

OAS LAUNCHES HEMISPHERIC FRESHWATER INITIATIVE

WASHINGTON D.C – Water resources managers and experts from the Caribbean and other Member States of the OAS will meet in Guatemala this week to agree on a shared and targeted response to new and emerging challenges in water resources management in the Hemisphere.

The August 11-12 meeting, organized by the OAS Department of Sustainable Development is being held against the backdrop of mounting pressures on freshwater resources in the Hemisphere due in part to climate variability and climate change. (Greenhouse gas emissions associated with air travel to the meeting have been offset through a carbon offset purchase for the meeting.)

Over the past decade, several OAS Member States have been experiencing prolonged periods of droughts and/or floods which have increased pressure on these countries to adapt to these changes.

Based on the priorities identified by Member States through a survey conducted by the OAS, the meeting will draw on recent information and practices from satellite and remote sensing platforms, geographic information systems (GIS) and water models, to help participants to identify pressure points and examine appropriate response options.

Additionally, the meeting will aim to identify common areas of technical cooperation among OAS Member States that will promote good governance in the freshwater sector.

OAS Executive Secretary of SEDI, Alfonso Quiñonez, considers the meeting to be timely and critical. "The technology is available to enable to identify current and future threats to the region's freshwater resources and to plan appropriate and effective responses. It is vital that OAS Member States take full advantage of such technology to address familiar problems like water contamination and the full range of challenges posed by Climate change, which we are told will have unprecedented impacts on millions of people in our hemisphere. The need to act together to design and implement climate adaptation plans in the water sector is urgent."

The results of the survey as well as information on the meeting, can be found at <http://www.oas.org/dsd/>

As part of the standard practice of the OAS Department of Sustainable Development, all travel to OAS sustainable development meetings or projects includes a carbon offset purchase. For the August meeting in Guatemala, approximately 36 tons of carbon equivalent from air-travel to Guatemala City was offset through the support of a reforestation project in Chiapis, Mexico.

For more information, please contact S. Vaughan or C. Springer at (202) 458-6248. For more information on the carbon offset program, please contact Juan Cruz Monticelli or visit The Carbon Neutral Company Limited at <http://www.carbonneutral.com/>