



CONSULTATION TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL  
COOPERATION ON HUMAN MOBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF  
DISASTERS AND THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE  
IN THE CARIBBEAN

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 6-7 June 2019

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## INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean is comprised of countries and territories, many of which are Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and are vulnerable to a variety of natural hazards: hurricanes, floods, volcanic and seismic activity, droughts and bush fires. Many of these countries and territories have large percentages of their population centers and economic activities in low-lying coastal areas, facing specific risks linked to the adverse effects of climate change. In the Caribbean, like elsewhere, the adverse effects of climate change are projected to affect the frequency and intensity of certain natural hazards and extreme weather events such as hurricanes and heavy rainfalls. Rising global temperatures are also likely to increase drought risk and water scarcity in the Caribbean, according to the latest report issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

In the Caribbean, a complex and multi-causal relationship exists between these hazards and political, demographic, environmental and social factors and human mobility<sup>1</sup>, both

<sup>1</sup> As per the UNFCCC Cancun Adaptation Framework, human mobility includes migration, displacement and planned relocation. See also Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility. Human mobility in the context of climate change: Recommendations to COP 20. <https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/pbn/docs/Human-Mobility-in-the-context-of-Climate-Change.pdf>

### The overall objectives of the consultation were to:

1. Deepen knowledge and understanding of displacement trends and overall human mobility dynamics in the region in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change among regional and national stakeholders from various departments, including migration officers, disaster risk reduction and environment experts and consular affairs staff;
2. Identify policy, normative and operational challenges and gaps related to disasters and displacement in the Caribbean;
3. Develop concrete, practical policy and programmatic guidance to enhance the region's overall preparedness and response capacity to these challenges under the work of the Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC).

internally and across borders. For example, sudden-onset disasters linked to natural hazards, particularly frequent and intense storms (and the earthquake in Haiti) have resulted in over six-and-a-half million reported incidents of displacement (mostly internal) over the past ten years (2008-2017), the majority in Cuba and Haiti. More recently and in the aftermath of the 2017 hurricanes Irma and Maria, many Caribbean countries and territories both experienced both internal displacement and received displaced persons from nearby countries<sup>2</sup>.

To enhance regional cooperation in addressing human mobility in contexts of disasters and climate change, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) organized a two consultation in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 6-7 June 2019. Participants included a range of practitioners from the migration, foreign affairs, climate and environment and disaster risk reduction fields from Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands, along with the embassies of the United States, Switzerland, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, international and regional organizations such as CARICOM IMPACS, the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, CDEMA, OECS,

UNHCR, ECLAC, PDD, the German Development Cooperation, academic institutions and other key actors (see list of participants in annex).

#### Expected outcomes from the regional consultation in the Caribbean included the following:

1. Achieving a better shared understanding of the overall displacement dynamics in the region (drivers, trends, patterns, pathways and characteristics of the population) and the general protection needs of people displaced in the context of disasters and climate change;
2. Discussing good practices, at regional, national and community levels, in establishing mechanisms for disaster preparedness, building resilience, and responding to and managing displacement risks;
3. Identifying priorities to prepare future regional cooperation frameworks, which may include criteria for identifying people displaced across borders due to disasters, admissions, standards of treatment, opportunities for further regional and inter-state collaboration and recommendations on how to address them.

## OPENING CEREMONY, PRESENTATION OF THE CMC AND INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING

Opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Vel Lewis, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Security, Government of Trinidad and Tobago; Mr. Marcelo Pisani, Regional Director, IOM; Prof. Walter Kälin, Envoy of the Chair, PDD; and Mr. Matthew Reynolds, Regional Representative, UNHCR.

Speakers pointed out the vulnerability of Caribbean countries to climate change, compounded by the dependence on the environment and the location of communities. The relationship between human mobility and climate change was discussed in line with current migration dynamics in the region and the need to forecast and respond to future threats.

<sup>2</sup> See: Cantor, D (2019). Cross-border displacement, climate change and disasters: Latin America and the Caribbean. Geneva: UNHCR/PDD.



The importance of conceptualizing disaster displacement and understanding why people leave their areas was also mentioned. Mitigating climate change, reducing exposure and enhancing resilience are key factors to address this issue. Helping people to stay in their communities of origin through climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction; helping them to move out of harm's way through planned relocation, evacuations and leveraging migration as adaptation; and helping persons displaced by disasters and climate change and environmental migrants are all crucial approaches embedded in the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the recommendations of the Task Force on Displacement under the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change, the Sendai Framework, the Nansen Initiative and other key documents.

A brief presentation on the CMC was provided by Mr. Brendan Tarnay, Sub-regional Coordinator for the Caribbean, IOM, and Ms. Amaria Belaskri, Head of the Caribbean Protection Unit, UNHCR. The CMC is a State-led initiative supported by IOM and UNHCR created about three years ago to enable discussions on migration and refugee protection issues in the region. Recognizing that the Caribbean is characterized by mixed human mobility movements, the CMC is enriched by experience sharing and builds on the contents of the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees. The foreseen way forward for the CMC is to build thematic networks from experts and practitioners in Caribbean governments and regional and international organizations.

Thematic meetings were held in 2018 on [emergency preparedness and response](#), [counter trafficking](#) and [migration data collection](#). In 2019, there are plans for a meeting to further formalize the CMC, continue looking at funding

mechanisms and pursuing the expansion of the thematic networks. A series of thematic meetings are also planned for 2019, including the present one on migration, environment and climate change, diaspora, and labour migration. The CMC is developing a regional plan of action which will be presented at the forthcoming CMC meeting. This process is supported by an online [Caribbean Migration Portal](#) developed by IOM to foster exchanges between registered members.

The rationale of the event and the content of the agenda were presented by Mr. Juan Carlos Méndez, Regional Advisor, PDD, and Mr. Pablo Escribano, Regional Thematic Specialist, IOM. The session enabled presenting the objectives and the expected outcomes of the meeting as well as the overall structure of the agenda divided into three different elements: helping people to stay, helping people on the move, and helping people to move. Participants had the opportunity to introduce themselves to the audience.

## DISPLACEMENT TRENDS AND OVERALL HUMAN MOBILITY DYNAMICS IN THE CARIBBEAN IN THE CONTEXT OF DISASTERS AND THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The first thematic session introduced global concepts and Caribbean realities on human mobility dynamics in contexts of disasters and climate change. The session was moderated by Mr. Keith Nichols, Head of the Project Development and Management Unit, Caribbean Community Climate Change Center, who introduced the panel highlighting the vulnerability of Caribbean SIDS to slow and sudden onset processes associated with climate change.

Mr. Pablo Escribano, Regional Thematic Specialist, IOM, presented the internal frameworks applicable to environmental migration and discussed how this issue has been approached at the global level within global climate negotiations, in the international governance of migration and through a disaster risk reduction perspective. These different angles have led to the elaboration of guidance notes and resources that provide working definitions of main concepts, such as human mobility, displacement, planned relocation, environmental migration. While no agreed definition exists at the global level, ensuring a similar understanding of these concepts is important to foster cooperation.

The second intervention by Dr. Natalie Dietrich Jones, Research Fellow, University of the West Indies, looked into mobility patterns in the Caribbean and highlighted the high rates of displacement per population size in SIDS. Despite the importance of these issues, few countries have incorporated

displacement concerns in national policy documents. Understanding long term human mobility derived from disasters and climate change remains challenging and building a resilient region will not prevent future displacement due to the exposure of Caribbean countries. Caribbean SIDS will need to take a more proactive approach, by explicitly including protection references and action points in relevant policy and legislation.



Mr. Omar D. Bello, Coordinator of the Sustainable Development and Disasters Unit, ECLAC, discussed the impact of disasters in the Caribbean from an economic and statistics perspective. Disasters are common events in the Caribbean. Between 1990 and 2017, 408 disasters

associated with natural hazards occurred in the region. The highest incidence occurred in 2004 and 2017. Death counts are relatively low, excluding the massive impact of the Haiti earthquake of 2010. However, the damage caused by natural hazards in infrastructure, productive structures and housing is considerable.

Finally, Mr. Atle Solberg, Head of the Coordination Unit, PDD presented on behalf of IDMC data from the 2019 Global Report on Internal Displacement. Around 108,000 new displacements were recorded in 10 Caribbean countries in 2018 and 29 disaster events triggering displacements were documented. This represents a decrease when compared to 2017 figures affected by the devastating hurricane season. In the longer term, from 2008 to 2018, more than 8.5 million new displacements were recorded in 21 Caribbean countries. The region is distinctively impacted by the effect of strong hazards, including Hurricane Ike in 2008, the Haitian earthquake of 2010, Hurricane Sandy in 2012, Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. Data on the needs of displaced persons remains elusive and should be collected in a more consistent manner.

Questions from participants addressed the relationship between the per capita GDP of countries and their migration

rates. The panel noted that the relationship between these two factors is not always linear and migration rates depend on many different elements. Migration drivers are not necessarily considered in a rational manner and the decision to migrate is taken looking at many different angles.

The efforts deployed by Caribbean countries to enhance resilience, as in the example of Dominica, are important in terms of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. However, it should be noted that the exposure of Caribbean countries to hazards and slow onset processes make it very probable that displacement remains a constant feature in the future. Efforts should be implemented to build coping capacities and protect displaced persons in a changing climate.

Finally, participants highlighted that the figures on internal displacement refer to many different circumstances and scenarios. As a matter of fact, internal displacement may not lead to enhanced vulnerability. For instance, Cuba has a strong evacuation system that enables people to be removed from harm and return safely to their areas of origin. The needs and situation of displaced persons are one of the areas where additional research is required.

## SESSION I: MANAGING DISPLACEMENT RISK AND

## BUILDING RESILIENCE, ADDRESSING THE ENVIRONMENTAL

### DRIVERS OF FORCED MIGRATION

In line from the recommendations of international frameworks, Session I focused on strategies and actions design to help people to stay in their communities in contexts of disasters and climate change. This includes addressing the environmental drivers of forced migration through efforts in climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as disaster risk reduction. The session was moderated by Ms. Michelle Forbes, Director, National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Ms. Mariam Traoré Chazalnoël, Thematic Specialist, IOM, delivered the first intervention focused on the provisions contained in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants (2016) already acknowledged natural disasters, environmental and/or climate change as key drivers of migration. During the 2-year negotiation phase of the Global Compact, extensive discussions took place on environmental migration driven by SIDS and African countries. The final text of the Compact includes a dedicated paragraph within objective 2 on environmental migration.

#### The following recommendations were mentioned:

1. Invest in programmes on DRR, climate change mitigation and adaptation;
2. Account for migrants in national emergency preparedness and response (MCIC Guidelines);
3. Strengthen joint analysis and sharing of information to better understand, predict and address migration;
4. Integrate displacement in disaster preparedness strategies and promote regional cooperation (early warning, contingency planning, coordinating mechanisms, evacuation planning, reception and assistance arrangements);
5. Harmonize and develop approaches and mechanisms at regional and sub-regional levels to address vulnerabilities of persons affected by sudden and slow onset disasters, considering existing country capacities (ensuring access to humanitarian assistance respecting rights, increasing resilience and self-reliance);
6. Develop coherent approaches to address challenges of migration movements in context of disasters, by taking into consideration the recommendations of the Nansen Agenda and PDD.





Ms. Johanna Granados, Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean, UNDRR, stressed the importance of integrating human mobility issues into national and regional policy as per the provisions of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The Sendai Framework represents the advancement to a more comprehensive approach to risk informed sustainable development and develops a preventive approach to DRR focused on people. UNDRR has developed a series of Words into Action Guidelines stemming from the Sendai framework, including one on disaster displacement which seeks to enhance the understanding of disaster displacement risks and focuses on disaster preparedness to promote effective responses to disaster displacement and achieve durable solutions.

The recommendations on integrated approaches for averting, minimizing and addressing displacement related to climate change by the UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement (TFD) were presented by Mr. Atle Solberg, Head of the Coordination Unit, PDD. The TFD was established by the Paris Agreement (2015) to provide a series of recommendations, which were approved by COP24 in Katowice. These recommendations urge UNFCCC parties to strengthen risk analysis, policy development and planning processes and facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people. UN Agencies are requested to improve coordination and coherence, operation, action and support. The recommendations complement and contribute to other efforts and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and outline 'what' to do (to avert, minimize and address displacement)



as well as 'how to do it' (international standards, policies, effective practices, tools and guidelines).

After this set of interventions, participants requested examples of countries that have used visa procedures and labour migration as climate change adaptation strategies. The relationship between these two processes has not been explicitly approached by public policies in the Caribbean but more in the Pacific. The [CMC has posted a webinar](#) on addressing labour migration as a climate change adaptation strategy.

Participants also noted the importance of addressing the sense of belonging of vulnerable populations as well as mental health issues when discussing the impacts of climate change. This is certainly an angle that is drawing increased interest at the international level and a perspective to be considered when designing public policies.

The final comment noted that moving forward on non-binding agreements, such as the Global Compact and the TFD recommendations requires whole of government approaches, but also reaching out to opposition parties to avoid blockages after changes in power. Implementing international conventions should be pursued through bipartisan agreements.

A second set of interventions looked at Caribbean initiatives to address the environmental drivers of forced migration. Ms. Elizabeth Riley, Deputy Director, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), discussed the coordination of disaster preparedness efforts at the regional level. The regional objective of the CDEMA 2014-2024 strategy is to achieve safer more resilient and sustainable Caribbean States. CDEMA has developed a comprehensive approach at resilience based on a set of defined pillars (social protection, economic opportunities, infrastructure, environmental protection, operational readiness and recovery). Displacement risk is not explicitly captured in CDEMA Strategic Documents but there are entry points to address this issue. The integration of displacement risk in Caribbean Regional Strategic Frameworks – notably the mid-term review of CDEMA's Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy 2014-2024 and the Caribbean Resilience Framework – is particularly

important. Looking forward, the CDEMA system appears as a vehicle for integrating disaster displacement in the agenda of the Caribbean, including through the development of a Regional Mass Evacuation Policy and Disaster Management Guidelines for Customs and Immigration.

The final presentation of the session was delivered by Ms. Sonia Orué, Agencia de Medio Ambiente, Cuba. The intervention focused on Cuba's efforts to coordinate and mainstream climate change adaptation throughout the government. Cuba faces important challenges related to slow and sudden onset natural hazards and has developed a strong research and evidence-based approach to understanding how these factors will affect livelihoods. A plan of action on climate change adaptation (Tarea Vida) has been established defining a set of strategic priorities, the first one including the reduction of population density in low lying coastal areas. Interventions in priority areas include planned relocation of vulnerable communities. Disaster risk reduction has also been prioritized in the framework of Cuba's Civil Defense structure. Cuba has developed a strong capacity building approach to train almost one thousand CARICOM stakeholders and practitioners on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

The issue of financial resources required to carry out climate change adaptation projects was discussed by participants. There are some available funds, but the level of complexity and requirements makes their access difficult. Priorities should be set up at the national level as well: countries make significant investments on infrastructure projects and vulnerability assessments could be better mainstreamed. Cuba lacks financial means but has prioritized the use of data on vulnerability and risks in public interventions, as well as consulting affected populations. Tarea Vida includes an action related to the mobilization of international financing, such as Euroclima and the GCF. South-South cooperation also remains a priority.

Cuba's Tarea Vida's horizon is set of 2050, as that is the deadline for which data risks have been established. However, as per the law, the Plan can be continually updated to account for new vulnerabilities and risks.

Using innovative data is important, for example the use of cellular data connectivity, which can help in better understanding displacement trends. It would be important for countries to sign data-sharing clauses in concession contracts with phone companies.



## SESSION I WORKING GROUPS: MANAGING DISPLACEMENT RISK AND BUILDING RESILIENCE, ADDRESSING THE ENVIRONMENTAL DRIVERS OF FORCED MIGRATION

The working group discussions under Session I focused on identifying challenges, best practices and recommendations to address in a cooperative manner the environmental drivers of migration and displacement. To do so, three topics of interest were defined to constitute three separate working groups.

### »Working Group IA: Addressing the environmental drivers of forced migration at the regional and national level

Members of this working group discussed challenges and potential recommendations to better address the ways in

which environmental changes force populations to leave their areas of origin. The main challenge identified in this framework referred to the limited protection of people to adverse climate change impacts. A set of factors causing this situation were identified and classified as relating to government action, population and private sector and the academia.

In terms of good practices, the group discussed Cuba's approach to policy coherence and the mainstreaming of climate change action throughout government as well as the efforts deployed to promote literacy and integrate disaster and climate change issues across education cycles.

The approach of Trinidad and Tobago in developing its Vision 2030 was also mentioned as the document sets a national

vision and goals for the long term that include environment and climate change considerations. Each sector is also requested to create its strategic plan under a common vision.

Finally, representatives from the Dominican Republic presented the country's experience in building the resilience of populations through an emphasis on poverty reduction and the availability of social services. The government of the Dominican Republic has used planned relocation in different settings to reduce vulnerabilities. Strong communication systems have been set up to request the communities' input on participative projects and budgets.

### In terms of recommendations and priorities for enhanced action, the following ideas were discussed:

1. Designing comprehensive programmes to tackle economic inequalities and eliminate extreme poverty, applicable to nationals but also non-nationals residing in the country, including different dimensions (health, food, education, social housing, etc.).
2. Developing national integrated long term strategic development plans that include environmental migration and climate change adaptation.
3. Making research more relevant to governmental priorities and ensuring access to existing data and research.
4. Prioritizing climate change adaptation and risks and investing in structural mitigation (updating and enforcing building codes, better building planning, enforcing penalties in case of non-compliance).
5. Encouraging regional technical cooperation on climate change adaptation (CCA), capacity assessments, communities' adaptation, vulnerability assessments.
6. Integrating local and indigenous knowledge in plans and strategies.
7. Strengthening public/private partnerships.



## »Working Group IB: Integrating human mobility issues into national and regional DRR policy

The second working group looked at the issues of disaster displacement and the introduction of human mobility issues in national and regional disaster risk reduction strategies. Challenges in enforcing DRR strategies and regulations, obtaining required evidence and information and ensuring adequate leadership were discussed.

The group noted the limitations in human resources in the departments charged with DRR and addressing disaster displacement, as well as a certain dependence on international assistance. Despite recent progress, some countries still required additional support in developing procedures to tackle this issue. The cultural features of the Caribbean were also discussed as a potential challenging factor in enforcing disaster risk reduction given the reluctance of many populations to leave their areas of residence.

### The recommendations identified by the group included the following:

1. Addressing cultural risks – e.g. resistance to relocations based on preferences and what populations are used to.
2. Relying on the existing coordination role of CDEMA and the mid-term review of the CRM strategy 2014-2024.
3. Developing communication strategies to enhance awareness.
4. Enhancing the role and interventions of Child Protection Services for a more consistent approach to vulnerable persons.
5. Offering psycho-social support and including it in DRR and emergency response strategies.

### In terms of opportunities, approaching the integration of human mobility in disaster risk reduction could benefit from the following:

1. Including new players and actors in preventing disaster risk and incorporating disaster displacement.
2. Involving affected communities in the preparation and implement of DRR measures.
3. Fostering DRR education of communities and implementing school curricula to reach affected populations.
4. Developing a SIDS specific approach to development to factor in the vulnerability to disasters and the adverse effects of climate change.
5. Prioritizing a disaster risk reduction approach to the design and implementation of national budgets.
6. Leveraging disaster displacement as an opportunity to build resilience.



## »Working Group IC: Interagency coordination at the regional level

The final working group focused on the coordination of different agencies working on issues related to environmental migration in the Caribbean. Enhancing coordination but within countries and at the regional level is particularly important to avoid duplication and ensure the adequate support for vulnerable populations. Existing challenges relate to limited inter-ministerial interaction, lack of involvement from Ministries of Finance and opposition parties and obstacles to binational cooperation.

Good practices identified by the working group noted that progress has been made in developing a regional approach to these issues. All CARICOM agencies are expected to build resilience and the regional response mechanisms includes the security cluster.

Regional protocols on human mobility, such as the ones under CARICOM and OECS, can enable discussions between migration and environment/DRR practitioners. CDEMA can act simultaneously to national institutions to foster disaster risk reduction.

Finally, in terms of opportunities and recommendations, the following items were identified:

1. Promoting simultaneous discussions of high level and relevant agencies – coordination.
2. Developing national solutions dependent on geographical locations – different territories have differing issues.
3. Addressing the need for a Caribbean policy on human mobility which includes displacement and environmental migration.
4. Identifying political leads and champions in country as mandated agencies to work on these issues. This requires conducting stakeholder analyses to identify relevant actors, roles and responsibilities.
5. Capitalizing on current political interest (note, this is not the same as political will).
6. Building cooperation with relevant private sector agencies as well as NGOs and civil society organizations working on these issues and potentially collecting data.



## SESSION II: PROTECTING AND ADDRESSING THE NEEDS

## AND RIGHTS OF PERSONS DISPLACED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

## AND DISASTERS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRANTS IN THE CARIBBEAN



After addressing during Session I the environmental drivers of forced migration, Session II looked at protecting and addressing the needs of persons who are displaced by climate change and disasters. The focus was on assisting environmental migrants and helping people on the move. Presentations on international frameworks, regional approaches and national experiences provided examples on how Caribbean countries are already working to protect displaced persons in contexts of disasters and climate change.

Ms. Mariam Traoré Chazalnoël, Thematic Specialist and Ms. Luz Tantaruna, Regional Thematic Specialist, IOM, discussed how the implementation of the Global Compact can help in protecting displaced persons and introduced the MICIC guidelines to protect migrants in disaster scenarios.

The UN Migration Network established in the process of the Global Compact has as mission for protecting the rights and wellbeing of migrants and communities of origin, transit and destination. The network represents an opportunity to request support from the UN system on specific environmental migration issues. The establishment of a Fund for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is underway with a target of USD 25 million. Objectives are i) support country –level implementation of GCM and ii) support regional and global initiatives supporting GCM implementation.

The Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) guidelines were developed as concrete, non-binding principles and practices that countries can adopt and use. They apply to scenarios of disasters and conflict and include different types of migrants. The guidelines provide practical guidance to States, private sector agents, international organizations and civil society

to protect migrants. MICIC includes a training methodology for the personnel of the emergency management or crises actors of host countries. It has been used for awareness-raising events, staff training and training of trainers. Different experiences have been registered by IOM in countries like Guatemala and the Maldives and could be exported in the Caribbean.

Mr. Matthew Reynolds, Regional Representative, and Ms. Amaria Belaskri, Head of the Caribbean Protection Unit,

UNHCR, introduced the importance of the Global Compact on Refugees and discussed regional developments in the framework of the 2014 Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action. The current global refugee situation is compounded by new challenges posed by displacement caused by climate change and disasters. In this framework, the Global Compact on Refugees (2018) institutes the architecture for a stronger, more predictable and more equitable international response. The Global Compact on Refugees acknowledges that climate, environmental degradation and natural disasters increasingly interact with the drivers of refugee movements and provides a basis for measures to be taken.

At the regional level, the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action was adopted by 29 countries and 3 territories in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2014, marking the 30th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees of 1984. It seeks to improve protection and achieve solutions for refugees, displaced persons, and stateless persons. The Brazil Declaration recognizes the challenges posed by climate change and natural disasters, and by the displacement of persons across borders. Following the provisions of the Plan of Action, a study was

conducted on cross-border displacement, climate change and disasters in the Americas. It assesses the legal and policy frameworks relevant to cross-border disaster displacement in three sub-regions of the Americas. Effective practices in the Caribbean address the protection needs of people who have been displaced across borders, but most countries lack normative frameworks and rely on the discretionary power of migration authorities.

The CDEMA Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) was presented by Ms. Elizabeth Riley, Deputy Director, CDEMA. The system is organized in four sub regional groups led by four countries. The RRM is an arrangement for the coordination of disaster response among CDEMA Participating States, Regional and International Agencies. It delivers speedy response and effective, efficient use and management of resources. Response teams are trained, briefed and deployed in case of need. The system is based on a three-tiered process dependent on the volume of the need requested by affected countries.

Ms. Michelle Forbes, Director, National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, started the presentation of countries' experiences in assisting displaced persons. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a SIDS located in the Eastern Caribbean composed of 32 islands and cays, of which five are inhabited with a population of 110,000 persons. The country has experience in being affected by natural hazards and has established a comprehensive emergency response system activating shelters, providing relief and rebuilding houses. During Hurricanes Irma and Maria, housing assistance was provided for returning Vincentians (rent for 6 months), children of Vincentian Citizens and non-Vincentian could continue school and education (e.g. medical school relocated students from Dominica to Saint Vincent). NEMO provided support with mattresses and other hygiene items. Challenges include the lack of a clear policy to determine what will be given as assistance post disaster. Rebuilding in vulnerable areas remains problematic. There is also the issue of assistance being not sustainable over the long term given the means available to small countries.

Finally, Lieutenant Lakshman Persaud, Operations Officer, Civil Defense Commission (CDC), Guyana, presented the Guyana experience in coordinating emergency response and assistance. The mission of the CDC is to reduce loss of life, damage to property and improve the quality of life in Guyana by leading, coordinating and supporting the nation in the development and enhancement of a comprehensive disaster risk management system. CDC also has a coordinating role in the Venezuelan Migrant Crisis. The Migrant Response involves a wide range of government departments. In terms of expected challenges, CDC expects that the challenges from the impacts of climate change will increase and will lead to migration in a context marked by the expansion of the Guyana oil industry and the arrival of migrants.

Comments from participants highlighted that the Caribbean has developed effective practices and initiatives to protect cross border migrants. These measures are often based on discretion, which means that their application is not predictable, and harmonization is limited. The commitments made under the Global Compact on Migration are important to strengthen harmonization and predictability. Next year's follow-up forum to the Compact could enable the presentation of good practices and their consolidation in the Caribbean. **Possibilities of receiving support from the mechanisms related to the GCM should be explored.** The disaster component is addressed under one of the clusters, which includes disaster and climate change. It is up to the countries to influence the use of this mechanism.

Issues and challenges exist both at the regional and country levels. Dealing with these new challenges remains a priority in a context of increased migration and displacement linked with climate change and disasters. What is important is to systematize approaches, harmonize them and come up with consolidated policies through cooperation. Political and resource constraints are important and need to be considered realistic.



## SESSION III: HELPING PEOPLE

### MOVE OUT OF HARM'S WAY

Leveraging human mobility to build resilience and promote climate change adaptation was the focus of the third and final thematic session of the conference, moderated by Ms. Ama Ruth Francis, Sabin Center for Climate Change Law, Columbia Law School. In this framework, migration has been approached as a potential climate change adaptation strategy in international discussions. At the regional level, labour mobility within the Caribbean, in the CARICOM setting and within the OECS, may be approached from a climate change adaptation perspective. Countries have also implemented evacuation mechanisms to protect vulnerable populations in disaster scenarios. Planned relocation is also gaining traction as a last resort solution to face climate change in various Caribbean countries.



Ms. Mariam Traoré Chazalnoël, Thematic Specialist, IOM, discussed opportunities to consider migration as adaptation to climate change, acknowledging that well managed and supported migration can help people living in areas subjected to great environmental deterioration. Conversely, the lack of opportunities for regular migration might result in irregular migration and associated risk. The development of national legislations, bilateral and (sub)regional agreements can facilitate temporary and circular migration and even potentially permanent movements. Harnessing the potential of migrant communities, remittances and financial investments can facilitate climate change action.

Ms. Joycelyn Hughes, CARICOM IMPACS, and Mr. Clarence Henry, OECS, discussed free movement protocols and mechanisms to facilitate intra-regional migration in the Caribbean. CARICOM has established mechanisms to prevent crime and enhance security, notably through the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS). The free movement of citizens of CARICOM Member States

enables six months stays on arrival in other Member States and applies to skilled nationals through verified certificates. In the OECS however, the free movement protocol allows for the indefinite stay of nationals in Member States. In response to displacement, the Regional Response Mechanism for Security, the Regional Migration Strategy and the Immigration and Customs Working Group on Disaster can help in leveraging free movement for emergency response and the protection of displaced persons.

Three country experiences were presented to close the panel discussion. Mr. Sherrod James, Deputy Director, National Office of Disaster Services, Antigua and Barbuda, discussed the country's preparedness efforts and measures to protect persons against disasters. Antigua and Barbuda has established strong preparedness capacities, but the impact of Irma and Maria in 2017 required extraordinary engagement to manage internal and international displacement. Unaccompanied minors arrived in-transit with no arrangements and Dominican nationals reached Antigua to stay for the short term with family members. Education and health services had to be arranged while preserving border integrity and ensuring security.

Ms. Maria Medard, Deputy Director, National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO), Saint Lucia, introduced the country's experience in displacement and disaster risk reduction with a focus on evacuation procedures. Assessments have confirmed that Saint Lucia is at risk from numerous hazards because of its location and plans and policies have been developed to address risk mitigation and reduction. The Saint Lucia evacuation plan identifies challenges associated with sheltering persons affected by evacuations. It prescribes actions to be taken at each stage of the sheltering operation and provides guidelines for support services for people who have relocated from their normal residences due to the threat posed by a hazard.



Finally, Dr. Florinda Rojas, Director, Instituto Nacional de Migración, Dominican Republic, presented the country's experience in using planned relocation for climate change adaptation. The Dominican Republic presents a high degree of vulnerability and exposure to natural hazards. A set of policies and institutional arrangements have been developed to build adaptation to climate change and enhance resilience, notably through the National Adaptation Plan of Action and the National Development Strategy. This document includes provisions to consider the relocation of human settlements at risk of natural hazards. Hundreds of families are, for instance, forced to relocate from their houses due to the flooding of the Ozama river. A project is being implemented to analyse existing housing conditions and plan for adequate relocation.

Participants requested more detail on the functioning of the OECS free movement protocol in terms of documentation. While free movement processes have evolved over time, OECS is trying to focus on further training immigration officials and border agents to ensure the adequate determination of treatment for people traveling without documents. OECS is also aiming at implementing through the 11th European Development Fund a system to allow for biometric registration of OECS nationals. The OECS is a very connected region and there are associations of nationals from other countries in many islands. These associations have networks and can provide assistance in tracking and identifying persons.

A question was also raised on the elimination of the work permit in the OECS and the possibility for OECS nationals

to freely compete in the labour market with host country nationals. The framework is not designed for disaster response, but because persons have indefinite stay and have access to the labour market without a work permit, it is easier for people fleeing disasters to arrive and settle to other islands. The OECS has 11 Members, but free movement exists in the seven full members countries<sup>3</sup>.

The CDEMA sub-regional disaster units have the responsibility to provide assistance in disaster scenarios. CDEMA can mobilize human resources to assist and support in the framework of different teams. Any country can also provide support to other countries. Once an event happens, the needs of affected countries are highlighted in the rapid response mechanism and any country can pledge support, but countries are expected to mention their contribution to avoid duplication.



## SESSION II AND III WORKING GROUPS: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRANTS AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HELPING PEOPLE MOVE OUT OF HARM'S WAY

In order to avoid duplication and to streamline best practices and recommendations, it was decided to merge the working groups related to sessions II and III into four different topics. Participants were distributed in four groups to address these issues together, identify challenges, recommendations and priorities for the future.

### »Group 2A: Protecting migrants in disaster scenarios

The first working group of the session addressed the challenges of protecting migrants who find themselves in a disaster scenario. The Guidelines from the Migrants in

Countries in Crisis (MICIC) were developed to address these issues. In general, participants in the group noted that there is still a limited integration of migrants in disaster preparedness and response in some circumstances in countries of destination, which challenges their protection in cases of emergencies. This situation derives from a set of issues, which were classified by group members around communication challenges, data and evidence and international cooperation.

Participants in the working group were also able to identify a set of good practices and experiences that Caribbean countries have implemented to reach out to migrants and include them in emergency preparedness and response. The GCM includes provisions that require authorities to register migrants and provide basic services.

<sup>3</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat (UK), Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.



For instance, the registration of migrants undertaken by Trinidad and Tobago includes incentives for migrants (access to health, education, work) to register and helps in obtaining required data to include migrants in DRR. Security concerns are taken into consideration. Guyana has also introduced registration procedures to obtain available information, which gives the right to work.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the ODPM has rolled out community emergency response training to enhance basic resilience in communities. The objective is to also reach out to migrant communities to enhance their resilience and preparedness.

Cuba has set up a shelter system for Haitian migrants. Basic services are provided, and language support is available. Voluntary return is available for migrants wishing to return to their country of origin. Cuba has also established communication procedures with Embassies, like Haiti, to share information on arrivals, vulnerabilities and foreseen voluntary returns.

Guyana has developed a good collaboration with UN Agencies. An Inter-ministerial Committee has been established with the participation of international institutions to consolidate the approach to migrants. Planning has been developed to establish additional services in destination areas of migrants, addressing the language barriers. Using local language knowledge and exchanges is an asset. The information sharing enables quick response and awareness of all actors on the situation of migrants.

Most immigration to Barbados happens within regional treaties, which enables the registration and follow up of migrants. The number of undocumented migrants is relatively low and the extension of free movement protocols to new working categories helps in including more migrants in these processes to ensure their regular movement. When Maria

hit the country, contacts were made with Embassies and Consulates to ensure assistance and evacuations and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was included in the exchanges. There is a protocol to establish communication in cases persons are transiting through Barbados in disaster scenarios.

The discussion around opportunities and recommendations focused on promoting positive experiences and consolidating these practices for a more consistent approach to migrants in emergency scenarios.

#### Identified opportunities may include:

1. Getting information from case studies around the world to get useful information on how to address challenges related to the protection of migrants.
2. Enhancing communication capacities within disaster agencies to better reach out to migrant communities. This includes a better identification and registration of migrants and communication efforts, not only in terms of language, but using institutions such as churches, migrant associations, involving migrants themselves, etc.
3. Publishing protocols and standard operating procedures would be critically important to address some of the gaps and avoid reactive and improvised measures when it comes to assisting migrants.
4. Involving migrants in DRR would provide a great addition in the use of their existing capacities, language skills, etc.
5. Conditions in shelters need to be upgraded considering available resources to meet the best standards. The migrant population needs to be accounted in the provision of emergency response. Purposeful shelters could be established, rather than relying on other buildings. This would entail that buildings have the required systems and human resources, even if they could double for other purposes.

## »Group 2B: Developing a regional perspective for emergency evacuation processes and addressing planned relocation

The discussion within working group 2 focused on the potential development of stronger evacuation procedures at the regional level, including the possibility of facilitating cross border evacuations in cases of emergencies. There is a need to launch a discussion around legal frameworks that govern evacuation at the regional level and address the political sensitivities around such conversations. Many countries actually lack a mandatory evacuation policy, which is something that may be required. Issues around logistics should also be addressed with regards to lack of awareness, training and planning and the need to agree on costs and funding.

In terms of effective practices, the following experiences were discussed:

1. Cuba has developed evacuation plans within the national disaster risk management approach. Widespread simulation exercises are organized, lessons learned are analyzed and included in the following exercise.
2. Guyana implements search and rescue simulations beyond national borders and the availability of modern shelters in each region of the country has been enhanced, including provisions for adequate security.
3. In the Dominican Republic, training is conducted in the preparedness phase, including vulnerability awareness, to be able to immediately facilitate evacuations.
4. CDEMA has compiled model national evacuation policies. Annual checklist exercises are carried out looking at critical readiness issues. Every three years, a comprehensive audit of disaster management is carried out.

The working group finally also looked at the issue of planned relocation, which has so far mostly been addressed at the national level. Some important points of discussion were identified:

1. There is a general need to address building code issues and their implement and enforcement.
2. Stronger national land use planning policies are required when identifying places people can be relocated to, including better understanding the role of cities, their preparedness, the identification of relocation land and opportunities to avoid vulnerabilities.

Recommendations in terms of evacuation procedures include the following:

1. Enforcing preparedness is crucial: Countries should determine capacities ahead of time. Each country has different capacities for emergency response. These capacities should be assessed through thorough assessments to take stock of roles and responsibilities, best practices, existing gaps, etc. The use of a harmonized and common checklist could be promoted. Regional contingency plans could also be developed.
2. Efforts are already underway at CDEMA for the development of a regional mass evacuation policy, which should be supported. Material should be developed in various languages to address the needs of targeted countries. The regional policy could also influence national policies. Evacuation issues could be better integrated under the CDEMA portfolio and the discussion should be escalated to heads of government to make them aware of the situation.
3. Evacuation plans need to be tailored to the potential cross-border nature of evacuations: this might mean adding a regional perspective to national plans.
4. There is a clear need to build partnerships (private sector, development partners) to improve the availability of assets to move people. The availability of funding should also be considered. Substantive incentives can be provided for populations and businesses to prepare for evacuation.
5. The upgrade of shelter facilities can represent an opportunity to engage with local populations. Purpose-built shelter concepts can be explored.
6. It is important to identify lessons learned from drill exercises and better take them into account.
7. Existing capacities should be reinforced to meet existing and future needs. Evacuation dimensions can be integrated within disaster management audits taking place every 3 years to look at gaps and needs.

3. Civil society actors, such as NGOs and churches, and the cultural sector, should be involved in this process.
4. Robust communication strategies are required to reach out to affected communities for planned relocation.
5. Appropriate policies should be developed to anticipate relocation processes as much as possible, so that voluntary relocation is preferred to mandatory relocation, and people are offered options to relocate before mandatory policies are enacted.

## »Group 2C: Using policy options and law to protect displaced persons in the Caribbean

The third working group looked at existing policy options, notably with regards to immigration law, available for Caribbean countries to protect displaced persons in events of disaster. In terms of challenges, the group noted the limited capacities at border points to process displaced persons. The situation of irregular migrants in countries also deserved increased attention.

Reaching out to displaced persons across borders requires addressing security concerns and developing language and communication skills. Humanitarian assistance, in terms of shelter, health, etc. also needs to be set up and escalated. The availability of housing and the challenges related to the integration of migrants also need to be considered. A special approach needs to be developed to tackle the situation of unaccompanied minors.

Good practices have however been implemented in the Caribbean in recent years, especially during the 2017 Hurricane season. The following experiences were discussed by the group:

1. Lifting restrictions by Cabinet decisions enabled migration authorities to facilitate the entry of displaced persons. Visa requirements were also waived in certain instances. This enabled the provision of temporary protection and residence in the cases of Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands for instance.
2. Deportations were also suspended in certain cases to avoid creating further vulnerabilities.
3. The CARICOM regional system (RSS) can provide a useful platform to address these situations.
4. The integration of migration officers in emergency capacity building trainings is important to better respond to the needs of displaced populations

### Finally, group 2D identified a series of potential recommendations:

1. With regards to extra-regional nationals in situations of emergency, provisions for a single domestic space could be developed to facilitate their mobility.
2. A single OECS ID with biometric information would represent an added value and participants even discussed the possibility of releasing emergency identification.
3. Special work permits could potentially be established for people who fall outside of the CSME categories in periods of disaster recovery.

Recommendations identified by the group consisted of the development of basic training material for migration officials in English, Spanish, Dutch and French. Establishing better systems for information exchanges between immigration and customs officers can also help to promote cooperation. Finally, developing binational and regional agreements at the highest level is important when considering these issues.

## »Group 2D: Leveraging free movement of people frameworks

Following on the panel presentation from CARICOM IMPACS and OECS, the third working group looked at gaps and opportunities to leverage Caribbean protocols for free movement people to protect environmental migrants and displaced persons, build resilience and support climate change adaptation.

Initially, the group determined challenges in the application of free movement protocols within the CARICOM region. Upon the return of migrants, countries should implement a standardized procedure for reporting and sharing of quantitative data to CARICOM. A similar process exists and has been approved by policymakers but is not consistently applied through CSME units in every country. There is also a deficit of implementation of free movement, potentially related to capacity gaps in Member States to apply all provisions.

Good practices identified by the group included experiences of prescreening of migrants or screening in transit, to facilitate mobility in situations of emergencies. The potential time extension of free movement to 6 months could also provide an added value. The introduction of a small fee to travel tickets could be considered to support emergency response.

4. Adequate processing times should be enforced to deliver skill certificates facilitating free movement and access to social services should be guaranteed.
5. The lessons learned from the 2017 hurricane season and identified in the Chiefs of Immigration and Customs Controllers (CICC) working group on border security in disasters should be better analyzed. In this line, simulation exercises at the CDEMA level can help in identifying processing needs in cases of crisis.
6. Awareness raising, and communication efforts should be deployed on mobility rights and legal provisions.

## PLENARY SESSION: REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS, COHERENCE AND NEEDS -

### APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

The final plenary session of the conference consisted of the review of the recommendations from all seven working groups and the agreement over the path forward in the framework of the CMC. Mr. Brendan Tarnay, Sub-regional Coordinator for the Caribbean, IOM, and Ms. Amaria Belaskri, Head of the Caribbean Protection Unit, UNHCR, presented the main findings of the event and participants had the opportunity to provide any comment or suggestions.

Participants also agreed to establish a working group to look at the conclusions from the conference and, with the support of IOM, PDD and UNHCR, edit these into a draft roadmap for the future that may be potentially endorsed by officials at the future CMC meeting. A set of participants volunteered to be involved in this working group and will be contacted by IOM and the PDD to kickstart the preparation of the plan of action.

Participants noted the added value that the meeting had in bringing together stakeholders from various departments, who have limited opportunities to address together the challenges of human mobility in contexts of disasters and climate change. Establishing connections between stakeholders can be very useful to tackle these issues together.

Participants also pointed out that the current political momentum should be seized to move forward with concrete interventions. Some short-term opportunities, such as the mid-term review of the CDEMA Comprehensive Risk Management strategy, were identified to continue the engagement. The working group established by the conference will provide a clear platform to look at the future and define concrete actions to be agreed upon by CMC stakeholders.

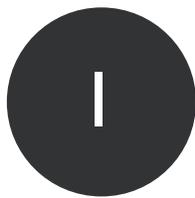
### CLOSING REMARKS



Captain Neville Wint, Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management, Ministry of National Security, Trinidad and Tobago, closed the event thanking the organizers and the participants for a productive and fruitful conference. The discussions highlighted the need to develop comprehensive approaches to displacement, including internal and cross border

movements, not only looking at the protection of persons but also at building resilience, creating bipartisan engagement, and collecting data for evidence-based policies. Good practices have been identified at various levels during the conference, but they need to be consolidated to better manage risk and build resilience.

# ANNEXES



AGENDA



PARTICIPANTS  
CONTACT LIST