



RET - Latin America and the Caribbean Region

Official Statement to the Seventh Session of the Regional Platform “Building Resilient Economies in the Americas and the Caribbean”

Here at RET Americas, we are working at the nexus of sustainable development, human rights and peacebuilding, addressing issues of human security in a multi-sectoral manner, specifically through the methodology of resilience and education in situations of transition. We work to help participants overcome multi-dimensional adversities, bridging gaps between disaster and development programming and the different phases of operations in these sectors.

We work with populations affected by disasters, displacement, violence and conflict, where our core commitments have always been to strengthening resilience through multi-dimensional solutions, education and capacity building for youth and vulnerable populations. This has led to the integration of a new differential focus, addressing intersectional vulnerabilities and increasing meaningful participation. Furthermore, scientific consensus has left us firmly convinced of the need for Nature-based Solutions, which we believe will enable us to boost the resilience of vulnerable populations affected by disasters and climate change whilst also achieving sustainable long-term change. In fact, we strongly feel that organizations across the wider development sector should now be mainstreaming inclusive disaster and climate adaptation initiatives.

In addressing this paradigm shift, which by necessity frames Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation within the broader development field, we feel it is imperative to operationalize nature and ecosystem-based solutions at all levels across sectors, as sustainability is key to adequately addressing the challenges of climate change, which in turn fuel the frequency and intensity of disaster related events. Therefore, to secure long-term change, we must endeavor to make our programming environmentally sustainable, wherever possible taking ecosystem resources into account.

At the same time, for humanity to survive and thrive we must effectively ensure that no one is left behind, which requires a robust intersectional focus to address the unique vulnerabilities felt by each of the most vulnerable groups. We therefore call on all participants in this platform to reaffirm their commitment to integrating a differential focus on vulnerability, focusing on the needs of women, girls, youth, LGBTQI+, disabled and displaced populations.

It is also imperative that we work to reduce both exposure and vulnerability to all hazards, for all people. In this we believe that voices from the youth and the educational community must be an integral part of the response, as they represent the future generations who will be most impacted and are best placed to seek out new and innovative solutions can have a transformative effect on disaster and climate risk reduction.

Finally, here in the Americas, COVID has set back the fragile progress made in the development and Disaster Risk Reduction sectors, weakening socio-economic structures and overwhelming safety nets for those most at need, as well as exponentially increasing vulnerabilities to disaster and climate change impacts. The post COVID transition period is the perfect time to Build Back Better, integrating inclusive Ecosystem-based Approaches into our economic, humanitarian and disaster response initiatives in order to ensure resilience and longevity, strengthening areas of vulnerability that must become resilient, in order to allow for the survival of our species and our planet.