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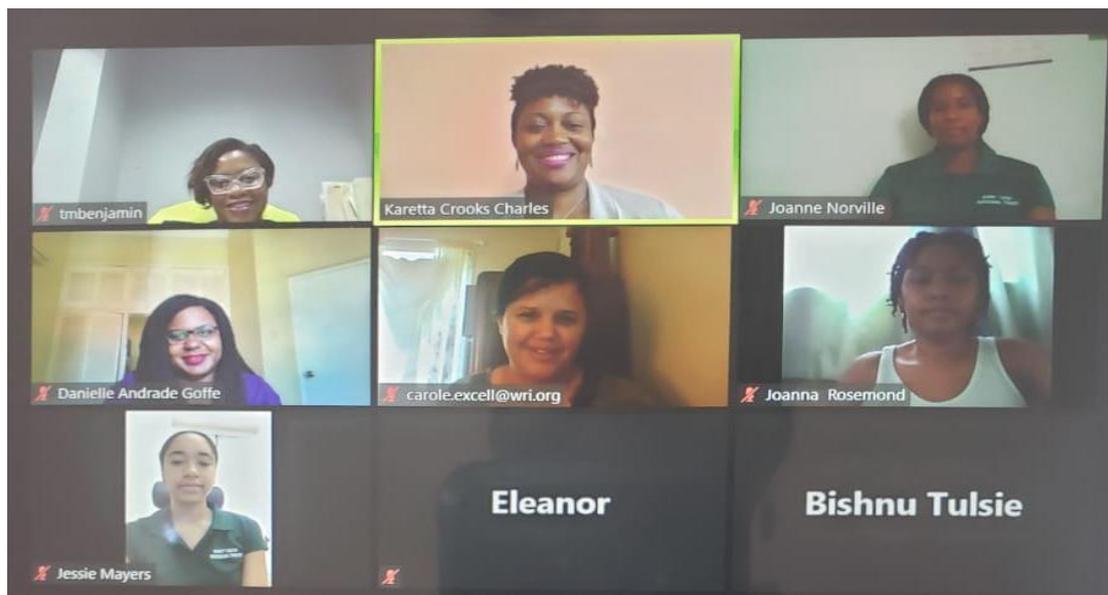
Patron: Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy

SLNT Partners with Government Stakeholders for Project Promoting the Escazú Agreement in Saint Lucia

By Joanne Norville
SLNT Programme Assistant- Communications and Advocacy

On 10th November 2020, the Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT) hosted a meeting between government representatives, SLNT representatives, and World Resources Institute (WRI) representatives to discuss *Advancing the Escazú Agreement and Climate Justice in the Caribbean* project. The Escazú Agreement aims to promote access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

One of the activities under this project is an assessment of the adequacy of the existing national policy and legal framework to support the implementation of the Escazú Agreement. The assessment will be informed by a document review and consultations with public sector and civil society stakeholders and will be used to develop an action plan for implementing the Agreement at the national level.



Meeting Participants (top left to bottom right): Ms. Turkessa Antoine, Mrs. Karetta Crooks Charles, Ms. Joanne Norville, Mrs. Danielle Andrade-Goffe, Mrs. Carole Excell, Mrs. Joanna Rosemond, Ms. Jessie Mayers, Ms. Eleanor Maurille and Mr. Bishnu Tulsie

The meeting was coordinated by Karetta Crooks Charles, SLNT's Programme Officer for Communications and Advocacy and Alternate Elected Representative of the Public for the Escazú Agreement. Ms. Kate Wilson, Legal Officer in the Department of Sustainable Development, updated the meeting participants on the status of the ratification process. Carole Excell, Director of The Access Initiative and WRI representative, presented an overview of the project as well as the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) Framework which is also a key consideration in the implementation of this project. Mrs. Excell said that the implementation of the Paris Agreement (Climate Change Agreement) will only be effective if countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region ratify and implement the Escazú Agreement, considering its goal to put people at the centre of environmental decision making. Saint Lucia is one of the few Caribbean countries to have an ACE Focal Point, in the person of Snaliah Mahal of the Department of Sustainable Development. Ms. Mahal made a brief presentation on the status of the ACE Framework locally, indicating her willingness to collaborate on this project to enhance our shared efforts to raise awareness about climate change.

Danielle Andrade-Goffe, Attorney-at-Law and Representative of the Public for the Escazú Agreement, also represented WRI at this meeting. She presented an overview of the methodology for the project's legal and policy assessment to support the ratification and implementation of the Escazú Agreement, which she and Ms. Excell had developed. Mrs. Andrade-Goffe stressed the importance of implementing the Agreement locally, even after it has been ratified. Ms. Turkessa Antione, Attorney-at-Law and Project Consultant also stressed the importance of government's involvement in the assessment, so that the project would proceed smoothly. Mrs. Crooks Charles highlighted collaboration opportunities between the SLNT and the government, and gave an overview of the timeline of the project. Following this, Joanne Norville, SLNT's Programme Assistant for Communications and Advocacy and Project Manager for this initiative, made a brief presentation on the CSO engagement opportunities and information products that will emanate from the Action Plan.

All stakeholders present at this meeting contributed meaningfully to the discussions and shared ideas and information. This project will be a true collaborative effort for the advancement of the Escazú Agreement, which will benefit all Saint Lucians as well as raise the standards of environmental governance in the LAC region.