

# A Guidebook for

*New*

# CLIMATE CHANGE REPORTERS



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## INTRODUCTION

# HI, I'M MAUREEN VALMOND.

I am from the Commonwealth of Dominica, one of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) nations that appears to bear the heavy burden of climate change. Tropical Storm Erika in 2016 caused the island to relocate an entire community, while Hurricane Maria in 2017 left the country with \$4000 billion in damages. Recently, the island's eastern region was again cut off by severe rain on Sunday, November 6, 2022, resulting in the loss of agricultural lands. Data shows conclusive evidence projecting that harsher weather conditions are likely to continue and worsen. These projections will inevitably disproportionately impact my island and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS), further burdening struggling countries. Of greater injustice, is that Caribbean countries are among the least contributors to carbon emissions, yet they are on the receiving end of the yard stick.

It was this knowledge that propelled me into climate justice reporting. According to the University of California, climate justice is the *"recognition of the disproportionate impacts of climate change on low-income communities around the world, or the people and places least responsible for the problem."*

Using my first degree in Social Work and Journalism I felt very strongly that my competencies could raise awareness on climate justice and to advance the agenda for climate adaptation and mitigation.

I trust that the information in this guide will strengthen your climate change and or climate justice reporting. Thank you for being an active participants in the climate change advocacy by joining in the as bolstering efforts to share knowledge and experiences.



## CHAPTER ONE

# Understanding Climate Change

Climate change refers to the long-term alteration of weather patterns and temperatures on Earth, primarily caused by human activities. The burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, industrial processes, and agricultural practices release greenhouse gases (GHGs) like carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere, leading to the greenhouse effect. This effect traps heat and warms the planet, resulting in various changes that profoundly impact the Caribbean region. According to the United Nations, since the 1800s, human activities—primarily the combustion of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas—have been the primary cause of climate change.

The primary causes of climate change in the Caribbean are linked to global anthropogenic activities.

## 1. Greenhouse Gas Emissions



- The burning of fossil fuels for energy production, transportation, and industrial processes is the main contributor to the increase in GHGs, especially CO<sub>2</sub>.

## 2. Deforestation



Clearing forests for agriculture, urban development, and logging reduces the Earth's capacity to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, exacerbating the greenhouse effect.

## 3. Land Use Changes



- Conversion of natural landscapes into urban areas alters local climate patterns and influences temperature and rainfall.

The Caribbean region is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to its geographical location, economic dependence on natural resources, and limited capacity to adapt.

### RISING SEA LEVELS

Rising sea levels threaten coastal communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems. Small island states like those in the Caribbean are particularly at risk of inundation and erosion.

[E.g. The Kaliña, an Indigenous People of Suriname, have long lived in harmony with nature. But rising sea levels have recently devastated their village, crippling its economy.](#)

### EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

Climate change intensifies the frequency and severity of extreme weather events in the Caribbean, including hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rainfall. These events cause widespread damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and human settlements, resulting in economic losses and displacement.

[E.g. Paramaribo versus water: The effects of climate change on Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname](#)

### COASTAL EROSION

Rising sea levels and increased storm surges contribute to coastal erosion, threatening beaches, coastal properties, and infrastructure. This loss of coastal land affects tourism, a significant economic driver for many Caribbean nations.

[E.g. Almond Beach in Guyana's Shell Beach Protected Area hosts nesting grounds for four endangered sea turtle species that are at risk because of rising coastal erosion.](#)

## CORAL BLEACHING

Rising sea temperatures stress coral reefs, leading to coral bleaching and the eventual death of these vital ecosystems. Coral reefs provide critical habitats for marine life and protect coastlines from erosion.

[E.g. Beneath Belize's azure waters bleached corals, deprived of vital algae by rising temperatures, face dire threats, even from slight increases in sea surface temperatures.](#)

## AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Climate change impacts rainfall patterns and temperature, affecting agricultural productivity in the Caribbean. Changes in crop yields and water availability can lead to food insecurity for vulnerable communities.

[E.g. St. Kitts and Nevis excels but faces challenges from drought and climate change affecting its food supply, despite not being a major carbon emitter.](#)

## BIODIVERSITY AND LOSS

Climate change disrupts ecosystems, leading to the loss of plant and animal species endemic to the Caribbean. This loss of biodiversity can have cascading effects on ecosystem health and resilience.

[E.g. Barbados' mangrove forests in Graeme Hall have shrunk due to coastal development and pollution, notably sewage. The closure of Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary in 2008 was prompted by these issues, exacerbated by a closed sluice gate disrupting saltwater flow, endangering the forest's ecology.](#)



Adapting to these changes and implementing sustainable practices are crucial for the region's long-term resilience. Addressing climate change requires collective efforts from the international community, Caribbean governments, businesses, NGOs, and individuals to mitigate its causes and adapt to its impacts.



## CHAPTER TWO

# The Science

### Knowledge is key

There are a lot of people who believe that climate change is not real.

As a journalist, you must be equipped with facts and statistics based on scientific evidence to combat misinformation and disinformation.

It is crucial for journalists and the public to be cautious of misinformation and ensure the information they use is based on verified and peer-reviewed scientific research. Misrepresentation of climate change data can lead to misunderstandings and hinder effective action.

Relying on reputable scientific sources and expert analysis can provide a clear understanding of the scientific consensus on climate change and its potential impacts on the planet and human societies.

### Resources:

- The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) a non-profit institute, has been advocating for over 30 years for fair and sustainable natural resource management across the Caribbean, guided by our mission, vision, and values. (<https://canari.org>)
- The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) supports people of the Caribbean as they address the impact of climate variability and change. (<https://www.caribbeanclimate.bz/>)
- Climate Tracker Caribbean believes that reporting on climate change need not be dull and are committed to injecting energy, creativity, and fresh perspectives into the climate discourse in the Caribbean. (<https://climatetrackercaribbean.org/>)



### SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN DATA



### Greenhouse Gas Concentrations

The concentration of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), has been steadily increasing since the industrial revolution. This rise is primarily attributed to human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes.

### Global Temperature Rise

Surface temperature records consistently show an upward trend over the past century, with the last few decades experiencing more rapid warming. This is confirmed by various temperature datasets, including those maintained by NASA, NOAA, and the Met

### Ocean Warming

The Earth's oceans have been absorbing a significant portion of the excess heat from greenhouse gas emissions. This is evident through direct measurements of ocean temperature, showing a consistent warming trend over time.



### Melting Ice and Rising Sea Levels

Satellite observations and ground-based measurements demonstrate that glaciers and ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica are losing mass, contributing to rising sea levels. This is further supported by long-term tide gauge records showing an increase in global average sea levels.





## Extreme Weather Events

Scientific studies indicate that climate change influences the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, heatwaves, droughts, and heavy rainfall events. These events are consistent with the projected effects of a warming climate.

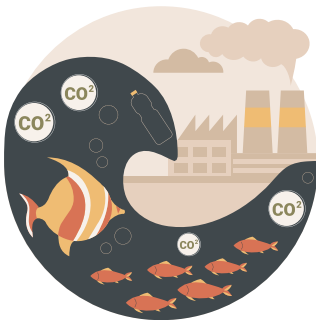


## Consensus Among Scientists

Multiple scientific organisations, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), have issued reports supporting the conclusion that climate change is real, largely driven by human activities, and requires urgent action.

## Ocean Acidification

Increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> is also leading to ocean acidification, as the oceans absorb excess carbon dioxide. This poses a threat to marine ecosystems, including coral reefs and shell-forming organisms.



## CHAPTER THREE

# Impact on Local Communities

Climate change directly affects communities in the Caribbean in various ways, impacting their livelihoods, infrastructure, and overall well-being. Consider the plight of residents in the Bahamas, who, in recent years, have endured the fury of hurricanes like Dorian, a Category 5 monster that obliterated homes and infrastructure, leaving behind a trail of devastation and despair. Similarly, in Jamaica, heavy rainfall events have become more than just occasional nuisances, triggering landslides that bury homes and disrupt lives. Through the stories of residents, insights from experts, and efforts of organisations working on climate resilience and adaptation, it becomes clear that urgent action is needed to address climate change and support vulnerable communities in building resilience to its effects.

Caribbean communities are facing more frequent and intense hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rainfall events due to climate change.

These events result in devastating impacts on homes, infrastructure, and agriculture, leading to displacement, economic losses, and disruptions to daily life. Picture the coastal communities of Barbados, where rising sea levels and relentless storm surges gnaw away at once-pristine shores. The erosion doesn't just steal sand; it robs livelihoods, imperiling the very heart of tourism-driven economies. In Trinidad and Tobago, fishermen grapple with dwindling catches as coral reefs, teeming with life, succumb to the

Meanwhile, over in Haiti, farmers battle against the odds as changing rainfall patterns and prolonged droughts parch the land. Staple crops like rice and maize wither under the relentless Caribbean sun, leaving gaping holes in food security.

Climate change exacerbates heatwaves, leading to health risks, especially for vulnerable populations. In Cuba, where heatwaves have become more frequent, the elderly and infirm bear the brunt of soaring temperatures. Access to clean water is another battleground, with communities in the Dominican Republic grappling with dwindling supplies as erratic rainfall patterns disrupt the delicate balance of nature.

Climate change poses risks to the unique biodiversity of the Caribbean, including marine life and coral reefs. These ecosystems provide critical services like fishery resources and coastal protection, and their degradation can impact both the environment and local economies.

Experts point to a grim reality: these are not isolated incidents but harbingers of a changing climate. Organisations like the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) are on the front lines, working tirelessly to bolster resilience. Their efforts, however, underscore a pressing need for urgent action.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# Social Impact



The impact of climate change on society is vast, affecting communities, societies, and individuals in various ways.

Addressing these impacts requires comprehensive strategies that involve engaging communities, supporting vulnerable populations, and prioritising resilience and adaptive capacity.

Global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change are crucial to prevent worsening these social challenges.

As journalists, it's crucial to recognise that climate change is closely tied to global inequality. Millions of vulnerable people bear a disproportionate burden of climate change effects, such as extreme weather events, health risks, food and water insecurity, forced migration, loss of cultural identity, and other threats.

Socially marginalised groups, such as older people, female-headed households, children, people with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities, landless tenants, migrant workers, and displaced people, are particularly vulnerable to climate crises.

The underlying factors contributing to their vulnerability include their geographic locations, financial, socioeconomic, cultural, and gender statuses, as well as their access to resources, services, decision-making ability, and justice.

Climate change is not only an environmental disaster; it is also a social crisis that requires journalists to address the inequality between men and women, between generations, and between rich and poor countries.

Understanding and addressing the social inclusion, cultural, and political economy aspects is the first step to tackling the distributional effects of decarbonising economies ([World Bank](https://www.worldbank.org/)).

### Displacement and Migration

Climate change-induced disasters, such as hurricanes like Hurricane Irma in 2017, floods, and droughts, can compel people to flee their homes in the Caribbean, leading to internal and cross-border migration. For instance, following Hurricane Maria in 2017, many residents of Dominica were displaced, with some seeking refuge in neighbouring islands such as Barbados and Antigua. This displacement disrupts social structures, strains resources in receiving areas, and can lead to conflicts over scarce resources such as food, water, and shelter.



Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns impact agricultural productivity and food availability. Communities in the Caribbean that depend on agriculture as their primary livelihood face challenges in ensuring an adequate food supply, resulting in food insecurity and malnutrition. For example, in Jamaica, prolonged droughts have significantly reduced crop yields, leading to food shortages and increased prices for staple foods such as yams and potatoes.



### Health Risks

Climate change contributes to the spread of vector-borne diseases, heat-related illnesses, and air pollution, which have significant impacts on public health. Vulnerable populations, including the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing health conditions, are at higher risk of experiencing adverse health effects. For instance, in the Caribbean, rising temperatures have been linked to an increase in cases of dengue fever, particularly in countries like Guyana, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Additionally, air pollution from industrial activities and transportation exacerbates respiratory illnesses, affecting communities across the region.



### Access to Water

Changes in precipitation patterns and rising temperatures can lead to water scarcity, affecting access to clean and safe drinking water. Competition for water resources can escalate social tensions and inequalities. In Jamaica, climate change-induced droughts and resulting water scarcity threaten livelihoods globally, especially impacting vulnerable groups like the elderly, Indigenous peoples, children, and individuals with diverse abilities.



### Social Inequalities

Climate change exacerbates existing social inequalities, as vulnerable populations, including the poor, marginalised groups, and indigenous communities, are disproportionately affected. These communities often have limited resources to adapt to climate impacts and face barriers in accessing support and resources. In Trinidad and Tobago, women and girls suffer more from climate change, facing increased risks during crises. Limited resource access worsens this, heightening vulnerability to disenfranchisement and violence.



### Community Resilience and Adaptation

Climate change forces communities to adapt to changing conditions. Social cohesion, community organisation, and access to resources play crucial roles in determining a community's ability to build resilience and adapt effectively. In Belize, Allison Ifield, dubbed "Mangrove Mama," passionately protects Caye Caulker's mangroves.





### Cultural Heritage and Identities



Climate change impacts can threaten cultural heritage, including traditional practices, languages, and historical sites. Changes in weather patterns and natural disasters can disrupt traditional livelihoods and practices, leading to cultural loss and identity challenges. The Garfina Community in Belize continues to face loss of land and culture due to sea level rise

### Mental Health and Well-Being



Experiencing the trauma of climate-induced disasters, loss of livelihoods, and uncertainty about the future can have significant psychological impacts on individuals and communities, leading to increased stress, anxiety, and mental health challenges. Indigenous communities in Suriname, Jamaica, and Guyana continue to face climate challenges. This can lead to an array of mental health problems, from anxiety and feelings of helplessness to depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal thoughts’.

### Access to Education



Climate change-related impacts, such as extreme weather events and displacement, can disrupt educational systems, affecting access to education for children and youth. This can perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality. This is more challenging in Jamaica where Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD) is fighting for inclusion.



## Conflict and Migration Pressures



Climate change-induced resource scarcity, especially in vulnerable regions, can escalate tensions and contribute to social unrest and conflicts. It can also increase pressure on migration flows as people seek better living conditions and opportunities elsewhere. The number of "climate refugees" is expected to rise in the future, according to the [United Nations](#). Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Davis told Climate Tracker, "We need to continue this fight because if nothing changes, we are doomed to a watery grave or to be climate refugees."

In essence, climate change affects health, food production, shelter, safety, and employment. Certain individuals, like those living in small island states and other vulnerable nations in the Caribbean, are particularly sensitive to its effects.

The challenge in tackling these impacts has been worsened by inadequate funding for resilience efforts. Currently, only about 10% of the required funding is available, and it often fails to reach those most severely affected by climate change. For instance, smallholder farmers in the Caribbean, whose livelihoods rely entirely on favourable climate conditions, often do not receive sufficient support.



# Government Policies and Initiatives



Caribbean governments have acknowledged the urgency of tackling climate change and have introduced a range of policies and initiatives to mitigate its impacts and enhance climate resilience.

Although the effectiveness of these measures differs between countries, there's an increasing focus on transparency and accountability in climate action.

Several Caribbean nations have crafted national climate change strategies laying out their vision, goals, and actions to tackle climate change. These strategies frequently entail collaboration across sectors and aim to integrate climate considerations into national development plans.

Several Caribbean nations have established targets to increase the proportion of renewable energy in their energy mix.

These targets concentrate on utilising solar, wind, and geothermal resources to diminish dependence on fossil fuels and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

Given the region's vulnerability to rising sea levels and coastal erosion, some governments have introduced comprehensive coastal zone management plans.

These plans are designed to safeguard coastal areas, implement sustainable development practices, and conserve critical ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs.

Caribbean governments have launched projects to bolster climate resilience in vital sectors like agriculture, water resources, infrastructure, and disaster management. These projects often receive backing from international organisations and donors.

Numerous Caribbean countries have set up green funds or climate funds to gather financial resources for climate-related projects. These funds aid both mitigation and adaptation initiatives and encourage investments in renewable energy and climate-resilient infrastructure.

Certain Caribbean governments engage in regional forums and organisations dedicated to climate change. Regional cooperation promotes the sharing of knowledge and best practices, allowing countries to glean insights from each other's experiences and coordinate efforts to tackle shared challenges.

To gauge the effectiveness of climate-related policies and initiatives, it's vital for governments to conduct regular evaluations and monitoring of their implementation.

Although the effectiveness of these measures differs between countries, there's a growing emphasis on transparency and accountability in climate action.

Several Caribbean countries have devised national climate change strategies detailing their vision, goals, and actions to tackle climate change.

These strategies frequently entail cross-sectoral collaboration and seek to integrate climate considerations into national development plans.





Important indicators to consider include progress towards renewable energy targets, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, improvements in climate resilience, and the successful implementation of adaptation projects.

Governments should ensure that climate data, emissions inventories, and progress reports on climate-related initiatives are readily accessible to the public.

Transparent reporting enables stakeholders to monitor progress and hold authorities accountable. Involving civil society organisations, local communities, and experts in the decision-making process fosters transparency and ensures that climate action aligns with the needs and priorities of the people.

Governments can commission independent reviews or audits of their climate policies and initiatives to obtain unbiased assessments of their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

Participating in international reporting initiatives like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) provides a platform for countries to report their progress and showcase their achievements on a global stage.





## CHAPTER SIX

# Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies

The Caribbean region is actively investigating renewable energy as a crucial climate mitigation strategy. Some countries have established ambitious targets to shift their energy systems away from fossil fuels and towards cleaner and more sustainable sources. Solar, wind, and geothermal energy show particular promise in the Caribbean because of the region's plentiful natural resources.

## Solar Energy

Numerous Caribbean nations are investing in solar photovoltaic (PV) systems for both grid-connected and off-grid applications. Solar farms and rooftop solar installations are becoming more prevalent, aiding in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and lessening dependence on imported fossil fuels.

## Wind Energy

Certain islands with consistent wind patterns are harnessing wind energy through onshore and offshore wind farms. Wind power offers a dependable and environmentally friendly source of electricity, aiding in the achievement of carbon reduction objectives.

## Geothermal Energy

Nations with geothermal potential are investigating this renewable resource to generate electricity and provide thermal energy. Geothermal power is a dependable and low-carbon choice, providing a stable energy supply.

Climate change poses significant challenges to agriculture in the Caribbean, affecting food security and livelihoods. Sustainable agricultural practices that promote climate resilience are becoming essential for adaptation



### Drought-Resistant Crops

Farmers are transitioning towards drought-resistant and climate-resilient crop varieties to adapt to changing rainfall patterns and water availability.



### Water Management

Using efficient water management techniques, like rainwater harvesting and drip irrigation, helps preserve water resources during droughts.



### Agroforestry and Conservation Farming

Practising agroforestry alongside agriculture and adopting conservation farming techniques can enhance soil health, mitigate erosion, and sequester carbon.

Building climate-resilient infrastructure is crucial for safeguarding communities and economies from climate impacts. Several innovative projects are taking place in the Caribbean:



### Climate-Resilient Buildings

Constructing buildings with climate risks in mind, including using storm-resistant materials and designs, helps reduce damage from extreme weather events.



### Flood Management

Creating flood management systems, which involve restoring wetlands and building flood barriers, helps shield communities from inundation.



### Erosion Control

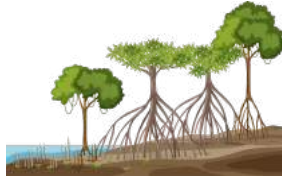
Implementing erosion control measures, like beach nourishment and coastal reforestation, helps preserve coastlines and lowers the risk of erosion.



Given the region's vulnerability to rising sea levels, coastal zone management plays a vital role in climate adaptation:

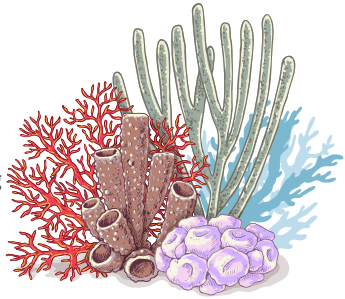
### Mangrove Restoration

Restoring mangrove ecosystems provides natural protection against coastal erosion and storm surges, safeguarding coastal communities.



### Coral Reef Conservation

Protecting and rehabilitating coral reefs supports marine biodiversity and provides vital coastal protection.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

# International Climate Agreements

- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), adopted in 1992, stands as a cornerstone in the global response to climate change. This treaty serves as the overarching framework for international cooperation to combat the increasingly pressing challenge of climate change. The UNFCCC acknowledges the existence of climate change and its potential impacts on ecosystems and societies worldwide. Its fundamental objective is to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The convention provides a platform for dialogue, negotiation, and collaborative action among member states to address mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building efforts.
- The Kyoto Protocol, adopted in 1997, marked a crucial milestone by establishing legally binding emission reduction targets for developed countries. Despite its limitations, such as the absence of binding commitments for emerging economies like China and India, the Kyoto Protocol represented a significant step forward in acknowledging the differentiated responsibilities of nations in addressing climate change. By setting specific commitments and timelines for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the Protocol aimed to mitigate the impacts of climate change and promote sustainable development. However, its effectiveness was limited by challenges such as the absence of binding commitments for emerging economies and the withdrawal of key nations.
- The Paris Agreement, adopted in December 2015 at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is a landmark global agreement aimed at addressing climate change. Its central goal is to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with efforts to pursue limiting it to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The agreement emphasises the need for countries to strengthen their resilience and adaptive capacities to effectively cope with climate impacts. Small island developing states (SIDS), like those in the Caribbean, are disproportionately affected by sea-level rise, extreme weather events, coastal erosion, and disruptions to ecosystems.

- The Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, adopted in 2012, represents a critical extension of commitments. The amendment outlines binding emission reduction targets for developed countries for the period beyond 2012. It reaffirms the importance of international cooperation in addressing climate change and emphasises the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The Doha Amendment enhances the ambition in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fosters momentum towards a low-carbon future. However, its effectiveness has been hindered by challenges such as limited participation and political constraints.
- The Copenhagen Accord, reached during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2009, represents a pivotal moment in international climate negotiations. While not a legally binding treaty, the accord brought together key nations to address the urgent need for global action on climate change. Its primary goal was to limit global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. It acknowledges the devastating impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities and ecosystems. While the accord faced criticism for its lack of legally binding commitments and the absence of unanimous agreement among nations, it nevertheless laid the groundwork for subsequent agreements, including the Paris Agreement.
- The Marrakech Accords, adopted in 2001, serve as a crucial set of rules and guidelines for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. These accords were instrumental in operationalising various mechanisms outlined in the Protocol, such as emissions trading, clean development mechanism (CDM), and joint implementation (JI). They provided clarity on accounting methodologies, reporting requirements, and compliance mechanisms, enhancing transparency and accountability in the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Cancun Agreements, reached during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2010, reaffirmed the commitments made under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, providing a framework for enhanced action on mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building. One of the key outcomes of the Cancun Agreements was the establishment of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to support climate adaptation and mitigation projects in developing countries, addressing the urgent needs of vulnerable communities.
- The Lima Call for Climate Action, 2014, outlined key elements and expectations for the negotiation of the Paris Agreement. The Lima Call emphasised the importance of submitting nationally determined contributions (NDCs) outlining each country's climate action plans, thereby ensuring transparency and accountability in the global effort to address climate change. It underscored the need for developed countries to provide financial support to developing nations for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts,

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# The Caribbean's Role in Global Efforts

## Ambitious NDCs

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are commitments made by countries under the Paris Agreement, detailing their individual climate action plans and emission reduction targets.

Several Caribbean countries have submitted ambitious NDCs, taking into account their specific vulnerabilities and the imperative for sustainable development.

## Focus on Resilience-Building

Caribbean countries have stressed the importance of enhancing climate resilience and adaptation capacity to manage the inevitable impacts of climate change. They advocate for integrating climate considerations into development planning and policy frameworks.

## Advocacy for Vulnerable Countries

Caribbean countries, along with other Small Island Developing States (SIDS), have been staunch advocates for recognising their distinctive vulnerabilities in international climate negotiations. They have pushed for greater support to bolster climate resilience and adaptation measures.

## Accessing Climate Finance

The Paris Agreement underscores the significance of climate finance to aid developing countries in their climate actions. The Caribbean has actively pursued financial assistance from global climate funds and mechanisms to execute adaptation and mitigation projects.

## Role in COP Negotiations

Caribbean delegations are actively engaged in COP negotiations to ensure that the region's concerns are addressed, and that climate action reflects the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities.



## Climate Partnerships and Initiatives

The Caribbean has engaged in regional and international climate partnerships to leverage resources and technical expertise. Initiatives like the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) contribute to regional collaboration and capacity-building.



## CHAPTER NINE

# Engage in Solution Journalism

As journalists covering climate change in the Caribbean, adopting solutions journalism enables you to spotlight success stories, local innovations, and collaborations that bolster climate resilience in the region. By emphasising positive responses, you can inspire action, empower communities, and encourage the adoption of effective climate solutions. Through solutions journalism, you have the ability to magnify positive responses to climate change in the Caribbean.



## Renewable Energy Success Stories

Produce feature stories on Caribbean countries that have made notable strides in shifting to renewable energy sources. Spotlight how these endeavours have lessened greenhouse gas emissions, enhanced energy security, and created economic prospects. For example, spotlight islands that have attained substantial levels of renewable energy integration, illustrating the technologies and policies behind their achievements.

## Community-Based Adaptation Initiatives

Draw attention to local communities in the Caribbean that have proactively taken measures to adapt to climate change. Showcase projects that exemplify community-led efforts, such as climate-resilient agriculture practices, reforestation projects, and sustainable water management. Highlight how these initiatives have bolstered resilience, enhanced livelihoods, and strengthened community cohesion.



### Green Infrastructure Projects

Examine infrastructure projects in the Caribbean that incorporate nature-based solutions to tackle climate impacts. Highlight initiatives employing green infrastructure, like coastal mangrove restoration to shield against storm surges or urban green spaces to alleviate urban heat island effects. Illustrate how these projects not only enhance climate resilience but also deliver added benefits to biodiversity and public health.

### Innovative Climate Education Programs

Feature educational initiatives in the Caribbean that raise awareness about climate change and empower the next generation of environmental stewards. Spotlight programmes that embed climate education into school curricula and involve students in practical projects, such as developing climate action plans for their communities.

### Public-Private Partnerships for Climate Resilience

Showcase collaborations between governments, private sector entities, and civil society organisations in the Caribbean that have led to successful climate resilience projects. These partnerships may involve sustainable tourism practices, resilient infrastructure investments, or joint efforts to promote the adoption of renewable energy.

### Climate-Informed Disaster Management

Highlight success stories in disaster preparedness and response in the Caribbean. Showcase countries that have enhanced their disaster early warning systems, emergency response protocols, and community engagement strategies. Illustrate how these measures have mitigated the impact of climate-related disasters on communities.

### Climate Financing and Investment Initiatives

Examine how Caribbean countries have accessed climate financing, including international climate funds and green bonds, to support adaptation and mitigation projects. Highlight projects that have effectively utilised these funds to generate positive and lasting impacts.

## CHAPTER TEN

# Engage Stakeholders

Engaging stakeholders is vital for comprehensive reporting on climate change in the Caribbean. By fostering relationships with a broad spectrum of local scientists, climate experts, NGOs, and community leaders, journalists can access diverse perspectives and insights into the region's climate change challenges and responses.

## Establishing Relationships

Highlight success stories in disaster preparedness and response in the Caribbean. Spotlight countries that have enhanced their disaster early warning systems, emergency response protocols, and community engagement strategies. Illustrate how these measures have lessened the impact of climate-related disasters on communities.



## Conducting Interviews

Arrange interviews with scientists and climate experts to grasp the scientific foundation of climate change in the Caribbean and its particular impacts on the region. Seek their insights on mitigation and adaptation strategies being deployed, as well as their recommendations for future actions.

### Collaboration with NGOs

Collaborate with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) actively engaged in climate-related projects and initiatives in the Caribbean. Partner with them on joint reporting efforts to spotlight on-the-ground experiences and successes.

### Engaging community leaders

Connect with community leaders and local activists to understand the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities in the Caribbean and the grassroots efforts underway to tackle climate challenges. Community leaders can offer valuable insights into the real-life experiences of those directly impacted by climate change.

### Participatory reporting

Embrace participatory reporting approaches by engaging stakeholders in the story development process. Encourage them to share their perspectives, experiences, and potential solutions. This approach builds trust and ensures that their voices are faithfully represented.



### Respectful and inclusive reporting

Be aware of cultural sensitivities and ensure inclusive reporting that takes into account diverse perspectives and experiences in the Caribbean. Acknowledge the indigenous knowledge and practices that contribute to climate resilience.

### Visiting climate projects

Visit climate adaptation and mitigation projects in various Caribbean countries to witness their impacts firsthand. Document the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from these projects.

### Virtual engagement

Utilise digital communication tools to facilitate virtual interviews and discussions with stakeholders who may be situated in remote or hard-to-reach areas of the Caribbean. This approach enables broader participation and inclusivity.

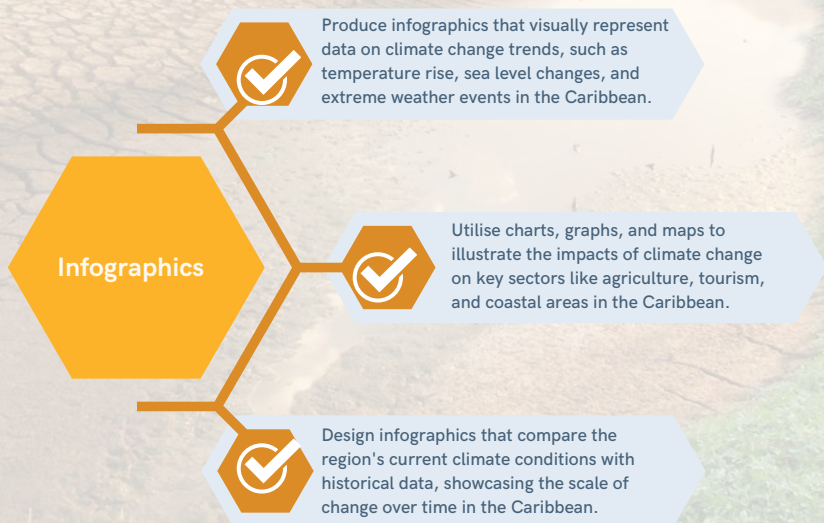
### Long-term relationships

Establish long-term relationships with stakeholders to maintain ongoing dialogue and monitor progress in climate change initiatives in the Caribbean. Regularly follow up on developments, ensuring updated and accurate reporting.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# Communicating with Visuals

Utilising visuals is a powerful way to enhance storytelling and convey the impacts of climate change in the Caribbean. By using infographics, photographs, and videos, journalists can engage their audience, evoke emotions, and make complex information more accessible.



## Photographs



Capture powerful images that showcase the direct impacts of climate change on Caribbean communities, such as flooding, coastal erosion, and damaged infrastructure.



Highlight the effects on biodiversity by capturing images of coral bleaching, disappearing habitats, and endangered species in the Caribbean.



Feature photographs of local adaptation and mitigation projects, showcasing the resilience and efforts of communities in combating climate change in the Caribbean.

## Videos:



Produce short documentary-style videos that tell the stories of individuals and communities experiencing climate change in the Caribbean. Include interviews, visuals of impacted areas, and footage of local initiatives.



Utilise time-lapse videos to demonstrate changes in natural landscapes, such as glacier retreat or coastal erosion, illustrating the long-term effects of climate change in the Caribbean.



Create animations or motion graphics to explain complex climate concepts, such as the greenhouse effect or the carbon cycle, in a visually engaging way, using examples from the Caribbean.



### Social Media and Interactive Visuals:

Share visuals on social media platforms to reach a broader audience and encourage sharing and engagement.

Use interactive maps or data visualisations to allow the audience to explore climate data and impacts specific to their region or country.

### Captions and Context:

Provide context and informative captions alongside visuals to ensure accurate interpretation and understanding of the depicted impacts.

Use storytelling techniques to humanise the climate change narrative, connecting the audience emotionally to the people and places affected.

### Attribution and Ethical Use

Ensure that all visuals used are properly attributed to their source and comply with copyright and ethical guidelines.

Prioritise authenticity and avoid using images that may perpetuate stereotypes or misrepresent the climate challenges faced by the Caribbean region.



## CHAPTER TWELVE

# Fact Checking and Accuracy

Fact-checking and accuracy are paramount in climate change reporting to provide the public with reliable and credible information. Clearly distinguishing between climate change and extreme weather events helps avoid confusion and promotes a comprehensive understanding of the complex climate system. By adhering to these guidelines, journalists can contribute to fostering informed discussions and constructive actions on climate change in the Caribbean and beyond.

## Rely on Reputable Sources

Seek information from reputable scientific organisations, government agencies, and peer-reviewed research papers. Double-check facts with multiple reliable sources to ensure accuracy.

## Verify Data and Statistics

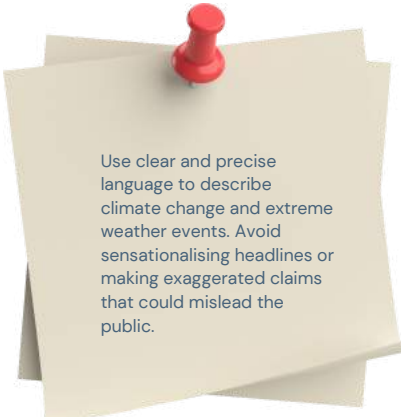
When reporting on climate data and statistics, verify the sources and methodologies used to collect and analyse the information. Clearly state the data's origin and any limitations associated with it.

## Differentiate Climate Change from Extreme Weather Events

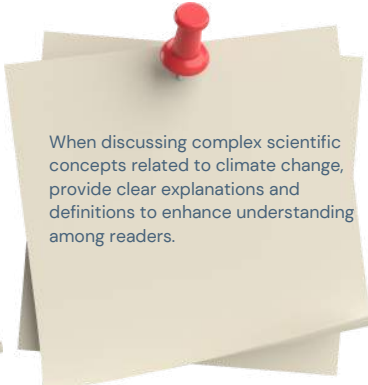
Clarify the distinction between climate change and individual extreme weather events. Climate change refers to long-term shifts in weather patterns, such as rising global temperatures and sea levels. Extreme weather events, like hurricanes and heatwaves, are short-term and localised phenomena influenced by complex atmospheric conditions.

## Avoid Attribution Errors

Exercise caution when attributing specific weather events solely to climate change. While climate change can influence the frequency and intensity of extreme events, attributing individual events to climate change requires extensive scientific analysis and attribution studies.



Use clear and precise language to describe climate change and extreme weather events. Avoid sensationalising headlines or making exaggerated claims that could mislead the public.



When discussing complex scientific concepts related to climate change, provide clear explanations and definitions to enhance understanding among readers.



#### Consult Climate Experts

Consult climate experts, scientists, and meteorologists for accurate insights and interpretations of climate data and its impacts. Include their perspectives to add credibility to your reporting.



#### Fact-Check Quotes and Statements

Fact-check quotes and statements from interviewees or officials to ensure accuracy and context.



#### Provide Context

Contextualise climate change impacts within the larger global and regional trends. Avoid drawing conclusions from isolated events or data points.



#### Corrections and Updates

If errors are identified in published articles, promptly issue corrections and updates to maintain journalistic integrity.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# Why is it important to report?

For a number of reasons, reporting on climate change stories is crucial.

- ✓ It first increases public knowledge of climate change and its economic effects.
- ✓ It helps to demonstrate how rising temperatures are directly causing negative consequences including droughts, floods, rising sea levels, etc.
- ✓ It helps illustrate the threat climate change poses to all life and the planet.
- ✓ It helps to demonstrate the connectivity between climate change and social issues
- ✓ It also highlights the need to approach climate action from a human rights perspective, or as "human rights obligations," (United Nations)



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# The steps of drafting your story

The steps in drafting the Climate Justice story include:

①

**Research and gather information** – Who, what, where, when, and why are the five Ws of your news story.

To accurately convey the incident or news to your reader, you must have a thorough understanding of the sequence of events. By conducting thorough fact-finding, you may establish yourself as a competent and trustworthy source of information.

②

**Interviewing subjects** – Alternatively, secondary sources can offer readers viewpoints from those familiar with the subject or impacted by it. This could be a subject matter specialist providing technical comments or analysis, or an ordinary person sharing a personal narrative about how the subject has affected them.

③

**Outlining** – With the inverted-pyramid structure in mind, create an outline for your news item. Consider your potential readers and the publication to ensure that your writing aligns with their expectations in terms of complexity. Unlike a news item for a community or niche publication, your readership may be more diverse if this article is for a general news outlet.

④

**Add the Climate Change connection** – Use simple language that can be easily understood. Include factual information and data on climate change to support the story.

5

**Start writing**

A news article should comprise brief, concise paragraphs written in a tone of your choice. Ensure to attribute any statements or opinions to a reliable source that you have verified.

6

Alongside words, utilise aids such as pictures, maps, and videos to help visualise the issue and make it more tangible.

7

**Focus on solutions –**

For every problem you discuss, endeavour to present a solution.

8

**Fact Check** – Facts are the foundation of good news stories. The entire effort is at risk if even one assertion or piece of information is unreliable or unsupported. Verify the accuracy of all the material you've obtained so far before publishing a news item, as well as the information provided by your interview sources.

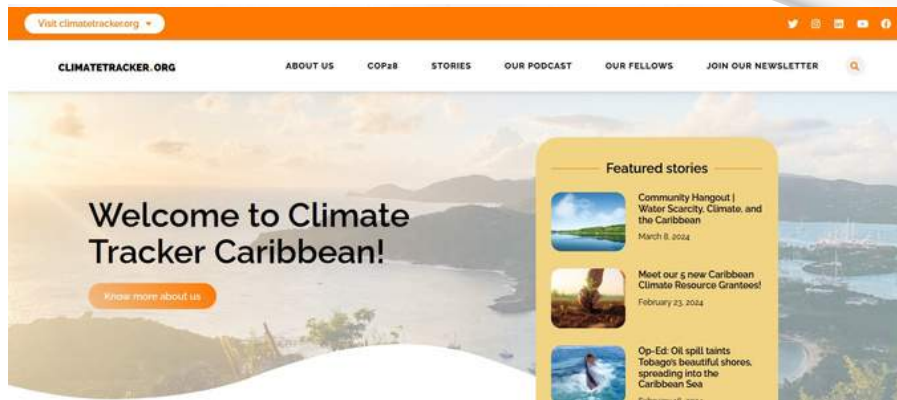
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**Empower action**

Climate journalism empowers action by informing Caribbean communities about the local impacts of climate change, such as increasing hurricane intensity and coastal erosion. By highlighting successful adaptation projects, it inspires individuals and governments to take proactive measures, like implementing resilient infrastructure and sustainable land management practices. Through investigative reporting, it holds policymakers accountable for addressing the urgent need for climate action and encourages public support for environmentally responsible policies.

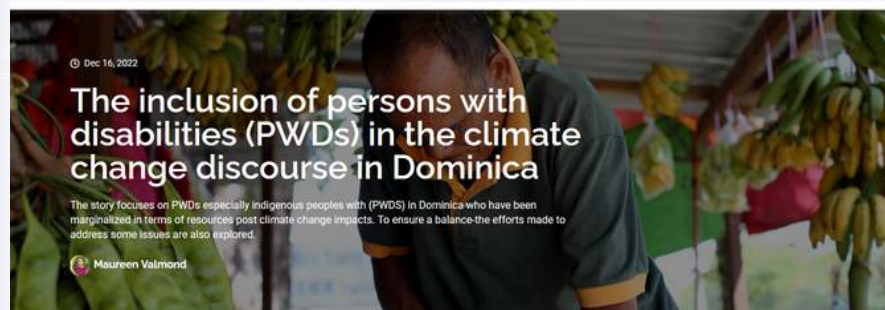
## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# Climate Justice Stories



**The inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the Climate Change discourse  
“I want to see people with disabilities treated as any ordinary person in Dominica because we are!” – Earnica Esprit**

Dominica seems to be one of the main countries in CARICOM to feel the full brunt of climate change. As recently as Sunday 6th November 2022, the eastern part of the island was again cut off due to heavy rain falls. Prior to this, the damaging effects of Tropical Storm Erika in 2016 and Hurricane Maria in 2017, proved that Small Island Developing states (SIDs) like Dominica are disproportionately affected by climate change. Read more here: <https://climatetrackeribbean.org/climate-justice/the-inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities-pwds-in-the-climate-change-discourse-in-dominica/>



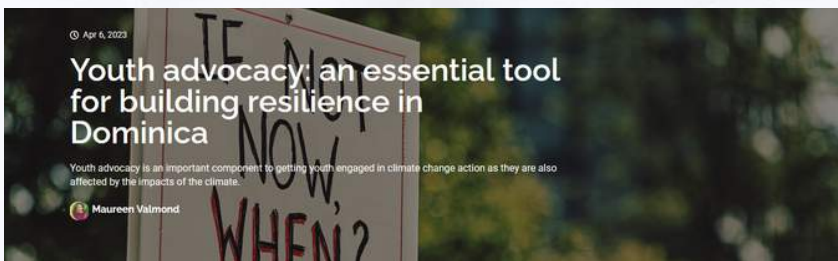
## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

**The muffled cries that trail climate disasters**—This story speaks of how climate change increases children’s vulnerability to abuse. An interview with a victim of sexual abuse which took place at the last Climate disaster.



Located in the centre of the Hurricane belt, it is well known that Dominica is among the most climate-vulnerable islands in the Caribbean Region and projections suggest that the risks are likely to intensify in the coming years. This forecast means that climate-related hazards will pose a continued threat to the safety of children and the country’s ability to provide the necessary social protection to children and their families. Read more here: <https://climatetrackercaribbean.org/climate-justice/the-muffled-cries-that-trail-climate-disasters/>

**Youth advocacy: an essential tool for building resilience in Dominica**—Youth advocacy is an important component to getting youth engaged in climate change action as they are also affected by the impacts of the climate.





Valmond is from the indigenous community in the Kalinago Territory and was still in high school when Hurricane Maria struck the island. After creating his first youth group at the age of 15, he decided that he should expand his target population by searching for organizations such as UNESCO, OECS, CARICOM, and the United Nations (UN) that covered the youth work.

Many more stories can be found at the Climate Tracker website: <https://climatetrackercaribbean.org/>

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# Ethical Guidelines

-  Subject (s) must consent to use their narrative, illustrative details, visuals, or audio/video recording, albeit they may specify particular restrictions.
  
-  The subject's name, age, location, and other details about his or her circumstances, such as any illnesses, abuse, or other conditions as well as the subject's relationship to the journalist, are examples of descriptive facts included in the informed consent forms.
  
-  Photos should not be taken if interviewee refuses or if he or she does not sign the consent form.
  
-  A parent of guardian should give consent on behalf of a minor. Forms **MUST** be clearly explained to subjects before they proceed to give consent.
  
-  Protection of Vulnerable Populations: It is crucial that "vulnerable populations" are aware that their story and/or image may be made public. Minors (those under the age of 18) and indigenous groups are automatically included in the category of vulnerable people and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on Rights of Indigenous Peoples should guide the journalist.
  
-  Bring along: Several copies of the consent form, enough to leave some blank if necessary as well as Certificates of Appreciation or a non-monetary gift to be presented to the Subjects in appreciation and a translator, or someone who speaks the local dialect.



# Blank Forms

## Consent Form (Adult)

I give.....the permission to use the full information and other materials, including, without limitation, my name, location, age, my statements, a personal interview, my image, and any voice recording, including excerpts of such information.

My materials may be used by OTHER COMPANIES, PERSONS OR GROUPS that partner with ..... to promote the article.

I understand that the materials will be used for reporting use. I understand that my consent or refusal will not affect this project.

I understand that my materials may be used in printed materials, on the internet and other electronic media, video and audio recordings and other media, for any period and anywhere in the world.

I understand that my Consent cannot be cancelled or changed.

I am of adult age and have every right to contract with .....

I have read, or I have been read, this consent before signing it. I understand this consent.

Signature of Subject/Group representative:

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Name of Subject:

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:Location: -----

Date: -----

Additional notes -----

### Consent Form (Minor)

I give.....the permission to use the information and other materials, including, without limitation, name, location, age, statements, a personal interview, image, and any voice recording, including excerpts of such information.

The materials may be used, including editing, by OTHER COMPANIES, PERSONS OR GROUPS that partner with ..... to promote the article.

I understand that the materials will be used for any use. I understand that my consent or refusal will not affect this project.

I understand that the materials may be used in printed materials, on the internet and other electronic media, video and audio recordings and other media, for any period and anywhere in the world.

I understand that my Consent cannot be cancelled or changed.

I have read, or I have been read, this consent before signing it. I understand this consent.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian:

\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of child:\_\_\_\_\_

Age of child:\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

The Open Society Foundations, founded by investor and philanthropist George Soros, represent a global network of organisations dedicated to promoting democratic governance, human rights, and social justice. Established in 1979, the foundations operate in over 120 countries, working to empower marginalized communities, advocate for civil liberties, and strengthen the rule of law. Through grantmaking, advocacy, and capacity-building initiatives, the Open Society Foundations strive to address some of the world's most pressing challenges, including climate change.

In partnership with the Open Society Foundations, Climate Tracker awarded grants inspiring journalists, media professionals, communicators, and content creators to produce resources centered on climate justice under the Caribbean Community Climate Resource Grant programme.

These grants are intended to support the Caribbean media and activism community in understanding and promoting climate justice communication and reporting throughout the region. The objective of these grants is to empower recipients to generate content, tools, and resources that will benefit both local and regional communities.

# Thank you!

Thank you for choosing to be an active participant in the climate change discussion and advocacy. Your involvement will help raise awareness necessary for addressing the challenges of climate change on both regional and global scales.

This publication was made possible through the crucial support from Open Society Foundations, “world’s largest private funder of independent groups working for justice, democratic governance, and human rights.”

Furthermore, your participation in this discourse is crucial as your stories will encourage citizens to engage more actively in decision-making as their understanding of climate change grows. Public behaviour and activities concerning climate change may also change as a result of increased public knowledge, education, and participation, which you will be highlighting.

I send positive energy as you embark on your climate reporting journey!

MAUREEN