

Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for  
Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 for Latin America and the Caribbean

**MTR SF - LAC**  
**REGIONAL REPORT**  
volume 1: Main report

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

DISCLAIMER	4
ACRONYMS	5
INTRODUCTION	7
CURRENT STATE OF RISK AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN LAC	10
IMPLEMENTING THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK IN LAC - MAIN FINDINGS	14
A. Priority 1: understanding disaster risk	15
Achievements	15
Challenges	16
B. Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk	17
Achievements	17
Challenges	20
C. Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience	21
Achievements	21
Challenges	23
D. Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to build back better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction	23
Achievements	23
Challenges	25
E. Collaboration, Partnerships and Cooperation	26
Achievements	26
Challenges	27
ESSENTIAL ISSUES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	29
Socio Economic Issues	29
Poverty increase and social inequality	29
Human rights violations, gender inequality and barriers to women's participation	31
Gender inequality and barriers to women's participation	31
Power and governance issues	32
Crises in Haiti, Venezuela and the Northern Triangle (Central America) leading to forced migrations and displacement	32
Haiti	33
Venezuela	33
Northern Triangle	34
Environmental issues	35
Rapid urban growth, informal settlements and changes in land use	35
Deforestation, biodiversity loss and food production systems	35
Climate change	36
El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), changes in temperatures and intensification of the Atlantic hurricane season	36

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The Caribbean: Sea levels rising and a chronic state of emergency	37
Cultural and Technological Issues	37
Limited access to information technologies	38
The COVID-19 pandemic as a catalyst for social crisis	39
CHANGES IN CONTEXT FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION	39
DRR achievements in the region	39
Need for climate change and DRR articulation	41
Systemic risk management as a driver for coordinated actions	41
THE ROAD TOWARDS 2030 AND BEYOND: RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS	42
Essential Actions	43
Technical Actions	44
Legal, Political and Institutional Actions	45
Cultural and Social Actions	46
Actions on Financing and Investing	47
Conclusions	48
REFERENCES	50

## **DISCLAIMER**

While all efforts have been made to reflect the views and opinions of the numerous individuals and organizations involved in the process of consultation and developing this report, the views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of UNDRR or others. The regional office of UNDRR for the Americas and the Caribbean expresses its sincere thanks and appreciation to the more than 300 individuals and agencies that supported this process and a special thanks in particular to CAPRADE, CDEMA, CEPREDENAC and RMAGIR for their support.

**ACRONYMS**

ARISE	Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies
BBB	Building Back Better
CAN	Andean Community of Nations
CAPRADE	Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (Spanish acronym)
CARICHAM	Network of Caribbean Chambers of Commerce
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEPREDENAC	Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (Spanish acronym)
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CIFs	Climate Investment Funds
CRED	Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters
CSSI	Caribbean Safe Schools Initiative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CREWS	Climate Risk Early Warning Systems
DaLA	ECLAC's Damage and Loss Assessment Methodology
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DiDRRN	Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EPRS	European Parliamentary Research Service
EWS	Early Warning System
GAR	Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
iGOPP	Index of Governance and Public Policy in Disaster Risk Management
ITU	International Telecommunication Union

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ILAPyC	Latin American Institute for Peace and Citizenship (Spanish acronym)
IRP	International Resource Panel
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Intersex, Trans, Queer
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market (Spanish acronym)
MHEWS	Multi-hazard Early Warning Systems
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
OAS	Organization of American States
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
PCGIR	Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management
PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
RAP	Regional Action Plan for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Americas
RAR	Regional Assessment Report on Disaster Risk in Latin America and the Caribbean
Red GIRDD LAC	Latin American and Caribbean Disability-inclusive DRR Network (Spanish acronym)
REDULAC/RRD	University Network of Latin America and the Caribbean for Disaster Risk Reduction (Spanish acronym)
RP21	VII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean
R-STAG	Regional Science and Technology Advisory Group Americas and the Caribbean
SCA/ECLAC	Statistical Conference of the Americas / Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030
SFM	Sendai Framework Monitor
SICA	Central American Integration System
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SSCYG	Sendai Stakeholders Children and Youth Group
STAG	Science and Technology Advisory Group
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

## **INTRODUCTION**

The present report, together with other submissions from our region including the Caribbean subregional review, various national voluntary reports and thematic studies, serves to inform the global process of midterm review of implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The global report will in turn serve to inform the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework (HLM), to be held in New York on 18 and 19 May 2023 as per General Assembly resolution A/RES/76/204. The HLM, as part of the seventy-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly, will adopt a concise and action-oriented political declaration to renew commitment and accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

Having DRR at the heart of such high-level UN General Assembly dialogues is a unique opportunity to advocate for enhancing risk informed development and a more coherent approach to safeguarding hard-earned development gains and substantially reducing disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods, and health in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.

The MTR SF is both a retrospective and a prospective exercise, providing an opportunity for UN Member States and other key stakeholders to take stock and examine the lessons learned in the implementation of the Sendai Framework to date, to reflect upon emerging issues and changes in context, and to review challenges to be addressed and actions to be undertaken, accelerated or amplified between 2023 and 2030 and beyond. Furthermore, it places a critical imperative on system wide coherence for integrated action across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and with other frameworks that will shape the way forward during the second half of implementation.

Participation in the region was high throughout the consultation process, with the active engagement of UN Member States, a diversity of stakeholders, and supported by the following intergovernmental organizations: the Caribbean Community's Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA/CARICOM), the Andean Community of Nations' Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE/CAN, for its acronym in Spanish), the Central American Integration System's Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC/SICA for its acronym in Spanish) and the Southern Common Market's Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Comprehensive Disaster Risk (RMAGIR/MERCOSUR).

The first part of this report, the retrospective balance, reflects some key aspects of the progress made in the region, identifies obstacles and calls attention to some of the key challenges as per the key aspects of the Sendai Framework. The assessment of the Sendai Framework's implementation between 2015 and 2022 presents the main findings in terms of both achievements and challenges in each of the four priorities for action of the Sendai Framework, also identifying some key challenges in regard to technical, legal, political, institutional, cultural, financial or structural affairs.

The second part of this report details key structural issues in LAC: poverty, social inequality, human rights violations, gender inequality and barriers to women's participation, as well as some concerns power and governance. It delves into some specific issues such as forced migration in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua (collectively known as The Northern



Triangle), Haiti and Venezuela. This section also highlights emerging issues and changes in context, such as the pressing need to better articulate sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and climate change, as well as integrating cultural and technological issues into disaster risk management (DRM). The COVID-19 pandemic is understood as a catalyst for social and economic crises and a wakeup call on the profound existing gaps and inequalities among LAC countries and between different areas of countries in and of themselves.

The third section looks to the road towards 2030 and beyond, putting forth specific recommendations aiming to broaden and accelerate efforts to achieve the Sendai Framework's expected outcome and goal in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in line with the previous sections.

Finally, it is relevant to note that the process for this MTR SF LAC commenced in 2021 in the lead up to the VII session of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean hosted by the Government of Jamaica in November 2021, whereby two notable consultations were carried out with UN Member States and with representatives of civil society respectively. In 2022, a third round of consultations took place, involving a significant number of meetings, one-on-one interviews, as well as online surveys and questionnaires. More detail about the process itself is provided in volume 2 of this report.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The consultation process began in 2021, prior to the VII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean (RP21). Three initial surveys were carried out: (i) Consultation with civil society, carried out by the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction GNDR) with answers from 63 civil society organizations from 22 countries; (ii) Consultation with the private sector, academia, civil society and governments, carried out by the Latin American Institute for Peace and Citizenship (ILAPyC) and the University Network of Latin America and the Caribbean for Disaster Risk Reduction (REDULAC/DRR), reaching 48 organizations in 18 countries; and, (iii) Consultation with Member States, carried out by the Government of Jamaica as host country of RP21, answered by the official representatives of 22 countries of the region. In 2022, three additional consultation surveys were carried out: (i) Sendai Stakeholder Children and Youth Group (SSCYG), reached 2,875 children and youth from 18 countries in the region; (ii) an "Online Survey" aimed to different stakeholders obtained a total of 245 responses (87% from 22 countries in the Americas and 13% from 19 countries in the Caribbean); and (iii) a more detailed Country Consultation, answered by national DRR focal points and DRM national agencies, obtaining 23 responses from the Americas and 13 from the Caribbean.

## **CURRENT STATE OF RISK AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN LAC**

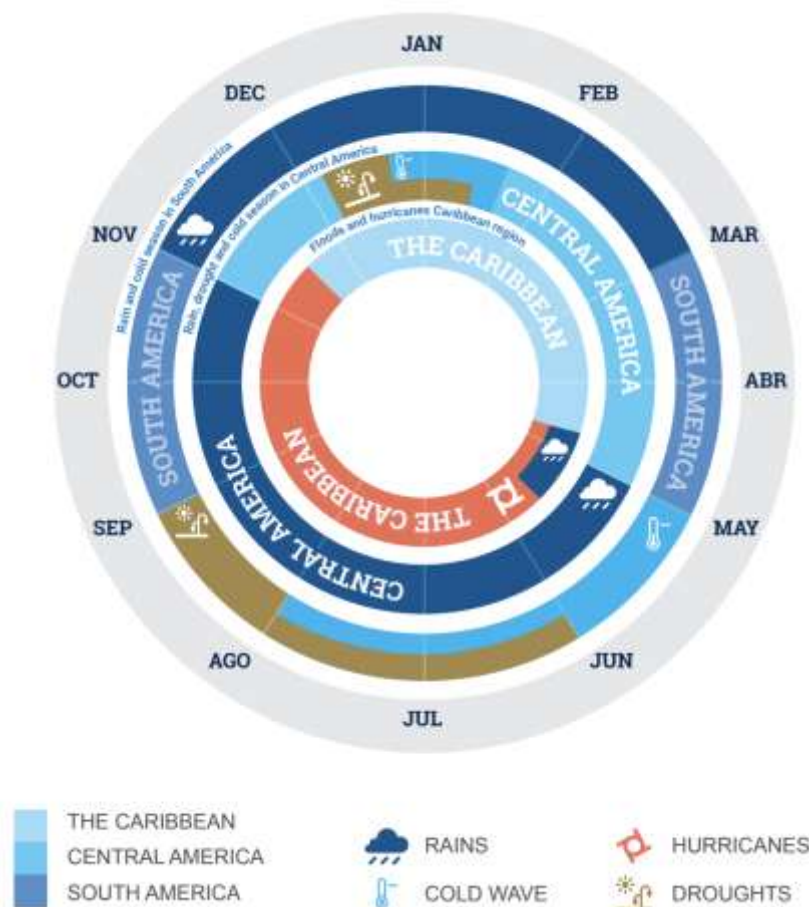
Latin America and the Caribbean is the second most disaster-prone region in the world<sup>2</sup> and this situation is only getting more complex and urgent. As we reach this halfway point in the Sendai Framework's implementation, it is evident that major disaster or emergency events have served in the past as catalysts for action. As some donors and external partners in the region may look to other regions in the face of seemingly more acute or pressing needs, this could severely hamper hard-earned gains over the past decades and lead to compounding challenges.

The region is broadly diverse in terms of its natural topography, geography, biodiversity and blend of cultures. While such diversity is undoubtedly part of the region's wealth and vitality, so too does this heterogeneous character lend to complexity.

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<sup>2</sup> OCHA (2020). *Natural Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2000 - 2019*.

Figure 1. Cyclical nature of disasters



Source: OCHA (2019) Natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean 2000 - 2019

According to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters' Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT), between 1970 and 2019, a total of 2,309 disasters in the region left 510,204 dead, 297 million people affected, and damage estimated at US\$437 billion<sup>3</sup>. Even though many hazards are cyclical (figure 1), according to OCHA, the hazards most likely to trigger a major humanitarian response in the region are sudden events like earthquakes, hurricanes and flash floods. It is relevant to note that 93% of all disasters in that 50-year period are related to floods, storms, droughts, heat waves and other meteorological events, while most of the fatalities were attributed to events of geological origin, especially earthquakes<sup>4</sup>.

As stated in the 2021 Regional Assessment Report on Disaster Risk (RAR21), between 1997 and 2017, one out of four disasters in the world occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean. Nine out of ten people affected by these disasters were impacted by weather events, while seven out of ten disaster related deaths were triggered by a geological hazard.

<sup>3</sup> CRED (Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters) (2020), *EM-DAT International Disaster Database*.

<sup>4</sup> Since 2000, there have been 20 earthquakes of magnitude 7.0 or higher in the region.

Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 175 events of natural origin were recorded in the Latin American and Caribbean region during the 2020-2022 period, 88% of which correspond to events associated with meteorological, climatic and hydrological phenomena (EM-DAT).

Natural and human-induced hazards are becoming increasingly frequent, intense and at times unpredictable in the region due to the influence of climate change and the current climate crisis. Biological and technological hazards have also become more pronounced, compounded by factors of vulnerability, exposure and limited coping and adaptive capacities.

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been stronger in Latin America and the Caribbean than in other regions of the world (ECLAC, 2022). This multisector crisis triggered by a biological hazard has clearly demonstrated how existing factors can influence the impact of a disaster, evidencing the systemic nature of risk. The impacts generated by the containment measures implemented to control the spread of the SAR-COV2 virus generated a cascade of negative effects that at times even exceeded those of the disease itself. Quarantines and physical distancing measures led to job losses, business closures or downsizing, a reduction in household incomes, with loss of income mainly impacting low-income populations already living in precarious conditions.

In general, Latin America and the Caribbean has made great strides in the development of a structured conceptual approach to risk management, knowledge generation and management, as well as establishing the foundational institutional and organizational arrangements along with normative and regulatory structures that enable the implementation of associated policies and mechanisms. In the last couple of decades, but most evidently since the SFDRR was adopted, the region has seen increased investment in disaster risk reduction, governments have greater disaster risk management tools and guidance at their disposal, more DRR policies and legislation are being passed, increasingly more inclusive and participatory practices are being undertaken, and institutions, programmes, national systems and roundtables as well as trainings, capacity-building and awareness raising campaigns are being created and put into practice; all with a view to enhancing disaster risk reduction and risk management with an increasingly all-of-society and multisectoral approach.

Such advances have not, however, been uniform, and as we look towards the remaining period for implementation, we must recognize key structural considerations as well as key priority areas for improvement. Such areas include ensuring political backing at the highest level, strengthening horizontal integration among sectors, ensuring DRR forms part of the institutional mandate and capacities of all key sectors, fostering transboundary and multicountry collaboration, promoting vertical articulation between the national and local levels, fostering exchange of knowledge and good practices, strengthening partnerships and alliances among the public and private sectors, as well as the role of ministries of planning and finance for increasing the resilience of infrastructure and ensuring resilient investment. This report also serves to highlight the importance of raising awareness and understanding of the Sendai Framework to foster behavioral change and a culture of prevention and risk management, as well as broadening the active engagement and participation of women, youth, indigenous communities and persons with disabilities, along with other marginalized populations, academia, science and technology, research and development, and the business sector in policy development and implementation.

While important advances are noted in broadening the region's focus beyond natural hazards, the consultation process of the MTR SF LAC served to underscore the perception that one of

the greatest limitations to reducing risk is the lack of allocation of resources aimed at prevention and risk reduction actions, with the majority of funds still destined to response and recovery. It also raised some contentious and at times uncomfortable issues such as weak governance mechanisms, disarticulation with the territorial realities, limited technical capacities at the local level and, in some instances, lack of political will; issues that can hamper moving from discourse to concrete actions.

## IMPLEMENTING THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK IN LAC - MAIN FINDINGS

As per an internal review of Sendai Framework Monitoring in the region carried out by an external consultant in 2021, reporting on the indicators of the Sendai Framework's global targets in Latin America and the Caribbean has been uneven. Notable advances can be seen in reporting on targets A, E and F, whereas targets B and C were the ones found to be most lagging behind. Targets G and D were found to show some advances but are still lagging.

Figure 2. Reporting on the Sendai Framework indicators in LAC

<b>B</b>	Substantially <b>reduce the number of affected people</b> globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020–2030 compared to the period 2005–2015.
<b>C</b>	<b>Reduce direct disaster economic loss</b> in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030.
<b>D</b>	Substantially <b>reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services</b> , among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030.
<b>G</b>	Substantially <b>increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments</b> to people by 2030.
<b>A</b>	Substantially <b>reduce global disaster mortality</b> by 2030, aiming to lower the average per 100,000 global mortality rate in the decade 2020–2030 compared to the period 2005–2015.
<b>E</b>	Substantially <b>increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies</b> by 2020.
<b>F</b>	Substantially <b>enhance international cooperation to developing countries</b> through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of the present Framework by 2030.

### Sendai Framework Monitor (SFM)

A key fact to highlight regarding progress towards the Sendai targets and indicators is the difference between action and reporting. While countries have made important progress towards achieving the targets, challenges persist in reflecting these advances through monitoring and reporting within the online Sendai Framework Monitor (SFM) system and, in turn, in reporting on the corresponding SDG indicators. Rather than a lack of advancement *per se*, this discrepancy is largely reflective of issues of data and information collection, systematization, consolidation and measurement of indicators arising from both institutional and methodological issues. This is largely attributable to the absence of systematized data and information collection tools and coherent and standardized methodologies among the national,

sectoral and local levels; including on disaggregated data, the need for corresponding inter-institutional and multi-sectoral coordination agreements and protocols, and limitations in terms of human, financial and technological resources.

CAPRADE's subregional report regarding the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) member countries<sup>5</sup> is illustrative of some of the successes and difficulties in reporting to the SFM<sup>6</sup>. Such an analytical review can serve to consolidate findings on the reporting process and in turn provide the evidence base for improved decision making and a culture of monitoring and evaluation.

The establishment in 2018 of a disaster risk focused working group within ECLAC's Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA/ECLAC) is a significant step towards mainstreaming risk knowledge in national accounting, strengthening statistical criteria for Sendai implementation monitoring and reporting, enhancing systematic disaggregated data collection, and mainstreaming the use of administrative data for monitoring progress. In 2021, this SCA/ECLAC working group produced a document<sup>7</sup> with institutional and methodological recommendations to enhance measuring the SFDRR indicators from a statistical perspective, whilst countries are increasingly looking towards incorporating aspects of DRR in national censuses and surveys. This, in turn, also supports greater coordination between those national agencies that oversee DRR and the national statistics offices and has positioned the region within global processes on disaster risk related statistics.

## A. Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk

### Achievements

The first edition of the *Regional Assessment Report (RAR) on Disaster Risk in Latin America & the Caribbean*, launched in 2021 by UNDRR's Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean, the hybrid character of the 2021 Regional Platform (RP21) that facilitated broader and more diverse participation in dialogue and exchange, the application of tools such as the Index for Risk Management (INFORM)<sup>8</sup>, the Interamerican Bank (IDB)'s Index of Governance and Public Policy in Disaster Risk Management (IGOPP) and the World Bank and Global

<sup>5</sup> CAPRADE (2020). *Advances by the Andean Community of Nations Member Countries with regards to the achievement of the Sendai Framework's targets and goals*. PowerPoint presentation.

<sup>6</sup> The document notes that some countries are able to report important advances in public awareness (due to national dissemination of early warning information), DRR inclusion in development planning and decision making (as direct result of data collection on human losses), and local governments with response action plans implemented. The report also lists great difficulty in quantifying, registering and monetizing loss, at least partly due to low technical skills and high rotation at the local government level, as well as lack of economic and financial coordination and complexity in SFM indicators. Finally, CAPRADE states that all countries agree on the need to develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of progress in DRR as key aspects of governance, as well as improving both the systems to register DRR programs and initiatives, and the articulation mechanisms with competent government institutions, which will also lead to a better allocation of international support.

<sup>7</sup> ECLAC (2021). *Institutional and Methodological Recommendations for the Measurement of SDG Indicators Related to Disasters and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* (in Spanish).

<sup>8</sup> *INFORM* is a multi-stakeholder forum for developing shared, quantitative analysis relevant to humanitarian crises and disasters. It includes organizations from across the multilateral system -including the humanitarian and development sector-, donors, and technical partners. Its scientific leader is the Joint Research Center of the European Commission.

Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery's CORE tool for Central America<sup>9</sup>, instruments for loss and damage accounting such as DesInventar Sendai, ECLAC's Damage and Loss Assessment (DaLA) and UN and World Bank led Post-Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs); along with nationally defined and developed tools, methodologies and instruments have all been instrumental in advancing risk understanding and creating the foundations for a sound evidence base in the region.

Furthermore, specific advances have also been made by numerous countries in the region towards better understanding the root causes and underlying factors of disaster risk. Essential steps have been taken to develop and implement new tools for risk-informed decision-making, while the decentralization of roles and responsibilities to enhance action at the local and subnational level has progressed through the establishment of disaster risk management systems that facilitate coordination on the ground. Additionally, the integrated use of multisectoral and multipurpose interoperable geographic information systems, the development of risk atlases, situational analyses and risk profiles, as well as microzoning hazard and risk mapping have enabled important steps towards disaggregating and at the same time systematizing data and information.

Similarly, there have been some advances in the incorporation of scientific and technological knowledge, with greater use of advanced technology and instruments to monitor geodynamic and hydrometeorological hazards and in the design and implementation of Early Warning Systems (EWSs) and increasingly towards the consolidation of Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWSs). The use of geospatial and georeferenced data has been strengthened with technologies such as remote sensing, drones, hand-held devices and high-definition satellite images, facilitating more robust risk assessments as well as real time information for decision-making through increasingly multipurpose and integrated Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Gradual incorporation of ancestral and traditional knowledge in DRR is also noted, along with increased engagement of specific groups, particularly women, young people, older persons, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, persons with disabilities, migrants and displaced persons.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)'s Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in the Agriculture Sector and Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Caribbean Safe Schools Initiative (CSSI)<sup>10</sup> are a notable achievement in the region for understanding from different sectoral perspectives on how to reduce disaster risk.

## Challenges

Despite such advances, there are still important challenges in the region, such as for

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<sup>9</sup> *CORE* is a tool that supports the identification of key points to move proactively towards resilience scenarios. Its overall objective is to identify opportunities for targeted resilience building at the national level in the Central American region.

<sup>10</sup> The *Caribbean Safe School Initiative* (CSSI) was launched in April 2017 and is the suggested framework to advance school safety in the Caribbean. The initiative is the Caribbean contribution to the 'Worldwide-Initiative on Safe Schools (WISS)' and shall be a partnership for advancing safe school implementation at the national level among Caribbean countries. Ministries of Education lead the implementation supported by international, regional and national partners.



broadening the scope of focus of hazards, and the need to enhance knowledge and outreach with regards to how the different types of hazards interact and interconnect. Similarly, to enhance conceptual approaches that recognize the interaction between different social, ecological, political, economic and technical systems, and to further integrate disaster risk analyses with climate change and sustainable development, with all three as vehicles for transformation, action and change.

With regards to strengthening the inclusion of alternative systems of knowledge and thinking, the participation of indigenous communities and their traditional methods in risk assessment and risk management decision-making is still quite limited. This impedes capitalizing upon differential knowledge and alternative approaches to reducing social vulnerability and enhancing disaster prevention and response mechanisms.

Furthermore, there is still much work to be done regarding data collection, data analysis and data interoperability, together with bridging the technological and digital divide, and strengthening the use of communications tools and mass media for proper knowledge management, with sound information and with formats and languages that are accessible, understandable and actionable to all.

## B. Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk

### Achievements

*“The Index of Governance and Public Policy in Disaster Risk Management (iGOPP) is one positive development in the region that does not exist anywhere else. It was developed by IDB with multiple experts from Latin America and the Caribbean and it has been applied in nearly all countries of the region. Econometric studies have been performed to demonstrate that this Index appropriately measures governance and that improving those governance indicators contributes to reducing disaster mortality and economic losses”.*

*Sergio Lacambra, Principal Specialist in Disaster Risk Management at the Inter-American Development Bank.*

The level of awareness regarding disaster risk has, to some extent, permeated decision-making beyond DRR actors *per se*. The creation of thematic networks and partnerships in LAC has also facilitated a more inclusive all-of-society approach, whereby alternative sources of knowledge and innovation are becoming increasingly mainstream in the DRR agenda and more influential in disaster risk governance and decision-making. Some examples of this include the Regional Science and Technology Advisory Group for the Americas and the Caribbean (R-STAG), the national and subregional chapters of the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE) initiative, the regional representation of the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR), the University Network of Latin America and the Caribbean for Disaster Risk Reduction (REDULAC/RRD), the Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network (Red GIRDD LAC), the LAC Women’s Network for DRR, and the youth alliance in the region. It is also worth noting that Ministries of Economy and Finance are becoming increasingly more involved, particularly through the Network of National Public Investment Systems (Red SNIP for its acronym in Spanish), as are National Statistics Institutes through the SCA/ECLAC Working Group on disaster risk related statistics noted above. Ministries of planning, education, agriculture, health and other key sectors are also increasingly actively engaged.

The greater involvement of specific sectors of State is also fundamental to strengthening overall disaster risk governance. Some exciting recent advances in the region, in addition to CELAC's adoption of the DRR Strategy for the Agriculture Sector and FNS and the Caribbean Safe Schools Initiative (CSSI) noted above include ministerial declarations such as the *Punta Cana Declaration*<sup>11</sup> among Ministries of Finance of Central American countries and the Dominican Republic on strengthening the role of public investment in post-pandemic economic recovery and the *Declaration of the Ministers and High-Level Authorities of the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*<sup>12</sup>; both of which make explicit reference to DRR and express commitment to the Regional Action Plan for Sendai Framework Implementation in the Americas and the Caribbean.

DRR dialogues at the regional, subregional, national and local spheres have also become more institutionalized through platforms, roundtables and fora while also becoming increasingly more inclusive and engaging, with the increasingly meaningful participation of historically marginalized groups such as women and youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous groups and other ethnic minorities, migrants and displaced persons, among others, in turn fostering a more holistic understanding of risk from different and at times intersectoral perspectives and thus influencing policy and practice.

In relation to the regulatory tools on DRR/DRM in the region, there are significant achievements at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. At the regional level, it is important to note the *Regional Action Plan for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Americas and the Caribbean (RAP)*<sup>13</sup> first adopted at the V Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2017 in Montreal, Canada and revised and updated as approved during the VII RP hosted by Jamaica in 2021.

At the sub-regional level, corresponding normative instruments strategically orient each of the sub-regions, establish guidance and serve as legally binding frameworks that help manage disaster risk beyond national borders (table 1). At the national level, an important number of laws, policies, programs and plans have successfully been approved, are in the process of being approved and are being implemented since the adoption of the Sendai Framework (table 2).

Table 1. Subregional DRR Policies, Plans and Strategies

AGENCY / COMMITTEE	POLICY / PLAN / STRATEGY
CAPRADE	Andean Disaster Risk Management Strategy (EAGRD) 2015 - 2030 and its corresponding Implementation Plan 2019-2030

<sup>11</sup> The Punta Cana Declaration, aimed to strengthen National Public Investment Systems and define a roadmap to ensure public investments are resilient, inclusive and sustainable. Signed by representatives from the governments of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama and Dominican Republic in November 2021.

<sup>12</sup> The Declaration was adopted at the sixty-second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (MDM62 for its acronym in Spanish).

<sup>13</sup> The RAP (last updated November 2021) is meant to serve as a foundational document, of a non-legally binding nature, that identifies practices and processes to advance implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) 2015-2030 throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. It was first adopted by Member States in the V Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas (Canada, 2017) and has been later re-confirmed as valid by Member States in the VI and VII Regional Platforms for DRR in the Americas and the Caribbean, held in Colombia and Jamaica, respectively.

CDEMA	Caribbean Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy (CDM) 2014 - 2024
CEPREDENAC	Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (PCGIR) 2015 - 2030 and regional DRR Plan (PRRD)
RMAGIR	Disaster Risk Management Strategy for MERCOSUR Countries 2019 - 2030

Table 2. National DRR Policies, Plans and Strategies

COUNTRY	POLICY / PLAN / STRATEGY
Antigua & Barbuda	Country Work Programme for Comprehensive Disaster Management (CWP) 2020 - 2024
Argentina	National Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018-2023
Bahamas	Currently under development. The last Country Work Programme (CWP) was valid up to 2019
Barbados	Country Work Programme for Comprehensive Disaster Management (CWP) 2019 - 2023
Belize	Not available. The last CWP was valid up to 2019
Bolivia	Vice Ministry of Civil Defense's National Risk Management Program (2017). A proposed national strategy is currently under review
Brazil	Decree No. 10.593 (2020), National Civil Protection and Defense System, National Civil Protection and Defense Council, National Civil Protection and Defense Plan and National Disaster Information System. Currently under development
Chile	National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction and National Strategic Plan 2020-2030 (PENRRD)
Colombia	National Disaster Risk Management Plan: A development strategy 2015-2025
Costa Rica	National Risk Management Policy 2016-2030 and National Risk Management Plan (2016-2020 and 2021-2025).
Cuba	Various documents cited, from the country's constitution to natural resources and environmental management, among others.
Dominica	Country Work Programme for Comprehensive Disaster Management 2021 - 2026
Dominican Republic	Not available
El Salvador	National Civil Protection, Risk Prevention and Disaster Mitigation Policy 2017 - 2030 and National Civil Protection, Risk Prevention and Disaster Mitigation Plan (PNPC)
Ecuador	Specific Risk Management Plan 2019-2030 (PESGRD)
Grenada	Country Work Programme for Comprehensive Disaster Management (CWP) 2021 - 2025
Guatemala	National Plan for Disaster Risk Management Guatemala 2018-2022 & National Policy, currently being considered for updating
Guyana	Country Work Programme for Comprehensive Disaster Management (CWP) 2021 - 2025
Haiti	National Disaster Risk Management Plan 2019 - 2030
Honduras	National Comprehensive Risk Management Plan (PNGIRH) 2014 - 2019
Jamaica	Not available
Mexico	National Civil Protection Law and the Index of Governance and Public Policy in Disaster Risk Management (IGOPP). Currently developing national plan.

Nicaragua	Disaster Risk Management National Plan (PNGR) 2010-2015
Panama	National Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Policy and National Strategic CDRM Plan expected to be adopted in October 2022
Paraguay	National Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (updated 2018) and National Implementation Plan for the Sendai Framework 2018-2022.
Peru	National Disaster Risk Management Policy 2050 and National Disaster Risk Management Plan 2014-2021. New plan currently being developed
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Currently being developed. The last CWP of St. Kitts & Nevis was valid 2014 to 2019.
Santa Lucia	Country Work Programme for Comprehensive Disaster Management (CWP) 2020 - 2024
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Country Work Programme for Comprehensive Disaster Management (CWP) 2020 - 2024
Suriname	Not available. The last CWP was valid up to 2018
Trinidad and Tobago	Country Work Programme for Comprehensive Disaster Management (CWP) 2022-2026 awaiting approval
Uruguay	National Comprehensive Risk Management Policy 2020, with national comprehensive emergency and disaster risk management plan currently being considered for ratification
Venezuela	Not available

Current DRR regulations in the region are largely aligned to the Sendai Framework. Their implementation requires time and solid governance systems for the intended results to be effective. In general, the Sendai Framework has become the benchmark for national agendas, achieving the incorporation of disaster risk management in public policies, with high coherence in achieving results.

### Challenges

Despite the progress seen at the regional, subregional and national levels, challenges persist with regards to translating national strategies into legislation and action at the subnational and local level.

There are a number of initiatives at the local level that support local governments to establish planning mechanisms and legal frameworks on building resilience, reducing CO2 emissions, mainstreaming DRR, and for fostering governance for disasters and climate related action. Many of these initiatives are captained by global networks such as [C40](#), the [Resilient Cities Network](#) and [ICLEI](#). Furthermore, numerous cities in the region are seeking to include climate change adaptation and mitigation together with integrated DRR and resilience in their budget allocation. Considering climate issues are still a relatively recent topic within cities' public finance, few cities have expanded this budgetary allocation beyond response to disasters. Notwithstanding, significant efforts are being made by many organizations to strengthen associated technical capacities in the region.

The Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030) initiative led by UNDRR has been a driver for municipal and city DRR plans. Nonetheless, it is also recognized that these plans are not always linked to local, subnational or national development plans and have not always been developed according to a territorial prioritization at the national level. Countries such as Colombia and Ecuador are showing notable advances and strategic benefits in vertical

alignment and national ownership of the MCR2030 initiative and could serve as good practices for other countries of the region.

Another important challenge throughout the region is that DRR/DRM is still largely regarded as a sector in and of itself, which leads to limited articulation and coordination among sectors and actors, resulting in disconnected efforts, duplicate agendas and work silos. This, in turn, causes limited integration of DRM issues within planning, environment, infrastructure, economy, public investment, health and education and other key sectors and policies.

Finally, regarding the private sector and civil society's active involvement in DRR, there is still much to be done to strengthen their role and recognize the sheer importance of their unique and invaluable contributions to DRR governance mechanisms. Furthermore, there is also much room for improvement to elevate the voices of women and youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous groups and other ethnic minorities, migrants and displaced persons, informal workers, among others, that tend to be disproportionately impacted yet less accounted for in the decision-making processes. In short, many governance frameworks still lack the necessary conditions to forcefully and significantly address the challenges of dealing with disaster risk. The actions that promote disaster risk governance vary considerably from country to country, which can impede achieving efficiency that radiates at the regional level.

### **C. Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience**

#### **Achievements**

There are significant advances in the region regarding budgetary allocation and financing for DRR and resilience. In various countries, regular funding is being increasingly designated for disaster risk reduction and regulations are being established with guidelines for incorporating disaster risk assessments into approval processes for public projects. Notable progress is also being made for enhancing the role of the private and business sector, including through private sector networks, public-private alliances, the provision of fiscal incentives and disincentives, increased corporate responsibility, and diverse risk transfer arrangements and insurance and reinsurance schemes.

In Costa Rica, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy, the Ministry of Finance and the National Emergency Commission (CNE for its acronym in Spanish), among other government authorities, have developed a tool that provides guidelines for incorporating disaster risk evaluations in public investment projects, also providing methodological and informational criteria to estimate prevention and maintenance associated costs as well as to identify which resources are allocated to DRM and which to climate change adaptation.

There is increasing interest on behalf of the private sector in DRR, including a demand for tools and guidelines to better understand and integrate disaster risk into investment decisions, management practices and business continuity plans. The national and subregional chapters of the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE) initiative are an important advancement towards generating cooperation agendas between the public and private

sectors<sup>14</sup>. In 2018, for example, 150 members of the Mexican private sector signed a Declaration of Voluntary Cooperation, which led to the creation of ARISE Mexico<sup>15</sup>, the first national public-private network aimed to prevent and mitigate disasters in the country.

In 2020, ARISE MX announced the signing of a Collaboration Agreement with the Confederation of National Chambers of Commerce Services and Tourism (CONCANACO SERVYTUR) to boost the rapid recovery of micro small and medium-sized companies in the face of the COVID-19 crisis as well as to foster a culture of disaster prevention that allows in the medium and long term to avoid future crises. This was accompanied by “The Resilience Protocol for MSMEs” which aims to develop a roadmap and train MSMEs to ensure their operational continuity in the event of disasters as well as increase their competitive advantages through sustainable business models.<sup>16</sup>

In 2021, ARISE Canada and ARISE in the Caribbean (CARICHAM) collaborated to support CARICHAM’s SMEs resilience strategy by developing a digital tool for business continuity and a business risks assessment. Launched in October at the ARISE Forum for the Americas and the Caribbean, the tool introduces businesses to disaster risk from a multi hazard and systemic risk approach. It also equips users with templates and audio-visual material guiding them to plan measures to prepare for disasters and prevent future risks. It includes training, providing a platform for exchange and to disseminate the tool with other initiatives and stakeholders in the region, such as CDEMA and CARICOM’s private sector association, which contributes to enhanced business knowledge on DRR and a strengthened role of the private sector in DRR.

Also, worth noting is an increase in the available resources for DRR from international cooperation organizations, largely destined to technical assistance, capacity building, and construction of resilient infrastructure, among others.

One interesting and innovative tool that some Caribbean countries have started to explore as an answer to the destruction brought on by frequent climate events, especially tropical storms and hurricanes, is the introduction of clauses relating to hurricanes or similar disasters in debt negotiations. In 2015, Grenada became the first country to introduce a clause stipulating an immediate and temporary debt moratorium if the economy was hit by a disaster. Three years later, in 2018, Barbados inserted a hurricane clause as part of its domestic debt restructuring.

<sup>14</sup> At the time of writing this report, there are currently 20 national chapters of ARISE in the Americas and Caribbean region: 18 national chapters and 2 subregional chapters, namely Integrase in Central America and CARICHAM in the Caribbean.

<sup>15</sup> The agreement was signed by the Board of Directors of ARISE Mexico, which is composed of companies and organizations such as: AECOM (a global firm that specializes in the development of resilience strategies and climate change planning in Latin America and the Caribbean), AXA Insurance, the National Cement Chamber (CANACEM), the National Center for Disaster Prevention (CENAPRED), the Mexican Center for Philanthropy (CEMEFI), Cementos Mexicanos (CEMEX), the CINEMEX film company, the National Chamber of Industry, Radio and Television (CIRT), the humanitarian CMAX Foundation, Communication Council, Fuerza México Trust, Grupo Salinas, Jacobs, Marhnos, the National Civil Protection Center of the Ministry of the Interior (SEGOB - CNPT), UPS, World Vision and UNDRR.

<sup>16</sup> [Collaboration Agreement with the Confederation of National Chambers of Commerce, Services and Tourism \(CONCANACO SERVYTUR\)](#)

Clauses like these are increasingly relevant due to the growing risks from climate change and other environmental issues, and their use could be extended to larger countries and broader sets of external shocks, including those related to public health disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>17</sup>

### Challenges

One of the greatest limitations to dealing with disaster risk is the reduced budgets allocated to actions for prevention and risk reduction. With approximately 0.5% of official development assistance currently being spent on disaster prevention, it is crucial that disaster risk prevention and mitigation be prioritized in the definition of budgets. This calls for a need to rethink how government expenditures incorporate DRR into fiscal planning and to explore different ways to develop and or strengthen financial mechanisms based on successful experiences in the region. Such exploration should also focus on developing financing mechanisms for an increasingly prospective analysis of risk, based on foresight and the evolving landscape of risk, aimed at overcoming the underlying factors and drivers of risk. There is a predominance of investments in disaster response, through reserve and transference mechanisms (reserve funds, contingency credit, insurance, etc.) and less weight is put on investments in prevention and resilience. 70% of the latter are directed towards infrastructure. There are opportunities to ensure DRR criteria is further enhanced in infrastructure investments, not only considering aspects of safety and environmental care, but also advancing a holistic approach to reducing risk, including aspects such as shared responsibility, social engagement, capacity to adapt to a changing risk context, etc.

Another important obstacle is that investments in DRR are also still predominantly the domain of the public sector, and despite evidence that every dollar spent on prevention represents a savings of roughly seven dollars, the vast majority of spending is still predominantly on emergency response. Even though there is notable progress by the ARISE members, the private sector is not yet fully on board with the need to allocate funds for DRR. With some notable exceptions, programmes aimed at the provision of incentives and disincentives are largely unexplored in the region. Furthermore, the aforementioned lack of integration between climate change, sustainable development and DRR agendas leads to a dispersal and at times absence of coordination of funding and funding opportunities.

Finally, DRR governance is increasingly multi-sectoral in the region, this is not always translated into sectoral budget allocations. In other words, there is a lack of balance between the DRR responsibilities across sectors and the resources allocated to implement them.

## **D. Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to build back better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction**

### Achievements

Since the adoption of the Sendai Framework, some progress has been made in the region in strengthening preparedness for response, recovery and reconstruction. Some of the main achievements include tools and standards for response, plans for recovery and rehabilitation,

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<sup>17</sup> ECLAC (2021). *An innovative agenda of development financing for the recovery of Latin America and the Caribbean* (in Spanish).

national and local contingency plans, Early Warning Systems for improved preparedness and response, along with impact forecasting and multi-hazard simulations and drills.

The growing number of disasters in the region has pushed countries to invest more in preparedness for response and recovery. Post Disaster Recovery is a growing practice area that begins way before a disaster or a crisis starts, **anticipating** governance arrangements, preparing needs assessment methodologies, and understanding how to plan and implement recovery programs. Ten countries in LAC are working towards getting ready for recovery, setting up recovery policies, adapting assessment methodologies and integrating expert teams, formulating ex-ante recovery frameworks, strengthening their capacities for recovery planning and implementation through the UNDP's DRR and Recovery for LAC: Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

Under the Recovery Component of the EnGenDER project funded by the Government of Canada and supported by UNDP, CDEMA supports the design and operationalization of the Caribbean Resilient Recovery Facility (CRRF) which is part of CARICOM's comprehensive recovery approach. The CRRF is a regional mechanism for the coordination of ex-ante and ex-post resilient recovery services to CDEMA Participating States: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname. To this end, CDEMA has put forward the Model National Recovery Framework (MNRF 2021) to serve as a guidance document with a suite of tools (Adaptation Guide, Recovery Checklist and M&E Guide) to augment resilient gender-responsive recovery approaches and solutions at the national level.

Many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have successful strategies, plans, projects and experiences on the development and implementation of Early Warning Systems (EWS). Even though the experiences are diverse, there are many lessons to be drawn regarding key actions to be taken in order to increase resilience, especially through the availability and access by people and communities to multi-hazard early warning systems (MHEWS) and their ability to react in a timely and effective way.

A good example is the implementation of the Climate Risk Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative for strengthening hydrometeorological and early warning services in the Caribbean. CREWS is based on a coherence approach while also recognizing that women's empowerment is fundamental for building resilience and that men and women access, process, interpret and respond to information and warnings in different ways, therefore the needs for gender sensitive programming principles and institutional commitments.

Disaster preparedness is especially important in Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, disaster preparedness applies to all types of risks, ranging from natural hazards and epidemics to human-induced threats such as armed conflict and violence. This is particularly important in a region where man-made hazards have severely increased in the last years, with a growing number of people being affected by complex crises.

Disaster preparedness actions over the last decades have contributed to strengthening resilience at the national level through targeted technical support to national risk management systems to drive the inclusion of DRR in their actions, policies and investments; strengthening



the presence of UNDRR and scaling up the implementation of the Sendai Framework at national level. All such efforts have significantly contributed to shifting the focus of national efforts from response to preventive action that saves lives. Over the years different actors have sat down to share expertise with people and organizations, bringing together diverse representation of stakeholders and systematizing efforts. This has boosted the replication and multiplication of actions to reach more impact. It is essential to give people the ability and skills to prepare themselves and their communities and anticipate emergency humanitarian needs. The timely activation of early warning systems established by local authorities has been key in saving lives.

### Challenges

Even though concrete advances have been made in Early Warning Systems (EWS), most notably in the Caribbean region, there are still notable challenges yet to be overcome in terms of a wider understanding of EWS as well as policy development for MHEWS: (i) normative issues, (ii) better understanding of the multi-hazard approach, (iii) MHEWS are yet to be understood as more than the sum of single or cluster EWS and (iv) need to strengthen data collection and analysis as well as information sharing processes.

Regarding normative issues, many countries have prepared roadmaps and policy for ensuring the design, development, implementation and monitoring of early warning systems, some of them inclusive of the multi-hazard approach. Nonetheless, such policy instruments often lack concrete financial mechanisms that could ensure their implementation. Furthermore, they are at times disarticulated from national strategies for disaster risk reduction, adaptation or sustainable development. In relation to confusions in multi-hazard understanding rather than focusing on single or cluster systems, the COVID-19 pandemic evidenced this confusion in cases where even though many countries already had standard operating procedures (SOPs) in place for meteorological or geological hazards, none were found to offer the flexibility to support response to other parallel or cascading occurrences, such as those relating to biohazards<sup>18</sup>.

As for understanding MHEWS, despite the clear guidance provided by the OIEWG report, some countries still regard this as the sum of single or cluster EWS, thus lacking the necessary linkages and connections to bring these systems together. This in turn can also lead to underreporting in national reporting through the Sendai Framework Monitor (SFM).

The operational work and overall interaction between National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and Disaster Management Agencies is vital for the effectiveness of MHEWS and a solid risk management governance. However, the effectiveness of this interaction is uneven in the region.

While the Caribbean is considered at the forefront of early warning systems, South America is noted by WMO<sup>19</sup> as being among the regions with the greatest documented need for strengthening of EWS. For Central America, challenges involve the sustainability for the

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<sup>18</sup> This was evident in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, where multiple biological, meteorological and geological hazardous events were occurring simultaneously: dengue, COVID-19, Hurricane Elsa and the eruption of La Soufriere volcano. One of the lessons learnt in the context of the latter was that regulatory frameworks should be more flexible and agile, and that a multi-hazard approach for EWS is indeed urgently needed.

<sup>19</sup> WMO (2022). *State of the Climate in Latin America and the Caribbean 2021*.

maintenance of the EWS equipment, as well as the implementation of the governance system that leads from the warning to actions that save lives.

Furthermore, it is essential to support the transition from traditional hazard-based early warning systems towards more impact-based forecasting by providing high quality data collection and analysis in addition to information sharing mechanisms. In addition to this, the promotion, dissemination and exchange of good practices and technical cooperation among countries is another area in need of strengthening, as well as financial tools and mechanisms to strengthen investments in recovery that increase resilience of local communities.

In 2020, disasters were the largest cause of internal displacement in the region, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Hurricanes Eta and Iota on 3 and 17 November 2020 respectively affected more than 7.5 million people, providing another clear example of complex disaster events compounding issues of inequality, vulnerability, unequal access to basic services, and unemployment.

As noted by Felipe del Cid, Head of the IFRC's Disaster Response Unit in the Americas, in the month after Eta and Iota in December 2020: "We are talking about a huge disaster, exacerbating an already ruinous combination of COVID-19, poverty and inequality in the region. These overlapping crises are making our operation one of the most complex we have ever mounted." Hurricanes Iota and Eta, occurring during strict containment measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, opened a major crisis-management gap in countries such as Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico and further illustrated the need to enhance preparedness, including cross-border cooperation.

## **E. Collaboration, Partnerships and Cooperation**

### **Achievements**

The main achievements regarding collaboration and partnerships in the region are in large part thanks to platforms, networks and alliances, intergovernmental mechanisms and systems for integration.

The most prominent alliances at the regional level for DRR include: the Caribbean Community's Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA/CARICOM), the Andean Community of Nations' Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE/CAN, for its acronym in Spanish), the Central American Integration System's Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC/SICA for its acronym in Spanish), the Southern Common Market's Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (RMAGIR/MERCOSUR for its acronym in Spanish), the Community of Latin American & Caribbean States (CELAC), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA).

As noted above, there are also notable thematic networks fostering collaboration in the region. These include the subregional and national chapters of the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE), the Regional Science and Technology Advisory Group for the Americas and the Caribbean (R-STAG), the Disaster Risk Working Group of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA/ECLAC), the LAC Disability-Inclusive DRR Network (Red GIRDD LAC), the LAC Women's Network on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Network of Social Studies in Disaster Prevention in Latin America (LA RED), the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) in the region, the Network of National Public

Investment Systems, (SNIP Network) and the University Network of Latin America and the Caribbean for Disaster Risk Reduction (REDULAC/RRD for its Spanish acronym).

Many of these networks and associations work to strengthen and establish new alliances amongst themselves and with other organizations (non-governmental, private sector, etc.), articulating actions for the benefit of the region, its countries and its communities. They are also spaces for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and exchange of good practices, experiences and lessons learned, as well for coordinating joint actions. Forums such as the World Bank's Understanding Risk, the Central American Consultative Fora and the Caribbean Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Forum, as well as the Regional and National Platforms for DRR, roundtables and others, are instrumental in furthering foresight and thought.

International cooperation in DRR has been constant in the region since the Sendai Framework, but in the future reductions are being foreseen.

The Directorate General for Civil Protection and European Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) has been supporting the Latin American and Caribbean region since 1994 in fulfilment of its humanitarian mandate to preserve and save lives, with the ultimate aim of reducing disaster risk conditions and contributing to increasing people's, communities and countries resilience in the region.

During these years, ECHO, through its Disaster Preparedness Program (DP), has invested in the region more than a total of 321 million euros in 34 countries through more than 631 projects, reaching 30 million Latin Americans and Caribbeans with the participation and involvement of a wide variety of organizations and partners. The disaster preparedness projects supported by ECHO align with the goals defined by the countries of the region (whether national or regional) and contribute to the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

DG ECHO views preparedness as being critically important for the quality and timeliness of response operations, as well as being a way of improving anticipation, thus complementing humanitarian assistance in saving lives, reducing suffering and preempting or decreasing humanitarian needs. DG ECHO recognizes that disaster preparedness applies to all forms of risk, ranging from natural hazards and epidemics to human-induced threats such as conflict and violence.

With this in mind, DG ECHO and UNDRR's Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean developed a web-based collection as a knowledge base dedicated to promoting tools and knowledge on Disaster Preparedness (DP) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)<sup>20</sup>.

## Challenges

One key challenge in this regard, is that of ensuring the active engagement of an ever-increasing audience, to ensure that such dialogue reaches beyond those already involved.

Many countries of the region struggle to have a national registry that reflects DRR-related official development assistance, particularly with regards to the transfer of technology and capacity-building that are not as easily monitored as direct financial support. This impedes the ability to steer international cooperation according to nationally defined priorities and needs.

<sup>20</sup> [Disaster Preparedness Programme \(DP\) in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

Most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are middle or high-income countries despite vulnerabilities, exposure and challenges that create and/or exacerbate risk. This makes it harder to access funding for international cooperation in DRR. Other areas of the world experience complex and chronic crises that impact the availability of development cooperation for the region. More synergies should be promoted with climate adaptation and mitigation funding and finance instruments to broaden the scope of funding opportunities.

Upper-middle-income	8
SIDS	6
Upper-middle-income, SIDS	6
High-income	6
SIDS, High-income	3
Lower-middle-income	3
LLDCs, Lower-middle-income	1
LLDCs, Upper-middle-income	1
Low-income, SIDS, LDCs	1
<b>Total general</b>	<b>35</b>

## ESSENTIAL ISSUES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Aside from changes in each individual country and in the region as a whole since the Sendai Framework was adopted, it is also necessary to highlight certain structural issues in the region that strongly affect disaster risk reduction and risk management: poverty, human rights violations, unsustainable environmental practices, socio-economic inequality, gender inequalities and systemic barriers to the participation of women, girls and other historically marginalized populations, including people with disabilities, Afro-descendant and indigenous communities. Several countries in the region also face issues of concentration of power and governance constraints (particularly at the local level), forced human migration and displacement, rapid and unplanned urbanization, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. Many of these issues have been severely aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken for containment.

Furthermore, millions of people in the region face greater vulnerability due to the effects of climate change and the climate emergency, including heat waves, droughts, wildfires, heavier rainfalls and flooding, as well as stronger storms and hurricanes in the Atlantic with a particularly devastating impact for already strained Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

### Socio Economic Issues

ECLAC projections on economic growth as of September 2022 place Latin America and the Caribbean among the lowest in the world, “as limited dynamism in job creation, falling investment and growing social demands continue to stifle its post-COVID-19 economic recovery. The war in Ukraine is only compounding inflationary pressures already set in motion by the pandemic, generating a cost-of-living crisis that is driving up food and energy prices across the region, dealing yet another devastating blow to livelihoods and food security”<sup>21</sup>. The exception being the case of Guyana due to oil extraction.

#### Poverty increase and social inequality

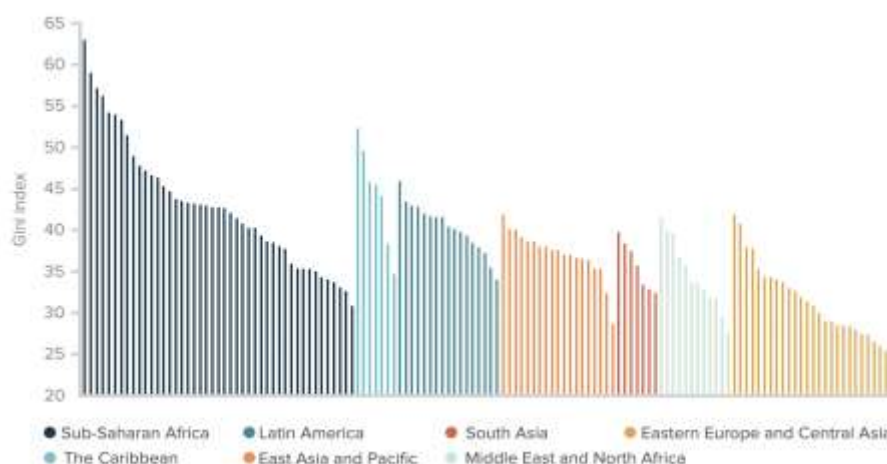
In its *Social Panorama of Latin America 2021*, ECLAC indicated a general increase in both poverty and extreme poverty across the region in 2020, with extreme poverty rising to levels similar or higher than those recorded in 2014 in ten countries; and in some cases levels were higher than those of 2008<sup>22</sup>. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)<sup>23</sup>, in 2021 rates of poverty (33.7%) and extreme poverty (12.5 %) across the region reached levels not seen for 12 and 20 years, respectively. Such deceleration will impact populations that were already dealing with the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic, including indigenous and afro-descendant people, women and girls, persons with disabilities, persons in detention and people on the move.

<sup>21</sup> As referenced by OCHA in its *Latin America & the Caribbean Weekly Situation Update (22-28 August 2022)*

<sup>22</sup> The largest increases in poverty were recorded in Argentina, Colombia and Peru (7 percentage points or more), while in Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Paraguay the poverty rate rose by between 3 and 5 points. Brazil was the only country that reported decreases in poverty and extreme poverty in 2020 (1,8 percentage points and 0,7 percentage points, respectively).

<sup>23</sup> *UN Human Rights Report 2021*

Figure 3. LAC countries are some of the most unequal in the world  
*Gini indices on the distribution of household consumption per capita by region, circa 2017*



Source: *Regional Human Development Report 2021. Trapped: High inequality and low growth in Latin America and the Caribbean*

Regarding wealth distribution, in its Human Development Report 2021, UNDP states that Latin America and the Caribbean is the second most unequal region in the world (right after Sub-Saharan Africa) and its countries exhibit higher inequality than those in other regions at similar levels of economic development (figure 3)<sup>24</sup>.

The report explains that such inequality is the result of several factors interacting, but with one seemingly standing out: the concentration of power in the hands of a few (who defend their own interests rather than the public good). This often results in weak institutions and distorted policies that are short-sighted and inefficient. One clear example of this is that markets in Latin America tend to be dominated by a small number of large private companies with strong political influence, which in turn also distorts policy beyond the market sphere, particularly in regard to fiscal policies<sup>25</sup>. This leads to a lack in trust, quite often reflected in low tax collection and limited budgets for investment in resilience and disaster risk reduction actions, especially for prevention and mitigation interventions.

<sup>24</sup> *Regional Human Development Report 2021. Trapped: High inequality and low growth in Latin America and the Caribbean.*

<sup>25</sup> The report states that LAC countries collect lower taxes as a share of GDP than other countries at similar levels of development or inequality levels and also have a limited share of tax revenue from personal income taxes.

### Human rights violations, gender inequality and barriers to women's participation

According to the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) and Amnesty International<sup>26</sup>, the human rights situation in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has deeply deteriorated in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (although with considerable differences between countries). In addition to the high levels of socio-economic inequalities, the region was the world's deadliest region for human rights defenders, with severe human rights violations endured by trans and gender-diverse people, journalists, women and environmental activists<sup>27</sup>.

Nevertheless, the Escazu Agreement<sup>28</sup>, as the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean signed in 2018 and entered into force on 22 April 2021, is a very important movement in the right direction as it is the first treaty of its kind in Latin America and the Caribbean. The agreement addresses key aspects of environmental management, climate change and resilience to disasters from a regional perspective and from a human rights approach. It also includes the world's first binding provision on human rights defenders in environmental matters. One of its main provisions includes recognizing the right of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment. In this way, the Escazu Agreement can be seen as a driver for enhancing DRR in LAC.

### Gender inequality and barriers to women's participation

By 2030, Latin America and the Caribbean will have a population of nearly 700 million people, of which approximately 354.6 million (51%) will be women, according to ECLAC's statistical databases and publications<sup>29</sup>. However, there are several structural issues faced by women such as the low level of participation in family and community decision-making, limited access to land tenure as well as to the management of household finances, banking or credit services, to health care or education, among others<sup>30</sup>. These limitations are exacerbated in rural areas, further limiting the advancement towards narrowing the gaps on women's autonomy and fully exercising their rights.

Thanks to the progress made in global and regional DRR gender studies, we are beginning to have a better understanding of the level of influence of gender-

<sup>26</sup> European Parliamentary Research Service, EPRS (2022). *Democracy and human rights in Latin America. Is democratic erosion gathering pace?* and Amnesty International *Facts and figures: Human rights in the Americas in 2020-21*.

<sup>27</sup> With 264 killings, Latin America and the Caribbean was the world's deadliest region for human rights defenders in 2021 and accounted for 79% of the global total of 331 killings. Colombia remained the world's most lethal country for human rights defenders, (177 killings) and other dangerous countries for human rights activists in 2020 were Honduras (20 killings), Mexico (19), Brazil (16) and Guatemala (15). 84% of the trans and gender-diverse people reported murdered worldwide between 1 October 2020 and 30 September 2021 were killed in LAC. Mexico was the world's deadliest country for journalists (9 killings), whilst Cuba, Nicaragua and Brazil imprisoned several of them. Regarding generalized violence, Jamaica remained the most violent country in the region in 2021, followed by Venezuela and Honduras. The region also recorded the highest number of killings of environmental activists (with almost 75% of total attacks in the world, and home to 7 out of the 10 countries with most killings). Mexico recorded over 3.750 killings of women, of which over 950 were investigated as femicides; and over 77.000 people were reported officially missing or disappeared.

<sup>28</sup> *Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean*, adopted in Escazu, Costa Rica, in March 2018 and entered into force in April 2021.

<sup>29</sup> *CEPALSTAT ECLAC Statistical databases and publications*, last accessed on Oct. 4, 2022.

<sup>30</sup> UN Women and UNDRR (2022). *Towards Gender Equality and Women's Leadership for Resilience to Disaster Risks in Latin America and the Caribbean*.

based social inequalities on disaster outcomes. And there are two main reasons for this: (i) the gender bias in the use of language and production of knowledge (including statistical data), and (ii) structural gender inequalities that exist in our societies.

Source: *UNDRR & UN Women (2022). Towards Gender Equality and Women's Leadership for Resilience to Disaster Risks in Latin America and the Caribbean*

In recent events such as hurricanes Eta and Iota in the northern countries of Central America (2020), hurricane Elsa in the Caribbean, the volcanic eruption in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, or the Haiti earthquake (2021), the erosion of women's social, economic and political autonomy, already exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the loss of hard-fought gains, prevented women from gaining equal access to life-saving information, protection and support after the crisis.<sup>31</sup>

Source: *UNDRR & UN Women (2022). Towards Gender Equality and Women's Leadership for Resilience to Disaster Risks in Latin America and the Caribbean.*

*“Compared to men, women are more likely to engage in informal activities, underpaid work, and to endure unsafe living and working conditions. Under these conditions, there is a higher risk of fires and industrial accidents, and the physical infrastructure is not resistant to the impacts of natural hazards, for example, earthquakes. In addition, women often remain responsible for functions such as childcare, in addition to maintaining a traditional role in the home. In such cases, the multiple roles that exist for women can, in the long run, lead to physical and health impacts that can reduce their resilience to disasters”.*

*Excerpt from LAC Women's Network for DRR Working Group (WG) for the Mid Term Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030: Contributions and Recommendations.*

## Power and governance issues

In general, Latin American and Caribbean countries have relatively stable governments and institutions with quite solid governance mechanisms that plan their future development.

Nevertheless, the region has been subject to swings in political parties as many countries wrestle with overcoming key societal needs, often demonstrated through ideological divides. In some countries there is also a remarkable concentration of power and centralization of government functions among national level institutions and decision-making processes. This leaves smaller cities, local governments and municipalities with limited resources and technical capacities. As noted above, lack of confidence in government parties and a perceived lack of transparency and corruption in the region have a negative impact on tax collection, resulting, in turn, in reduced financing available for investing in medium- and longer-term goals.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, based on data from *UN Women-CARE Rapid Gender Assessments from Guatemala (2020), Honduras (2020) and Haiti (2021)*



## Crises in Haiti, Venezuela and the Northern Triangle (Central America) leading to forced migrations and displacement

“Latin America and the Caribbean has more migrants per capita than any other region in the world and is facing the largest human mobility crisis in recent history”<sup>32</sup>. According to the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the growing Venezuelan exodus, record numbers of people fleeing the countries of northern Central America (known as the Northern Triangle), together with new migration outflows from countries such as Haiti or Nicaragua and an influx of migrants from other regions, have countries facing unprecedented challenges with regards to social protection measures and overall social inclusion. In addition to this, the COVID-19 pandemic has only deepened the difficulties faced by refugees and migrants, further affecting their sources of income and living conditions, making them even more vulnerable to sustained shocks and sudden disasters.

### Haiti

Haiti is experiencing a dire security situation, including loss of government control over strategic areas to the hands of dangerous armed gangs, which is worsening an already severe humanitarian, political and human rights crisis, and exacerbating health and food insecurity. The country is also enduring political and constitutional turmoil<sup>33</sup> and as a consequence, millions are fleeing the country only to be deported back in many cases. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), given the current security conditions in Haiti, civil society groups and organizations assisting returnees have expressed concern that people deported to Haiti are at risk of kidnapping and extortion by criminal gangs and return to face enormous difficulties in accessing basic services such as housing, education or healthcare since insecurity and violence, coupled with severe shortages of fuel and drinking water, have forced many health facilities to reduce their activities and in some cases to cease delivery altogether.<sup>34</sup>

### Venezuela

According to UNHCR, people leave Venezuela to escape violence and insecurity as well as lack of food, medicine and other essential services. With over 6 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants worldwide<sup>35</sup>, this has become the second-largest external displacement crisis in the world, as figure 4 illustrates.

<sup>32</sup> Statement made by IDB President Mauricio Claver-Carone during *the announcement of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IDB and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)* in December 2021 to address the development challenges and opportunities generated by rising forced displacement across Latin America and the Caribbean.

<sup>33</sup> Prime Minister Henry, the presumed head of government, was not elected but rather appointed by former President Jovenel Moïse, two days before Moïse's assassination on July 7, 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Human Rights Watch (2022). *Haitians Being Returned to a Country in Chaos* and Medecins Sans Frontieres (2022) *MSF responds to a resurgence of cholera cases amid insecurity and violence*.

<sup>35</sup> The vast majority of Venezuelan refugees and migrants have relocated to countries within Latin America and the Caribbean, most of them in Colombia, Peru, Chile and Brazil.

Figure 4. Refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Latin America and the Caribbean (as of Aug 2022)



Source: *The Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants (R4V)*, 2022

### Northern Triangle

According to UNHCR figures, worldwide there are around 597,000 refugees and asylum seekers from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras (collectively known as the Northern Triangle). They are escaping political turmoil and human rights abuses<sup>36</sup>, gang violence, threats, extortion, recruitment into gangs or prostitution, as well as gender-based violence (GBV), with LGBTIQ+ persons having limited protections under national laws and therefore facing increased levels of generalized violence and persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity in recent years.

Many more are displaced multiple times within their own countries or have been deported back to their countries of origin, often into dangerous situations where crime and violence fueled by drug cartels and gangs, as well as fragile institutions, deeply rooted inequalities, the profound

<sup>36</sup> Since April 2018, protests and political turmoil in Nicaragua have led some 200,000 people to flee the country, the vast majority – 150,000 — into neighboring Costa Rica.

impacts of climate emergencies and the sustained shocks that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought.

## Environmental issues

### Rapid urban growth, informal settlements and changes in land use

Latin America and the Caribbean currently has an urban population of more than 80%, making it one of the most urbanized regions of the world. In their joint report<sup>37</sup>, the International Resource Panel (IRP) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) state that the proportion of the region's population living in cities and towns is expected to rise to 90% percent by 2050. Therefore, addressing the current urban challenges as well as moving towards more efficient and sustainable cities in the region are, and will continue to be, top priorities for the foreseeable future.

The region's poverty, socio-economic inequality and -in some countries- violent situation prove to be important roadblocks in the way forward. On the one hand, forced migrations that expel people from rural areas into the cities' fringe increase poverty belts and swell informal settlements that lack public utilities and are predominantly located either on protected land or in risk designated areas. On the other hand, this is often compounded by weak governance and urban control, local communities' poor access to information and participation in decision-making processes.

### Deforestation, biodiversity loss and food production systems

In addition to the aforementioned issues, concentration of power, corruption, deficient governance structures or illegal activities enable unapproved changes in land uses in rural and protected areas, causing deforestation and natural cover depletion, in turn intensifying hazards and affecting all biodiversity. According to UNEP<sup>38</sup>, our global food system is the primary driver of biodiversity loss<sup>39</sup>, with food production systems being a significant threat, as the expansion of soy, cattle and other commodities is taking place through deforestation and the loss of native forests.

Special attention to the Amazon River Basin<sup>40</sup> is required, since it expands beyond the forest and, according to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights<sup>41</sup>, encompasses an estimated population of 34 million (as of 2019) mostly concentrated in urban areas along the Amazon River and its main tributaries. Among those, a considerable part belongs to some 350 indigenous populations, including those in voluntary isolation or having minimal contact beyond their communities.

We are currently at a pivotal period in time as countries increasingly explore energy transition towards more environmentally friendly energy sources. While there are many alternatives that could help us towards a cleaner and healthier planet, the risks associated with these alternative

<sup>37</sup> IRP (2018). *The Weight of Cities: Resource Requirements of Future Urbanization*.

<sup>38</sup> UNEP, press release (2021). *Our global food system is the primary driver of biodiversity loss*.

<sup>39</sup> Agriculture alone has been identified as a threat to 24,000 of the 28,000 (86%) species at risk of extinction.

<sup>40</sup> The Amazon River Basin is the world's biggest tropical rainforest and river system, covering an area of nearly 7 million km<sup>2</sup>, spanning nine countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela.

<sup>41</sup> IACHR (2019), *Situation of human rights of the indigenous and tribal peoples of the Pan-Amazon region*.

and at times innovative sources, including safety, need also be more fully explored and analyzed. More investment is needed in the infrastructure behind these prospects, to address the risks and potential spin-off impacts, as well as to the implications for neighboring communities.<sup>42</sup>

## Climate change

One major change of context, with unquestionable impact on the dynamics of disaster risk reduction and risk management, is the accelerated direct effects of climate change in the region. While the climate crisis is undoubtedly a global issue, low and middle-income countries having least contributed to this crisis are often the most vulnerable and exposed to the most severe impacts.

While only contributing 8% of global GHG emissions according to the World Bank, Latin America and the Caribbean is highly exposed to the negative effects of climate change and is already feeling severe adverse effects of the climate emergency. This too is exacerbated by the aforementioned structural conditions of socio-economic inequality, poverty, population growth and concentrated urban population densities, lack of zoning controls, deforestation, biodiversity loss, land degradation and high dependence of national and local economies on natural resources for commodity production.

Rainfall pattern alterations are evident, producing either droughts or floods, extreme temperatures leading to heat waves and cold fronts, wildfires, melting glaciers and sea level rise, among others. Such impacts have become increasingly frequent and intense, affecting millions of people in all subregions and sectors of Latin America and the Caribbean. Prolonged droughts affect countries heavily dependent on hydropower for energy production and they can also be a major factor affecting agricultural products thus influencing the region's food security<sup>43</sup>.

More than 27% of the population in the region live in coastal areas, with an estimated 6–8% living in areas that are at high or very high risk of being affected by coastal hazards, such as contaminated freshwater aquifers, eroded shorelines, inundated low-lying areas, and storm surges. This threat, enhanced by the increasing occurrence of extreme events, is especially important in the case of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

## El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)<sup>44</sup>, changes in temperatures and intensification of the Atlantic hurricane season

El Niño and La Niña events occur every 2 to 7 years, typically lasting for 9 to 12 months and having widespread impacts on weather around the world. In the LAC region, El Niño is often associated with wetter than normal conditions along the Gulf Coast of the United States, the west coast of tropical South America (Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) and from southern Brazil to central Argentina.

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<sup>42</sup> As per interview with Konstantinos Pappas, Assistant Director for Research of the Texas A&M Energy Institute.

<sup>43</sup> ECLAC (2022). *A decade of action for a change of era*.

<sup>44</sup> According to the *World Meteorological Organization (WMO)* "El Niño and La Niña events are caused by naturally occurring climate variability. They disrupt the normal patterns of tropical rainfall and atmospheric circulation and are the opposite phases of air-sea interactions collectively referred to as El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO)".

La Niña usually leads to increased rainfall in Northeastern Brazil, Colombia and other northern parts of South America, and it is associated with less rainfall in Uruguay and parts of Argentina. It also causes drier than normal conditions along coastal Ecuador and Northwestern Peru. However, changing patterns of La Niña are affecting the Atlantic hurricane seasons, evidencing climate change effects: for instance, in 2021 there were 21 named storms, versus an average of 14 between 1991 and 2020. In addition to this, stronger and deadlier hurricanes<sup>45</sup> have hit both Central America and the Caribbean in the last few years, having devastating effects. According to NASA, the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season had 30 named storms, marking the fifth year in a row with above-average hurricane activity<sup>46</sup>.

According to the World Meteorological Association (WMO)<sup>47</sup>, despite being cooler than recent years due to the influence of a moderate La Niña, temperature continued to rise in the region in 2021, where the average temperature relative to the 1981-2010 baseline was 0.5°C warmer in Mexico, 0.35°C warmer in Central America and 0.36 °C warmer in South America. The report also states that rainfall was below normal across many areas in the region, with anomalies of between 20-60% below normal over regions of Chile, and -30 to -50% of normal over the southwestern Andes of Peru, above normal precipitation was recorded in central Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, the western side of Colombia, central Amazonia, French Guyana, Suriname and Guyana.

### **The Caribbean: Sea levels rising and a chronic state of emergency**

The most impacted subregion, where such challenges have become a matter of sheer survival, is the Caribbean. Climate change threatens to undo decades of progress in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which are heavily exposed and highly vulnerable to the changes taking place. The implications of climate-related hazards for the sustainability of the Caribbean are becoming increasingly clear. Participants in the MTR SF process report the rapid intensification of impacts related to climate change, which -in the most extreme cases- implies entire islands being evacuated in the event of a hurricane and that countries are almost in a constant state of preparedness, response and recovery.

### **Cultural and Technological Issues**

LAC has been instrumental in conceptual shifts in DRR. While there is still much room for improvement, behavioral changes are noted in the region. Advocacy campaigns, public-private partnerships, DRR in the academic curricula, scientific and technological advances and greater appropriation from various sectors as well as civil society and non-governmental partners are driving this change. With the VIII Regional Platform for DRR in 2023 focusing on science and technology, the region is well positioned to further dialogue and ensure that such advances are able to permeate at all levels.

While information technology and hand-held mobile devices are enabling the dissemination of information, access to these tools has not been evenly distributed. Furthermore, Governments are largely dependent upon private corporations to ensure business continuity. This too presents challenges in terms of financial dependence but also puts restraints on corporate

<sup>45</sup> Hurricanes Ida (2021), Iota (2020), Eta (2020) and Maria (2017) -to name a few- have been some of the more devastating hurricanes of the past years.

<sup>46</sup> [NASA Global Climate Change, 2020 Hurricane season.](#)

<sup>47</sup> WMO (2022). [State of the Climate in Latin America & the Caribbean 2021.](#)

social responsibility. According to a representative of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) office for Central America, this is especially relevant in the context of emergencies, since telecommunications are a key element to achieve an adequate response in the event of an emergency or disaster. Therefore, designing national emergency telecommunications strategies ensures that adequate mechanisms are in place to maintain communications before, during and after a disaster event.

Containing thousands of years of cultural expression and 147 World Heritage sites<sup>48</sup>, it is imperative that efforts aim to protect and conserve the cultural and natural wealth of the region which transcends monetary valuation.

Similarly, LAC is also a region highly dependent upon fossil fuels and mineral extraction, hence advancing towards alternative technologies and a climate and disaster risk informed development will require solutions that lessen this reliance and look towards innovative solutions within the region and beyond. Science and technology are particularly well positioned to support this, if accompanied by the necessary behavioral changes, motivated and incentivized by both from public as well as private and non-governmental sectors. If dependency on external sources is not reigned in, the region will continue to feel the effects of external market fluctuations but also possible reductions in financing as a whole.

### Limited access to information technologies

Restrictions to mobility in an effort to control the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus affected all human activities and disrupted everyday lives. Information technologies became essential in trying to maintain productivity in academic and working environments. However, as noted by UNDP (2021), pre-existing difficulties in access to technological tools at home, as well as disparities in learning support from parents due to disparities in parental educational levels, strongly influenced children's ability to shift to remote learning<sup>49</sup>. According to a report from October 2021 based on findings of a survey carried out by the University Network of Latin America and the Caribbean for Disaster Risk Reduction (REDULAC/RRD) and the Latin American Institute for Peace and Citizenship (ILAPyC)<sup>50</sup>, 3 out of 5 elementary school students in the LAC region missed the whole school year as a result of not having access to remote and distance education.

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<sup>48</sup> [UNESCO World Heritage Convention](#)

<sup>49</sup> [Regional Human Development Report 2021. Trapped: High Inequality and Low Growth in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

<sup>50</sup> Survey conducted in October 2021 by REDULAC/RRD and ILAPyC in which a total of 48 entities or organizations from 18 countries participated (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Saint Lucia)

### The COVID-19 pandemic as a catalyst for social crisis

The multi-faceted crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic deepened already existing gaps, whereby inequality, poor access to water and sanitation, as well as overcrowding and lack of access to health services and social security, became a concern for the transmission of this disease, a situation that not surprisingly impacted most heavily on those already marginalized (low income populations, women and girls, indigenous and rural populations, older persons, afro-descendant and ethnic minority populations, migrants, informal laborers, LGBTQI+ populations and persons with disabilities, among others), thus exacerbating inequalities.

According to *ECLAC's Social Challenges in Times of COVID-19*, the crisis generated by the pandemic could push an additional 15.9 million people in the region into extreme poverty, taking total poverty to around 214 million; the majority being women, girls, and LGBTQI+ people, especially from at-risk and marginalized groups.

This impact has taken different forms: heavy toll on household income due to loss of employment, women disproportionately losing their source of income and having to care for family members, children missing school due to not having access to technological and academic tools at home, increasing incidence of gender-based violence, and indigenous people and rural communities not having access to medical care or vaccines.

And even though many countries in the region are managing to get their economies slowly back on track due to COVID-19 vaccination programmes, unequal vaccine access has also hampered such efforts. This particularly affects marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities, rural and indigenous communities, who already experience long-standing disadvantages in receiving adequate health coverage.

## CHANGES IN CONTEXT FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Perhaps one of the most notable changes since the adoption of the Sendai Framework in 2015 has been the adoption and increased institutionalization of globally agreed terminology and indicators. No less noteworthy, the Sendai Framework -as opposed to its predecessor- reflects a process of consultation, negotiation and agreement; setting the stage for globally defined and agreed terms, concepts and variables for measurement, thus broadening the scope of dialogue to a new variety of actors with differing priorities and worldviews. It also paved the way for analytical questioning, critical thought and new ways of working; where governance is prized as a shared responsibility, investment and knowledge as building blocks.

With this in mind, there are three major evolving conditions that have become new benchmarks for DRR and DRM in Latin America and the Caribbean and will strongly influence the second term of the implementation of the Sendai Framework in the coming years: (i) ensuring that the gains made in DRR in the region are sustained, (ii) the need for expediting more meaningful articulation between climate change and DRR, and (iii) embracing systemic risk as a driver for coordinated action.

### DRR achievements in the region

Since the commencement of the Sendai Framework's implementation in the region, there have been important achievements: (i) specific regulations backed by legislation on DRR, increasingly seen as a driver of positive change towards greater vertical articulation between the

national and local (*i.e.*, territorial) levels; (ii) improvements in infrastructure, land-use planning and natural resources management; and (iii) enhanced overall planning *ex-ante*. Not surprisingly, a higher level of progress within the region is reflected in those countries having adopted national DRR strategies, action plans, legislation and multisectoral DRR platforms.

When asked to identify ways in which actions and approaches adopted in implementing the Sendai Framework have resulted in a reduction in disaster risk, a significant proportion of both State and non-State actors note advances in policy and planning, both in terms of stand-alone DRR as well as sector specific policy implications, national development and even fiscal planning instruments. Other areas of advancement that were mentioned included *ex-post* planning for recovery and building back better.

A clear success in several countries is the creation of National Disaster Risk Management Systems as mechanisms for more effectively penetrating the territorial level, fostering overall coordination among different sectors, public and private partners, civil society organizations and the general population. Similarly, advances in national information systems, albeit with challenges still to be overcome such as linkages with cadastral and national multisectoral registries. Another good example from the region is the level of organization and active engagement of persons with disabilities, both at local and national levels as well as in regional and global DRR platforms. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) have become increasingly key advocates<sup>51</sup>; albeit recognizing that more needs to be done in terms of adhering to the adage of “nothing about us, without us” to ensure that expertise in this regard is more systematically accounted for, and that data on persons with disabilities is prioritized along with ensuring accessibility in all its forms.

The Escazu Agreement is an exciting catalyst for change with regards to the environment, climate change mitigation, disaster risk management, access to information and defense of human rights. Also, the four DRR inter-governmental agencies present in the region have binding DRR and DRM strategies<sup>52</sup> in place that establish a common vision for their member States and also provide action plans that go beyond national borders, bringing solid ground and specificity to their respective member countries.

The *Making Cities Resilient 2030 Initiative*<sup>53</sup> so far incorporated 656<sup>54</sup> cities and local governments in the region, providing them with the tools to assess their own advancements as

<sup>51</sup> From consultations carried out with representatives of the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Disability-Inclusive DRR (Red GIRDD LAC), some significant changes are noted since 2015 with regards to persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities being more actively engaged in DRR in the region, being more organized and also in part through greater participation in sessions of the Regional Platform for DRR since the adoption of Sendai, both in terms of assistance as well as for thematic interventions within panels. On the other hand, however, it was also noted that much remains to be done for ensuring their voices are heard and truly reflected in policy and related political processes.

<sup>52</sup> These agencies and committees are: the Caribbean Community’s Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA/CARICOM), the Andean Community of Nations’ Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE/CAN, for its acronym in Spanish), the Central American Integration System’s Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC/SICA for its acronym in Spanish) and the Southern Common Market’s Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (RMAGIR/MERCOSUR for its acronym in Spanish).

<sup>53</sup> MCR2030 is co-created by Core Partners, including C40 Cities; ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); Resilient Cities Network (R-Cities); United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG); United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT); United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); the World Bank Group; World Council on City Data (WCCD), with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) acting as



well as access to knowledge, monitoring and reporting tools, and a clear 3-step roadmap to urban resilience.

Other important advances include specific funds for disaster risk management, the development of atlas and risk maps at the territorial level, the implementation of national information systems and Early Warning Systems, the incipient inclusion of differential approaches<sup>55</sup> and gender responsive DRR, the creation of financial and investment mechanisms that enable DRR budget allocations, as well as the publication of different national and subregional protocols for recovery and building back better. Although these achievements are not equal throughout the region, they do become new benchmarks that spearhead progress and change towards 2030 and beyond.

### Need for greater climate change and DRR articulation

Disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation are vital strategies for achieving the SDGs. These strategies, however, have been largely pursued in siloes and this is preventing both agendas to have stronger impacts<sup>56</sup>. Policy coherence is essential, and the limited ties between disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation in policymaking is worrisome, while also impeding opportunities for financing. This leads to funds being invested dispersedly, institutions working on each issue without the corresponding coordination on common aspects, generating duplication of work and separation of efforts that reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of the designed policies and programmes.

As the *UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies* rightfully identifies, resilience is the common thread that links the three UN pillars of development, human rights, and peace and security. It is also reflected in important global, regional and national policy agendas and frameworks and therefore could serve as the binding link between the DRR and climate change agendas and strategies.

### Systemic risk management as a driver for coordinated actions

The COVID-19 pandemic has startlingly evidenced how pre-existing factors influence the impact of a disaster. The health crisis caused by the pandemic rapidly evolved into a social and economic crisis that affected all sectors of societies worldwide. In the aforementioned regional context of poverty and socio-economic inequality, LAC has been the region<sup>57</sup> hit the hardest and recovery has been difficult. Moreover, the impacts have not been the same for all people and have led to the erosion of hard-fought gains in different areas such as health, security, economy and social protection, especially for women and girls<sup>58</sup>.

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the Secretariat. It was launched on 28 October 2020 for a 10-year operation starting from 1 January 2021 to the end of 2030.

<sup>54</sup> As of 6 October 2022 according to UNDRR ROAMC.

<sup>55</sup> As previously mentioned, greater inclusion of persons with disabilities is considered to be facilitating positive change in the region.

<sup>56</sup> UNDRR (2020). *Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework*.

<sup>57</sup> Despite comprising only 8.4% of the global population, Latin America and the Caribbean has been the world's hardest-hit region, with 18.5% of all global COVID-19 cases and 30.3% of all deaths.

<sup>58</sup> UNDRR and UN Women (2021). *Towards Gender Equality and Women's Leadership for Resilience to Disaster Risks in Latin America and the Caribbean*.

The pandemic has demonstrated that no country in the world was prepared for this kind of challenge, since all lacked the inter-institutional and multisectoral arrangements to tackle such a complex crisis. In addition to the negative effects derived from the different measures taken to contain the spreading of the disease, uneven access to vaccines and insufficient funds to obtain them, only deepened inequalities between regions and between poorer and wealthier countries. According to UNDRR (2022), many countries felt the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic months before ever registering a single case of the disease<sup>59</sup>, demonstrating the cascading effects generated by this crisis.

The human and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are unprecedented. According to World Health Organization (WHO) figures, by November 2020 it had caused more than 18 times more deaths than all the epidemics that took place in Latin America and the Caribbean between 1970 and 2019. Furthermore, these deaths account for 63% of all those caused by disasters in the region in the same period. For the first time since records began, all the countries of the region have seen their economies contract at the same time, destroying jobs and driving up poverty and inequality. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the cracks in the existing development pattern, and revealed its limitations, around the world, but particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>60</sup>

Disasters know no boundaries. Therefore, it is crucial to work towards true horizontal articulation at regional, national and local levels, including all branches of government and promoting DRR beyond national disaster management and civil protection authorities -or equivalent agencies-. Performance monitoring and evaluation metrics are essential to identify and properly address implementation gaps and can successfully support integration across sectors.

## **THE ROAD TOWARDS 2030 AND BEYOND: RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED ACTIONS**

As seen in this report, significant achievements have been made in disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean since the adoption of the Sendai Framework in 2015. However, there is still much to be done to achieve the expected outcome and goal of the Sendai Framework by 2030 with a view to leaving no one behind, especially after more than two years since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which set the region and the whole world back in several aspects.

After assessing the Sendai Framework's implementation in the region to date, identifying key achievements and challenges, it is evident that DRR/DRM must be taken out of the exclusive realm of technical and accrued expertise into a democracy of multisectoral and multidimensional governance and forward-looking humanity and ecosystems or networks approach. Both the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate emergency point to a new reality and have bluntly evidenced how risk aggravates and is aggravated by multiple socioeconomic factors such as poverty, social and economic inequality, gender inequality, urbanization, political turmoil and instability as well as environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.

<sup>59</sup> *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022 (GAR2022)*.

<sup>60</sup> ECLAC & UNDRR (2021). *The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic - an opportunity for a systemic approach to disaster risk for the Caribbean*

Institutionalizing and internalizing this “emerging” reality requires a paradigm shift, a structural change away from isolating risks and designing the corresponding response. The complex nature of climate change and COVID-19 undoubtedly call for deconstructing the traditional ways of understanding disaster risk and how public health, climate change and DRR agendas are defined and implemented at all levels.

Intersectionality is a term ascribed to movements associated with gender equality and celebrating and embracing the diversity of women. Here, however, we suggest applying this concept to these interconnected global agendas in a coherence approach based on intersectionality, integrity, harmony, consensus-building and thus bringing into play the systemic nature of risk but also the interconnected and systemic nature of moving forward in a changing agenda increasingly more urgent and alarming. Building upon this integrated approach, the recommendations contained herein are cross-cutting through all seven targets of the SFDRR and presented in five major proposed groupings: (i), Essential Actions, (ii) Technical Actions, (iii) Legal, Political and Institutional Actions, (iv) Cultural and Social Actions, and (v) Financing and Investing Actions.

## **Essential Actions**

As noted above, Latin America and the Caribbean is an extremely unequal region. With 32.4% of the population of the region living in poverty<sup>61</sup>, uneven access to basic needs such as food and nutrition, safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, health and education services or affordable and safe housing is already leaving many people behind. In addition to this, political strife and social conflict in several countries is adding severe strains to an already difficult situation. All these issues are interconnected and feed on each other, calling for a comprehensive approach as well as a deep understanding that risk is systemic and has complex, cascading and far-reaching effects. As we will see in the section on recommendations here below, this calls for fostering a system of accountability towards a human-rights based approach as called for in the Sendai Framework and other internally agreed conventions and commitments.

The LAC region has made progress in terms of advancing a multi-sectoral approach to DRR/DRM. This trend needs to continue and be complemented with DRR financing strategies that align DRR efforts with sustainable development and climate action. Current DRR financing mechanisms focused on retention and transference instruments should be complemented with efforts to risk-inform all public and private investments to contribute to prevention and resilience-building. Access to DRR financing for local governments should be prioritized.

Similarly, it is essential to develop and expand disaster risk communications strategies aimed at strengthening scientific, social, economic and political cooperation in order to move towards systemic risk governance. Special action is needed from regional and national DRR/DRM agencies towards strengthening the dissemination of the Sendai Framework at the institutional level and in civil society.

Furthermore, promoting the development of technical structures and capacities for interdisciplinary, integrated and multi-sectoral assessment, planning and decision-making needed to understand and address systemic risks is of the utmost importance. This is a major

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<sup>61</sup> According to ECLAC (2022), this percentage represents approximately 202 million people. Of those, 87 million people -13.8% of the population- were living in extreme poverty.

challenge, one that requires the support of the different multilateral agencies and offices, especially those related with climate change and disaster risk reduction. Another key action is designing DRR/DRM strategies to be integrated into development planning and processes, looking beyond the aspects of emergency response.

Youth have an essential stake in accelerating implementation of the Sendai Framework and in boosting this necessary paradigm shift. They are undoubtedly key drivers for ensuring an agenda of coherence with other global agreements. In a consultation carried out by the Sendai Stakeholders Children and Youth Group (SSCYG), also known as MGCY-DRR Constituency, with children and youth of Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>62</sup> in May 2022 in the lead up to the GP2022, the topics of most concern included investment and decentralization of resources, risk-informed decision making and policy making, engagement of young people and children, and better strategies for prevention.

Finally, it is imperative to promote greater involvement of the business and industry sectors (private and public) in development planning and understanding of systemic risk, promoting public-private coordination initiatives for the development of resilience and the establishment of regulations that require them to have risk management and business continuity plans.

## Technical Actions

Research and the generation of knowledge should be continuously promoted with the purpose of impact forecasting and warning, while the use of information should serve for the modeling of future risk and the adoption of informed decisions. International cooperation should be subject to the needs as defined by the countries, oriented to the transfer of information and the promotion of innovative practices. Also, national and regional agendas or strategies that prioritize the areas of knowledge according to the characteristics, level of progress and needs of each country should be promoted.

Strengthening the articulation and interoperability between information systems and communications strategies with a differential approach (ethnicity, gender, for persons with disabilities, for national, subnational or local managers, among others) is strongly encouraged, as well as more articulated national monitoring and reporting to the global agendas -particularly SDGs- is recommended.

It is essential to improve land occupation and land use conditions, considering existing and future hazards in the territory, risk conditions, their particularities and how they are interrelated. Similarly, urbanization monitoring and control is key to preventing the expansion of communities' vulnerability.

In order to build resilience at the local level, it is necessary to promote local initiatives and capacities, the adoption and implementation of risk reduction agendas at the local level, the exchange of good practices, preparedness and training addressed jointly by government entities and local communities. It is also recommended to promote the development of green and blue infrastructures, particularly in the fringes of towns and cities, to improve resilience to adverse events of hydrometeorological origin, improve the ecological functionality of these ecosystems

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<sup>62</sup> Involving 2,855 children and young people (756 children aged between 8-15 years old, 599 young people between 15 - 20 years old, and 1,520 young people between 20-25 years old) from Mexico, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Nicaragua, Argentina, Paraguay, Panama, Uruguay, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Haiti, Dominica and British Islands.

by favoring natural processes and facilitating community contact with a diverse natural environment.

Truly embracing the broadened scope of hazards as called for by the Sendai Framework has been a notable challenge in breaking the sectorial divide in the region's DRR agenda. Building on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and the current climate emergency, dealing with biological hazards has gained increasing recognition as part of overall disaster risk management mandates. While not a new consideration when considering other epidemics and diseases that have plagued the region over time, COVID-19 served as a wakeup call for renewed urgency. In this regard, greater investment and focus is needed on understanding the underlying factors of existing and emerging health issues, as both a direct result of unsustainable lifestyles but also as a direct and a cascading effect of disaster events and of the ensuing emergency response and recovery actions.

Efforts must be made to consciously integrate biological hazards into all risk assessment tools and methodologies at national and sub-national levels, including their direct and indirect effects and how they can increase the vulnerability of people, livelihoods and systems. Recommendations in this regard include ensuring that health-related risks are identified and adequately considered in the development of national disaster risk assessments and strategies; linking epidemiological surveillance systems and systems for early detection and identification of disease outbreaks to national DRR strategies as well as to MHEWS.

Finally, it is necessary to deepen the decentralization of technical and financial capacities that provide the necessary institutional strengths at the subnational or local level for disaster risk management and reduction. In order to achieve this, the 'democratization' of access to information made possible through the internet and mobile devices -with technology at the hands of all- is a bridge to new possibilities and innovation. Special attention should be placed on promoting the development of methodologies for the generation of statistical data that can ensure the systematic collection of sex, age and disability disaggregated data.

### **Legal, Political and Institutional Actions**

Moving from emergency response to disaster risk reduction and risk management is a persisting and top priority. To achieve this, coordinated and articulated collective action is needed, aiming to implement DRR/DRM policies, strategies and plans -both at the national and local levels- that enable the creation and/or expansion of national DRM systems. While advancing, the outdated notion that all issues linked with disaster risk reduction and risk management must be entirely run by emergency and response agencies, predominantly State-led, is still prevalent in some countries. This often hinders the development of strategies, mechanisms and regulations that promote the articulation of DRR with environmental, planning, climate and human rights issues, among others. For instance, the need for behavioral changes in the region along with efforts to reduce dependency on unsustainable mining and over dependence on fossil fuels and non-renewable natural resources, towards alternative solutions to food systems, transportation and energy.

While perhaps not unique to Latin America and the Caribbean, disaster risk governance and the political will to strengthen risk-informed development are foundational for progressing in the implementation of the Sendai Framework. According to UN member States in the region in consultations carried out in 2021 prior to the VII Regional Platform for DRR, DRR is frequently overlooked in development plans and only brought to the forefront when a disaster occurs. And while progress is noted in the development of national and local DRR strategies, actions are

needed to ensure implementation and enforcement of these policy instruments, especially through the required institutional arrangements.

Governments should look towards developing or strengthening strategies, instruments and regulations that promote the articulation of key issues such as environment and natural resource management, land-use planning, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and human rights together with disaster risk reduction; issues all too often treated in isolation within policy making. This would enable avoiding duplication of efforts at the subnational and local levels. Furthermore, it is necessary to adjust plans, policies and legislation to continue enhancing a prospective approach to risk, since the late approval of national DRM laws and the delayed implementation of National DRR/DRM strategies is a challenge yet to be overcome.

“Notwithstanding the progress made so far, we continue to witness challenges in multi-stakeholder collaboration and local involvement in decision making, where the voices of those most affected are included in disaster response planning and response actions, where risk is informed from the local level. The space for interactions and exchanges across stakeholders has been shrinking in the past few years, and representation of community perspectives in policy making processes is still weak.”

*Excerpt from the Statement by GNDR in representation of civil society at the RP21.*

To be most effective, disaster risk governance must be institutionalized in all sectors and backed by the highest level of authority, together with a decentralization of governance and stakeholder empowerment through the exchange of experiences involving society as a whole and diverse decision-makers. This means regulating inclusion and meaningful participation in national DRR/DRM strategies and in accordance with legislation that embraces global commitments on human rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, among others. It is also necessary to strengthen the organizational scheme of national DRR platforms, roundtables or systems, as mechanisms for ensuring articulation among governmental and non-governmental actors.

Regarding transparency and accountability, it is necessary to develop or enhance actions and mechanisms that facilitate access to information as well as deepening the synergies between governments, civil society and the general population, strengthening existing community spaces for participation and clarifying the role of dialogue mechanisms between public actors and society.

## Cultural and Social Actions

*"As a Network of Civil Society Organizations, we are committed citizens in permanent search of dialogue. In some way we are a bridge between permanent conversations with the authorities and the communities, through the work we do in the territory. We believe that our role is an important one, but we are humble enough to recognize that we cannot do it alone. We are stronger if we are together (our slogan) and what we want to be is in fraternal union and continuous learning".*

*Graciela Mercedes Salaberry Vacani, President of the Global Board and Regional Representative for South America, Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR).*

In relation to the role of civil society in mainstreaming DRR/DRM, it is essential to generate and/or strengthen the organizational, technical and financial conditions that guarantee the active participation of civil society organizations, organizations of people with disabilities, mechanisms for the advancement of women, environmental organizations, organizations of older persons, organizations that defend the rights of children and youth, organizations of indigenous and Afro-descendant populations and rural communities, among others. For instance, the creation of an online Sendai implementation monitoring system accountability functionality, either linked to the official national reporting or stand-alone and to be used by civil society at the local level was recommended as part of the regional consultation process with civil society organizations<sup>63</sup>. This could serve as an independent evaluating mechanism for tracking progress on the Framework's implementation at the local, national and regional levels. Such a system or functionality could be complementary to official national monitoring and reporting with clear articulation between the two.

Finally, it is key to develop and strengthen risk communications strategies aimed at reinforcing scientific, social and political cooperation. To achieve this, academia -from elementary schools to universities- should be deeply involved in raising awareness and generating DRR/DRM knowledge, through including DRR in academic curricula at all levels.

### **Actions on Financing and Investing**

The linkages between climate change and DRR as well as fiscal instruments and incentives are highlighted as areas where substantial support is recommended. As the region and the world rightly shifts towards more ecosystems-based alternatives for energy, transportation and communications, it is imperative to undertake comprehensive analyses on the increasing use of such technologies, both in terms of the opportunities they present but also to ensure appropriate measures to mitigate potential emerging risks.

The region should actively seek ways to capitalize upon existing and emerging opportunities at the global and regional level, including funding opportunities for combatting climate change, whereby DRR should be seen as an integral part of the strategies for dealing with the climate emergency. As noted by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on the occasion of the 2022 International Day for DRR: "We must invest equally in adaptation and resilience". In terms of resilient investments, efforts should be made to review codes and standards, zoning and urban development planning; accompanied by the creation of incentives for private sector companies to support research and development in this area. Urban regeneration and gentrification interventions should factor in overall quality of life, safety and security, as well as reducing the dependency on single occupancy modes of motorized transportation and thus the excessive need for fossil fuels. Nature-based solutions should be explored, as should local, indigenous and traditional solutions, with consideration to the current practices of animal husbandry, alternative agro-industrial and family farming practices, along with the entire food cycle from production to consumption.

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<sup>63</sup> This consultation was carried out by the Global Network of Civil society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) in the leadup to the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean in 2021 (RP21) involving representatives from 63 civil society organizations from 22 countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, USA and Venezuela.

Such initiatives are vital for the future of both urban and rural settlements and a change in paradigm is not only warranted but increasingly urgent. Climate change is impacting risk at the territorial level and this needs to be coupled with foresight, along with science and technology for sound decision-making on zoning, land use regulations, building norms, industry and commerce.

Bearing in mind that the Sendai Framework calls on States as the lead party responsible for DRR -but that this responsibility is shared-, this MTR SF should serve as a wakeup call to countries to comply with their commitments on human rights but also ensure that all actors are given the spaces needed to actively engage. It is crucial to increase the evidence base for enhancing resource allocation for DRR on the part of States, and to improve risk-sensitive investments supported by cost-benefit analyses that show the importance and advantages of investing in reduction and the savings it means when dealing with disasters or emergencies.

In regard to the incentives for investing in the understanding of disaster risk, there is a need to strengthen measures to ensure accountability for the construction of risk and tools that promote its deconstruction. Such mechanisms need to move beyond specific sectors and State actors, leveraging public - private partnerships in recognition that all risk is, by nature, systemic. Also, true costing of major infrastructure projects and service provision should become increasingly considered within State regulations that cover the social, economic and environmental elements of such investments throughout the entire lifecycle of such endeavors.

There is a strong need to widen the scope of banking and insurance products, through public and private disaster risk insurance schemes as well as innovative products and services that meet the needs of vulnerable populations such as women, young people, older persons, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, persons with disabilities, migrants and displaced persons, as well as people employed informally. For instance, digital wallets have become essential tools for people who, for whatever reason, don't qualify for conventional banking and insurance policies and have the potential of becoming essential partners in the development of new banking and insurance products, including microfinancing, community schemes and coops.

## Conclusions

As part of the MTR SF, rather than put forward answers, this report seeks to move the focus and target some important albeit perhaps uncomfortable questions. Based on a review of some of the available literature and a number of meetings, surveys and interviews; it delves into some interesting advances and difficulties as well as conceptual shifts and recommendations, but in essence seeks to steer the focus of our investigations as we move forward.

Although there are notable tendencies, trends, challenges and opportunities common throughout the region, this report finalizes by build upon the recommendation made by Guatemala in its national voluntary review regarding the importance of **nationally defined perspectives, as a process for immersion in current understanding on comprehensive risk management, linked to new challenges and each country's own approach to achieving the Sendai Framework expected outcome and goal.** Such a perspective should be focused on the national development policy, strategy and outlook as the technical instruments to guide public administration and that may foster policy at the highest level with strategic action towards sustainable and resilient development.

In addition to the upcoming political processes to be held in New York in May, the 2023 Regional Platform for DRR will be pivotal in its potential to act as a driver on the road towards



2030. The focus on science and technology of the RP23 is appropriate for seizing upon this opportune moment in time to ensure that science and technology is at the heart of foresight and inclusion.

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