IMA NEWS

APRIL 2023 **VOLUME 13 - ISSUE 1**

Community Research Symposium: "Protecting Our Environment and Preserving Our Heritage through Research"

pg 2

Beyond the Blue Prize Giving Ceremony pg 5
The BBNJ Agreement – Progress! The Ocean and Multilateralism pg 7
Coastal monitoring from the skies ACS project pg 9
Supporting Caribbean Blue Economy Start-ups and Innovative Firms pg 10
The Origins of the IMA (45TH year) pg 11
Eldorado Secondary School & IMA Take on Water Quality Testing pg 12
UWI Life science Day 2023 pg 13
Welcome to the IMA (HR) pg 14
Blue Corner pg 15

INSTITUTE OF MARINE AFFAIRS 45TH ANNIVERSARY

Community Research Symposium: "Protecting Our Environment and Preserving Our Heritage through Research."

The Honourable Pennelope Beckles-Robinson Minister of Planning and Development delivering feature address at the Symposium

"Clean air, clean water and green spaces are core to both our survival on this planet and our economic prosperity." These were the sentiments shared by the Honourable Pennelope Beckles-Robinson, Minister of Planning and Development as she formally opened the Institute of Marine Affairs' (IMA) 8th Community Research Symposium in Scarborough, Tobago under the theme "Protecting Our Environment and Preserving Our Heritage through Research." Truly at the core of what the IMA does is the preservation of clean water for all. This year marks the IMA's 45th anniversary, and the symposium was part of the commemoration of its long history of researching and providing policy advise on the preservation of the marine and coastal environment in Tobago, Trinidad and across the Caribbean.

One of the key topics discussed at the symposium was the importance of Coral Reefs Resilience Scores as a gauge for the health of reef systems and their ability to withstand future stressors. Dr. Anjani Ganase, an IMA researcher, conducted a survey in 2022 to examine the health and resilience capabilities of ten reef sites around the island of Tobago. The survey examined various characteristics such as the amount of hard coral cover, coral diversity, extent of coral recruitment, prevalence of coral disease, structural complexity, herbivore biomass, extent of algae cover, and the extent of nearby coastal development.

The results of the survey were enlightening. Booby Island Reefs in Man O' War Bay in Charlotteville had the highest resilience score, demonstrating the healthiest and most likely ability to withstand stressors. Other sites such as Blackjack Hole and Angel Reef in Speyside, Castara, and Buccoo had medium-to-high resilience scores, while Culloden had medium-to-low resilience. The poorest performing reefs were Flying reef, which is one kilometer offshore Kilgywn Bay, and those in Plymouth along the coasts washed by the Caribbean Sea.

These results help the IMA in determining which reef sites should be prioritised for targeted action in management and restoration; in the case of Flying

Reef this may include measures for curbing pollution, management and even restoration. Characteristics of reef resilience that score poorly across many sites will require island-wide management, in addition to the targeted management strategies at the reef level; for example, many reefs had a low biomass of herbivores (parrotfish) which can be improved by regulating fishing practices.

Dr. Ganase also emphasised the importance of coral diversity in making the reef more resilient to future disturbances. The presence of a diverse range of coral species provides better redundancy in the face of diseases and other negative impacts of climate change or human activities. Moreover, monitoring coral disease is crucial because when a coral colony is overly impacted by a disease, it is likely to perish eventually.

Turning to seagrasses, researchers Attish Kanhai and Nikia Gooding discussed the significance of seagrasses in our ocean. Often over-looked, seagrasses play a vital role in maintaining the health and diversity of the marine environment. Not only do they serve as a food source and habitat for a diversity of marine creatures, but they also help prevent coastal erosion and help capture and store carbon dioxide- the most commonly produced greenhouse gas and one of the main drivers of climate change- in the ocean. On the global scale, these ecosystems provide a carbon sink and therefore assist with climate change mitigation. Unfortunately, seagrass loss is prevalent both worldwide and locally with the only extensive seagrass community located in Southwest Tobago. IMA has been using GIS technology to accurately map seagrass extent in order to quantify its biomass and carbon content, as well as to monitor changes over time. A feasibility study is being conducted to determine suitable areas for seagrass restoration, a management intervention to ensure its preservation for future generations.

Coastal erosion caused by storm surge (swells) are a growing concern in many coastal communities, including those in Trinidad and Tobago, and this is expected to be exacerbated by climate change impacts such as sea level rise. Symposium participants also heard from researchers Christopher Alexis and Isabelle Chen who discussed the importance of monitoring our coastlines to better understand the effects of both natural and climate induce impacts so, researchers can determine the most effective strategies to arrest coastal erosion and protect our coastline. This type of research informs

Exploring the power of the ocean: Insights from the Tobago community symposium on coastal monitoring and the impacts of swells on Trinidad and Tobago's shoreline.

planning decisions and assist coastal communities that rely on tourism and fishing in developing sustainable and resilient practices to protect their livelihoods and ecosystems.

Another important issue covered at the symposium was the bathing beach water quality at popular beaches in Tobago. Microbiologist, Mr. Sheldon Ramoutar, reported that while land-based sources of pollution are often the cause of poor water quality, most of the beaches in Tobago remain safe for bathing. However, it's important to note that during the rainy season, water quality declined at most of the study sites, highlighting the fact that what we do on land affects coastal waters.

Dr. Farahnaz Solomon, Fisheries Biologist, delivered an insightful presentation on how fishers, recreational divers, and dive tour operators have been controlling the lionfish. Her presentation was particularly relevant, given the IMA's recent start of a lionfish fish pot project, which, if successful, will provide another effective method for removing this invasive species from our waters. The fish pots, which target lionfish in deeper waters than those typically accessed by divers and snorkelers, offer a promising solution to the challenges posed by the presence of lionfish.

As an invasive alien species, lionfish can cause severe harm to coral reefs and fisheries, making effective control strategies crucial to the conservation of marine ecosystems and the protection of the livelihoods of those who depend on them. Dr. Solomon emphasised the crucial role that community members and stakeholders play in implementing lionfish control efforts. Her presentation accentuated the importance of collaborative efforts in safeguarding our marine environment for future generations.

The IMA's key partner bpTT, was present at the symposium and announced that they are extending their partnership with the IMA to undertake research and rehabilitation work. Over the next five years, phase II of MARIN, Tobago intends to deliver long-term biodiversity conservation and restoration of seagrass and coral reefs including avoided loss using a multi-pronged approach: (1) Ocean stewardship; (2) Restoration of Tobago's marine biodiversity; (3) Building sustainable

Assemblyman Nathisha Charles-Pantin Secretary of Food Security, Natural Resources, the Environment and Sustainable Development

ocean resilience. MARIN Tobago and its growing cadre of ocean caregivers are committed to a programme of direct and indirect restoration strategies to build Tobago's resilience as a single island ecosystem. Through this project, IMA aims to build connections between communities and their ocean backyard through baseline understanding, inclusion, education and embedding stewardship into communities. This will overlap with on-going practical restoration in locations of active stewardship and involve knowledge transfer and capacity building. The anticipated plan and partnerships will deliver long-term marine biodiversity conservation that may be scaled up for future restorative efforts in other areas in Tobago, Trinidad and even the wider Caribbean.

The news of BpTT extending their partnership with the IMA to undertake research and rehabilitation work was welcomed by the THA Assemblyman - Nathisha Charles-Pantin, Secretary for the Division of Food Security, Natural Resources, the Environment, and Sustainable Development. She also brought greetings to participants congratulating the IMA on its contribution to Tobago's marine environmental stewardship. The IMA had been monitoring and analysing Tobago's coral reefs and sea grasses, assessing the beaches and coastlines to ascertain its expansion and/or erosion and the water quality at bathing sites since the 1980s . The Assemblyman also extended her gratitude to BpTT for putting their support behind research and restoration efforts of the IMA and their commitment to ensuring a just and equitable future for all citizens.

Research Symposia are platforms used by the IMA to allow researchers to share with coastal communities their findings and knowledge on the marine and coastal environments which have been under study. Through collaboration, partnerships, and knowledge sharing, it is hoped that a diverse group of stakeholders can ultimately be engaged in the implementation of management strategies that will redound to protecting our nation's precious coastal and marine resources.

"Diving deeper into coastal preservation: The Tobago community engages in thought-provoking Q&A session with local experts at the symposium."

Beyond the Blue Prize Giving Ceremony

Honourable Penelope Beckles-Robinson, Minister of Planning and Development, presents certificates of achievement to the winners of the Beyond the Blue: From the Ocean to our Tables public education challenge, flanked by Republic Bank's Vice President, Mr Richard Sammy and students, at the prize-giving ceremony held at the bank's head office in Port of Spain.

New fisheries legislation will strengthen domestic fisheries management, giving the state agencies more responsibilities and powers to protect the industry. This is from the Minister of Planning and Development, the Honourable Penelope Beckles-Robinson, who delivered the feature address at a Prize Giving Ceremony on Friday, February 24, 2023, to recognize eleven (11) winners of the Beyond the Blue: From the Ocean to our Tables public education challenge. The challenge is an initiative of the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) and Republic Bank through the Power to Make a Difference programme.

Delivering the feature address, the Honourable Minister said, the domestic fisheries sector is not simply of significance because it supports the nutrition needs of the nation. The sector, she says, makes a notable contribution to the country's foreign exchange earnings, an estimated 70 million TTD annually. As such, the new Fisheries Bill (No.2) 2020 which is currently before the Parliament "will put the infrastructure in place to enable the industry's further growth, and its protection.

The legislation, she added will "create a legal basis for compliance by all stakeholders as it establishes a legal framework for the state to fulfil its obligations as a flag, port, coastal and market state in accordance with the existing international frameworks for fisheries management and related sectors". It also establishes "the legal basis for state to collect revenue through application fees for authorisations, licences and permits as well as implement significant penalties" as a deterrent to illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.

Eight secondary school students and three adults emerged winners of the Beyond the Blue: From the Ocean to our Tables public education challenge hosted by the IMA and Republic Bank in observance of the United Nations 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA). Winners of the challenge received their awards at an official Prize Giving Ceremony held at the Park Street head offices of the Bank.

The aim of the year-long observance of IYAFA was to bring global attention to the importance of small-scale or artisanal fisheries to global food security, nutrition, achieving zero hunger, improving livelihoods and the sustainable use of natural marine resources. The world over, the contribution of small-scale fishers, fish farmers, fish workers and women in fishing was celebrated. Expanding on the significance of small-scale fishers to the global economy to the gathering, IMA's Board of Governors Chair, Mr Hayden Alexander said "a 2019 FAO report puts the contribution of small-scale or artisanal fisheries at 40% of the world's total catch, employing billions across the length and breadth of the industry's value chain." Here in Trinidad and Tobago, "small scale fishers account for as much as 80 per cent of total catch at an estimated 3 percent of our GDP" he added.

Small scale artisanal fishermen in the Gulf of Paria

The Challenge consisted of word puzzle games for students age nine to nineteen and a survey for adults based on the content produced for radio broadcasts and social media posts. Twenty (20) radio broadcasts and ten (10) video vignettes were created by the IMA and broadcast from mid-August 2022 to mid-January 2023. The initiative saw the participation of more than 20 students and scores of adults. Also speaking at the Prize Giving Ceremony, was the Bank's Vice President, Mr Richard Sammy. He said, "Our partnership with the Institute of Marine Affairs to safeguard viable fisheries - resonates deeply with Republic Bank. Not only is it critical in pivoting the national mind-set towards the importance of a sustainable blue economy but it is also directly aligned with our national commitment, under the Principles for Responsible Banking, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. This initiative particularly applies to Sustainable Development Goal #14 – Life Below Water to improve integrated marine management."

For a chance to walk away with electronic devices, students had to complete correctly a word search or cross word puzzle based on content aired in the preceding month. In September 2022 Masters Tyrell Thomas of St Francis Boys College and Israel Eccles of Gasparillo Secondary School were the first and second place winners, respectively. Master Abdul Qadeer Mohammed of ASJA Boys College San Fernando and Miss Rayniece Amedee of Morvant Laventille Secondary School, coped first and second place for October 2022. Masters Amit Praboocharan and Rivan Gildharry of ASJA Boys College emerged first and second place winners for November 2022, and Master Brandon Ramkelawan of ASJA Boys College San Fernando and Miss Myah Felician of Providence Girls, Belmont came away with first and second place prizes for December 2022/January 2023.

In the category for participants twenty years and older, Ms. Christianne Zakour and Mr. Shabaka Mahluli, tied for first place and Mr. Marc Alfred Edwards coped the third place. The adults were awarded electronic devices.

The Planning and Development Minister congratulated the winners and saluted Republic Bank for its commitment to financing initiatives that support UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Acting IMA Director, Dr Rahanna Juman also showcased additional knowledge products of the Institute: two new videos on topics in the marine and coastal environment, Beach Profiling and Ocean Acidification; and an Anthology. The book, an anthology of articles written by the IMA for publication in the national dailies from 1992 to 2022 in observance of the Institute 45th Anniversary in 2023 will be available to the national community in June 2023, while the videos are for placement on the Ministry of Education's online platform.

Dr Rahanna Juman, IMA Director (Ag.) handing over videos to Mr. Allister Ramrattan, Science Curriculum Coordinator, Ministry of Education

The Institute of Marine Affairs has been a part of the Republic Bank's Power to Make a Difference Programme since 2020.

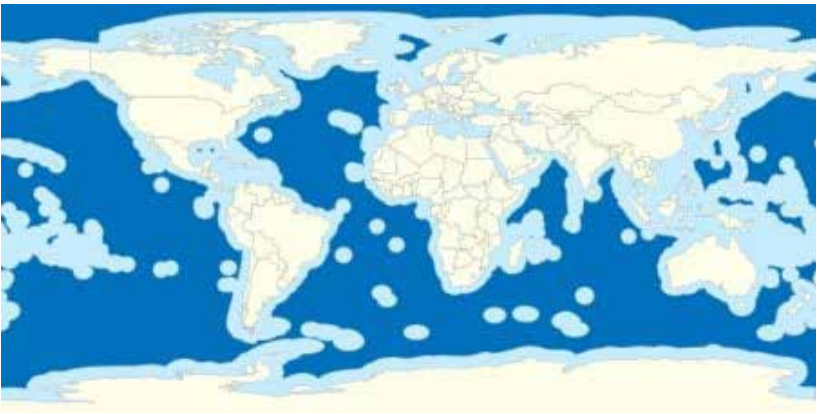
Members of the public may access the Beyond the Blue content and other knowledge products at:

https://www.ima.gov.tt/

The BBNJ Agreement – a monumental step forward for the Ocean and Multilateralism

Global Panellists Unite for Monumental BBNJ Agreement, a Milestone for Ocean Conservation and Multilateralism

The conclusion of negotiations on the international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (the BBNJ Agreement) is a significant win for the ocean and multilateralism. For nearly two decades, discussions focused on parts of the planet that are geographically remote and largely outside the everyday consciousness of the average person. However, the impact of the BBNJ Agreement on the planet cannot be overstated. It covers 64% of the ocean and 45% of the earth's surface that lie beyond national jurisdiction, making it the most comprehensive and impactful ocean governance agreement to date.



Dark blue areas represent areas beyond national jurisdiction (Picture courtesy the IUCN)

The final treaty text provides a framework for accessing and utilising genetic resources and digital sequence information from areas beyond national jurisdiction while ensuring that developing countries receive fair and equitable benefits. The pharmaceutical industry will use these resources to develop treatments for a range of ailments and diseases, including cancer, with part of the expected proceeds shared with developing countries to help conserve and manage the ocean.

The BBNJ Agreement also includes a mechanism for establishing conservation measures, including marine protected areas, to achieve the global goal of protecting 30% of the earth's marine areas by 2030. The agreement mandates environmental impact assessments for activities proposed in areas beyond national jurisdiction and provides avenues for global oversight and intervention to ensure transparency, use of best available science, and traditional knowledge. The agreement also mandates subsequent monitoring and review of permitted activities.

The IMA's Dr Kahlil Hassanali representing Trinidad and Tobago played a critical role in the CARICOM Team

Additionally, the agreement provides for improved and robust capacity building and marine technology transfer to ensure that developing countries are not hampered or disadvantaged in fulfilling their responsibilities and exercising their rights under the Agreement. In doing so, the Agreement can positively contribute to all countries conserving, managing, and maintaining a healthy ocean, enabling sustainable development of emerging societies, including those of small island developing states.

The negotiations were complex and highly technical, and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) played a crucial role in advancing text that reflected their interests. CARICOM's participation as a bloc allowed for a more influential and impactful contribution to the negotiations, providing enduring lessons for future environmental agreement negotiations in the region.

Agreement on the text is a crucial step, but not the last step. The text will have to be adopted later this year, after which the process of States ratifying and implementing the Agreement will begin. It is hoped that Caribbean countries will continue to lead the world on this journey geared towards conserving and sustainably using the ocean and its resources.

In essence, the BBNJ Agreement negotiations and the final treaty text are a tremendous achievement for the ocean and multilateralism. The agreement provides a framework for sustainable use and conservation of ocean resources while ensuring that developing countries receive fair and equitable benefits. The implementation of the agreement will require cooperation and collaboration among all nations to conserve and sustainably use the ocean and its resources for the benefit of all.

BBNJ IGC5 CARICOM team

Coastal monitoring from the skies

Drone shot of Maracas Bay

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) Secretary General His Excellency Rodolfo Sabonge on March 31, 2023, handed over a drone to the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) as part of an initiative to support the gathering of data on the state of Trinidad and Tobago's coastlines. Acting Director and Corporate Secretary of the IMA, Mr. Cyril Best received the new equipment on behalf of the Institute. IMA researchers will be able to collect important spatial data that will give an indication as to whether the coastline is eroding or accreting as part of the Sandy Shorelines project, which is being implemented with funding from the Korean Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The Caribbean Sea Commission of the ACS is implementing the Sandy Shoreline project. One main aim of the project is establishing a network for strengthening beach erosion monitoring across the Caribbean.

A number of notable figures, including Ms. Ana Ramirez, the ACS Director of Disaster Risk Reduction, Environment and Caribbean Sea; Mr. Colin Jack, the Sandy Shorelines Project Manager; Mr. Jinwoo Jung, the First Secretary of the Korean Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago, attended the event. The ACS was gifted a drone from Rectrix Drone Services Limited, who was represented at the event by Mr. Anthony Viera.

(r-L) Mr. Cyril Best Corporate Secretary / Legal Counsel at the IMA, His Excellency Dr Rudolfo Sabonge, Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States, Mr. Jinwoo Jung, the First Secretary of the Korean Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago

Credits: Association of Caribbean States

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) is an organisation that focuses on consultation, cooperation and joint action in a range of areas, including trade, transport, sustainable tourism, and natural disasters across the Greater Caribbean. Its membership includes twenty-five (25) countries and there are seven associate members.

Support to Caribbean Startups and Innovative Firms within the Blue Economy

Sustainable development of marine resources | The Financial Express

In Trinidad and Tobago, the expansion of our blue economy can be a vital source of economic growth, improved livelihoods, and job creation. However, despite the opportunities that exist in the blue economy, the Caribbean region faces numerous challenges that must be addressed. There is a need for greater awareness and understanding on how to sustainably use and quantify ocean resources. To support the expansion of the blue economy, IMA staff recently participated in a capacity-building training program conducted by consultants Charles Colgan, Fernando De Paolis, Varinka Farren, Jimena Caro, Pablo Manzano, and César Yammal, in support of the Inter-American Development Bank's project "Support to Caribbean Start-ups and Innovative Firms within the Blue Economy."

The training program covered several topics, including blue economy, technology transfer, entrepreneurship and innovation, and marketing. The sessions were interactive and engaging, with subject matter experts delivering presentations followed by Q&A sessions. The IMA staff found the training informative and relevant to their work, which will help them better serve the needs of the Caribbean region.

The first module of the training program covered the concept of the blue economy and its economic potential, sustainable use of ocean resources, and challenges and opportunities facing the Caribbean region. The second module focused on technology transfer and covered topics such as intellectual property rights, licensing agreements, and technology transfer best practices. The third module covered the basics of entrepreneurship and innovation within the blue economy, including the entrepreneurial mind-set, importance of innovation, and steps involved in starting a business. Finally, the fourth module covered the basics of marketing, including market research, branding, and social media marketing.

Overall, the training program was well received by the IMA staff and is expected to support the expansion of the blue economy in Trinidad and Tobago. With this training, the staff gained a better understanding of the blue economy, technology transfer, entrepreneurship and innovation, and marketing, and will be able to build their capacity to support the growth of the blue economy.

The Origins of the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA)

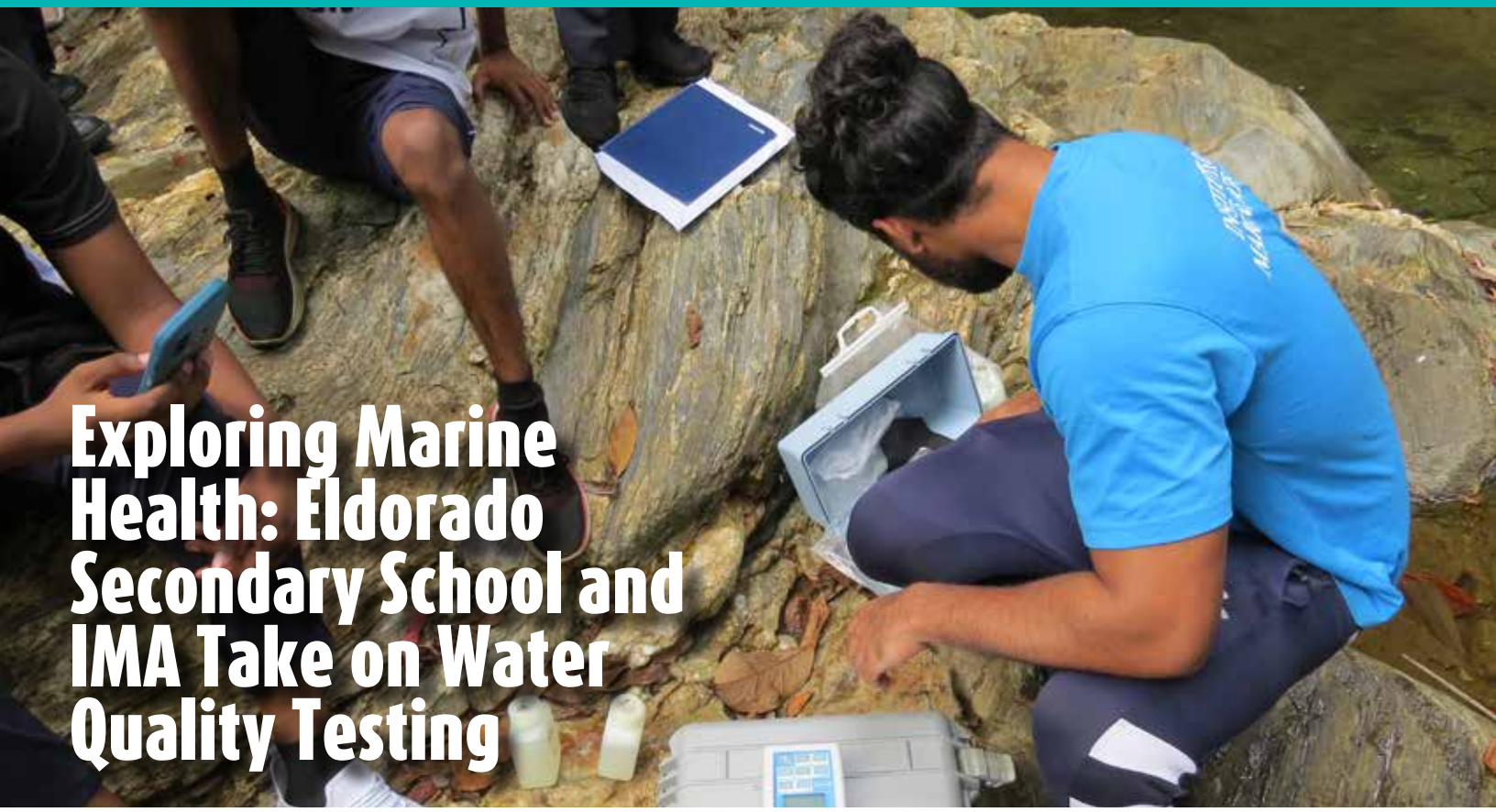
It was former judge at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the late Mr. Lennox Ballah and former lecturer at the St. Augustine Campus of The University of the West Indies, the late Professor Julian Kenny who first proffered the idea of a multi-disciplinary marine science research institute for Trinidad and Tobago, having regard to the importance of marine and coastal areas in the life and livelihoods of the inhabitants of the twin-island state. The concept grew and later received support of the political directorate in 1974, when an Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Law of the Sea recommended the creation of a special organisation to deal with Trinidad and Tobago's marine affairs.

The government accepted this recommendation and sought the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which viewed the potential for expansion of the Institute's activities to the entire Caribbean region as worthy of support. That's how the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) came to be, with Dr. Cruz Matos leading the design of the multi-functional facility that would be the advisory headquarters to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in marine affairs. Since then, the IMA has made significant contributions to marine research, conservation, and management over the past four and a half decades.

Some of IMA's notable achievements is the development of its Aqauculture Programme, which has recently transformed into its Mariculture Facility, creation of the Coastal Conservation Monitoring Programme, and the development of the National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Policy, all of which have helped inform national policies and practices related to marine conservation and management. Additionally, the IMA has been involved in several collaborations, including being designated one to two Regional Activity Center (RAC) for the Land-Based Sources of Pollution (LBS) Protocol under the Cartagena Convention, which allows the IMA to lead regional efforts to address marine pollution and promote sustainable development.

Another recent collaboration for the IMA has been the Marine Resilience Initiative (MARIN) Tobago Project, which aims to build resilience in coastal ecosystems as one of the strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate change. The IMA has also been exploring mariculture, identifying opportunities and challenges for sustainable mariculture in Trinidad and Tobago, and developing best practices for mariculture operations. This type of research is crucial in addressing food security challenges and supporting sustainable economic growth in the region.

As the IMA celebrates its 45th anniversary this year, its commitment to providing accurate, reliable, and quality data for marine research and management remains strong. With its focus on research and innovation, the IMA is well-positioned to continue making significant contributions to marine science and management in the Caribbean and beyond.



Exploring Marine Health: Eldorado Secondary School and IMA Take on Water Quality Testing

IMA chemistry technicians assists Eldorado Secondary School students in collecting water samples for critical Water Quality Testing exercise

Students of Eldorado Secondary School got a taste of scientific enquiry in the real world, as they embarked on a Water Quality Testing exercise in February 2023. Lending expertise in this area, the IMA, who brought their A-game to the table, aided the students' preparation for their School Based Assessment (SBA), which is a component of their CSEC examinations.

Senior Laboratory Technician, Mr Shane Ramsammy, was the perfect choice to lead the water testing operation. During his briefing, he highlighted the importance of testing various water parameters, such as nitrate, nitrites, ammonia, phosphates, turbidity, and dissolved oxygen. He explained how these parameters could paint a vivid picture of the health of the marine environment and could inform decisions on coastal area usage.

The students were not the only ones getting hands-on experience in the field. Two Eldorado Secondary School teachers who accompanied the students, were eager to try out the YSI meter. This state-of-the-art tool was used to sample the Guapo River, ensuring that the data collected was of the highest accuracy.

The results of this exercise were paramount, and the IMA did not disappoint. The data they generated was fed into each student's SBA, giving students the best possible opportunity at meeting the requirements of their course of study. With the IMA and students from Eldorado Secondary School working together, the future of the marine environment looked bright!

Group shot of IMA chemistry technicians and Eldorado secondary school form 6 students

Taxonomist Alana Jute showcases the diversity of marine organisms from the IMA's reference collection at UWI's Life Science Day 2023

IMA at UWI Life Science Day 2023

The University of West Indies (UWI) celebrated their annual Life Science Day on March 23, 2023. The event, which focused on Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14), brought together researchers, students, and organisations to raise awareness about the importance of conserving and sustainably using the world's oceans, seas, and marine resources. This year's theme was "Freshwater and Marine Environments and Resources: Conservation, Sustainable Development, and Climate Change."

As part of the celebration, UWI invited the IMA to showcase its marine specimens from its reference collection. The IMA's collection of marine organisms includes a wide range of species, from fish and corals to sponges and algae. The collection serves as a valuable resource for researchers studying marine ecosystems, and for educators teaching marine biodiversity.

The showcase was a significant highlight of the event as it provided attendees with an opportunity to learn about the diversity of marine organisms that exist in the Caribbean and the important role they play in maintaining the health and balance of marine ecosystems. The exhibit also highlighted the threats facing marine ecosystems such as overfishing, pollution, and habitat destruction caused by urbanisation.

The UWI Life Science Day celebration served as a platform to discuss the impact of human activities on marine ecosystems and resources. The event emphasised the need to adopt sustainable practices that promote the conservation and responsible use of marine resources, as well as the need to address the growing threat of climate change by building resilience of marine ecosystems.

The focus on SDG14, Life under water, is especially timely given the urgent need to address the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on marine ecosystems, and the livelihoods of millions of people who rely on them. Rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and increasing sea surface temperatures are just a few of the challenges that threatens long-term sustainability of our oceans.

The University of West Indies' Life Science Day 2023 celebration was a valuable opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of marine conservation, sustainable development, and climate change. The display by the IMA provided attendees with a glimpse of the rich biodiversity found in Caribbean marine ecosystems, and reinforced the importance of preserving these resources for future generations. The event served as a reminder that we must take collective action to protect and conserve our oceans, seas, and marine resources.

Welcome to the IMA!

We are delighted to announce that Mrs. Shelly McLean Robinson joined the IMA in February 2023 as the Human Resource and Industrial Relations Manager. Mrs. McLean-Robinson brings with her a wealth of experience in HR leadership, having served in various organisations, including the Employers Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago where she was the Human Resource Administrator from 2014.

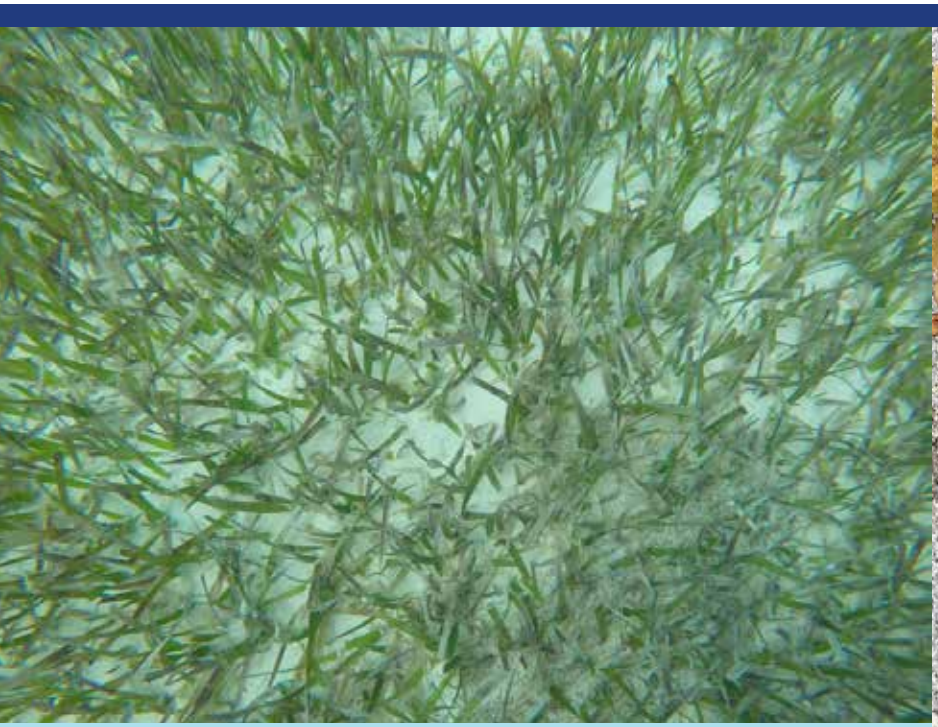
Mrs. McLean-Robinson is a highly qualified HR professional and holds the designation of MHRM. She earned her Master's Degree in Human Resource Management from the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business and also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Campbell University in North Carolina, USA.

In addition to her impressive professional achievements, Mrs. McLean-Robinson is also an accomplished athlete She represented Trinidad and Tobago in Track and Field at the CARIFTA games in 2004 and was a member of the track and field team at Campbell University.

We are confident that Mrs. McLean-Robinson's expertise, leadership, and dedication will help our organisation realize its strategic goals and reach its fullest potential. We look forward to working with her and wish her all the best in her new role at IMA.

Mrs. Shelly McLean Robinson

THE BLUE CORNER



Seaweeds and Seagrasses: Not the Same!

A Poem by Glendon Glasgow (a mnemonic device)

Seaweeds and seagrasses, both grow in the sea,
But they're different in many a way, you'll soon see.
Seaweeds are algae, sometimes slimy and green,
They float on the surface, or down below unseen.
Seagrasses are plants, rooted to the ground,
Growing in meadows, where fish and crabs abound.
Seaweeds are simple, with no true leaves or stem,
But seagrasses have roots, leaves, and flowers, a gem.
Seaweeds are important, as food for the sea,
And shelter for creatures, as they go on their spree.
Seagrasses are vital, for the oceans and land,
Helping to absorb carbon, and keeping waters grand.
So remember, seaweeds and seagrasses, not the same,
Each with their own role, in the ocean's grand game.

IMA NEWS

Published by

Institute of Marine Affairs 45th Anniversary

established by Act of Parliament
(Chap. 37:01 of the Revised Laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, as amended by Act No. 13 of 1990).

Institute of Marine Affairs
Hilltop Lane, Chaguaramas
Trinidad & Tobago, W.I.

Phone: 634-4291
www.ima.gov.tt
imadirector@ima.gov.tt

IMAgovTT

Prepared by
Glendon Glasgow, Information Officer

Design/Layout:
Karl Doyle