

Saving Caribbean Islands' Coasts



Castries, July 04 (teleSUR-RHC) Coastal erosion poses a significant threat to beaches across the Caribbean but regional governments are scrambling to slow down the rate of erosion.

It is a particularly serious concern as seventy percent of people in the Caribbean live on the coasts, with many of the countries' capital cities less than a mile away from the water's edge.

Now, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia have launched a \$15m campaign to save their coastlines.

"A lot of this vulnerability is based on the natural characteristics of islands as Saint Lucia. We're basically coastal communities, most of our populations reside on the coasts, most of our critical infrastructure are coastal infrastructure. So this project is trying to build resilience to ensure that we can continue to benefit from our natural assets, many of which are along our coastlines," says Project Manager Kenneth Reid.

Residents like D'Anthony Charles say the project is timely as Caribbean nationals become more aware of climate change and its impacts, they are embracing projects that will protect the environment for future generations. "Climate change is something that affects the region ...it's actively seen. It's not something that we are not aware of and we have to take responsibility for the fact that humans, we are the reason why we have the heat, we have the coastal erosion, we have climate change. It's our actions that are affecting not us but our future, our children," he said.

“It will continue to deplete our environment, but there are small things that we can do now, which will mitigate the issues that we’re going to face in the future. So the important thing here is we’re getting money, take it and start to sensitize, educate, work towards coastal rehabilitation,” Charles added.

The Eastern Caribbean is among the top five global biodiversity hot spots in the world due to its coastal and marine ecosystems. Many of the islands are dependent on tourism and their beaches for economic survival.

Project officials are hoping the initiative will result in coastal recovery. Under this project, successful country proposals can access grants between \$300,000 to \$600,000 for projects consistent with the overall Coastal Protection Project, for up to 30 months.

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