



VII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean (RP21)

Building Resilient Economies in the Americas and the Caribbean

1 to 4 November 2021, Virtual Event



MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Fourth High-Level Meeting of Ministers and Authorities on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Americas and the Caribbean

1. We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation gathered at the Fourth High-Level Meeting of Ministers and Authorities on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Americas and the Caribbean during the 7th Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean (RP21) hosted by the Government of Jamaica from November 1-4, 2021:
2. *Expressing solidarity* with all people and countries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims of the pandemic and those whose lives and livelihoods have been affected by it, especially in the Americas and the Caribbean;
3. *Emphasizing* that the COVID-19 pandemic, as a manifestation of the systemic nature of risk that we all face, has underlined the urgency to address disaster risk and build resilience;
4. *Noting with concern* that the human and financial cost of disasters is rapidly rising, trapping countries in a continuous cycle of emergency response and curtailing governments in their capacity to grow and develop;
5. *Recognizing* the impact recent disasters have had in the Americas and the Caribbean, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the volcanic eruption in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the 7.2 earthquake in Haiti, the ETA and IOTA hurricanes in the Central American region, and hurricane ELSA in the Caribbean territory, among others, and the specific challenges facing Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean region, requiring a concerted integration of disaster risk reduction into recovery plans and development planning;
6. *Reinforcing* the need to integrate disaster risk reduction at the core of the political and technical sustainable development and climate agendas, as well as the new urban agenda;
7. *Acknowledging* the need to enhance risk governance through a truly multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement at national and local / municipal and community levels;



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8. *Emphasizing* the importance of increasing knowledge about the systemic nature of risk and the cascading effects that can have primary and secondary degree impacts at multiple levels and across different sectors;
9. *Reiterating* the importance of ensuring that the COVID-19 pandemic recovery integrates disaster risk reduction and becomes an opportunity to build back better;
10. *Recognizing* that public and private investments and increased disaster risk financing at national and local levels are important to developing sustainably in a rapidly changing climate;
11. *Recognizing* the need to increase the integration of ecosystem-based solutions as part of overall efforts to reduce disaster risks and build resilience to climate change, especially in local communities;
12. *Acknowledging* that the multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral nature of disasters, the repeated impacts on economies and our physical environment require ongoing collaboration with multiple stakeholders, supporting mutual learning, shared experiences and actively engaging in initiatives at all levels: local, national, regional and global;
13. *Acknowledging* the special challenges created by rapid urbanization and the need to strengthen local capacities to reduce disaster risk and build resilience, especially given the complex and challenging nature of urban disaster risk, with increasing populations and increasing urban poverty;
14. *Highlighting* the importance of a strong articulation between the production of science and decision making with respect to the management of disaster risk reduction, that includes prevention, preparedness, response and post-disaster recovery processes, as well as financial protection;
15. *Recognizing* the need to strengthen the integration of biological hazards into disaster risk reduction plans and strategies with the objective of strengthening preparedness and response to epidemics and pandemics;
16. *Acknowledging* the experiences of the region's different countries in the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Americas and the Caribbean, and the gaps and opportunities identified by them;



VII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean (RP21)

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17. *Convinced* of the importance of strengthening both north-south and south-south cooperation and the need to continue encouraging the participation of providers and international organizations to support the actions identified in the Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Americas and the Caribbean;
18. *Acknowledging* that disasters have become a major cause of forced displacement, requiring concerted action at the local, sub-national, national and regional levels to address disaster displacement risks and impacts, including additional pressures on host countries and communities;
19. *Recognizing* the important role of youth as agents of change and the contribution of future generations in the face of current challenges, including reducing disaster risk, fighting climate change and promoting resilience;
20. *Recognizing* the disproportionate impact of disasters on women and girls, children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants, indigenous peoples and other historically marginalized populations requiring special protection, and their importance as agents of change, without distinction of any kind of race, colour, sex, language, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other status;

Further *recognizing* the need to apply an equitable, participatory and inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction in order to reduce the social, economic and psychological impact of such events, including taking measures for adaptive and responsive social protection mechanisms;
21. *Recognizing* the need to work with indigenous peoples and their communities in the event of disasters while ensuring the integration of their rich cultural heritage and traditional knowledge into disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and disaster response activities through participatory approaches, as well as recognizing the importance to protect cultural heritage from disaster risks;
22. *Recognizing* the importance of shock responsive social protection and scaled up mechanisms for preparedness, response and recovery while promoting social equity and building back better;
23. *Acknowledging* that with the realities of climate change and emerging biological hazards, there is a need for greater emphasis on emergency and humanitarian response from a multi-hazard perspective;



VII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean (RP21)

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1 to 4 November 2021, Virtual Event



24. *Promoting* mental health and psycho-social wellbeing by strengthening psycho-social responses and support mechanisms in disaster risk reduction and recovery planning;
25. *Promoting* effective and inclusive public communication and awareness on risk, vulnerability and resilience building, promoting the reduction of the technological gap for the use of new technologies as a vital component to enhance disaster response and recovery;
26. *Encouraging* the increased and effective use of geospatial data and statistics in all components of disaster risk reduction for improved decision making and disaster risk governance;
27. *Acknowledging* the countries of the region who have signed on to the Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030) initiative and encourage all local governments of the Americas and the Caribbean to sign-up and be engaged in advancing city resilience;
28. *Acknowledging and emphasizing* the need for land-use planning and sustainable development to be integrated as tools and points of entry for advancing disaster risk reduction;
29. *Highlighting* the importance of the evidence provided by the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the relevance of the COP26 United Nations Conference on Climate Change generating progress towards a more effective linkage between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

We, Ministers and Heads of Delegation, highlight the importance to:

1. *Reiterate* our commitment to achieve the Sendai Framework outcome of the substantial reduction of disaster risk, to protect livelihoods and health, and particularly to reduce mortality and the number of people that are affected by disasters, as well as the resulting economic losses and damages from disasters, including by investing our own domestic resources and international cooperation projects in planning and preparedness;
2. *Take note and accept* the adjustments proposed by Member States to the Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Americas and the Caribbean so that it reflects and addresses the challenges of this region with regards to disaster risk and contributes to building resilient societies and economies in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, and lessons learnt from disasters (2019-2021) including the COVID-19 pandemic;



VII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean (RP21)

Building Resilient Economies in the Americas and the Caribbean

1 to 4 November 2021, Virtual Event



3. *Take note of the declaration of the youth and their perspectives regarding the Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, discussed during the Youth Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction which took place on 26th October 2021 as a preliminary event to this Platform, including the need to ensure they are integrated in decisions to reduce disaster risks;*
4. *Take note of the perspectives of civil society members and grassroots and women's organizations regarding the Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which have been provided as input to the consultation regarding the challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the Regional Action Plan;*
5. *Commit to making progress on monitoring the Regional Action Plan in order to assess its effectiveness and the response by the region's countries and stakeholders to the planned initiatives and establish follow-up arrangements, in line with the baselines to be assessed in the context of the 8th Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean to be held in 2023;*
6. *Commit to strengthening our risk governance mechanisms, particularly in geographic areas of greater vulnerability, through the engagement of all sectors and at all levels and with the participation of multiple stakeholders, including older persons, people with disabilities, children and youth, rural communities, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and other historically marginalized groups that require especial protection, to working to promote that public budgets across different sectors and levels of government integrate disaster risk reduction;*
7. *Commit to redoubling efforts to prioritize the updating, implementation, financing and monitoring of disaster risk reduction plans and strategies at the national level, in coherence with climate change and sustainable development plans and strategies;*
8. *Commit to enhancing the capacities of local governments to understand and assess disaster risk as well as develop and implement plans and strategies to reduce risk and avoid the construction of new risks, promoting coherent approaches with the development and climate change agendas, in collaboration with multiple stakeholders, and supported by national governments;*
9. *Commit to promoting resilient economies by de-risking public and private investments, creating an enabling regulatory environment for the promotion of resilient infrastructure, supporting the expansion of disaster risk reduction financing and risk transfer mechanisms, the continued promotion of public-private partnerships with the goal of uniting efforts against disaster risk and damage to critical infrastructure and services;*



VII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean (RP21)

Building Resilient Economies in the Americas and the Caribbean

1 to 4 November 2021, Virtual Event



10. *Strengthen* the development and dissemination of methodologies and science-based national and local tools and the technical assistance that facilitate the timely implementation of prevention and preparedness measures as well as identification, registration and communication of the impacts caused by disasters through online monitoring platforms that are designed for this purpose and adopted for the monitoring of the Sendai Framework;
11. *Highlight* that the recovery from the pandemic should enhance disaster risk reduction, upscale social protection systems with a “one health” approach, acknowledging the linkages across all hazards, and contribute to building resilience by addressing the underlying factors that create risk and make people more vulnerable and exposed to risk, also considering the middle class and their capacity to cope with disasters;
12. *Promote* awareness and knowledge among women and men, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants, children and youth, rural communities, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants and other historically marginalized groups, as appropriate, related to a culture of disaster prevention and resilience, including by promoting and strengthening a systemic approach to school safety and disaster risk reduction in school curriculum, placing emphasis on the vulnerabilities of the geographic areas where they reside, and enabling the continuation of learning during disasters;
13. *Emphasize* the need to strengthen international development cooperation, including the achievement of international commitments of the less developed countries, and solidarity to recover from the pandemic, facilitating access to COVID-19 vaccines for countries that so require, fight climate change, address the underlying factors of risk and embark on a path of resilience by redoubling efforts in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
14. *Call on* the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, other development partners and multi-lateral agencies, to continue providing support for the implementation, monitoring and review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean as well as for its Regional Action Plan adopted in this Regional Platform, in collaboration with relevant regional and sub-regional organizations;
15. *Encourage* Member States and relevant actors, in accordance with their respective mandates and priorities, to actively participate in the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to be held between the 23rd and 28th of May 2022, in Bali, Indonesia;





VII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean (RP21)

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1 to 4 November 2021, Virtual Event



16. *Recommend that countries in the region actively engage in the Mid-Term Review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030;*
17. *Invite Jamaica, as the host country of the 7th Regional Platform, to deliver the present Declaration during the 2022 Global Platform as a contribution from the region to the implementation of the Sendai Framework.*

Only Together can the countries and people of the region be truly resilient.

Adopted on the 3rd of November 2021.

