

POLLUTION

of the
North-east Tobago UNESCO
Man and the Biosphere Reserve
Management Plan

SUMMARY SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Despite strong laws, pollution has become a serious threat to NE Tobago's ecosystems, our livelihoods, communities, and ecosystems. All types of terrestrial and marine pollution (solid-, liquid-, air-, noise-, and light pollution) are present; nevertheless, policing is very poor and the "Polluter Pays Principle" is not applied. Fly tipping is a common practice along roadsides, often started by government contractors and continued by residents. Littering of one-way plastic packaging, Styrofoam, plastic bags is common and can be seen in every village. Plastic is often washed into the ocean and marine organisms mistake plastic items as food resulting in the animal's death; as micro-plastic it returns to us when we eat fish and impacts our health. Within the past years Sargassum has become a frequent seasonal pollutant and no proper solution is implemented as yet. Ravines, rivers, beaches, and reefs are polluted by chemicals, pesticides, oils, detergents, and unhealthy bacteria; it is definitely not safe to bathe next to a river mouth in a community. Some bars and vehicles cause significant noise pollution until early morning hours without the police intervening. Light pollution from buildings close to the shore line distract hatching turtles and lead to many deaths every season. Unfortunately, reduce, reuse, and recycle activities are very rare.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL

Pollution is not a threat to ecosystem- and human health in the North-east Tobago UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

PRIORITY NEEDS

- Residents, visitors, and all Divisions of the THA are aware of the serious negative impact of pollution on resident's health, the economy, and our ecosystem and significantly reduce all forms of pollution.
- The relevant pollution laws, regulations, and policies are fully enforced by the THA, Coast Guard, and the Police.

STRATEGIES

- Develop and implement an outreach programmes on the effects of pollution on health, economy, and ecosystems;
- build the capacity and the dedication of the police force and other state representatives to enforce environmental laws;
- fully implement and enforce the "Polluter Pays Principle";
- implement a pollution monitoring through litter wardens and community groups; and
- implement improved of waste management, specifically the reduction of waste in general.

KEY PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Facilitate:

- pollution-related community surveys to design future outreach programmes specifically designed for various stakeholder groups
- collaboration between THA, NGOs, community groups, churches, and private sector to implement creative programmes to improve the beauty of our communities and to foster community pride among residents, e.g., best clean village and best clean school competitions;
- commitment from the private sector to undergo a anti- pollution certification programme;
- lobbying for use of reporting mechanisms such as CrimeStoppers, to report any major pollution crimes, to actively discourage major dumping and fly-tipping;
- capacity building of police on enforcement of laws against pollution; and
- improved or new monitoring strategies against pollution.