PR-SPAN Ambassadors in action: Climate Change and the onslaught of Hurricane María

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Submitted by Flavia A Tejeda [2] on 10 December 2018 - 11:57am

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Embajadores de PR-SPAN

During the past months, ambassadors of the PR-SPAN have been part of important investigations that reflect the current climate state, effects of climate change and the impacts of atmospheric phenomena inside and outside of Puerto Rico. Last November, the United States Congress published the Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4), a report on climate change in the United States and its territories. Isabel K. Parés-Ramos, environmental scientist and PR-SPAN ambassador, was part of the group of researchers who led the chapter on Puerto Rico and the Caribbean [3]. The NCA4 shows how climate change is caused by humans and how their impacts will continue to be strengthened, with disastrous environmental, social and economic consequences that are already being experienced. The report contains 29 chapters on changes registered at the national and regional levels, including two chapters focused on actions to reduce greenhouse gases and adaptation strategies that would help reduce society's vulnerability to climate change, if adopted today.

Specifically, the report concludes that by 2050 the Caribbean will experience a drop of more than 10% in precipitation (rain), that is, the island is becoming drier and hotter so it is expected an increase in days with temperatures above 95 ° F. The objective of the NCA4 is to educate the public and inform decision makers in the government to develop public policies and measures to help deal with the challenges of climate change. Compared to the costs of the damage that climate change would cause, investing in actions that will help in reducing greenhouse gases and financing adaptation and preparedness projects to manage the impacts of future climate events is imperative and cost-effective. For a summary of the key points of the NCA4, click here [4].

On the other hand, the doctoral student Luis Alexis Rodríguez-Cruz, ambassador of the PR-SPAN, published a joint investigation [5] with Dr. Niles in which the effect of hurricane Maria on Puerto Rico is detailed. In its publication, climate change and the perception of the agricultural community are intertwined with the effect of hurricane Maria and agricultural production on the island. As a result of this research, 72.8% of the study participants confirmed that they agree that climate change will have an effect in Puerto Rico. While 42.5% reported a total loss in their agricultural production and 45.5% reported significant damage to their production. This research tries to understand what are the motivators and barriers to adopting adaptation practices and how the agriculture and harvest of food can become more resilient and resistant to the onslaught of future atmospheric phenomena.

Isabel and Luis will soon be working on a series of blogs focused on climate change and its impact on different sectors, these recently published studies and the state of public policies surrounding these issues in Puerto Rico.

Tags:

- cambio climático [6]
- sector agricola [7]
- política pública [8]
- NCA4 [9]

Links
[1] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/blogs/pr-span/pr-span-ambassadors-action-climate-change-and-onslaught-hurricane-maria [2] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/user/ftejeda [3] https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/20/ [4] https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2tfWntVf_hQRlV0bVZEdTFPRFFXaGZ4WWZJa1c0eDN1LTlJ/view?usp=sharing [5] https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B2tfWntVf_hQVlVuZlFtSmFLMmpCcTRVOWMzd3dyOEdmLUNV [6] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/tags/cambio-climatico [7] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/tags/sector-agricola [8] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/tags/politica-publica [9] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/tags/nca4