

UWI 3rd Sargassum Symposium

Presenters

DAY ONE

Session 1: Focus on SargAdapt research

Kristie Alleyne

An MSc graduate of UWI-CERMES, now pursuing her PhD at the World Maritime University in Malmo, Sweden. She is one of a group of students in the “Closing the Circle: Marine Debris, Sargassum and Marine Spatial Planning in the Eastern Caribbean” programme. Kristie is in fact the only student in the group working on sargassum and has conducted all of her fieldwork back home here in Barbados addressing several key topics including the biodiversity associated with incoming sargassum rafts which she will tell us about today.

Dr Hazel Oxenford

A Professor of Marine Ecology and Fisheries, PhD graduate of UWI-Cave Hill and long-time staff member at UWI-CERMES. She has been involved in sargassum research since its first unwelcome arrival on our shores back in 2011. First of all concentrating on the impacts on fisheries and then branching out into many other areas of concern with regard to the management of sargassum influxes, including the complex business of producing sargassum forecasts for the Eastern Caribbean – her topic today.

Makeda Corbin

A BSc graduate of UWI-Cave Hill and currently pursuing her MPhil at UWI-CERMES. Makeda has been working hard over the last 2 + years to address several important knowledge gaps with regard to sargassum. Today she will tell us about her clever experiments to understand the growth of the floating sargassum.

Micaela Small

An MSc graduate of UWI-CERMES, who made a name for herself exposing the damage to coral reefs being done by cruise ships here in Barbados. She is currently a Research Assistant with the SargAdapt project, and has been responsible for many aspects of the sargassum research, fieldwork and writing over the last 2 years. Today she will speak about her innovative research to produce sargassum hazard maps for the Eastern Caribbean islands.

Jeanelle Irvine

Another MSc graduate of UWI-CERMES, who was responsible for producing the first Coral Report Card for Barbados in 2020. She is also currently a Research Assistant with the SargAdapt project and has been largely responsible for maintaining the ever- expanding open-access collection of scientific papers on sargassum, compiling reviews of current knowledge, as well as leading the creativity behind our online sargassum story maps, videos and public educational materials. Today she will speak on a preliminary study looking at economic impacts to the tourism sector in Barbados.

Session 2: Focus on SargAdapt Capacity Building

Bethia Thomas

An MSc graduate of UWI-St Augustine and now in the final stages of completing her PhD at UWI-CERMES. Through her research Bethia has been looking at the vulnerability of small coastal communities to sargassum influxes through the lens of the inhabitants and using a participatory approach to adaptation planning. This is something Bethia is particularly passionate about, having spent most of her life in one of the coastal communities in St Lucia that have been significantly impacted by sargassum. She will share some of those experiences with us today and lead us through her research.

Dr Kim Baldwin

Also a MSc and PhD graduate and research associate of UWI-CERMES, Kim initially made a name for herself developing a transboundary marine resource and space-use information system for the Grenadine island chain. She is also the Director of Marine Spatial Information Solutions and has worked on a number of marine spatial planning initiatives across the region as well as offers drone and geospatial data training services. Since 2018, Kim has worked with CERMES to identify how drone technologies, web-mapping dashboards and analysis tools can be used to help manage the impacts of sargassum influxes and improve the implementation of adaptation efforts across the Caribbean. She will give you a brief overview of this work.

Yasa Belmar

Yasa Belmar is a Senior Technical Officer at the Caribbean Natural Resources Management Institute. She has over 17 years of experience in environmental management and sustainable development in Small Island Developing States. Based in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, she manages projects related to coastal resilience-building, ecosystem stewardship and inclusive blue-green development. She is a former commonwealth scholar and holds a master's degree in Water and Environmental Management from the University of Bristol and a bachelor's in Environmental Sciences from the University of the West Indies, Mona.

Session 3: UNDP Panel Discussion “Real talk or hype – can we use this sargassum landing on our shores?”

Moderator – Karima Degia

Karima Degia is the Project Coordinator for the UNDP Project for Improving National Sargassum Management Capacities in the Caribbean. She has over 15 years professional experience in coastal engineering and coastal zone management in the Caribbean. Prior to joining UNDP, as a private consultant she provided technical and policy advising services to governments and inter-governmental institutions in the Caribbean, including co-authoring the 2021 UNEP Sargassum White Paper and serving on the Barbados delegation to the UNFCCC COP26 and COP27. Through her affiliation with UWI-CERMES, she has been involved with applied research on nature-based solutions as well as response to the problem of sargassum seaweed influxes.

Dr Mohammad Nagdee

Dr. Mohammad Nagdee is the Head of the Nature and Energy and Climate Change Programme at the UNDP, where he is responsible for a US\$45 Million grant portfolio implemented in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, with over 13 projects in the areas of climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation, climate-resilient agriculture, Ridge to Reef, Renewable Energy Transition, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and Gender. His academic qualifications are in natural resource management, and coastal engineering and management, with a doctoral specialization in coastal, climate change, damage and loss and high energy events. He is a co-founder and former CEO of Blue Green Initiative (BGI), and is a registered land surveyor in Barbados.

Dr Hazel Oxenford – as before

Mark Hill

Mark Hill is the CEO of Export Barbados, where he has brought a new focus to the organisation, formerly known as Barbados Investment & Development Corporation (BIDC), on exports, innovation and diversification. His vision is to rethink exports and be focused with a purposeful and aggressive approach tailored to build a new export economy in Barbados. He has a design background and experience in both the public and private sector, embracing an understanding of design as a strategy, well beyond styling or process. Mr. Hill is the founder of Innogen Technologies and Biogen Biotechnologies, two research and development companies in the clean technologies market. He is also an MIT-trained product and service innovation specialist using Design Thinking methodology.

Crystal Drakes

Senator Crystal Drakes is an economist, sustainability strategist and trained foresight practitioner. She is an advocate for holistic public policy aimed at ensuring a more sustainable and equitable future for all. Sen. Drakes is also a PhD student at the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies UWI; her research seeks to investigate how Doughnut Economics can be used for development planning in SIDS. As a consultant, Sen. Drakes has worked with various development agencies and international research institutes such as the UN Environment, IADB, UNDP, World Bank, ILO and the Stockholm Environmental Institute.

DAY TWO

Session 4: Focus on Management

Dr Patrick McConney

A former chief Fishery Officer in Barbados and a long serving senior lecturer at UWI-CERMES with a PhD in resource management from the University of British Columbia, Canada. Patrick's interdisciplinary research is focused on small-scale fisheries and marine protected area social-ecological systems in the Wider Caribbean. He has a keen interest in ecosystem approaches, livelihoods, gender issues, adaptive capacity, and in management, planning and governance.

Richeda Speede

Another MSc graduate of UWI-CERMES whose research focused on how fishers were coping and adapting to sargassum. She created a 'best practice booklet' with fishers for fishers to share their experiences and innovations. Richeda is currently a Research Assistant with the SargAdapt project and has been largely responsible for pulling together the stakeholder knowledge and capacity survey results and collating the complex web of sargassum management strategies and plans across the 5 Eastern Caribbean project countries.

Tanbaje Sealy

Tanbaje Sealy is Senior Economist in the Blue Economy Division of the Ministry of Environment, National Beautification, Green and Blue Economy. He joined the Blue Economy Division in March 2020 and around 2022 matters pertaining to sargassum management were added to his portfolio. In particular, recent and regular networking with members of the Sargassum Clean-up Program has raised his awareness of this marine ecological phenomenon and the challenges associated with harvest and disposal of sargassum.

Aria St Louis

Mrs. Aria St. Louis, currently Head of the Environment Division in Grenada, is a Conservation Geneticist by training who has done molecular genetic work to guide conservation and management of invasive species, cryptic species, and endangered species. She serves as Grenada's technical focal point for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and as Grenada's climate science-policy focal point for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Session 5: Synergies with other projects

SarTRAC/SarSNAP/SarCAP Team

Dr Bob Marsh

A Professor in Oceanography and Climate at the University of Southampton, UK. Bob's interdisciplinary studies use large data sets and advanced computer models to explore how oceans are changing our world. He is particularly fascinated by the drift of objects as diverse as sea turtle hatchlings, volcanic pumice, icebergs and now sargassum! Bob is one of the lead scientists in the SARTRAC project and has been concentrating on exploring the drivers of, and modelling drift of, sargassum.

Romario Anderson

A Research Officer with the Mona Geoinformatics Institute (MGI) in Kingston, Jamaica and is actively involved with international collaborative research on emerging challenges for the Caribbean - including the *Sargassum* inundation issue. In this work he is responsible for investigating the geomorphic, meteorological and biophysical conditions which influence the beaching of sargassum along various coastlines around Jamaica and examining the risks posed to various coastal industries. He is also an MPhil student at UWI-Mona studying the intricate linkages between the digital divide, and social and economic development.

UNDP Project

Karima Degia – as before

CRFM Project

Dr Maren Headley

Maren Headley works with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism Secretariat (CRFM) which is an intergovernmental organization made up of 17 Member States. CRFM's mission is "to promote and facilitate the responsible utilization of the region's fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region." She has been working in the sector for over a decade. Currently, she is involved with the Developing Sargassum Products for Climate Resilience in the Caribbean project which aims to develop Sargassum-derived product prototypes and production processes, including a commercialization strategy to support its marketing.

[GHANA TEAM – Panel Moderator Dr Janice Cumberbatch](#)

Dr Janice Cumberbatch

A senior lecturer in social and environmental management at UWI-CERMES. She has over 30 years professional experience in participatory research, environmental management, social and gender impact assessment, heritage tourism management, meeting facilitation and training. Her current research focusses on climate change, social planning, sustainable development and the socio-economic impacts of sargassum.

Dr Winnie Sowah

A lecturer at the University of Ghana in Accra in the Department of Marine and Fisheries Sciences. She earned her PhD at Ehime University Japan in 2017. Her research interests are in population genetics, molecular biology, aquaculture, small scale fisheries and now sargassum and its impacts on the fishing communities in Ghana.

Bernice Wilmot Oppong

A PhD student at the University of Ghana she is studying the issues surrounding management of sargassum inundations in Ghana. Her research focusses on assessing the toxicity levels and possible uses of sargassum in Ghana.

Dr Philip-Neri Jayson-Quashigah

A Research Fellow at the Institute for Environment and Sanitation Studies (IESS), University of Ghana. His research interest spans the issues of coastal processes and climate change, vulnerability assessment and adaptation especially in deltaic regions. His expertise is in the application of remote sensing, GIS and modelling to environmental assessment and management. Philip-Neri's current research is on the invasive Sargassum along the West African Coast with the SARTRAC project

Peace Dziedzom Gbeckor-Kove

A Principal Programme Officer in the Natural Resources Department of Environmental Protection Agency, Ghana. She has over a decade of experience in Environmental Impact Assessment, Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Strategic Environmental Assessment. Her research includes biodiversity conservation, coastal erosion, climate change, environmental governance and policy, invasive species, &

marine spatial planning. She has collaborated with stakeholders both locally and internationally on research projects, educational campaigns and policy formulation in the environmental sector.

Session 6: Hearing from Innovators

Dr Legena Henry

A mechanical engineer with a PhD from UWI-St Augustine, she is a lecturer in Renewable Energy at UWI-Cave Hill. Legena's very active research focusses on sustainable energy sources in the Caribbean, such as bio-fuel from sargassum seaweed, ocean thermal energy conversion, and wave energy. She is also the CEO-Founder of 'Rum and Sargassum Inc' where she is commercializing an indigenous renewable transportation solution in Barbados.

Joshua Forte

Joshua Forte is an entrepreneur and sustainable environmental management practitioner. He is CEO-founder of the award-winning Red Diamond Compost Inc., a biotech social enterprise that creates clean and green agrochemical solutions. He is a recipient of a Commonwealth Innovation Award 2021 and the 2023 Barbados National Youth Award for his work in Agriculture. He also has expertise in removing pollutants from the environment and improving climate resilience and food & nutrition security.

Kerri-Ann Bovell

Kerri-Ann Bovell a chemistry graduate of UWI-Cave Hill is already recognized as one of Barbados' promising innovators. She is one of three 'Blue Tank Innovators' supported by the UNDP Blue Economy Accelerator Lab. She is also recognized by the 'Bloom Cleantech Cluster Barbados Incubation programme'. Her business EcoMycö seeks to replace traditional fossil fuel-based packaging, such as Styrofoam and high-density and low-density polyethylene, with a bio-based and biodegradable alternative. She incorporates local plant matter as the raw materials for the bioplastic films she has created so far.

Dr Nikolai Holder

A recent PhD graduate of UWI-Cave Hill where he conducted his research on conversion of sargassum biomass to biofuel. Nikolai is also involved in the 'Blue Tank Innovator' scheme currently supporting a project looking at the potential of fish offal for production of biomethane. Today he will be speaking about his experiences with sargassum.