

Building resilient economies: the leading disaster risk experts of the Americas and Caribbean will gather on the UN's regional platform

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In less than two months' time will take place the **VII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean (RP21)**, the region's most important disaster risk reduction event. It is anticipated that approximately 3000 persons will gather for this meeting, which will be held virtually for the first time with the aim of building more resilient economies in the region.

From November 1 to 4, 2021, discussions will be held involving delegations from all the region's countries, governments, members of civil society, and public and private sectors for the purpose of strengthening the region's resilience at local, national and regional levels and taking advantage of tools that will allow us to adapt more flexibly to the serious climate and human challenges that will face us in the future.

The most recent report by the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** was definitive in stating that climate change is already affecting the entire planet and is becoming more intense. Increased warming will continue to exacerbate the effects of hydrological cycles, precipitation rates, coastal and sea-level areas, thawing of

permafrost, and acidification of the oceans, among others. In brief, these will result in a larger number of extreme events and a more frequent occurrence of disasters.

“The greatest share of human costs associated with disasters occurs in middle- and low-income countries, where extreme weather events subject millions of persons to poverty and force their displacement, frequently for long periods of time,” said **Mami Mizutori**, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.

In 2020 alone, the world saw 30 million people displaced by extreme climatic events, exponentially increasing migration in the most vulnerable areas, which include Central America in the case of our region.

Prior to the pandemic, the region of the Americas and the Caribbean was already reporting that 53% of its economic losses in the last 20 years were related to climate-linked disasters.

Reducing disaster risks has never been as relevant as it is now.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that we are unprepared for multi-sectoral and systemic risk events, that usually has a bigger impact on the most vulnerable populations.

By the end of 2020, for instance, the pandemic pushed 22 million Latin Americans into poverty, increasing the poverty rates in the region to 33.75% of the total population. In addition, 120 million school-age boys and girls either lost or are at risk of losing a complete school year, causing many of them to abandon their studies and in this way worsening the rates of inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean. These cascading effects and impacts on social, economic, human and natural systems are clear examples of the systemic nature of risk in our region.

The **VII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean** “is taking place at a critical moment in which the world is facing extreme, climate-change-related events that amplify the effect of floods, droughts and heatwaves that threaten lives and economies and ultimately constrain our ability to achieve economic development. The call to action is now,” affirms **Andrew Holness**, president of the host country of Jamaica, whose aim in this platform is to raise consciousness concerning the increase in the economic and human cost of disasters in the small island Developing States.

The **RP21** will focus on identifying how governments, civil society leaders, NGOs, technical and scientific institutions, the private sector and the media can work together to reduce disaster risk in the region and to achieve the targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030).

Along with high-level sessions with leaders and regional and global leaders on this subject, parallel sessions will be organized that highlight challenges and identify practical recommendations. There will be also learning workshops and brainstorming sessions to emphasize the most innovative ideas being successfully implemented

throughout the continent. The platform will as well feature training areas for journalists focused on subjects linked to disaster risk reduction.

The event is organized by the Government of Jamaica, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).