



## CONCEPT NOTE

**Title:** High-level session, Americas & Caribbean: the resilience-building challenge for the next decades

**Date and time:** Monday, 1 November 2021 (Day 1)

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM Jamaica time, Eastern Standard Time Zone (Jamaica, Panama, Mexico, Peru)

**Venue:** Virtual

**Lead organization:** UNDRR

**Co-lead organization:** CDEMA

**Contributing Agencies:** ECLAC, PAHO, CEPREDENAC

## GOALS

The COVID-19 pandemic, a global disaster of epic proportions, has transformed our world affecting millions of people. It has devastated global economic and financial markets and thrown millions into poverty. The social impact has also been high, particularly for women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. No one was left unaffected. It has changed the way we live, interact, behave, work, and even die. COVID-19 has exposed our vulnerability and inequities, and undermined progress towards the Decade of Action to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has reminded us that no one is safe until everyone is safe. It has demonstrated just how essential prevention and risk reduction are for achieving a sustainable future for all.

In this context, learning from these lessons in managing complex and interconnected risks, such as climate change, pandemics, ecosystem degradation, nature, and biodiversity loss, represents one of the most pressing regional challenges for the Americas and the Caribbean region today.



This session takes place at a critical time: seven years after the adoption of the Sendai Framework, just over two years since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and one year before the inter-governmental midterm review of the Sendai Framework scheduled for 2023. This session presents a unique and timely opportunity to reflect on and take stock of the most salient challenges from the perspective of different stakeholders in the region for accelerating the implementation of the Sendai Framework for resilience building, including in specific country contexts.

The final objectives of the session will be:

1. Identify problems or limitations faced by different countries and stakeholders based on the lessons that emerged from past experience to prioritize areas of action for improving resilience.
2. Provide key elements that serve for a reflection on the key elements necessary to strengthen disaster risk governance and build stronger systems for managing all types of risks.
3. Highlight how international solidarity and cooperation can contribute to address these challenges and tackle key elements to address underlying risk drivers, locally and nationally, and recommit, with urgency, to accelerating progress toward the reduction of disaster risk and the achievement of the SDGs.

## MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

1. Identify key experiences and recommendations for the integration of disaster risk management within and across relevant sectors as required to address future complex systemic risk scenarios.
2. Recommendations of actions for policy-makers in the areas of sustainable development, finance and economic planning, disaster risk reduction and international trade, climate and ecosystem actions, international cooperation on disaster risk reduction, including the integration of disease outbreaks in all hazard disaster risk management strategies, including actions tailored to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), with a focus on ensuring that no one is left behind.
3. Contribution from the Americas and the Caribbean to the consultation process for the mid-term review of the Sendai Framework to be held in 2023, as well as to the HLPF to be held in New York in July 2022.
4. Inputs to the RP 2021 Outcome document on key areas to integrate for political commitment to advance efforts in achieving Sendai Framework for resilience building.



## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The RP021 will take place just over two years after the COVID-19 pandemic began. The future evolution of the pandemic remains uncertain with the ongoing response continuing for the foreseeable future. The health, economic and social recovery process will continue for many years to come in the Americas and the Caribbean, a region that has and will continue to suffer economic hardship. Inequitable distribution of vaccines across countries and access to health services will further exacerbate inequalities and curb international travel, of which many SIDS depend for tourism. While the pandemic has provided unprecedented challenges for governments and the international community, it has also provided both an opportunity and a moral obligation to re-think our approaches to managing risk.

Countries in the region need to commit to build resilient systems and to transform actions towards a more proactive, collaborative, inclusive, and prevention-focused approach. It is necessary to examine why countries were not adequately prepared, why a system failure occurred, and why the messages coming out of Sendai were not listened to. COVID-19 has reinforced the call for multisectoral, multihazard, gender-responsive, inclusive, accessible, preventive, and anticipatory approaches that consistently integrate disaster, climate, ecosystems, and multi-hazard risk management for strengthening the resilience of people and communities to ensure sustainable development and livelihoods. It has also reinforced the call for enhanced international and transboundary cooperation, and consideration of cross-border and transboundary hazards, including the possibility of cascading effects.

The session will thus contribute to reflect on and take stock of how the current situation has challenged the traditional understanding of risk and disaster risk governance. It will explore how the crisis can be turned into an opportunity for the necessary radical transformation needed to achieve the goal and targets of the Sendai Framework, as well as of the 2030 Agenda. Resilience must cover all elements and levels of society to ensure that no one is left behind in the efforts of reducing disaster risk and ensuring an acceleration towards the achievement of the SDGs.

## QUESTIONS THAT THE SESSION WILL SEEK TO ANSWER

Against this background, the following key questions will guide the session:

1. With the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on different groups, and considering the ongoing impacts observed in the Americas and the Caribbean due to the climate crisis, how can governments and stakeholders across society better identify and manage current and emerging systemic risks? How can awareness and understanding of disaster risk be better supported through new technologies and by various actors, and how can collaboration between different technical communities be improved?



2. Based on regional, national and community levels, what actions are needed to accelerate progress in disaster risk management, especially in countries most at risk, including SIDS? How can such actions be inclusive, accessible, and ensure that those who are most vulnerable and disproportionately impacted by disasters are not left behind?
3. What actions are required to address the identified challenges and accelerate progress in managing the “new” hazards included in the Sendai Framework (biological, technological, and environmental) and reducing related risk and exposure?
4. What are the key areas of focus identified by key stakeholders in the region that will enable accelerated progress in achieving the goal and targets of the Sendai Framework?