



**International Panel on
Deltas and Coastal areas**

CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND WATER REPORT

December 2022



Table of contents

1

Introduction

2

Opening of the conference

3

Island statements

4

Technical presentations

5

Panel on implementation and finance

6

Conclusions and next steps

Forward

This gathering, paired with additional knowledge-sharing and community engagement efforts, has set the stage for the International Panel on Deltas and Coastal areas to be demand-driven in nature. Hearing from Caribbean leaders and experts, and international experts alike curated an excellent space for gathering community knowledge of challenges and needs of Caribbean small islands.

IPDC heard that Caribbean islands call for assessment of what is needed for capacity building, support in access to climate funding, and the alignment of stakeholder objectives by assisting in national adaptation plans and providing a platform for sharing knowledge, best practices and scientific guidelines. Upon launching at UN-Water 2023 conference IPDC will present a working plan including contributions for Caribbean island adaptation. Community engagements and peer learning will continue with the support of the Global Centre on Adaptation's Water Adaptation Community as a knowledge-sharing and community engagement partner.

Introduction

This conference and the international Panel on Deltas and Coastal Zones (IPDC) respond to the urgent and critical need for special leadership to accelerate sustainable development and climate adaptation in deltas, coastal zones and small islands. According to the International Monetary Fund, the economic cost of disasters exacerbated by sea level rise for the Caribbean is substantial, exceeding \$22 billion between 1950 and 2016, compared with \$58 billion for similar disasters globally. With rising sea levels and the increasing intensity of severe storms, these disasters are expected to increase. Many more slow onset disasters are also threatening islands, including high population and urbanization pressures on limited land areas, vulnerable marine ecosystems, which hold significant value to the national economies.

To address these challenges, global collaboration and coalition building is urgently needed between countries, their leaders, science and finance experts and networks. The IPDC is an initiative by the Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and Water and Deltares supported by the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA). The IPDC was announced at the COP 27 and aims at linking together policy makers, experts and practitioners in a unique partnership.

The IPDC consists of three interacting layers:

- *The policy and finance layer:* the **Champions Group** consisting of High-Level Leaders for political and financial commitment and leadership.
- *The science layer:* the **International Expert Panel** consisting of Top-level Scientists and Adaptation Experts linking shared knowledge to local planning and implementation needs.
- *The implementation layer:* the **Action Holders** consisting of Knowledge Networks and Implementation Agencies working with the international experts to support accelerated actions on the ground.

Objectives of the conference

The hybrid conference in Curaçao and on Zoom on 13 December 2022, had the aim of bringing together the Caribbean high-level leaders and experts to help shape this important initiative by identifying key issues, opportunities and challenges for the IPDC to consider and take forward. It also served as a call for Caribbean leadership to join this initiative and collaborative action in preparation for the UN Water Conference in March 2023 in New York and beyond.

The program consisted of a high-level leaders meeting in the morning, an expert meeting in the afternoon and a field visit the following day. The main objective of the high-level leaders meeting was to continue the dialogue on the adaptation challenges for the Caribbean building on existing efforts. In the afternoon, experts presented the state of the art on climate change scenarios and adaptation efforts in the Caribbean, and participants engaged in exchange of ideas or expectations regarding the IPDC.

Opening of the conference

Introduction by Henk Ovink

The morning program of the conference was moderated by Henk Ovink, special envoy for international water affairs for the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Netherlands lead for the UN2023 Water Conference. He opened the day by welcoming the participants and making grounding statements on the urgency and relevance of coming together as islands, under the umbrella of the IPDC, on the topic of climate adaptation and water. Both research and practice show that many challenges are similar among at deltas, coasts, and islands. Therefore, it is also here – on islands in the Caribbean – where the solutions lie to interconnected challenges. Henk also stressed that this **conference is about both plans and implementation; to see “how the agenda of islands can land in the UN conference and IPDC; and that can be a catalyst for implementation, scale, and replication”**.

Welcome speech by Prime Minister Gilmar Pisas

The Prime Minister started with his appreciation of the participants online and in person, as well as the Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and Water. He mentioned the vulnerabilities and opportunities for resilience on islands, **“while vulnerabilities are inherent to small islands, strategies can be put in place to adapt by increasing resilience”**. For Curaçao priorities lie with ocean preservation, water management and food security, and the cabinet takes actions accordingly. Outstanding examples are: a climate change platform, a policy assessment conducted with support of UNESCO, a sustainable water management plan based on IWRM principles, [Project Xploration Coastline](#), and a local food security strategic plan, amongst others. **However, improving data, planning, local capacity and early warning systems are areas where Curaçao looks forward to working with the IPDC to improve.**

Keynote speech by Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management Mark Harbers

As the initiator of the International Panel on Deltas and Coastal areas Minister Mark Harbers held an inspiring opening speech of the conference. In his speech he stressed the vulnerability of deltas, coastal areas and small islands to climate change. He continued with the importance of the conference: **“This conference inspires us to forge stronger partnerships and to protect our peoples, now and in the future.”**. The IPDC connects the worlds of science, technology, finance and politics so that we can find adaptive pathways that are affordable, integrated and flexible. We need to do this together in partnership which the IPDC offers: **“No island can do this on its own and they don’t have to. We can learn from each other, strengthen each other and share knowledge, solutions and funding with each other. We’re setting to work.”**

Introduction of the IPDC by Martien Beek

Martien Beek program lead IPDC at the Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and Water management further introduced the IPDC program, goals and expected results. He emphasized the urgency and opportunity for action in deltas, coasts and islands and the necessity to team up to make impact. **“Driven by dedicated leadership, knowledge partners and coalitions of the willing, the IPDC aims to be an effective international platform/facility to act on improving lives, livelihoods and ecosystems in the deltas & coastal areas and assist in action-oriented climate adaptation strategies.”**

The IPDC is centered around long-term commitment (‘22-’30) and is driven by the demand of its committed partners to deliver tailor made advice. It does so by focusing on three areas:

- Stimulating the development of political coalitions and partnerships to prioritize water issues.
- Co-development of state-of-the-art shared knowledge and capacity on climate risks and resilience.
- Co-development of demand-driven, integrated, and actionable solutions in the fields of planning, governance, and finance.

Island statements

Aruba

Ursell M. Arends

Minister for Integrity, Nature, Transport and Care for the Elderly

Main climate impacts on Aruba are **water security**, flooding, unprecedented rainfall in recent months, and their climate **vulnerable infrastructure** such as power supply, hospitals and telecommunication.

An adaptation measure of Aruba is a **national climate resiliency council**, and they have a strong focus on increasing resiliency through **nature-based** solutions. Among many examples they work on mangrove, coral reefs and sea-grass meadows restoration, as well as expanding the marine park island-round and both increasing and protecting biodiversity in the wetlands and lagoons. Aruba is also committed to including the **rights of nature** in their constitution. In terms of policy, they work on national legislation for environmental impact assessment, a draft water memorandum for wastewater policy and a draft water ordinance.

Aruba acknowledged that the **IPDC can play a role in access to knowledge, networks, scientific guidelines, collaboration, and capacity building that is needed to support sustainable, strategic and scalable solutions for complex climate and water challenges**. Moreover, they are also proud to share their experience and expertise in the IPDC on common issues Caribbean islands are all facing. In March at the UN Aruba will make several commitments towards sustainable water management.

Sint Maarten

Egbert J. Doran

Minister of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure

An example of the climate impacts Sint-Maarten faces is the strongest **hurricane** on record in 2017. In the years after the number of hurricanes in the region has increased along with significant damages. Climate change has also **shifted food supply**, and **rising sea levels** are a direct threat to the Caribbean marine biodiversity and this directly affects economies and livelihoods on the island.

Therefore, Sint-Maarten is working on adaptation measures such as **updating the built coast, environmental norms and zoning plans** to ensure that future buildings are more resilient to storms. Other measures they take are investing in research on climate impacts, constructing integrated best waste management practices, and MoU with energy consultant to develop strategic renewable energy transition plan. They are also involved in the development of a **multidimensional vulnerability index for SIDS**.

According to Sint-Maarten the **IPDC needs to redirect attention to human and financial capacity for urgent recovery and survival initiatives. Most importantly, if we take preventative measures in water and sanitation plans, we are in the same investment reducing our climate vulnerability**. It is important that internal experiences, particularly those of the Caribbean part of the kingdom, are used to **bring awareness to the place of the SIDS**. Multilateral partnerships are needed to achieve these common goals, so the creation of this platform is much needed and greatly appreciated by Sint-Maarten.

St Eustatius

Glenville Schmidt

Government Commissioner

One of the climate impacts St Eustatius faces are goats as **invasive species** that cause erosion and affect vegetation, topsoil erosion and improper runoff. They are also faced with many weather impacts such as increasing temperatures and **prolonged drought, irregular and imbalanced rains**, and **annual hurricanes increasing intensity and frequency**. Moreover, the **limited availability of freshwater** impacts the quality

of marine ecosystems and biodiversity that they struggle to monitor. **Coastal erosion** is also a challenge they are facing, where the lower town region is already the most affected.

An adaptation measure St Eustatius therefore takes is the establishment of a long-term nature and environmental **protection program**. Other ongoing efforts are the **Marine Park** surrounding the island, invasive species removal, and **rainwater control systems by underground water channels**. They are also committed to the **education** of the public in understanding the problem and making them part of the solution.

St Eustatius hopes to **look to the IPDC for solutions and best practices in the international and regional arena to help them deal with the issues they are facing**.

Bonaire

Edison Rijna

Lieutenant Governor

A couple weeks ago Bonaire experienced **exceptional terrestrial rainfall** that flooded big parts of the island and its infrastructure. Coral reefs surrounding the island were also severely impacted by the runoff, degrading these natural wave shock absorbers. Recent studies also show that Bonaire will be affected by **rising sea levels**.

One of the adaptation measures Bonaire takes is the organization of a **climate roundtable** for climate change preparedness. In consultation with the Dutch Water Boards they hope to present their **comprehensive and sustainable approach for water management** at the UN Water Conference in March.

They **hope the IPDC can help in collectively learning how to better protect and defend islands against water** and act proactively on climate change and adaptation. Bonaire also offered itself as a **testing ground** for sustainable technologies and developments that, when successful, can be shared as best practices with other countries through the IPDC. The sustainable water management action plan they hope to launch in March can be a **roadmap for other islands** in terms of financing, governance, and capacity.

Curaçao

Dorothy Pietersz-Janga

Minister of Health, Environment and Nature

For Curaçao climate impacts concern **both water quantity and quality**, with the threat of floods and droughts increasingly becoming a problem. Likely to many other islands they are also faced with the impacts of **rising sea levels and degradation of fertile lands** affecting the livelihoods of their people.

Many efforts have gone to strengthening adaptation measures on the island and progress has been made. For example, the **Curaçao climate change platform** was recently set up and a working party started to coordinate the climate change transition. Important pillars are nature-based solutions, innovative ideas, courageous commitments, and a **shift towards prevention and adaptation**. In policy Curaçao is creating a participatory support base, making infrastructure resilient, a food security strategy, project Xploration coastline, and a newly adopted water policy.

For the IPDC Curaçao emphasizes **sharing knowledge and expertise for evidence-based decision making**, for them specifically expertise on retaining and distributing water is lacking. They also mention **access to climate funding** needs to be tackled vigorously, because the process is so intricate that many SIDS have not been able to access funds they need. Therefore, the IPDC can help in forming partnerships with countries that do get it, with the hope that this will lead to cross-sectoral and inclusive efforts.

High level panel

The first question asked concerned financial capacity necessary to support climate resiliency and how this relates to the GDP of SIDS. Multiple island representatives replied that it is difficult if not impossible to estimate the capacity needed, but that a shift of focus is needed towards **opportunity costs** and recognising the value of these investments. The lieutenant governor of Bonaire emphasised the issue of implementation costs. Minister Harbers said that the best possible outcome of the IPDC would be to get an idea of these opportunity costs and simultaneously come up with new spatial planning strategies contributing to **prevention**. It was also added that **trust** is an important component for this to work, as **equal partners** in the IPDC as a community of practice that dares to do peer to peer review and learning.

A question followed on the islands' spatial planning measures for their future built environment and whether they take water systems and climate impacts into account. The island representatives mentioned several legislative processes in this regard, although all with a slightly different focus. The last question was on how the islands deal with the lack of **human resources** or capacity, especially for specialized knowledge. Curaçao works inter-ministerial to tackle this issue and makes work of selecting which projects make the biggest difference and are the most realistic. On Bonaire this is also a big issue for which they have much support from the Dutch government; however, they are working on increasing capacity for maintenance of projects; *“don't give us fish but teach us how to fish”*. Whereas Sint Maarten looked back on recruitment during his recent visit in the Netherlands, concluding once again that we can collectively work on increasing capacity. Minister Harbers also pointed at the importance of **retraining the current workforce** for future-proof climate-adaptive building and even for improving access to financing.

Technical presentations

1

Trends concerning small islands and coastal areas in the Caribbean region

By Rubert Konijn from the Royal Dutch Meteorological Institute (KNMI)

Climate scenarios are the foundation for climate adaptation action, however there is uncertainty in models and **discrepancy between observation and models in the Caribbean** because of tropical eastern Pacific warming bias. With the Vrije University of Amsterdam **the KNMI developed a database (STORM) to use and calculate risks**, for example they found that the return rate of a Category 5 hurricane near St Maarten is 165 years and predicted how this probability will change in a warming climate. Another recent study was on sea level rise for the BES islands, in which they found that Saba will experience about the average of worldwide sea level rise. Some islands have less issues while others have more, but a common factor is that flooding is a big risk due to sea level rise. **To this end, the successful application of weather and climate services is essential, but this depends on a good system of observations.** Currently, this is limited by the ability to observe and pay from national resources to this end **KNMI launched an early warning centre multi-hazard dashboard.**

2

Coastal impacts and (nature-based) solutions

By Ap van Dongeren from Deltares

SIDS share common problems, while small islands cause a small part of global CO₂ emissions, they are faced with sea level rise, more intense storms, and changing rainfall patterns amongst more hazards. For coasts changes in winds and tides can cause hazardous waves (swell waves and high storm waves) that can cause flooding and erosion. A problem due to the deep-water surrounding islands can be that after hurricanes sand does not naturally return, a problem that is intensified by climate change and rising sea levels. This and **chronic coastal erosion by trade winds** is hard to solve for small islands because of their limited sand supply, while small sand losses can already have a big impact on the system using Aruba in the 1980s as example. **As dynamic areas, coasts need buffer areas for which soft interventions are preferred.** A few solutions Ap mentioned were; investing in early warning systems, develop and practice evacuation plans, resilient infrastructure and building relocation, geotubes in dunes, and coral reef, sea grass and mangrove restoration.

P

Questions and answers panel

With Rubert Konijn and Ap van Dongeren

What are lessons we can learn in terms of the **efficacy of flood and early warning systems in SIDS**, because of the nature of SIDS size sometimes recognition that flooding can take place can be within a matter of minutes. To prepare, islands can do scenario modelling to see which areas are critical to give quick warnings to. Ap works on **using nowcast radar in early warning systems to predict flash floods**, to make this a success existing technologies of different agencies must work together. In some cases, there will still be a very short notice for people to evacuate, there we can work on decreasing their vulnerability by securing houses. Rubert added that the Netherlands is also working on incorporating nowcast radar system, including the launch of a new satellite.

It is predicted that hurricanes will not increasing in quantity but will increase in severity due to increasing sea temperatures. **Another question was on the transferability of this research to other SIDS so that they form their own tailor-made solutions.** Ap believes all the tools are there, we do need specific elevation models of SIDS and to increase data quality. He works on satellite derived products to increase knowledge and capability to transfer and make flood maps for islands. **Connecting and maintaining the tools and getting the warnings to the right people for evacuation planning is needed. Open and shared science is very important**, developments such as cloud-based computing also helps in this regard.

3

Biodiversity and ecosystem management as adaptation

By Farzana Yusuf-Leon of Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean IWECO

The objective of Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystem Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWECO project) is to contribute to the preservation of Caribbean ecosystems that are of global significance. Specific **objectives are to strengthen policy, legislative and institutional reforms and capacity building**, taking into consideration climate resilience building. In September 2021 they completed reviewing the status of policy, legislative implementation, action plans and strategies for which 12 ToRs were developed and 6 got budget allocations **based on stakeholder indicated priorities**. Priorities are a methodological framework for integrated coastal zone management for Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, a regional environmental monitoring data portal, a national water information system for Saint Kitts & Nevis, a national research strategy for Antigua and Barbuda and Trinidad and Tobago, a marine pollution management strategy and national action plan for Barbados, and the update of the national risk management plan of the Dominican Republic. **Integrated is a key word for IWECO** thus they plan on finalizing an **action framework** for Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) for CARICOM states.

4

Adaptation strategies and holistic approach of water management for Curaçao

By Pedzi Flores Girigori of Meteo Curaçao and the Curaçao Climate Change Platform

Using the art of storytelling and magnetic metaphors Pedzi explained the advancements in climate change and especially water management in Curaçao. She explained the numerous **benefits of aligning stakeholder objectives with a national vision or roadmap**. To this end the Curaçao Climate Change Platform was established, a scientific and evidence-based platform where expertise related to the adverse impacts of climate change is combined to formulate mitigation and adaptation strategies. The **policy themes are knowledge of the impact, mitigation strategies, adaptation strategies, and cross-cutting issues** to develop a support base and make Curaçao resilient to the adverse impacts of natural hazards and the loss of biodiversity. While explaining the story of Curaçao it became clear that culture is a very important aspect in advancing behavioral changes, and hence the need for integrating **social adaptation and capacity building** in policy measures. One of the adaptive measures Curaçao is working on is catchment area management on micro and macro level by applying nature-based solutions.

P

Questions and answers panel

With Farzana Yusuf-Leon and Pedzi Girigori

During the panel a question of the public regarded **challenges with data management and procurement** in the IWEco project Farzana presented. She explained that existing national data will be imported into the new data management system, however in order to avoid duplication of systems, links to existing portals will be provided where they exist. She also stated that where synergies exist with other projects, such as the development of a **research strategy** for some countries, there will be cooperation in the engagement of stakeholders for similar data and information to reduce burden and duplication. Recognizing that there are needs in the region to build capacity in data and information gathering and use, **recommendations of the IWRM Framework report provide opportunities for funding and support**, based on a gap analysis that was done for CARICOM members.

The next question, on what happens with the water at the basin, was directed at Pedzi. She explained that several dam systems overflow if they reach capacity, from there the water will go downstream and reach the sea. **A goal of Curaçao is to have some of this run-off infiltrated into the ground, and work is being done at the micro level to increase this**. Part of this strategy is also community awareness, for example through water toolkits in the local language for youth.

Panel on implementation and finance

Joep Verhagen	Josette Edward-Charlemagne	Vanessa Toré	Trevor Thompson
Global Centre on Adaptation, Water & Urban Programs	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Nationally Determined Contributions Finance Initiative	Director Foreign Economic Cooperation at Ministry of Economic Development of Curaçao Local 2030 Islands Network	Global Water Partnership-Caribbean

Joep Verhagen, Global Center on Adaptation on financing adaptation - Introduction

Three main points that drive the uptake of financing adaptation are:

1. Science, finance and implementation need to be linked from the beginning;
2. Mainstreaming of adaptation does not stand alone, it must be integrated;
3. Adaptation is good economics: 4 USD is net benefit for each dollar invested.

This should be told to all ministers of finance. Climate accounts should be considered in every decision related to infrastructure. GCA offers technical expertise and solutions brokering to accelerate adaptation. In our technical programs, we are working with governments and the world Banks to support the financing of adaptation. As a solutions broker, we connect the science, local governments, and world banks from the beginning ensuring they're both equally satisfied with any project's terms of reference. The inclusive roach ensure government follow up actions based on the results of the climate risk assessment.

In term of community building and facilitating on-the-ground knowledge the GCA has a [Water Adaptation Community](#), with active thematic communities of practice to link subgroups of Practitioners, stakeholders, policymakers, decision-makers, and local community experts to share knowledge of best practices. A recent webinar hosted on Small Islands, the community voice brought forward the message that "implementation of solutions now" is needed. The Water Adaptation Community will partner with IPDC for events to share scientific knowledge and implementer-level knowledge sharing of best adaptation practices.

What are the challenges to planning and implementation of adaptation and resilient development?

Vanessa Toré: Three main challenges island face are **1. finances, 2. human capacity, and 3. prioritization. Better connecting financing to the priorities** is a first step, and addressing the human capacity follows. If we can **collaborate among islands to put the capacity where it is needed most**, it could solve many problems.

Trevor Thompson: A problem is the **isolation of action**, feel as a group SIDS are somewhat alone and feel internationally unheard, and IPDC can further connect us [to coastal and delta countries]. Strange research that includes traditional knowledge is completed but **not moving to demonstration projects or implementation**. We must move from research to implementation. The **lack of data, and human resources well as planning and policy** all are slowing down implementation.

Josette Edward-Charlemagne: Challenges getting to implementation are as mentioned, **inadequate human and institutional resources, inadequate financing, pressures and constraints**. Furthermore, **data gaps, lack of baseline studies; are creating the challenges for implementation and planning**.

What is needed in terms of national planning specifically, to get to effective implementation?

Joep Verhagen: The plan needs to be connected to the national budget the plan needs to speak to the budget. **Adaptation Plans need to be fully integrated across department** not just held and accepted by the Ministry of Environment when decisions are made by the ministry of finance. Capacity, resource and granularity of data need to be addressed.

Josette Edward-Charlemagne: We **need the presence of ministries of economic affairs and ministries of planning in the initial discussions**, so they see the relevance of integrating climate adaptation into plans, policy and strategy.

Vanessa Toré: For Curaçaos, have the Ministry of Economic Development, is what needs to be happening, we can **look to international partnering and financing with European Union and other islands, with sustainable development as a strategy**. Beyond this, the local NGOs private sector and youth are also involved, having **strong teams and leaders** has been an important driver.

Trevor Thompson Every plan needs a champion; it **needs someone driving it from plan to implementation**. Challenge is having that champion, politicians are driven by the community, so gathering **community support could help drive political leadership**.

How can access to money and financing be improved for your respective countries?

Vanessa Toré: Developing and implementing strategies are very costly. Islands have to look to other sources of financing. It **starts with the local government budget**, but additional funding is needed, options are to 1. generate budget locally by offering services related to water management, 2. look to international community for grants or loans for investment. However, ahead of this a good plan and policy to implement the plan/strategy is needed). **Prioritising and starting to address small challenges is progress and helps work towards addressing the core issue**.

Joep Verhagen: A gap which needs to be closed is **linking the international money is available and the local government/partners trying to access it**. GCA is working to close this gap by thinking about **preparing bankable projects**. Locally groups need to understand and speak the language of development banks, as well as understand opportunities and limitations. Setting up **a support facility to do this** can help close the gap. We need adaptation to be **integrated in existing projects and increase budget that way**.

What is your vision of the role of the private sector? How can they improve technology or provide new solutions? And how does the financing and role of tenders connect to the private sector?

Trevor Thompson: **Reducing bureaucracy is needed in the tender and the application process** is needed. The in-kind human resources contributed to these project applications and delivery adds up to millions of dollars and are not accounted for. **Lack of capacity to conduct procurement and hire/work with consultants** to get an international funding proposal to the stage where it could be accepted, is a challenge. There is **competition among multilateral organizations, competing concepts, and no consultations with the locals**. You **need to consult to get what they really need to get the problems**. Echoing from the last question – we cannot compete capacity wise and this must be addressed.

What pitfalls should IPDC try to avoid?

Josette Edward-Charlemagne: **not adding extra administrative processes** and make it more complicated. Funding is reliable and structured to allow planning and not ad hoc events and activities.

Joep Verhagen: biggest pitfall is **being supply driver rather than demand driven and replication of what is there already**. IPDC need to collaborate on researching the need, so that it lands with the people it is for.

Trevor Thompson: **If it lacks proper administrative structure, that is needed to keep the engine running**. You don't want to become an organisation that **meets and has no capacity to work and do additional research between meetings**.

Vanessa Toré: **avoid not being inclusive**, actively involve partners and stakeholders, and failing to plan beyond the UN conference, **make sure there is a longer-term roadmap longer than just the UN-Water conference**- plan and vision beyond that, to make sure we are on track for realizing some water adaptation goals and reach the SDG-6 goals.

Josette Edward-Charlemagne: Mark Habers indicated that he is happy that SIDS is present at this meeting, I respond we must be at these discussions. Caribbean has been adaptive, resilient and is realized as one of the most vulnerable and on the front lines of climate impacts. The need for urgent and ambitious action is acknowledged water and critical infrastructures are key sectors.

Conclusions and next steps

Moderator Henk Ovink closed off the conference with an energizing and inspiring presentation on the upcoming UN Water Conference 22-24 March 2023. Co-host Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands work closely together on organizing an inclusive, action-oriented and cross-sectoral conference. The Water Action Agenda – a set of voluntary commitments that can come through coalitions and partnerships across all of society – is a main deliverable of this conference to further strengthen the global water agenda. Attendants of this conference are **encouraged to work together, with the support of the IPDC, on such clear commitments, pledges and actions**. For islands opportunities are bringing together all stakeholders and collectively formulating an island position statement on water and climate related challenges, through which the urgency is addressed at the highest political forum.

The outcomes of this conference will be brought to the ECLAC Regional Water Dialogues in Santiago de Chili February 2023. This is a possibility to further identify the collective challenges, opportunities and innovations of islands and establish a roadmap towards the UN 2023 Water Conference and beyond. The conference also **served as a call for Caribbean leadership to join this initiative and collaborative action in preparation for the UN Water Conference in March 2023 in New York.** Several island representatives presented their commitments during the conference and highlighted the opportunity for sharing Caribbean experiences during the UN Conference to bring awareness to the place of SIDS.

This IPDC Caribbean conference had the aim of bringing together the Caribbean high-level leaders and identifying key issues, opportunities and challenges for the demand driven IPDC to take forward. The following considerations for IPDC continued development and roll-out have been identified during the conference:

1

IPDC should play a role in access to **knowledge, networks, scientific guidelines, collaboration, and capacity building** that is needed **to support sustainable, strategic and scalable solutions;**

- Sharing knowledge and **expertise for evidence-based decision making;**
- Islands are also proud to **share their experience, expertise and best practices through the IPDC on common (regional) issues;**
- **Cross-sectoral and inclusive efforts**, ownership over the agenda is of critical importance;
- **Trust and working together as equal partners** in the IPDC as a **community of practice** that dares to do **peer to peer review and learning;**
- Challenges that came forward were **fragmentation of island system management, incorporating interconnectedness**, lack of participatory approach, **lack of data for evidence-based decision making, lack of capacity**, and challenges in validating data.

2

IPDC needs to **redirect attention to human and financial capacity** for urgent and **proactive recovery and protective adaptation measures;**

- **Two tear approach 1) projects 2) people** is of critical importance; (retraining current workforce)
- The IPDC should **make capacity building more specific**, what is needed and how can we measure that partnerships really lead to more committed people on the islands;
- **Support in access to climate funding** by forming partnerships (with experienced countries) through the IPDC;
- Get an idea of these opportunity costs and how to build a pipeline of investment opportunities;
- **Support alignment of stakeholder objectives in the form of a national vision or roadmap.**

These findings will contribute to the IPDC working plan that is written for the UN Water Conference and forms an action plan and roadmap forward for the IPDC. If you have any more suggestions the IPDC should take forward we invite you to fill out this [form](#).

In addition to leading its own trajectory and finalizing the formulation, the IPDC is **collaborating with the Global Center on Adaptation's Water Adaptation Community for practitioner-level knowledge sharing and learning opportunities** throughout 2023. Water and adaptation champions can join this community (under the **Small Islands community of practice**) to attend community peer-learning meetings and participate as attendees or speakers at webinar and online global knowledge exchange events.

Upcoming Water Adaptation Community events: include monthly informal global knowledge-sharing meetings beginning Jan 31, 2023, a global knowledge exchange on risk assessment for urban resilience (with a breakout room focusing on assessment to implementation), and a webinar on the human societal components of water adaptation.

The community targets adaptation implementers but **all are welcome, so the invitation to join the WAC can be extended to island local NGOs, and other knowledgeable constituents. To join visit: <https://communities.adaptationportal.gca.org/>.**

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to climate adaptation measures (IPDC).

Special thanks go out to our speakers and panellists, moderators Henk Ovink and Nicole Maduro, the supporting staff of Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland (Jonas de Graaf, Michalery Balentina, Lucia Beck, Nydia Adam, Kim Sambo, Janou Troeman), Vinod Daswani and his team at Sound&Vision, Prime Minister Gilmar Pisas of Curaçao and his supporting staff (Roxienne Albertina, Darryllin van der Veen, Randall Valies, Corinne Leysner), and Aqualetra and Carmabi for hosting field visits for attendees in Curaçao.

Contact

International Panel on Deltas and Coastal areas
[LinkedIn](#)

www.deltasandcoasts.net
ipdc@deltares.nl