

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net)
Caribbean Regional Trialogue on Pollinators, Food Security and Climate Resilience

Red de Servicios de Biodiversidad y Ecosistemas (BES-Net)
Triálogo Regional del Caribe sobre Polinizadores, Seguridad Alimentaria y Resiliencia Climática

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
4-6 September 2018
Opening Session: Tuesday, 4 September, 9:00 – 9:40

- **Opening Session Speakers:**
 - **Hon. Ángel Estévez, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources**
 - **Hon. Eng. Osmar Benítez, Minister of Agriculture**
 - **Lorenzo Jiménez de Luis, UN RC/UNDP RR in Dominican Republic**
- Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. A very good morning. It is with great pleasure to welcome you all to the Caribbean Regional Trialogue on Pollinators, Food Security and Climate Resilience.
- First and foremost, I would like to thank the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, the Dominican Republic focal point to Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (or IPBES in short) for hosting this Trialogue in Santo Domingo – Honourable Minister Estévez, we very much appreciate the excellent collaboration with you and your colleagues in preparation for this important event.
- I feel genuinely privileged to be addressing you this morning on our intended journey in the next three days through the Trialogue.
- The Trialogue is organized under UNDP's Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (or BES-Net in short) to complement IPBES's capacity building work. BES-Net is funded by the Governments of Germany, Norway and Sweden and I would like to thank all of them once again for their generous support to us.
- The IPBES' 2016 global assessment report on pollinators, pollination and food production highlights a number of key messages:
 - That more than 75% of the crop plants grown depend on pollination, including coffee, almonds, many fruits, and chocolate, and therefore pollinator-dependent food products are important contributions to healthy human diets and nutrition;

- That pollinators are also a source of multiple benefits to people, beyond food provisioning, contributing directly to medicines, biofuels, fibres, construction materials, arts and crafts, to name a few; and
 - That the occurrence and diversity of wild pollinators have been declining steadily due to habitat loss, pesticide use, pollution, competition from non-native species and climate change, among other causes.
- The global momentum to protect pollinators led to the creation of the “Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators” in 2016 and declaration of 20 May as World Bee Day in 2018. The terms like pollinators and pollination may still be uncommon in many part of the Caribbean, yet the Caribbean island countries are in a precarious ecological position. They are blessed with the benefits of rich and unique insular biodiversity, but these benefits have been increasingly threatened as a result of land use change, recurrent extreme climate events, and invasive alien species, etc.
- The Trialogue brings together the three BES-Net communities of science, policy and practice into clear and constructive dialogue; hence the name ‘trialogue’. We seek to raise awareness of the IPBES assessment findings across the three communities and assist them in reviewing and assessing the assessment’s key messages through regional and national lenses.
- We are honored to have all three complementary sector representatives together – policymakers, scientists and practitioners – from the IPBES member states in the Caribbean, namely Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, to deliberate on region-specific challenges and opportunities on pollinators and pollination and build a common agenda for action both at policy and programme levels.
- In order to foster inter-sectoral learning and inter-cultural understanding, the Trialogue applies various innovative tools and approaches, organizing a mixture of plenary and group sessions and field visits, using background document, creative visual stimuli and many other supporting materials and incorporating pollination-dependent ingredients in the meals. Accordingly,

the participants are encouraged to use all five senses fully and see, hear, taste, smell and touch the theme of pollinators and pollination, which in turn will enable them to frame it not as a pure environment but as broader economic, social and cultural issue.

- I thank you for your attention and look forward to reporting the outputs of the Trialogue joinery, including a set of jointly identified policy options, back to you on 6 September at the High-level breakfast session.