

Caribbean Leaders Sign off on Climate Change Declaration



Fort-de-France, May 11 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Caribbean heads of state are hoping that the 'Declaration of Fort de France' will result in a unified voice to the unique challenges and solutions to climate related issues in their region.

The tourism-dependent countries have maintained that despite their small sizes and negligible contribution to global gas emissions, they are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

The 13 Caribbean leaders, along with Cuba's Environment Minister attended the one-day Martinique summit on Saturday, which was chaired by French President Francois Hollande. The landmark gathering gave regional leaders an opportunity to put forward a joint policy position ahead of the 21st session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations as a Framework on the Convention on Climate Change in Paris in December.

Chairman of the 9-member Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Dominican Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit said the summit gave the islands a chance to ensure that concerns of the Caribbean receive due prominence in the Paris talks. Skerrit also said climate change is an issue that affects the very survival of small island states in the Caribbean.

“We remain convinced that the global goal of limiting average temperature increase to no more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels is inadequate for protecting fragile ecosystems in SIDS from the adverse impacts of climate change, and that a target rate lower than 1.5°C would be more appropriate,” he said. “We are painfully aware that in the Caribbean, some ecosystems are already approaching the limits of their adaptive capacities, presenting major challenges for the livelihoods of the people. We therefore reiterate the call for urgent and ambitious action by developed country parties in particular, geared toward achieving this target.”

Chairman of the Caribbean Community bloc, Bahamian Prime Minister Perry Christie spoke of the urgent need to close the gap between the mitigation emitters and the level of effort required to decrease the global average temperature.

Meanwhile, President Hollande urged “rich countries to help poor countries fight global warming,” adding that “if there is nothing in terms of finance for countries that are the most vulnerable and the poorest, they won’t follow you.”

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