



CONCEPT NOTE

Title: Parallel Session 6: Local Government, Environmental Management and DRR addressing multiple hazards and supporting the most at risk

Date and Time: Wednesday, 3 November 2021 (Day 3)
09:00 AM - 10:00 AM Jamaica time Eastern Standard Time Zone (Jamaica, Panama, Mexico, Peru)

Venue: Virtual

Lead organizations: Government of Jamaica

Co-lead organization: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)

Contributing agencies: Colombia, PAHO, UN Environment

GOALS

The session will utilize a mix of keynote address, storytelling and round table discussion:

1. Promote the exchange of experiences between different countries and regions that have successfully integrated DRR, CCA and environmental systems management into local government processes.
2. Examine the systemic risks within a multi-hazard environment, including pandemics, using a multisectoral approach.
3. Advance implementation of priorities 1 and 2 (target e) of the Sendai Framework by identifying common factors and best practices such as DRR plans, policies, legal frameworks, programmes and local governance that can be replicated by other countries and/or regions.
4. Examine the challenges facing national and local levels in responding to climate-related hazards while responding to COVID-19.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

1. Storytelling and animated video shared in media outlets
2. Report of the session
3. Network/CoP



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Countries and regions have successfully integrated DRR actions and the management of environmental systems into local government as they work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite successes, integration still faces challenges, some of which include policy coherence, lack of coordination and collaboration, and in recent times, the impact of COVID-19, coupled with the effects of climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic presents a number of challenges and forces local government and environmental health and climate change actors to examine the realities of an already compounded systemic risk environment. It is therefore necessary that a 'network perspective' approach to risk governance is adopted to effectively counter systemic risk. A comprehensive approach to disaster risk management is paramount.

The session, therefore, addresses the problem of policy coherence amongst DRR, environmental management, climate change adaptation and development policies and unearths some of the solutions to address this issue. The session focuses on the role of the local government and supporting sectors in providing incentives, nature-based and ecotourism solutions, as well as opportunities that support an integrated and sustainable approach to achieving DRR in the context of development decision-making and investments, and environmental management. The session also seeks to provide best practices in tackling Covid 19, reducing disaster risk and building resilience.

Resilience means the ability to "rise from", "spring back from" or "bounce forward from" a shock. The resilience of a community in respect to potential hazard events is determined by the degree to which the community has the necessary resources and is capable of organizing itself both prior to and during times of need (Source: UNISDR definition). Crucial to securing resilient economies is to start at the community or local government level. This session will bring together experts and practitioners in this field to examine the good practices and progress made within the areas. The session will also highlight the Sendai Priority areas whilst documenting regional achievements towards DRR strategies.

The issue of policy coherence is of particular importance for the region since resilience building demands a comprehensive approach in any national development agenda. A comprehensive approach to DRR requires planning considerations that address specific needs. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are most vulnerable to disasters triggered by natural hazards due to their size and economic status. Therefore, actions aimed at achieving economic resilience should be based on inclusive planning and sustainable development. Hence cohesive strategy for risk reduction identifies a number of areas that should be strengthened and supported whilst economic ambitions are accounted for.

The role of the local government in supporting cohesion and sustaining DRR, CAA and environmental interventions is paramount. In this regard, a number of international strategies for risk reduction support the role of local governance systems in achieving sustainable development. It is prudent that investments aimed at sustainable development be risk-informed and screened in this sense. Given the global challenges posed by disasters, prioritized actions that inform legislative or policy directions should translate into long-term benefits for economic safeguards. Nevertheless, environmental issues cannot be viewed separately from potential economic growth and identified natural resources. Hence the need for continuous monitoring



and assessment to inform decisions. Protecting and restoring our ecosystems and natural resources is vital for sustainable development.

Disasters cause annual losses estimated at USD \$ 314 billion in the built environment alone, setting back development gains in affected countries and hampering the prospect of achieving sustainable development. Climate change is expected to drive these losses even higher in the coming decades. (Source: Handbook for Local Government Leaders, UNDRR). Given the economic stresses caused by disasters of natural origin, it is vital to examine the role of local governments, environmental management and environmental sustainability to strengthen disaster risk reduction and build resilient economies. A comprehensive review of projects and programmes to identify synergies among DRR, environmental management and local government systems provides an opportunity to secure a targeted approach for resources.

The overall objective of this session is to outline the requirements for risk reduction through local governance. Securing investments in disaster risk reduction and resilience building will safeguard sustainable development and economic continuity of urban communities. Disaster risk management should consider incentives that contribute to improved economic and social well-being. The session will highlight some of the limitations, potential opportunities as well as good practices in this regard.

QUESTIONS THE SESSION WILL SEEK TO ANSWER

1. How can greater coherence between policies, legislation and planning for DRR, environmental management, climate change adaptation and development be fostered at both national and local levels? How can local governments promote connections between DRR and environmental management? What adjustments are needed?
2. What are the limitations and potential opportunities for local governance systems and local development planning strategies in achieving sustainable environmental management and DRR?
3. Where in the region are examples of good practices in local governance and environmental management that support DRR? What lessons can be learned from coastal zone and ecosystem services?
4. What can local governments learn from COVID-19 for future pandemics and other disasters (taking stock, lessons, good practices, challenges)?