

FOCUS

The container deposit option



MIMPEI ITO, a solid waste specialist in Japan, believes small Caribbean countries should be wary of waste-to-energy projects.
(Picture by Barry Alleyne.)

by **BARRY ALLEYNE**
In Tokyo, Japan

IN THE ABSENCE of extremely deep pockets, small island developing states like those in the Caribbean should be wary of waste-to-energy solutions, says a Japanese solid waste management expert.

A programme set up under container deposit legislation (CDL) could be a more feasible and less expensive option, said Mimpei Ito, director of Environment Management Team 1 at the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Ito was speaking at JICA's Tokyo headquarters to six journalists participating in the 2017 Pacific/Caribbean programme hosted

by the Association for Promotion of International Cooperation and the Foreign Press Centre of Japan.

The journalists – from Barbados, Jamaica, Grenada, Fiji, Samoa, and American Samoa – are being introduced to several initiatives which Japan has used to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and risk management over the last decade.

The container deposit programme involves importers of containers (aluminium or plastic) having to pay an additional amount at the source, which is then passed on to the consumer.

The amount can be redeemed if the container is returned to a designated collection centre, at which time a small sum is

DISASTER MITIGATION WORKSHOP

The Association for Promotion of International Cooperation (APIC) and the Foreign Press Centre of Japan have come together once again to give regional journalists insight into how the country goes about mitigating the effects of natural disasters.

Japan, a country known in recent times for earthquakes and tsunamis, has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on special technology and building methods to protect its citizenry.

This year, APIC has invited six journalists from the Caribbean and Pacific region to get a first-hand look at those methods. Associate Editor Barry Alleyne is representing THE NATION.

returned to the consumer, and Governments uses the remaining finance to operate recycling centres.

One downside of the programme for small jurisdictions, however, is that a final source for the recycled product may have to be found outside the country.

Concerning the waste-to-energy option, Ito said that while it is viable, it demands a high level of continuous financing to make it work, which would be a bugbear for cash-strapped Caribbean and Pacific islands.

"Many islands like yours have the same problems with landfill space," he explained. "Yes, you can do waste-to-energy, but the first thing you

have to look at is the cost. Waste-to-energy creates benefits, but in reality it's not always financially feasible. You have to keep pumping money in.

"The waste amount produced is not always the capacity of the entire incinerator, and there is a large investment involved."

Ito revealed that ash, the end product of the waste-to-energy method, also needed to be delivered to a final disposal site.

"This ash is also sometimes environmentally toxic with some heavy metals," he said.

He concluded that if a Government's main target was waste reduction then waste-to-energy could work.

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