

Seeking international aid for vulnerable islands

The Secretary General of the Commonwealth, the Right Hon Patricia Scotland, QC, has committed to trying to get the international community to understand the vulnerability of small island developing states and their need for aid.

Before visiting Grenada last Wednesday, Baroness Scotland visited the Caribbean islands that were recently ravaged by hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Speaking to the media following a meeting with Prime Minister Dr the Right Hon Keith Mitchell, Baroness Scotland said, "I think I will be leaving here with a great deal of hope because despite the tragedy and unimaginable devastation I witnessed in Antigua and Barbuda

and Dominica, I also saw an unbreakable spirit of resilience and revival." This, she said making reference to the speeches she heard from those countries' leaders, who expressed determination to rise again.

She said from her meeting with PM Mitchell she felt the same determination to do all possible to better protect Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Returning to her homeland Dominica, Baroness Scotland said she was deeply touched as she could hardly recognise the country, which she said lost 200% of its GDP.

Speaking to the issue of making aid available for SIDS, Baroness Scotland said the Commonwealth has



Secretary General of the Commonwealth, the Right Hon Patricia Scotland, QC

been working with the World Bank and Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to create a Climate Change Finance Fund that countries in need can tap into. She

announced the creation of a Finance Access Hub for the region, which is based in Belize. She said the Hub is expected to provide technical assistance to help applications be successful.

From Grenada, the Secretary General was expected to attend the COP 23 – the UN Climate Change Conference 2017 in Bonn, Germany, from November 06-18. There, she said she will take the pictures showing what has happened, "in the hope that we will help the international community to better understand the true long-term consequences of what hurricanes and storms can do to small and vulnerable islands."

The Baroness went on, "I think we have to implement the Paris Agreement," noting that the consequences being suffered by the region were not made by this region "and therefore getting everyone to understand that we are all in this together is going to be remarkably

important..."

She noted that in addition to the Caribbean, countries in other parts of the commonwealth suffer from mudslides, flooding, fire, etc.

She said this COP is about implementation and action.

In addition, the Secretary General said in Bonn the Commonwealth will launch a Climate Change Toolkit to bring together the legislative and other provisions that will implement and put into law the aspirations that are in the 2015 Climate Change Paris Agreement.

Grenada was a participant in the preparation of the tool kit.

The Paris Agreement is an agreement within the United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) dealing with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in the year 2020. It aims to respond to the global climate change threat by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Each country determines, plans and regularly reports its own contribution it should make in order to mitigate global warming. There is no mechanism to force a country to set a specific target by a specific date, but each target should go beyond previously set targets.

Japan, rich in Culture and Heritage



Participants dressed in Kimonos – Japan's traditional dress

By Anisha Samuel

MATSUSHIMA, Japan - Japan is not only known as the country with the world's third largest economy, but it is also known for its rich culture and heritage that dates back thousands of years ago.

The way of life for the Japanese people is demonstrated in everyday living and it is passed on from generation to generation.

Tourists get to experience this culture when they visit Japan's national heritage sites and buildings, exhibits

and ceremonies. In addition, Japan's culture is demonstrated and preserved in its sculptures, paintings, calligraphy, architecture, clothing, cuisine, gardens, etc.

The journalists participating in the 2017 APIC-FPCJ Journalists'

Programme got a better understanding of Japanese religious beliefs and practices when they visited temples in Kyoto and Sendai during the weekend of October 20. A visit was also made to the Nijo-Jo Castle – a world heritage site,



Zen Buddhist temple in Kyoto, Japan

which was built 400 years ago.

Throughout the visits, tour guides explained the layout of each temple and the significance of each painting and room.

The group was in awe of the intricate details of the design and material used that make the temples, which are also national heritage, so unique.

The temples are surrounded by blooming gardens, filled with flora and fauna that adds to the rich history.

The journalists

enjoyed Washoku (food of Japan) and gained a deeper appreciation for Japanese cuisine after dining at the high-class Matsushima-based Japanese styled restaurant, Un-gai.

Probably the most memorable activity for the journalists this weekend was being dressed in Kimonos – Japan's traditional dress, for a few hours and participating in the authentic Tea ceremony, known as Chanoyu.

Chanoyu, which was established by Sen no

Rikyū in the 16th century, can be held anywhere, at any time; however, it is often held according to a theme of a specific seasonal event. It is said that the essential spirit of Chanoyu represents harmony, purity, respect and tranquility.

At Wak Japan (Women's Association of Kyoto), the journalists learnt the procedure in hosting the Tea ceremony, the types of utensils used, how to make green tea, the manners of drinking tea and the manners of the guests.