020. They are also working with small businesses to increase visibility on collection boxes, partnering with local restaurants, hotels and guest houses; and also partnering with the waste collection industry.

Another audience question was posed to the panellists asking their perspectives on how we can advance a collective space where we can work together as a Caribbean community and the diaspora.

Le-Anne shared that she also wears the hat of climate change negotiator, and in this role she partners with developing countries, including African and least developed countries. She noted that there is ongoing work on partnerships for our collective voice on climate change among developing states, ensuring that the countries that have the resources to do better, do so, because our lives depend on it. Ongoing partnership with countries outside the region is necessary in order to see everyone thrive.

Alyssa added that these are not just island problems but issues of developing states. We have very similar issues. Housing is an issue in East Africa as well as the Caribbean. She indicated that we need to work towards smart solutions for homes, sustainably designed homes, e.g., access to water. She added that it would be cool to see a digital communal space where we can crowdsource housing solutions. Alyssa shared that she is excited about the digital space, and the opportunity for creating a communal space to prototype solutions and roll out physical housing solutions across different geographic locations to see how they perform and the potential export opportunities for the region; export of intellectual properties to start solving solutions to Africa and the African diaspora.

Following this, Derval invited each panellist to share their vision for resilient communities and economies for the Caribbean.

Marcelle would like to see education and capacity building for vulnerable and marginalised communities. With the major role of tourism in islands, in order to achieve a sustainable tourism industry, we must include climate action. We can create a more sustainable development model in the Caribbean.

Danii's vision starts with inclusion, including the most affected countries and communities and collaborating to ensure that our solutions can be amplified by countries around the world

Le-Anne's vision is for a truly resilient region, including the physical space and natural resources we rely on. We do not have to accept all disasters as inevitable.

Alyssa hoped for the region to be guided by synergy and innovation; recognizing that there are no quick solutions for this multifaceted problem. No one is coming to save us; we have to save ourselves. We know ourselves in the Caribbean, our identity and our unique problems and have the solutions here. We are in charge of the Caribbean of the future, re-identifying the Caribbean of the future, developing innovative new ideas to shape that new future. She acknowledged that she stands on the many sacrifices of the women that came before her.

Derval thanked everyone for their contributions and brought the discussion to a close.

A recap of the session was done by Christine followed by the environmental Film screening of 'Uncivilized' facilitated by Romola Lucas, founder of Timehri Film Festival.

Film Screening

Uncivilized by Michael Lees, Dominica

About: In 2017 Michael Lees set out to the forest with nothing more than some basic tools, religious texts and camera gear. His goal: to find a way out of the modern perils of overconsumption, technology addiction and global warming. But three months in, Category 5 Hurricane Maria - one of the most powerful hurricanes of all time - made a direct hit on Michael's island. All of a sudden, the entire island must reckon with itself as the entire population is sent back to the stone age.

Panel 4: Planning for a Just Future

In planning for the Caribbean of the future, it is important to employ a framework that is based on inclusivity and equity. The inclusion of the perceptions, experience, knowledge and interests of all people leads to improved policymaking and decision-making. This should be reflected in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels. As we envision the Caribbean of the future, what actions can we take today to create environments (system, structures, policies, procedures and cultures) that centre gender equality?

Climate justice is tied to all other issues of justice. We know that the climate crisis is not gender neutral. All issues of gender inequality can be traced back to issues of colonization, patriarchy and systemic oppression. While addressing the current climate crisis, we set out to correct the socio-economic and ecological imbalances that have been placed on Caribbean countries and hinder our Sustainable Development.

Objectives:

- Highlight the benefits of ensuring that all people influence, participate in and benefit from development efforts.
- Demonstrate how gender mainstreaming can lead to sustainable, people-centered development in the Caribbean.
- Explore the linkages between the current climate crisis with other issues of justice
- Stimulate discussion around ideas of what is needed to create a sustainable, resilient and inclusive Caribbean.

Panellists:

- Kendria Ferguson, Sustainability Consultant (Bahamas)
- Khadija Stewart, Founder of Ecovybz Environmental Creatives, Regional representative for Sustainable Ocean Alliance (Trinidad and Tobago)

- Anaitee Mills, Co-founder of ITACA Solutions, Sustainable Development Professional (Guatemala)
- Alicia A. Wallace, Director of Equality Bahamas (Bahamas)
- Danielle Nembhard, Marine Scientist and Environmental Consultant (Jamaica)

Moderator:

- Alicia M. Richins, Sustainability Consultant (Trinidad and Tobago)

Discussion:

Alicia R. shared her excitement about being part of the event. She invited each of the panellists to introduce themselves and share about their work and its connection to gender justice.

Alicia R. acknowledged that in their introductions, the panellists touched on the importance of gender equality in creating a sustainable and resilient future. She invited the panel to provide more detail and share their views on what progress has been made so far in gender equality on their area of work and the critical connection between gender and sustainability.

Kendria admitted that it is a struggle to answer this question, with so few women in decision-making processes, particularly in government. She stated that when it comes to understanding gender and resilience, the harsh reality is that the Caribbean has not made many strides in this regard. Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas revealed many of the gaps/inequalities in society. Kendria noted that we have not been providing enough protection in terms of social services or providing climate assistance, tools, policies and programs to support both genders. Women are not getting the support that they need in order to recover. She indicated that we are behind in the curve; taking one step forward and twenty steps back. It is difficult to pinpoint progress made.

Khadijah echoed the sentiments made by Kendria, questioning whether progress has been made. She shared the following quote which captured her thoughts on the position of women and youth in the Caribbean: “If you’re invisible in everyday life, your needs would not be thought of, let alone addressed in a crisis situation.” She feels like we are in ancient times when it comes to gender equality in the Caribbean. However, she does not want to discredit the work that is going on, using the space created by the CW4CJ conference as an example. She pointed out that this is not at the decision-making level, not at the level that makes change, where it matters the most. She shared her experience at the international and regional level of feeling small and the frustration of not being heard. She mentioned that we need to work on shifting the mindset that gender equality already exists. Gender equality is not just having access to resources, but also the ability of women to have impact through the access to resources. In her view, we have a very long way to go.

Alicia R. added that most of our scholarship winners and degree-holders are women, but that is not reflected in positions of power.

Anaitee offered a different perspective. She highlighted the CW4CJ Conference and the conversations she was a part of at that moment as an example of progress. She highlighted that there are a lot of empowered women in the Caribbean but questioned whether it is enough. The climate space is still very patriarchal; spaces like the Conference of the Parties (COP) are still a man's world. She can relate to the feeling of being invisible. She noted that her organisation recognises the importance of mobilising climate finance and getting it to the communities. Although not the decision-makers, women are the ones who implement the practical solutions. ITACA promotes community led action and participation. When rebuilding after a disaster, it is not only about infrastructure. She shared that ITACA was set up as a women-led organization to be different as consultants, in the multilateral development and private sector world, where it is common to think you have all the answers. But instead, you need to go to the communities to learn how things are being done and match solutions to how the community wants it, using your technical knowledge to integrate, using a collaborative approach. She mentioned that this is not happening enough with women at those tables, for Community-led action. Women need to be drivers of decision-making instead of the "putting out fires" approach. She shared the example of the impact to the Colombian island of Providenciales from hurricane Iota. In the aftermath, decisions on the recovery of the island were made in the land-locked capital Bogota, which was disconnected from the realities of the island.

Alicia R. emphasized the value of leaning into people's lived experiences, instead of the top-down approach commonly seen between countries or between national governments and communities. What is key to driving this approach?

Alicia W. added that we have not seen as much progress as we would like to see. She noted that we spend a lot of time talking about what we don't have and under-using what we do have. She shared that following hurricane Dorian and the pandemic we've seen the effect on access to healthcare and education, particularly for women and girls. Following Dorian, her organisation spent six months serving 200 or more families. Women were the majority coming into the distribution centre to get help for their families. Women hold the knowledge of the family/community. Women use their knowledge to access the resources that everybody needs. Alicia W. highlighted this as a clear demonstration of why climate justice is gender justice. Women are doing the care work, even in disasters. What is the state doing about the additional burden placed on women and girls? She added that the nexus of gender equality and climate justice includes lived experiences. She noted that women are not a homogenous group; it includes disabled and queer, undocumented, class, and education level. Progress is not just putting a label of gender equality; it must be intentional using learning to develop better policies and better laws.

Danielle added that we need to do things at the level of legislation and policy. In her experience, as a consultant, often gender mainstreaming becomes a box ticking exercise, instead of meaningfully engaging intersectional groups like those previously highlighted. She noted that it also has to be transformative. The transformation has to involve men as well since they hold a lot of power and access. The allyship of men is needed as men play a key part in transforming the unequal norms, power relations, and structure imbalances hindering our progress. Transformative gender approach requires that intersectional lens, empowering everyone. She explained that it's

not just being in the room, but also being part of the decision-making process, being capable of making the decisions. It requires that we sensitise and educate and empower. She concluded with this assessment: “Do we have a long way to go? Too long. Do we have a lot of time? Not really.”

Alicia R. reflected on the responses from the panellists, noting that we have not made as much progress but being in spaces like this one is a great marker of progress. She posed the following question to the panellists: As we look forward, what are the expected outcomes if we were to centre gender in the respective sectors?

Kendria responded that regarding climate change and environmental shocks, for us to be more gender centred, it requires us to have policies and strategies that are adaptable and flexible. We must understand our communities and the roles of the people within our communities. Women fulfilled many additional roles during the pandemic as women were expected to work from home, be the home teacher, plus all the other care-giving needs. She explained that if we understand and centre gender roles then we can create programs that are responsive and effective. If we can tackle gender, we can tackle other social issues and develop programmes to fit those issues and also be able to shift these programmes to respond to disasters. Addressing education, healthcare, home assistance and mental health assistance can build resilient communities. She noted that once people need help in the Caribbean, we all band together. We should address community issues and strengthen community networks to build stronger countries.

Danielle shared that with her work in ecological interventions, conservation and restoration programmes, she would like to see those programmes and the systems that support them address underlying issues. Any effective intervention being implemented should challenge underlying causes of gender inequality, for example, how society values men and women and the intersections from there; thereby addressing issues of inequality from the root.

Anaitee mentioned that she cringes when she hears about the creation of more policies or regulations. In her view, we do not need more policies and regulations. We are well studied in the Caribbean so we know what the social issues are and where the gaps are. In agreement with Danielle, she stated that we need the mechanisms and resources that go to communities to be gender responsive. Programmes should be responsive to the realities of women on the ground and therefore, women should be involved in the decision-making process. They should be informing the development of the programmes instead of just accepting what the government or the donor is giving. She noted that there should be a mechanism to challenge the lack of involvement. Where can we complain about these things?

Alicia R. added that systems of bureaucracy set up in the Caribbean which stem from our colonial history, seep into other systems including community driven work and continues to hinder our ability to access resources. We need less bureaucracy, more action and resources.

Alicia W agreed that red tape is the bane of our existence, pointing to the nightmare of working with legislation and the constitution. Currently, the Bahamas is trying to go through constitutional reform and it has highlighted the need to bridge the gap between government and people. We need

to understand ourselves as the government and persons in government are our representatives. When we are looking at gender equality, we should not have a need for these policies but the reality is that we do. She shared that in 2020, right at the start of the pandemic, Equality Bahamas highlighted the need to address gender-based violence, bringing attention to the reality of people trapped in their homes with their abusers. The people we are electing are living completely different lives so we cannot depend on them to do this kind of work. Those of us who are here, that have the time and capacity must do the work and bridge the gap between the people whose voices need to be amplified and the people who have the power to do it. She emphasised that this is what equity is about; it's about being at the centre of progress and driving it. She noted that gender is connected to climate. Periods (menstruation) are connected to climate. We will know that we are centering gender effectively when, for example, a period comes up in the conversation and people are not confused.

Danielle reiterated the need to disrupt the underlying gender norms and the post-colonial things and social identities we are carrying over from our colonial history. In support of the point previously made by Alicia W., she pointed out that following the earthquake in 2010, no one considered that women in Haiti needed sanitary products.

Anaitee added that we just expect the government to come and save us post-disaster. But the private sector in the Caribbean should have the capacity to move resources at the community level. There should be a mechanism set up between the government and the private sector to mobilize resources to where it matters the most. We must recognise the interconnectivity with everything related to climate. It becomes complex but you have to choose a niche.

Khadija added that sometimes we ignore the disparities within the women's space, for example, the concerns of urban women versus rural women. Looking at gender at the national level and using broad terms, we can overlook the disparities. When gender is at the centre of everything, it looks like we are making decisions for ourselves.

Alicia R. pointed out the importance of getting away from the binary of women and men since there are other gender expressions who are also marginalised. She shared a question from the audience: What are some thoughts on regionalism and how we can address the past traumas of decolonisation?

Danielle responded that we in the Caribbean just need to do it; through networking and building connections. We have the expertise to have a discussion, to create an action plan, to act. The Caribbean can come together and punch above our weight.

Alicia R. agreed that we need to do some work to unpack the history of decolonization.

Kendria stated that she is not a fan of Governments doing everything. Governments lack the capacity and are unqualified to do everything. This is where the private sector and non-governmental organisations come in, with transparency and accountability. What we need is to build sustainable projects that won't just sit on a shelf.

Alicia W. brought up the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and reparations, stating that we should be more consistent in the call for reparations. It is not individual checks but a change in our conditions. How are we thinking about the way that we impact climate with our clothing choices? Why are we so into fast fashion? How do we think about the way that we are consuming without shaming ourselves for our choices? How do we have the dollar power to impact the market the way that we should? Or following along with rules of decolonisation with the rules of colonisation that means that we have to wear three-piece suits to the office? It is all connected.

Anaitee added that there is not enough conversation about the ways that reparations can be connected to climate justice. We are getting into debt to recover, rebuild and become resilient, based on a problem generated by the developed countries. It is connected to the way we consume, transport ourselves, and build our houses. We are challenged with developing with limited resources. It is about creating a culture and lifestyle of resilience. It is beyond recycling and planting a tree. What kind of lifestyle do we need to have in the Caribbean for sustainability and climate resilience?

Anaitee questioned whether we need to rethink our advocacy to environmental issues. She suggested that the regional environmental movement has lost momentum. Kendria supported this view, pointing out that the number of environmental organisations in the region is not translating into widespread knowledge or awareness about climate change and environmental protection throughout our populace.

Alicia W. added that we must make these issues matter to people. For example, the Conch shortage in the Bahamas gets people invested because people love conchs. People seem to think of themselves as separate from the earth so we have to connect it to people's real lives.

Anaitee mentioned that financing should not be based on economic indicators but should be based on vulnerability indicators. She added that we can talk for days together but we need more people in positions of power to get involved.

Khadijah remarked that we are not seeing ourselves in the environment and climate space. We all know Greta Thunberg but we can hardly name Caribbean youth activists. There is a need for greater representation. Global north models do not fit us.

Alicia R. shared a question from the audience asking about the outcome that panellists would like to see emerge from this space.

Beyond this space, Alicia W. would like to see more imagination, getting outside of the box of our current reality. This is Day 0. What ought to be and how can we make it so? These are the questions we should start with to open a space for creativity and innovation. We should also recognize the origins, the reason for our practice and how they are instructive for the people coming after us, mindful of the consequences of our practices.

Alicia R. added that we are seeking opportunities to work together and network and become involved in projects and actions on the ground.

Danielle hopes to see more unified movements as an outcome from this space, continued network and creativity with the outcome we hope to achieve. We need to start a Caribbean movement that can translate to the Conference of Parties (COP); presenting a unified message across the region. A hurricane does not know the difference between Barbados and Jamaica. Climate change affects us all collectively.

Kendria shared that she lives by the mantra: take up space. We need to be our own Greta's as well as optimize the use of technology. She agreed with Danielle's point of creating a regional movement.

Khadija's expected outcome is the formation of a movement, instead of operating in silos since we are working towards the same cause: climate justice. She hopes to see more regional collaboration for collective action.

Derval gave closing remarks. She noted that the outcomes identified by the panel align with the objectives for the conference. The discussion emphasised the need for an established space. Among the objectives of the conference was to initiate a regional alliance of partners and key actors for climate and gender justice, establishing a solid network for collaboration and influencing public policy and actions; and to initiate a database of stakeholders who are working on issues of climate change and gender in the region. She pointed out that the capacity and Indigenous knowledge exists. We have started something with CW4CJ and there is a high level of interest from participants in seeing it move forward. She invited everyone to stay connected as we build the movement to optimize collective efforts.

The session ended with the performance of a poem titled 'Tick-Tock, Nature's Clock' by climate change advocate Dainalyn Swaby from Jamaica.

Day Four – April 24th, 2022

Children and the Environment

Environmental impacts do not affect everyone equally. Like women, children are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Climate and environmental impacts threaten children's physical and mental health, exposing them to deadly diseases and disasters. It undermines the complete spectrum of children's rights, from access to clean air, food and safe water; to education, housing, freedom from exploitation, and even their right to survive.

The climate crisis is a children's rights crisis. However, children are often left out of the conversation on climate change. The kind of home our future generations will inherit, and the environmental impacts they will experience will be positively or negatively affected by the

decisions we make today. Children therefore must be included at the table in discussions which determine their future. Children should also be provided with environmental education and skills critical for their adaptation to climate change.

Objectives:

- Engage with children on the common environmental concerns in their country or community
- Highlight why it's important for children to learn and care about environmental issues
- Provide a platform for children to learn about climate change in a simplified way

This one-hour session was conducted by Educators: Christine Samwaroo and Afeefa Richardson, both members of The Breadfruit Collective and Coordinators of the CW4CJ Conference. The session was centered around the reading of storybook titled 'The Sprouts and the Mystery of the Flood' which explores the connection between climate change and health. The story is set in Guyana and includes cultural references, such as the use of Guyanese Creole.

The Educators began the session by introducing themselves. They then introduced the storybook and allowed the participants to share their names and ages.

After the book was introduced, the children were asked if they were familiar with words such as: environment, flood and pollution. They shared their perspectives on the meaning of the words and the educators noted the connection to those words and the relevance to the storybook.

The session continued with an interactive read-along of the story. Throughout the story, the participants were allowed to ask questions. Some of the questions asked included:

- Why did Aunty Sue and Uncle Tombo speak differently? (Using Guyanese Creole)
- Why was Aunty Sue being mean to the Sprouts?

After reading the story, the educators and participants engaged in a crossword activity from the storybook to reinforce some of the concepts learned. The participants were fully engaged and successfully completed the crossword.

To wrap up the session, the participants were asked to re-create a scene from the story that was not illustrated in the book. The drawing below was submitted by one of our enthusiastic participants.

"shamat looking at the big ship"



Jam heye. Ka Blessings Gordon

Film Screening

Coast Land by REEL Guyana

About: Coast Land is a Guyanese documentary that speaks to the vulnerability of the country's coastal region which is the home to the majority of the population. It examines the effects of rising sea levels and cyclical erosion which results in massive overtopping and disruption of livelihoods.

Networking

Participants were given an opportunity to connect with each other and learn about each other's work through small group interactions. The zoom breakout group feature was used to randomly place persons in groups of four. These groups were randomly shuffled three times to allow participants to meet as many persons as possible. Ice-breaker questions were provided and these included:

- What is your background and experience?
- What made you sign up for the CW4CJ Conference?
- What has been your favourite part of the Conference?
- What is the best environmental documentary/TED talk/ book you have seen/read?
- What is one piece of advice you always live by?
- When it comes to the climate crisis, are you hopeful? Why, why not?

Wellness Session

Recognising the importance of care in activism, a wellness session was planned to provide participants with a space to de-stress, reflect, and relax. This session was facilitated by Diane Chin from Armadillo Earth Farm, Guyana.

Diane led the participants through a series of breathing exercises and yoga stretches, including the 'Tree' pose, in dedication of Earth Day. After this, participants engaged in a discussion around overall wellness, looking at how one's physical and mental health is influenced by environmental health, and what we can do to ensure we take care of ourselves.

Closing Ceremony

The inaugural four-day Conference was brought to a close with a brief ceremony which featured remarks from the coordinating team.

Derval acknowledged the events of the past four days of activities. She stated that the alchemy to which all participants contributed has birthed something that we should commit to continue nurturing. She noted that the region is often found looking outward for a saviour; but no one is coming to save us. In her view, the region has the blueprint for the sustainable and resilient future being sought. Moving the region forward requires us to return to ourselves, the Indigenous knowledge, and confidence in the ability to navigate the future as Caribbean people.

Derval expressed her gratitude for the CW4CJ Community and the ability to share space with dynamic, passionate, and brilliant minds. She hoped that the energy of the conference would be transformed into something that could heal, restore, regenerate and advance the region.

Christine added how pleased she was to see the idea of the conference manifested. She noted that the need for the space was evident since Caribbean women are not always included in spaces, although vulnerable to climate and social justice issues. She highlighted that four Caribbean girls created their own space. Together, we have started a movement.

On behalf of The Breadfruit Collective, Christine expressed her gratitude to everyone. She stated that this type of work is sacred and difficult, but necessary. There is a need for people doing things, having ideas, and transforming ideas to community building. She stated that the region possesses homegrown solutions, and people who know how to do the work. She indicated that the Conference means so much not only to the organisers but also to the participants; to see themselves represented and their stories told. She reflected on the past three months of planning the Conference; sharing that the organisers took a holistic and intentional approach, determined for the conference to be inclusive, intergenerational, and intersectional. She highlighted that it is important that Indigenous, youth and women's voices were integrated and represented throughout. She pointed out the importance of wellness and self-care, in light of climate anxiety. Given the urgency of the problem, more people need to step up, even if uncomfortable. She hoped that the conference was useful and inspiring to the participants. She stated that this is just the beginning and urged the audience to imagine the Caribbean community when we heal the climate crisis.

Afeefa expressed gratitude, on behalf of the team, to Auro and Open Society Foundations for graciously agreeing to support this inaugural conference. She thanked Open Society Foundations for believing in four young women to take on this massive task and make it a reality and for their commitment to the Caribbean and to supporting grassroots movements, activists, groups, and persons doing the crucial and much needed work to achieve climate justice, gender justice, and all forms of justice.

Iyana extended thanks to the many community co-sponsors who supported the event and shared it widely within their networks. She noted that the team was blown away by the level of support they

Annex

Thank you to our community co-sponsors!

- REEL Guyana
- Feminitt
- Caribbean Feminist
- Transform Education
- IGDS Ignite
- Green Heart Movement
- GirlsCARE
- Guyana Environment Initiative
- Heart Through Art
- SAEDI Consulting
- Glenn Family Foundation
- Equality Bahamas
- Ecotrust Society
- Caribbean Youth Environment Network
- Center for Plants and Culture
- Savouring the Indo Caribbean
- Mango Tea Podcast
- Muslim Indo Caribbean Collective
- Global Yardie Podcast
- IAM Movement
- The Lilypads Project
- Carnicycle
- Media Sutra
- Armadillo Earth Farm
- Catcalls of UWI
- Greenheart TT
- Wan Wan Dutty Guyana
- UG Female Empowerment Movement
- Timehri Film Festival
- Green Tea Podcast
- Kiss Earth
- WI Global
- Global Peace Chain
- Guyana Youth and Environment Network
- Carry on Friends



Caribbean Women FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
IN CELEBRATION OF
Earth Day

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

21ST-24TH APRIL, 2022



Ayesha
Constable



Khadija
Stewart



Danielle
Nembhard



Anaitée
Mills



Malene
Alleyne



Kendria
Ferguson



Immaculata
Casimero



Sapphire
Alexander



Rueanna
Haynes



Sherlina
Nageer



Daphne
Ewing-Chow



Alicia
Wallace



Leisa
Perch



Auro
Fraser



Ashlee
Burnett



Andrew
Campbell



Alexandria
Douziech



Alyssa Amor
Gibbons



Marcelle
Lawrence



Danii
Mcletchie



Le-Anne
Roper



Alicia
Richins



Nikhil
Sankar



Diane
Chin



Romola
Lucas



D'Izrael
Billy



Dainalyn
Swaby



Biographies

Keynote Speaker

Ayesha Constable has paired her activism with her scholarship having researched and published on gender and climate change as part of her doctoral studies, which links her interests in agriculture, climate adaptation, youth and gender. Her research looks at perceptions of climate change and determinants of adaptation among small-scale farmers in rural Jamaica. The paper analyses the intersection between socio-cultural and economic factors in shaping farmers' experiences with climate change and willingness to adapt. She is the founder of GirlsCARE, a movement seeking to provide mentorship to young feminist activists in the Caribbean, and a recent recipient of funding from Rihanna's Clara Lionel Foundation to continue their work in feminist climate justice.

Panel 1

Malene Alleyne is a Jamaican human rights lawyer and founder of Freedom Imaginaries, an organization that uses human rights law to tackle legacies of slavery and colonialism. She holds a Master of Laws degree from Harvard Law School and a Master of Advanced Studies degree from the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva. She is qualified to practice law in Guyana and Jamaica.

Sherlina Nageer is a queer, cis-gender, Guyanese eco-feminist. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of Chicago and a Master's in Public Health from Emory University and has worked on a variety of issues such as violence prevention, women's empowerment, environmental justice, human rights, local policy, and non-profit management for over two decades. Sherlina currently lives in Guyana where she engages in grassroots mobilization and advocacy around issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights, economic justice, sustainability, and transformative leadership.

Sapphire Alexander is a strident feminist and youth advocate, who is passionate about equal rights and climate change awareness. She is the founder of Caribbean Feminist, a digital initiative and platform for young people to come together and to learn from each other, inspire and be inspired themselves. In addition to her role as founder of Caribbean Feminist, Sapphire is a member of The Queen's Commonwealth Trust Network as well as a member of the young feminist coalition, Transform Education. She also stands on the Caribbean advisory committee for the international non-profit FRIDA where she aids in informing the grant-making process for the region. Sapphire lives by the credo that elevating the voices of youth is the key to the progress of Society.

Rueanna Haynes is an international climate law and governance specialist, and TEDx 2020 speaker, with over a decade of experience in the UN Climate process. A former Trinidad and

Tobago diplomat, Rueanna has negotiated for the Caribbean Community as well as the Alliance of Small Island States, including in the development of the sustainable development goals. At present, she is Senior Legal Adviser at Climate Analytics and Director of the Climate Analytics Caribbean office in Trinidad and Tobago. Rueanna provides strategic, technical and diplomatic advice to island states in climate change negotiations, as well as training for officials new to the UN Climate process.

Immaculata Casimero is an Indigenous woman, who belongs to the Wapichan nation in Guyana. She is the communications officer at South Rupununi District Council and the co- founder of Wapichan Women’s Movement (WWM). Her journey as a village leader began in 2015, where she served as secretary of the Aishalton Village Council for 3 years. In July of 2019, Immaculata travelled to Geneva, Switzerland to represent the voices of Wapichan women to the CEDAW committee on discrimination faced by Indigenous women in Guyana. She helped to organise the first Rupununi Indigenous Women’s Conference which brought together over eighty women to discuss and focus on gender, leadership, environmental issues and empowerment.

Panel 2

Daphne Ewing-Chow is an award- winning Caribbean journalist, originally from Barbados but residing in the Cayman Islands. In addition to her role as Content Manager at LOOP Cayman, Daphne is a senior contributor at Forbes, with a focus on the environment, sustainability, food with frequent intersection across health and gender with a focus on the Caribbean. Daphne’s work has also been featured in The New York Times, The Sunday Times (London) and the International Monetary Fund. Daphne has managed communications for two climate projects at the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and currently serves as Communications Advisor for the World Food Programme’s Caribbean Multi- Country Office.

Leisa Perch is the CEO and Founder of SAEDI Consulting Barbados Inc. She established SAEDI Consulting as part of her commitment to bridging and ultimately eliminating the persistent policy, programming and financing gaps between social and environmental policy. An International Development Expert with more than 20 years of experience in climate change, poverty reduction, livelihoods, gender equality policy, inclusive green growth, inclusive green economy, research and gender mainstreaming (in various regional settings including post-disaster and emergencies). Leisa has a proven track record of enabling purposeful dialogue & debate, coalition-building to deliver new ideas, promoting concepts of change and delivering transformation in developing and emerging economies. Well published, she has worked across the globe, from Latin America to Africa (South and West) and more recently in Asia. She has worked on Caribbean SIDS issues for most of her career. She is keen to expand the space for Indigenous feminist voices in the Caribbean context.

Ashlee Burnett is queering, querying, and carrying the Caribbean forward. The Trinbagonian-born writer and advocate is a 2020 Women Deliver Young Leader. She is the founder of Feminitt Caribbean, an Intersectional Caribbean Feminist NGO based in Trinidad and Tobago where she

leads a dynamic and passionate core team and volunteers that uses education, social good, and conversation to advance Gender Justice in the Caribbean. She is a member of the Queen's Commonwealth Trust Network. Additionally, she serves as an Advisor to the Global Advisory Committee for the Caribbean region at FRIDA, The Young Feminist Fund. Ashlee is a graduate of the University of the Southern Caribbean with a BA in English Language and Literature.

Alexandria Douziech is a research-based artist and educator. Drawing inspiration from her parentage—her mother was born on a sugarcane plantation in Guyana and her father was raised on a farm in Alberta, Canada—Alexandria's artwork centres on nature, exploitation, and labour. Since receiving her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), Alexandria has worked in education departments across various museums in Los Angeles, including the California African American Museum (CAAM), the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), and the Underground Museum. In 2020, she founded the Center for Plants & Culture, a BIPOC educational platform dedicated to exploring what plants reveal about society—where we've been and where we're going.

Andrew Campbell was born in Moruca in Region One and grew up in Georgetown, Guyana. He holds Degrees in History and Tourism Studies. He served as a Teacher for many years in Mabaruma, Region 1. Andrew completed Archaeological field surveys and excavations under the guidance of the late George Simon, the late Neil Whitehead and Dr Michael Heckenberger. Andrew is the Founder of Ebesowana Natural Foods. Currently, he offers guidance to the Blue Flame Women's Group, from Hosororo in adding value to their cocoa by making chocolate in Guyana. Andrew is a member of the Moving Circle of Artists, where he provided training programmes in the Rupununi with central focus on arts, environment, archaeology and anthropology. Andrew is also a beekeeper.

Auro Fraser was born in Guyana but currently resides in Colombia. He leads Open Society Foundation's first ever Caribbean strategy with a focus on Climate Justice. He worked previously on five continents with national and international civil society organisations, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Criminal Court. Auro has an LLM with Distinction in International Human Rights Law from the University of Essex and previously he graduated with a First-Class Honours degree in International Relations. He is fluent in English and Spanish. He is a music addict and a jazz pianist as well as a proud father of a girl and a boy.

Panel 3

Le-Anne Roper is a sustainable development and climate change professional with almost fifteen years of experience. She currently serves as the Senior Technical Officer (Adaptation) in the Climate Change Division of the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation. Prior to this, she served as the Sustainable Development Planning Officer with the Planning Institute of Jamaica. At the international level, Le-Anne is a climate change negotiator, including lead negotiator for loss and damage on behalf of the group of developing nations in the Alliance of Small Island States

(AOSIS). She is a member of the Executive Committee (Excom) of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM), a body of the United Nations; in 2021, she served as a co-chair. She is also Jamaica's Loss and Damage Contact Point. She is the author of the book "Building Rock-Solid Resilience to Natural Hazards: The Church Edition". She is also a Council member of the Jamaica Institute of Environmental Professionals (JIEP).

Danii Mcletchie is an engineer and creative, born in Canaan, Tobago. Her passion for the environment has allowed her to conduct published environmental research during university, launch a full-time career in sustainability engineering and become a leader in sustainable events through her non-profit, Carnicycle. In her last 3.5 years, Danii has been responsible for monitoring end to end Supply Chain and Manufacturing processes while formulating waste and energy reduction strategies. The end results of her efforts allowed her current company to generate both environmental and cost savings through her projects. Through Carnicycle, Danii has been able to educate individuals and businesses on how to effectively create a sustainable Carnival using circular economy principles. Danii believes that the shift towards being environmentally conscious should be a fun and self-reflective journey, and wants to help others realize that on their journey.

Marcelle Lawrence began her career in the tourism and hospitality sector in Bermuda in 1992 working as a server in restaurants and numerous hotels. She has earned a B.Sc in Psychology & Anthropology from Brunel University, UK during which time she volunteered for 4 months in Guyana at a children's center for disadvantaged children. She is the former Acting Program Coordinator and Folklife Festival Assistant with the Department of Cultural Affairs in Bermuda and worked in the Bermuda public education system as an educator. Marcelle is a qualified lawyer called to the Bars of England and Wales & Bermuda in 2010. She earned an Executive Certificate in Social Impact Strategy from the University of Pennsylvania, 2019 and a Sustainable Tourism Certificate from Global Standard Tourism Council (GTSC), 2020. Marcelle is a Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) 2019-2021 and Local Chapter Lead of Impact Travel Alliance, a global non-profit with the mandate of increasing the awareness of sustainable tourism, 2020 - April 2022. She is a recipient of the Bermuda Tourism Authority's Investment Experience (Marketing Stream), 2021, Creator of Social Impact Tourism Program (Paddle with Purpose Pilot Program), 2021, and an experienced Kayak tour guide.

Alyssa-Amor Gibbons is an architectural designer with 8+ years of experience in a wide variety of projects throughout the Caribbean and the UK. She is a LEED Accredited Professional in general Building Design and Construction (LEED AP BD+C), residential Homes (LEED AP Homes), and a LEED Green Rater. With an MEng (Hons) in Structural Engineering and Architecture her multidisciplinary background and specialization in Building Information Modelling (BIM), fosters her passion for designing and delivering architecture that tells a story of consideration, environmental consciousness, energy efficiency, and resilience. When she is not in the studio she is somewhere in nature or underwater exploring the deep blue.

Panel 4

Alicia Richins is a Sustainability and Social Impact Consultant based in Toronto, and a fierce advocate of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a consultant, she works with forward-thinking organizations to translate the global framework to the local context. As the Partnerships and Standards Lead at the Common Approach to Impact Measurement, Alicia leads the development and adoption of the Common Approach's four flexible standards for impact measurement. She also serves as Director of Programming for Leading Change Canada, an organization focused on activating youth sustainability leadership for the transition to a low carbon economy within a generation. A dual citizen since birth of Canada and Trinidad and Tobago, Alicia holds a Master in Environmental Studies, Planning Concentration, and a BA in Economics and Social Science (Honours), both from York University.

Kendria Ferguson is a native of The Bahamas. She obtained a Bachelor's in Marine Biology from Barry University and a Master's Degree in Sustainable Energy from the University of South Florida. Since graduating, she has worked on several critical environmental projects locally and internationally. Kendria's experience included marine mammal research, sustainable development within the tourism sector, waste management, drafting environmental legislation, disaster response, developing a national campaign to ban select plastics and strategies for increasing renewable energy integration across the public sector and residential landscape. Currently pursuing her Ph.D. studies with UWI Mona Sustainable Development Institute, Kendria is exploring the socio-economics of natural disasters within The Bahamas context. Her vast experience and personal aspirations have led her to explore the breadths of policy and research within environmental and social sustainability roles throughout The Bahamas.

Khadija Stewart is an enthusiastic environmentalist with a passion for inspiring behaviour change through knowledge sharing and innovative storytelling. She holds a BSc in Environmental and Natural Resource Management, a MSc in Sustainable Development with Management Studies and a 2 nd MSc in Climate Change and Development from the University of London. Throughout her environmental journey she has represented Trinidad and Tobago at the 8 th World Water Forum with the World Youth Parliament for Water in 2018, at the Peace Boat Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Program in 2019 and at the Our Ocean Youth Leadership Summit in Oslo with Sustainable Ocean Alliance also in 2019. Presently, she is the founder of Ecovybz Environmental Creatives, a company focused on educating the public through environmental content creation and powerful storytelling initiatives focused on Climate Change, Ocean Conservation and Water Resources. At the core of her work is the youth and equipping them with the knowledge to be effective agents of change. Khadija is also the host of the EcoVybz Podcast and the Caribbean Regional Representative for Sustainable Ocean Alliance.

Anaitée Mills is a sustainable development professional with 12+ years of experience consulting for highly reputable organizations such as the World Bank Group, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Resources Institute (WRI), and for governments in Latin America and the Caribbean. Within the IDB, she worked for the Energy and Climate Change Sector Divisions supporting the implementation of sustainable projects in Trinidad and Tobago,

Jamaica, Belize, Barbados, and Guyana. She has also served as Climate Finance Consultant Advisor at the Office of the Prime Minister, coordinating Jamaica's participation in the 2019 United Nations Climate Action Summit and currently consults for public and private sectors on topics such as climate finance, climate risk, disaster risk financing, climate adaptation and mitigation. She also collaborates with Jamaica's Climate Change Division in stakeholder management and climate targets implementation. She is a co-founder of Panamanian-based ITACA Solutions, a technical services provider firm focused on promoting innovation, training, and climate change adaptation in coastal areas in the Caribbean. ITACA believes in building climate ready, transformative, and inclusive Caribbean communities led by motivated and prepared local champions who are empowered to "Build Back Better", recover post-disasters and create a climate-resilient vision and culture for the future.

Alicia A. Wallace is a queer Black feminist, gender expert, and research consultant. She is the Director of Equality Bahamas which promotes women's and LGBTQI+ people rights as human rights through advocacy, public education, and community engagement. Alicia is a Steering Committee member at the Feminist Alliance for Rights, an Advisor for the grants program and the Education Coordinator at Queen's Commonwealth Trust, and former Caribbean Coordinator at FRIDA the Young Feminist Fund. Alicia managed a hurricane relief centre following category five Hurricane Dorian, assisting more 200 families every week, centering women, LGBTQI+ people, and undocumented migrants. She facilitated innovation labs for directly affected people, facilitating the development of solutions in the face of the climate emergency. She is skilled in creating safe spaces for critical dialogue and designing community projects. She writes a weekly column in The Tribune on socio-political issues and has numerous publications including academic papers, toolkits, and articles. She enjoys reading, cycling, gardening, and talking to everyone and no one at the same time on Twitter as @_AliciaAudrey.

Danielle Nembhard is a marine scientist and project manager specialising in environmental management services. She currently works as an Environmental Consultant, providing people with tools and solutions to increase the sustainability value of development with minimal environmental and social impacts. In 2014, she pursued an MSc. in Queensland, Australia, bravely transitioning from a 9-year telecoms career in the Caribbean and Central America, to diving and research on the Great Barrier Reef. Since then, she has done academic research focused on coral reef ecosystems in the Caribbean, Australia and the Philippines, investigating their resilience as complex, social-ecological systems. In 2019, she was accepted to Homeward Bound, a global leadership initiative designed for women in STEMM, and will journey to Antarctica as a part of her fellowship. Recently she was accepted to pursue a PhD under the Great Barrier Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP) at The Cairns Institute, James Cook University. She will examine the complexity of planning assisted ecosystem restoration and adaptation programmes for increasingly threatened coral reefs in socio-culturally diverse societies. Danielle is also a passionate minority rights and science communication advocate who strongly believes that science and climate change must address structural racism, economic inequality and patriarchy.

- 2022 -

Caribbean Women for Climate Justice Conference

For more information, contact us at cw4cj2022@gmail.com