



# Climate Change and the Planning Response in Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago Society of  
Planners

# Introduction

## **Climate Change**

- Complex process with far reaching impacts that will affect every aspect of our lives, including basic elements i.e. access to water, food production, health and the environment

## **Planning**

- Use and development of land

## **Role of Planning in Climate Change?**

- Planning decisions impact the location and design of development and the management of land use change and have a direct impact on climate change

# Structure of Presentation

- General implications of climate change
- Potential impacts of climate change for Trinidad and Tobago
- Role of planning in addressing climate change
- Planning response in Region and in Trinidad and Tobago

# What are the Impacts?

- **Increased temperatures**
  - Impact on health e.g. new diseases, deaths
  - Increased risk of heavy storms and flash floods
  - Increased demand for water supply
- **Pressure on water resources**
  - Changing rainfall patterns and impact on availability of water
  - Refilling of reservoirs e.g. Hollis, Caroni Arena, Navet, Hillsborough
- **Flooding and extreme weather**
  - Rising sea levels – Caroni Basin and coastal settlements
  - Saltwater intrusion e.g. SW Peninsula
  - Flooding
  - Extreme weather events e.g. T&T affected by hurricanes?
  - Coastal erosion e.g. Cedros

# Addressing climate change

2-fold approach:

1. Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases
2. Adapt to changes that are largely unavoidable

# Role of Planning?

- Action on climate change needs to be comprehensive and integrated at all levels
- Planning decisions about the location and design of development and the management of land use change have a direct impact on climate change
- Planning policy provides context for planning decisions
- Planning policy and application impact on level of emissions and strategies for adaptation

# Planning

## **Location of development**

- Distribution and location of development
- Regulate and guide development to low risk areas

## **Design of development**

- Green buildings
- Siting and layout of buildings in development

# Planning – land use change

- Major land use change has implications for both emissions of greenhouse gas and adaptation to climate change
- In Trinidad and Tobago, major land use changes with significant impacts e.g.
  - Industrialisation programme
  - Caroni Lands
  - Illegal development e.g. Valencia sand and gravel extraction
- Climate change v economic growth?

# Regional Planning Framework for Climate Change

- CPACC – Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change
- MACC – Mainstreaming climate change project
- CCCC – Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
- IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

# Trinidad and Tobago Relevant Planning Legislation

- Town and Country Planning Act 1960
- EMA Act
- Municipal Corporations Act
- Forests Act 1915
- IMA Act
- WASA Act

# Planning response in Trinidad and Tobago

- Improving development standards to cope with potential threats
- Review of building codes and attempts at a standardized Caribbean building code
- Incorporation of climate change considerations into EIA process by major energy companies e.g. Petrotrin
- Requirement for incorporation of climate change considerations in all EIA projects.

# Recommended Actions

- Development of appropriate planning policy
- Implementation of recommended policy
- Training in climate change issues for built environment professionals at local planning level.
- Institutional capacity building
- National and Regional Planning Policy Improvements
- Relevant Local Area Plans for development control
- Enforcement of Development Control policies
- National education programme on Climate Change

# Discussion