



CONCEPT NOTE

Title: Parallel Session 1, Environmental protection and climate change adaptation to build local and national resilient economies: Dividends of Nature Based Solutions

Date and time: Monday, November 1, 2021 (Day 1)
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM Jamaica time, Eastern Standard Time Zone (Jamaica, Panama, Mexico, Peru)

Venue: Virtual

Lead organizations: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Co-lead organizations: Issue-Based Coalition (IBC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

GOALS

1. To introduce the concept of resilience in reference to local and national economies and the various impacts/stresses that are relevant to the LAC region.
2. To introduce the role that ecosystems play in enhancing local and national resilience and their value as agents of risk reduction, including in reducing potential drivers for climate induced migration.
3. To discuss the concept of nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based adaptation as measures for adaptation and risk reduction in the frame of national plans for managing climate impacts.
4. To present the opportunities that nature-based solutions provide in building back better and creating resilient local and national economies through the various co-benefits they generate for communities and local livelihoods, as demonstrated by experience.
5. To share experiences of national and local governments in the LAC region that have favored nature-based solutions and ecosystems-based adaptation as their principal approach to managing climate risk.



MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

1. A good understanding and agreement on the concept of resilience in reference to national and local economies and the increasingly complex interaction between economic, human and political systems with natural systems.
2. Recommendations on actions to be taken by States to strengthen the use of disaster risk reduction and recovery processes to assess the value of ecosystems and promote their protection as measures for adaptation and risk reduction.
3. Practical recommendations to incorporate nature-based solutions as measures for long-term risk reduction and adaptation.
4. Identify the multiple benefits in the implementation of nature-based solutions and their role in creating resilient national and local economies and markets.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Climate change and its association to increased disasters caused by natural hazards poses significant challenges to the economic resilience of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The region is especially vulnerable to climate impacts such as increased storm intensity, recurrent and more severe droughts, and coastal and inland flooding that are disrupting agricultural production, ecosystems, and tourism derived income. Climate related hazards contribute to increased poverty and food insecurity, exacerbate drivers of forced migration and cause economic losses at local and national scales across LAC.

In fact, neither the rich and diverse geography of LAC nor climate change are sufficient to explain the level of devastation and the cost of disasters in the region. These aspects need to be understood in tandem with the level of human intervention in our physical environment. For this reason, and due to their multiple benefits, nature-based solutions, including the conservation, rehabilitation and sustainable management of key ecosystems, have the potential to cost-effectively achieve ecological, social, and economic goals, promoting long-term resilience across multiple sectors with demonstrable impact in local economies. These solutions consist of activities that promote ecosystem services for climate change adaptation and contribute to sustainable livelihoods. Their implementation has proven to be increasingly effective in reducing climate impacts such as flooding, soil erosion, food production losses and diminished livelihoods that are key drivers of climate induced displacement, even in the face of slow onset risks such as sea level rise.

As the region of Latin America and the Caribbean confronts interconnected crises linked to increasing rates of disasters, climate change, biodiversity loss, and unequal economic vulnerability, with limited resources to address them, NbS show promise as tools that can synergistically achieve the multiple objectives of reducing risk, improving well-being and empowering communities. This approach is consistent with Priority 3 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 that focuses on “investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience” by integrating disaster risk reduction measures into development.



The session introduces the role that ecosystems play in disaster risk management, particularly in the LAC region, and their effects on protecting local livelihoods, markets and economies, which are often underestimated in disaster risk reduction and recovery processes. A presentation will be made on the various benefits derived from the nature-based solutions that have been implemented and observed in various settings within the region. The session will also outline how resilient livelihoods, markets and economies have been supported by promoting the related “least cost most benefit solution” approach.

Countries and representatives that have favoured nature-based solutions, including ecosystem-based adaptation measures, in national and local planning to manage climate change will provide an important reasoning on why they have preferred this approach, how it has been incorporated and implemented, and the results they have found in providing key benefits to enhance resilience to potential shocks. The relationship between climate induced displacement, climate change adaptation and NbS will also be discussed in the presentations, underlining the importance of coherent approaches between climate, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction policies and strategies.

QUESTIONS THE SESSION WILL SEEK TO ANSWER

1. Why is protecting ecosystems important as a risk mitigation strategy?
2. What is the role of ecosystems in reducing disaster risk reduction, protecting livelihoods and markets, ensuring resilient economies and mitigating drivers of climate induced displacement?
3. What are the economic and social benefits of implementing nature-based solutions to manage climate risk?
4. Do nature-based solutions work?
5. Are there concrete experiences of countries using nature-based solutions to manage climate risk and why have they been favored?
6. How to incorporate nature-based solutions in national planning and NDC targets in the frame of a coherent approach to implementing climate, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction policies, strategies and global agreements?