



Antigua and Barbuda International Year of Biological Diversity Activities for 2010

Introduction

In commemoration of the International Year of Biological Diversity the Environment Education Unit in the Environment Division – Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and The Environment, was involved in two major projects: the first involved the country's primary schools, and the second was aimed towards providing information on critical environment concerns to the general public. The activity in the schools (where the Environment Division directs an Environment Cadet Programme) was a Biodiversity Jingle Competition; while the other was a Public Service Announcement developed for radio and television.

Biodiversity Jingle Competition

Environment Cadets from seventeen (17) schools across the island took part in a competition focused on the importance of Biodiversity and its relationship to the sustainability of human life. Each school was given a booklet prepared by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) which detailed the importance of biodiversity on a national and regional level. The book, entitled "Biodiversity: The Spice of Life" provided a wealth of information for the cadets. It explained the definition of biological diversity, and how it impacts upon all persons, particularly those within the Caribbean Region.

For the competition, each school was required to develop a short song (or jingle) no longer than two minutes, that highlighted the importance of biodiversity or discussed the means necessary to preserve it. To choose the winning school, three local judges were selected. They included Mr. Tian Winter, Regional Soca Monarch, Mr. Vinema Jarvis, Director of Sanctuary (a local performing choir), and Mr. Quincy Etinoff, a celebrated local pianist.

The top three places in the competition were awarded as follows: Sunnyside Tutorial (first place), Pares Primary School (second place), and Five Islands Primary School (third place). The winners had the opportunity to record their jingles at Pelican Lodge Studios by the renowned Steve Jackson. The three schools were also showcased on the local television morning program, Good Morning Antigua Barbuda, where they sang their jingles for the wider audience of Antigua and Barbuda.

The jingles were distributed to a number of radio stations throughout the country where they were played over a period of a few weeks.

The jingles will be redistributed to all radio stations during the course of 2011 as part of the Division's continued commitment to educating the public on biodiversity issues.

Biodiversity PSA

The focus of the Biodiversity PSA's was to sensitise the general public on the negative impact that human activities directly and indirectly have on the country's biological diversity. The project entailed the conducting of a series of three interviews with a local fisherman, a farmer and a market vendor. In each interview, respondents discussed the changes that have been experienced over the years that they have been plying their trade or utilizing their skills and the impact that this has had on their livelihood. For example, the fisherman noted that the quantity of fish he would normally catch for sale has decreased in recent years, and this he believes, is due to an increase in the level of pollution in the traditional fishing areas.

These interviews clearly highlighted how the loss of biodiversity impacts upon the people who are most dependent upon it for survival, and by extension, the nation. These videos will be launched during 2011.