

Barbados set to be hub for marine science

BARBADOS IS BEING seen as a future hub for marine innovation, hurricane forecasting and scientific education.

Regional and international ocean experts made that announcement at the pre-launch media briefing for the Vetlesen Caribbean Hurricane Ocean Glider at the Barbados Blue Dive Shop in Aquatic Gap, Needham's Point, St Michael yesterday.



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This came about through the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH), Rutgers University's Centre for Ocean Observing Leadership (RU COOL), the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE).

Three leading experts in the field - regional coordinator and head of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, Dr Lorna Inniss, professor at Rutgers University's Centre for Ocean Observing Leadership, Scott Glenn, and principal for the CIMH, Dr David Farrell - shared their unified vision for a regional ocean observing system that will strengthen climate resilience and support sustainable development throughout the Caribbean.

Protecting ocean

"Whether we're talking about biodiversity conservation, pollution monitoring, ecosystem preservation, or, in this case, more accurate hurricane forecasting, this system has the potential to transform how we manage our coastal and oceanic resources in the Caribbean," Inniss said.

She reminded attendees that the ocean's condition directly affects the population's survival as it produces half of the planet's oxygen and regulates global climate, adding that after years of environmental abuse, the ocean is now "sick".

"Every second breath you take, it comes from the ocean - the ocean supplies 50 per cent of our oxygen. It means that the ocean is again having problems doing what it usually does in a predictable manner We need to make that change to bring back the ocean into equilibrium so that our economic and social gains can be sustainable over time," she added.

With hurricanes growing stronger and more unpredictable because of climate change, Glenn stressed the need for more accurate and smarter forecasting tools. Central to this new strategy is an underwater robot

called the RU 29, which will be deployed off the coast of Barbados. [Read more](#)