



**Workshop on “National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan,  
Mainstreaming of Biodiversity and the Integration of Climate  
Change.”**

***Dominica National Report***

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## Introduction

The small independent island state of Dominica is home to the most natural and intact forest covers, and spectacular and rich marine habitats found in the tropical Caribbean region. This developing country, though small in land size boast some very important features, such as; the only Boiling lake found in our part of the Earth and a UNESCO World Heritage Site “Morne Trois Pitons National Park”, just to name a few. Our Biodiversity is rich in Flora and Fauna and most of which is undocumented proves that there is a lot more that can be done in terms of Conservation and Preservation of species and habitats.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of Dominica’s land area is covered by natural vegetation ranging from dry scrub woodland on the west coast to lush, tropical rain forest in the interior and a wide variety of flora. The interior is interspersed with rivers, waterfalls and lakes, and these attributes have earned Dominica the name "The Nature Island of the Caribbean".

Awareness of the Earth’s dwindling biotic wealth during the years leading up to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro resulted in the conclusion, at this global conference, of the *Convention on Biological Diversity*. The shared sense of urgency led 156 nations and the European Union to sign the legally binding Convention before the conclusion of conference proceedings. Dominica signed to the Convention on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 1994. In 2000 the Government of Dominica embarked upon the preparation of its Biological Diversity Strategy and Action Plan in fulfillment of its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

This Strategy and Action Plan is based on a series of sectoral studies and seven stakeholder Consultations conducted (five local and two national workshops). Dominica’s Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan highlights the vision, goals and objectives, and guiding principles that are to direct the implementation of specific strategies and actions for the conservation of the country’s biodiversity.

Dominica’s biodiversity is under threat largely from the impact of human activity and natural disasters. Major threats are presented by:

- Deforestation;
- Over-exploitation of wildlife;
- Encroachment;
- Unregulated development;
- Introduction of foreign species;
- Loss of agro-biodiversity;
- Impacts from climate change;
- Uncontrolled use of biotechnology;
- Pollution;

- Natural disasters;
- Loss of traditional knowledge;
- Inappropriate legal/institutional frameworks.

**The Steering Committee** that was formed to ensure the preparation and initial dissemination of the NBSAP's in Dominica comprised of members from private sector organizations and the public service, which included:

Mr. Errol Harris, Chairperson  
 Mr. David Lang  
 Dr. Vivian Moise  
 Mr. Harold Guiste  
 Mr. Arlington James  
 Mr. Oliver Grell  
 Mr. Henry Shillingford  
 Mr. Alvin Bernard

### **The NBSAP's Vision**

We the people of Waitukubuli recognize Dominica's unique and fragile ecosystems as the basis for the development and advancement of our people and nation. As custodians of nature's biodiversity, we aspire to integrate the endowed gifts of our biotic wealth, with our cultural knowledge, to ensure economic, cultural and ecological integrity for the well being of present and future generations.

### **Goals**

1. The conservation and sustainable management of Dominica's terrestrial and marine biodiversity to ensure intra- and inter-generational equity.
2. The promotion of sound and sustainable agricultural practices and technology within existing agricultural human capital so as to minimize the loss of agro-biodiversity, and reduce Vulnerability to desertification, soil loss, and the contamination of water resources.
3. To ensure that biotechnology knowledge and concerns are widely distributed so that all life is guarantee and benefits derived are equitably shared.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To secure a biologically rich and diverse Dominica which:
  - maintains optimum systems resilience;
  - maintains resistance to invasive alien species;
  - maintains ecosystem structure and function;

- maximizes ecological integrity by reducing negative environmental impact of human influences; and
  - is populated by a diversity of peoples who promote and undertake the wise and sustainable use of natural resources.
2. To reduce or eliminate the potential risks from the use of biotechnology and its by-products while at the same time exploiting opportunities presented that are in keeping with Dominica's sustainable development agenda.
  3. To reduce and/or minimize the loss of terrestrial and marine biodiversity.
  4. To ensure that the basis for development is through the sustainable use of terrestrial and marine biological resources.
  5. To ensure the equitable and sustainable distribution of social and economic benefits from the use of terrestrial and marine biological resources.

Implementation of the country's NBSAP has been minimal on the ground but some very important government agencies and private environmental entities have incorporated its goals and objectives as part of their institutions adaptation to Global Changes, such as; Climate Change and Global Warming, to name a few. The steering committee is now nonfunctional and the Environmental Coordinating Unit is the main Government department which seeks to uphold and disseminate the importance of the NBSAP to our National development.

## **Conclusion**

With the growing Global challenges that are affecting directly or indirectly the sustainability and proper use of Natural resources, the various International Conventions seek to give rise to specific legal documents to help govern sustainably the Earth's natural resources. The next step for Dominica's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action plans is that greater emphasis be placed on the implementation of its goals and objectives to meet up to part of the expectation of the 2010 targets and further beyond.