



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



Summary Day 2

The second day of the Regional Platform focused on building resilient economies by examining the lessons learned from multi-hazard response in the Caribbean; risk-informed public and private investments; the integration of disaster displacement into inclusive DRR legal frameworks, policies and plans; and risk-informed recovery.

The day commenced with the second High-level Session of the Platform, which focused on the key drivers to building resilient economies and the importance of taking the opportunity to build back better and greener, while leaving no one behind. Speakers shared critical aspects that need to be addressed in the face of the complexity of the pandemic recovery and the climate challenge and stressed the need for a higher ambition in the implementation of the Sendai Framework in tandem with the 2030 Agenda. To achieve these goals, boosted investments in building resilience are required. A key sentiment conveyed by the panel is that in times of uncertainty, effective governance is fundamental for the management of risk. Social contracts that collectively manage risk are needed and these should be anchored in universal social protection systems.

The second Special Session of the Platform focused on the lessons learned from the Caribbean region in 2020, and on the need to enhance regional approaches to strengthen coordination in the face of multi-hazards, which increasingly affect the region. Presentations delivered by regional agencies highlighted the role of science and education, as well as the importance of strengthened strategic planning and prioritization of resources – including human resources – for preparing better and responding more effectively and efficiently to multiple hazards. Regional response agencies also brought attention to the successes observed so far, as well as to the areas where the systemic approach of regional mechanisms could be strengthened.

The Regional Action Plan technical meeting aimed to review and agree on recommended adjustments and areas of prioritization for the advancement of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the region. A primary concern was to ensure that the Regional Action Plan considered the systemic nature of risk and integrated lessons learned from the pandemic, including the need to strengthen risk governance and the linkages between disaster risk reduction and public health. Among the elements emphasized in the plan are: the linkages with social protection mechanisms to support the most vulnerable; the importance of the role of the private sector in disaster risk reduction; and the need to strengthen public-private partnerships. Other areas that warrant special mention are: the importance of ensuring access to basic services and the resilience of infrastructure; the need to strengthen capacities of local governments to assess risk; and the need to develop and



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implement disaster risk reduction plans and strategies in coherence with climate adaptation and sustainable development efforts. A special effort was made by all delegations to guarantee the inclusivity of the Regional Action Plan and to ensure that no one is left behind.

The third Parallel Session of the Platform featured discussions on overcoming economic losses incurred as a result of disasters – including pandemics – in the region. Several best practices were shared, highlighting gender inclusiveness, strategic planning and the use of technology to strengthen the development of public investments. Recommendations coming out of the session emphasize the need to establish systems that allow for supervision and monitoring of public expenditure and coordination of focused spending for public investments. It was also recommended that disaster risk information be cross-referenced with public health data to determine practical and sustainable public investment solutions.

The fourth Parallel Session of the event concentrated on the need for disaster-related displacement to be addressed from a cross-sectoral perspective, including at the local, national and regional levels. Stakeholders, including States and civil society organizations, were called to make a concerted effort for the implementation of the Sendai Framework to include the assessment and reduction of displacement risks. Specifically, efforts should include the framing of innovative and necessary approaches by agencies responsible for migration management, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.

A Learning Lab on the Forensic Investigations of Disasters (FORIN) methodology sought to enhance the understanding of participants on the causality of past disasters. The Learning Lab emphasized the idea that disasters are a social construct and called for moving away from the notion that disasters are a purely natural phenomenon. Four approaches used and advanced by FORIN were presented, along with a list of potential new cases in the region in which the methodology can be applied in the future.

Three side events of the Platform focused on resilience-building through: promoting recovery practices in the Americas and the Caribbean in a multi-hazard context; critical success factors for reducing disaster risk to SMEs; and the sharing of best practices and knowledge sources for developing inclusive disaster risk reduction plans that take into account people with disabilities and indigenous knowledge as well as priority groups, such as children, adolescents and women with disabilities.

In light of the experiences from the pandemic over the past months, governments and intergovernmental institutions agree on the relevance of continuous strengthening of institutional capacities and coordination. A key observation from the side events is that ethical principles and evidence-based decision-making will be crucial to arrive at a safe haven for what is left of the pandemic and to face the potential crises that may affect the region in the future.