

Official Statement by Canada
VIII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean
Punta del Este, February 28-March 2, 2023

The Government of Canada would like to extend its sincere thanks to the Government of Uruguay and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) for convening the Eighth Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean. This year’s theme, “Science and Technology for Integrated Disaster Risk Management,” offers an opportunity to discuss how to collectively address global challenges, as well as how science and technology can be used to manage disaster risk. Canada is pleased to provide an update on how we are delivering on the Sendai Framework’s priorities to contribute to disaster risk reduction.

Canada has experienced the devastating and growing impacts of climate change and extreme weather through severe floods, fires, hurricanes, and other major weather events over the past few years. In September, Canadians experienced the impacts of Hurricane Fiona, one of the most damaging hurricanes in our history. Its impacts were immediate and widespread, causing tragic loss of life and considerable damage to infrastructure and coastal geography. We must work together and act now to prioritize building our collective resilience.

With climate change bringing more frequent and severe extreme events, we must use science and technology as a foundation to underpin risk reduction efforts. Technological innovation, including increased computing power and advances in artificial intelligence and scientific methodologies, has supported more advanced modelling and analytics that can better account for complexities of risk, and offers improved access to disaster risk information and mechanisms that support disaster risk reduction action.

The “[Emergency Management Strategy for Canada: Towards a Resilient 2030](#)” and associated [Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Emergency Management Strategy Interim Action Plan 2021-22](#) outlines a path towards building resilience in Canada. All orders of government have been working together to advance key priorities under this strategy, with an update to the action plan to be released this year, along with the development of the 2023-2024 Action Plan. These actions contribute to fulfilling Canada’s commitment to the Sendai Framework.

In August 2022, Canada jointly published a report, “[Adapting to Rising Flood Risk: An Analysis of Insurance Solutions for Canadians](#)” together with Provincial and Territorial government counterparts and Industry stakeholders. The report serves to provide a common understanding of the evidence and information required to implement viable arrangements for a national approach to flood insurance, with special considerations for potential strategic relocation of those at most extreme risk.

While we have made important progress since the launch of the Sendai Framework in 2015, we must continue to take bold, ambitious steps to build resilient communities. Investing in

Caribbean resilience mechanisms that allow states to bounce back from the effects of disasters is and will remain among Canada's top priorities, because we know that Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean are disproportionately impacted by the effects of disasters, such as rising sea levels, ocean acidification and coastal erosion, due to their location.

Canada acknowledges the UN goal that every person on the planet be covered by an early warning system by 2027, and recognizes the importance of reliable weather forecasts and climate predictions in mitigating the impacts of climate extremes. In September 2022, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced at the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly that, through the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems and other efforts led by the World Meteorological Organization, Canada is helping least developed countries and Small Island Developing States to establish or enhance their capacity to provide early warnings.

In November 2022, Canada launched a "[National Adaptation Strategy](#)" that provides a roadmap for whole-of-society action to help prepare communities for the impacts of climate change, with goals and targets across five key themes: disaster resilience, health and well-being, nature and biodiversity, infrastructure, and economy and workers. To complement the Strategy, the Government of Canada Adaptation Action Plan sets out the federal role in preparing Canadians for climate hazards and outlines specific investments, programs and initiatives that are making Canada more resilient to climate impacts.

We recognize the need for a forward-looking picture of the risks of natural and human-induced hazards to strengthen Canada's resilience to them. We are developing a National Risk Profile, a strategic national disaster risk and capability assessment that uses scientific data with input from federal departments and agencies, provinces and territories, municipalities, Indigenous organizations and communities, as well as the academic, private, volunteer, and non-governmental sectors to provide a comprehensive analysis of the hazards facing Canada today. With this evidence, Canadians will be better informed about their potential risk and can better prepare to respond to these events in their communities. The first report on risk related to earthquakes, wildland fires, and floods will be published in 2023.

In addition to these initiatives, the Government of Canada is developing tools such as the Social Vulnerability Index which analyzes social vulnerabilities to natural hazard threats; and the Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program to help Canadians better plan and prepare for future floods.

Canada is firmly committed to a collaborative and whole-of-society approach to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. We have established a Humanitarian Workforce that supports non-governmental organizations in building and maintaining a capacity and domestic response resources, and that can rapidly deploy to support emergency responses to major events, such as flooding and wildfires. Likewise, recent emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have highlighted the need for an intersectoral approach to disaster risk reduction.

We continue to engage with key partners and stakeholders on the need for a civilian response capacity, which will increase Canada's disaster preparedness and capacity to respond to large-scale emergencies. We are also strengthening our engagement with civil society partners to enable a focus on the social, structural, economic, and environmental conditions that affect the health of Canadians during events.

As we look to build resilience across Canada, it is important to engage with communities that are disproportionately impacted by disasters, including women, seniors, and Indigenous communities so that they can empower us to become better prepared.

The Government of Canada continues to encourage all levels of government to engage vulnerable populations and Indigenous communities to integrate the local and traditional knowledge and address their disaster risk reduction needs, and to strengthen the resilience of all. The expansion of disaster risk reduction must take place at the community, regional, national, and international levels to ensure meaningful participation and inclusive recovery that leverages the lived experience of those most impacted. The Emergency Management Strategy commits the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, to provide support for Indigenous Peoples and their communities to build the capacity to integrate traditional knowledge and public awareness into emergency management and disaster risk reduction. Collaborating with Indigenous communities in our approach to emergency management is essential to building our collective resiliency.

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy helps strengthen gender equality and supports women and girls in their efforts to mitigate and adapt to changes that threaten their health and economic well-being. Canada continues to work at all levels of government to advance women's leadership role in disaster risk reduction, and to foster an understanding of disaster risk from a gender and intersectional lens.

With new threats constantly emerging worldwide, Canada is committed to continue its work with partners in the Americas and the Caribbean and across the globe to keep our citizens safe, resilient, and prepared. Forums like this are essential for sharing lessons learned, expertise, and leadership, and allow us to take stock of recent efforts to assess progress on global disaster risk reduction goals and understand concrete opportunities for accelerating the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Canada looks forward to continuing to work with the UNDRR and its members to make the world safer and more resilient.