

Caribbean Countries Grapple with Drought



Castries, May 23 (teleSUR-RHC)-- The Caribbean Drought and Precipitation Monitoring Network has issued a drought warning for a number of islands across the Caribbean.

Countries throughout the Caribbean are facing low rainfall levels, blistering heat, an increase in the number of bush fires, and water shortages. Drought warnings have been issued for Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, the Eastern part of the Dominican Republic, Martinique, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Northern Guyana and the Dutch Islands of Aruba, Curacao and Bonaire.

In Saint Lucia, the country's water problems are grave and the island's lone water company is now rationing the precious resource. Farmers say the situation is affecting food production. "It is very bad in Saint Lucia now. These days, there is no water. When I work in the bananas now, I have to go very far to get water to spray my property," said 68-year-old farmer Rene Monlouis.

Farmer and small-business owner Ambrose Mongroo lost an entire yield of crops to the scorching heat and dry conditions. He says the last time he experienced a drought so severe was in 1986. "It's affecting me very bad because the water is so scarce, even my flushing toilets. I have a big tank, but there is no water in it," said Mongroo. "We have to buy water from a guy who takes water from a river in a nearby community. We buy three drums (of water) a day."

The island's minister responsible for water and the environment, Dr. James Fletcher, declared in a televised address to the nation this week a national water related emergency and warned that conditions are expected to worsen over the next few weeks.

"The Meteorological Office has indicated that the rainfall outlook for the next three months will be below normal for this time of year ... the forecast is that islands in the southeastern Caribbean like Saint Lucia, which have existing water shortages may not see any improvement until the Hurricane, or wet season, starts," he said.

The island's water company has unveiled measures to deal with the drought, including repairing and bringing back online water intakes that had been decommissioned due to damage, and activating mobile water treatment plants that may be rapidly deployed where needed. The government is encouraging all citizens to be extremely prudent with their use of water and to avoid wasting the precious resource.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/56961-caribbean-countries-grapple-with-drought>



Radio Habana Cuba