



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 4

On the fourth and final day of the Platform, the High-level session titled “Strengthening disaster risk governance: Lessons from COVID-19” addressed the elements of governance that the current pandemic has highlighted as key to manage complex situations in the context of systemic risk. The urgent need was highlighted to bolster a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to comprehensive disaster risk management and to strengthen integration across sectors and at all levels. Specifically, the integration of disaster risk reduction in all government legal frameworks, policies and plans was recommended as a best practice to manage emergencies and disasters, including pandemics. The session highlighted important advancements in health disaster risk reduction including the concept of Safe and Smart Hospitals (Safe and Green = Smart), the Health Sector Multi-Hazard Response Framework, and Disability Inclusion in Hospital Disaster Risk Management (INGRID-H).

The eighth and final Parallel Session of the Platform sought to promote a better understanding of systemic risk and how it is constructed, its underlying drivers, the interconnections that it encompasses, and the way it materializes. Country presentations showcased the ways in which national and local governments are engaging in risk-informed decision-making, beyond just looking at hazards. A telling example of the successful implementation of a systemic risk approach in the education sector was presented by the Minister of Education of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Chair of the Caribbean Safe School Initiative, Hon. Curtis King. Finally, different tools and resources to better measure and understand risk and inform the design of strategies and decision-making processes were presented.

A Learning Lab on Cultural Heritage Management & DRR aimed to raise awareness and promote knowledge exchange and cooperation on the benefits and necessity of integrating cultural heritage management in DRR strategies and plans. The presentation of the Scorecard – Cultural Heritage Addendum gave operational insights on how to concretely achieve this goal. A Learning Session on Lightning and Wildfires provided concise but important insights about the wildfires and/or lightning information systems in the region. Specifically, it allowed for the review of wildfire monitoring, prediction and response systems in the Americas & the Caribbean and assessment of the region's progress and challenges in lightning detection and prediction. Best practices for integrating lightning and wildfire data systems were identified and means for improving current risk management approaches for these hazards were considered.

The last two side events of the Platform showcased Uruguay's achievements and challenges of risk governance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and promoted an increased understanding of how to implement Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) to increase local and national resilience in the Americas and the Caribbean.



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The Seventh Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean ended with the closing ceremony. In her remarks, Ms. Elizabeth Riley, Executive Director of CDEMA, underscored that the outcomes of the RP21 will provide a favourable context for the upcoming review process of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy 2014-2024, as well as the Mid-Term Review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework. Ms. Riley read the Chair Summary, which succinctly encapsulates the proceedings of the four-days event.

The SRSR for Disaster Risk Reduction and head of UNDRR, Ms. Mami Mizutori, remarked that we emerged from the Platform with a determination to promote international cooperation in favour of developing countries and support progress in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, she indicated that we have reiterated our commitment to reducing mortality, the numbers of people affected by disasters, damage to critical infrastructure and economic losses as set out in the Sendai Framework and to aligning our actions with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and the New Urban Agenda. Ms. Mizutori expressed satisfaction for establishing the Youth Forum as part of the Regional Platform and congratulated the adoption of an updated Regional Action Plan that captures the lessons learned from the disasters of the last years and recalibrates the regional priorities to achieve the targets of the Sendai Framework.

The Hon. Brig. (R'td) Mark Phillips, Prime Minister of Guyana, also delivered remarks at the closing ceremony. After describing Guyana's risk context, which includes marked coastal vulnerabilities along with other existing and emerging threats, the Prime Minister recognized that sustainable growth and development must take into account risk-informed investments that build resilience. He indicated that Guyana has this year adopted its National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, in line with target E of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, as an encouragement to other States. He invited governments of the Americas and the Caribbean to shift from a reactive approach to a preventive and holistic approach that recognizes the systemic nature of disaster risk.

In his closing remarks, the Hon. Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, highlighted that the more than 30 sessions and discussions that had taken place over these last four days, convening thousands of people from the region who shared their expertise, concerns, perspectives and ideas, contributed to making our region more resilient. From the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations in British Columbia, Canada, to the southern cone, over 2,500 people joined the event's bespoke digital platform and triggered a remarkable following on social media and our website live stream – adding up to more than 35,000 views! – making this the most attended Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction of the Americas & the Caribbean. The Minister also stressed that this event had broken other very significant records. This was indeed the first Regional Platform to be preceded by a Youth Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction, the first one to have a representative from the youth speaking at the opening ceremony, the first one to invite a representative of the youth to the



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Ministerial and High-Level Authorities Meeting, and the first one to end with concrete commitments to ensure the youth are part and parcel of our collective efforts to reduce disaster risks and build resilience. Nothing about them without them!

The Ministerial Declaration, the Youth Declaration, the Civil Society Declaration, the adjusted Regional Action Plan, and a Chair Summary capturing only a snapshot of the rich discussions held during these last four days can be found at the Regional Platform's webpage.

This seventh session of the Regional Platform has taken place at a pivotal time, as we look towards social and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, as countries convene at COP26 to define commitments with regards to the climate crisis, and as we look towards an increased cooperation and solidarity among countries to address the multiple risks that put growth and sustainable development in jeopardy.

In his opening remarks, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica, called upon all nations in the region and participants to reflect on the measures needed to address the impacts of disasters and build resilient economies in the Americas and the Caribbean. We want to thank all participants, organizations, agencies, community leaders, and particularly session organizing teams, for having responded to that call over these last four days and having contributed to make our societies more resilient.

