



Regional Consultations on Climate and Security in the Caribbean Region

“Planetary Security in the Caribbean Region: A roadmap to Climate Resilience”

1.0 Background

“Human security can no longer be understood in purely military terms. Rather, it must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law” (Annan, 2008). Climate change affects human security and can increase conflict risk. Though there has been increasing recognition of the importance of this issue in the international arena, more work needs to be done to address the risks on the ground, including consideration of how planetary security could affect regional security and geopolitics.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands (KNL) is currently a member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), and sees the prevention of conflict and instability as a priority. In this regard, the KNL strongly advocates for the consideration of the security risks of climate change and water stress and has launched several bilateral projects and initiatives to address the issue. One of these initiatives is the Planetary Security Initiative (PSI) which was launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands in 2015 as part of an effort to advance the integration of the issue of climate security onto the international agenda.

The objectives of the PSI are to:

- Enhance political involvement in climate-security;
- Strengthen the knowledge-policy interface by consolidating a global, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary community of practice;
- Develop and promote policies and good practice to support governments, the private sector and implementing agencies to better secure peace in regions affected by climate change; and
- Operate as a permanent platform for international cooperation on planetary security.

An important part of the PSI was the setting up of an international conference series which offers a platform to experts and policymakers in this field for the sharing of knowledge and experiences and the articulation of possible solutions. As the community of practice is consolidating, efforts are shifting to a focus on what can be done to reduce security risks emanating from climate change and related environmental stresses in concrete cases, including specific regions and countries as well as themes. The next edition of the Conference that will be convened February 19-20, 2019 will include the Caribbean region on the list of regions to be highlighted. Specifically, the Prime Minister of PM of Sint Maarten, Leona Marlin, is one of the confirmed speakers at the Conference. Further, two (2) workshops will specifically feature the Caribbean, one by the Centre for Climate and Security and one by the University of the West Indies Trinidad & Tobago.

Past PSI regional meetings have served to mobilize stakeholders ahead of the Planetary Security Conference and to prepare input and to discuss local action. It is anticipated that a Planetary Security Regional Meeting in the Caribbean would serve similar purposes as well as to:

- Highlight the KNL commitment to provide support to SIDS in addressing human security issues;
- Provide a link for regional stakeholders to follow-up on the July 11th 2018 discussion on planetary security held in the UNSC; and
- Feed into the workstream on resilience that is part of the Sept 2019 NY Climate Summit.

2.0 Context

The Caribbean has a history of economic and social dislocation resulting from the impacts of a diversity of hazards including tropical cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and floods. The Disaster Database (EMDAT) indicates that 238 disasters have occurred in the Caribbean as a result of tropical cyclonic events between 1950 and 2014. It is considered among the most vulnerable regions of the world.

Whilst loss of life from these impacts have generally been on the decline damage and losses have been increasing. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) the period between 1990 and 2014 saw Caribbean sustaining losses between 1.8% and 2% of Gross Domestic Product per annum. In many cases losses as has exceeded 100 % GDP, e.g. Ivan Grenada (2004), Haiti 2010; Irma BVI 2017; Maria Dominica 2017: Without instituting or enhancing current measures for risk management, the outlook portends further economic challenges and dislocation especially for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (IPCC 2014)

The devastating impacts of hurricanes Irma and Maria on the Caribbean region in 2017 have again brought into sharp focus the importance of considering the effects of climate change and variability on the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (C-SIDS). It is clear from ongoing experiences in the region that the capacity to prepare for the impacts of hazards and to recover from disasters is arguably the biggest challenge to our sustainable development as a region. In this context, there are two main categories of security issues which are most pertinent to Caribbean SIDS: those related to short term disaster preparedness and those related to longer term resilience building.

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), formerly the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) was created in 1991 as Regional Specialized Institution to advance and deepen functional cooperation across CARICOM Member Countries in Disaster Risk Management. The Agency's formation emerged from the experiences of disasters in the 1970's and was also prompted by the Global discourse taking place at that time on the transformation from a reactive culture towards a risk management culture which emerged early in the 1980's.

In 2009, the Agency evolved into CDEMA with the intent of functioning as an institution that is tasked not only with providing Emergency Response Support, Disaster Risk Information and Intelligence, Capacity Strengthening, and providing model policies and tools but more importantly to plan, coordinate, measure and evaluate a programme for Disaster Risk Resilience.

CDEMA is the main broker of Comprehensive Disaster Management and the Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy now in its third iteration for the period 2014-2024. The Strategy is the regional mechanism for achieving the objectives of the Global Sendai Framework. Resilience is the underpinning theme for the 2014-2020 CDM Strategy. The impact statement, "Safer, more resilient and sustainable CDEMA Participating States through Comprehensive Disaster Management" reflects the growing understanding that participating states must define what acceptable levels of risk may be within their context, define approaches and mechanisms that will enhance their capacity to endure and increase their ability to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard impact, in a timely and efficient manner.

Recent regional events have prompted the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government to have a renewed commitment to a strategic approach to addressing the need to build the region's resilience to disasters. These factors include the aforementioned catastrophic impacts of the 2017 Hurricane season; the worrying

scenarios projected by scientists on the effects of climate variability and change on natural and man-induced hazards; the existing potential for earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis in the seismically active Caribbean region; and the increasing intensity and frequency with which disasters are occurring worldwide.

In focusing on rebuilding the countries affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria CARICOM, at the Donor Conference held in New York in November 2017, has declared a vision of the Caribbean as the first climate Resilient Region in the world. This requires that Governments now clearly define what Resilience looks like in a Caribbean Context and the associated metrics to track progress towards this future desired state.

During July 2018, CDEMA convened a symposium in Montego Bay, Jamaica as a means of providing a forum where policy makers, technocrats and operational actors can exchange perspectives and ideas on the issues, challenges and options for building regional resilience in the face of existing hazards; in an effort to prevent or reduce the construction of future risks and vulnerabilities. CDEMA proposed five Pillars for consideration of a regional Resilience Agenda which were explored during the symposium.

These Pillars are as follows:

1. **Social Protection for the Most Vulnerable:** Hurricane events of 2017 identified gaps exist in recovery financing between what is needed and what is provided by the government and the international community. As such there is a widening of the gap between wealthy and poor households after the impact of disasters.
2. **Safeguarding Infrastructure:** The implementation of building codes which seek to provide regulations and associated standards to ensure human safety and welfare is still experiencing challenges in the Region. Strengthening the infrastructure, particularly at the sectoral level, is a key component of building the Region's resilience
3. **Economic Diversification:** Building economic resilience requires more focused and concerted efforts to pursue sustainable diversification initiatives in order to reduce the incidence of income volatility and alleviate development challenges.
4. **Environmental Protection:** An integrated approach to resilience must consider protecting the environment, as failure to do so may contribute to or exacerbate disaster impacts.
5. **Operational Readiness:** The Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) is an operational mechanism with architecture for structuring coordination support to impacted states.

3.0 Regional Planetary Security Consultation in the Caribbean

CDEMA proposes the organisation and hosting of a Regional Planetary Security Consultation (RPSC) in cooperation with the Aruba Centre of Excellence for the Sustainable Development of SIDS (CoE) to provide on the ground implementation support to CDEMA. CoE as a local partner will engender local ownership.

The CoE was established in 2015 as a partnership between the Government of Aruba and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to strengthen innovation and resilience in SIDS—in the Caribbean and beyond. The CoE offer a platform to exchange knowledge and experiences between developing countries (South-South cooperation), including on issues such as renewable energy, climate resilience, public-private partnerships, water management, tourism, environment and public health.

CDEMA will also collaborate closely with the Dutch Institute for Foreign Relations (Clingendael), which is the lead agency for the PSI, to ensure that the Consultation is organized from the scope of the concept and current issues of Planetary Security.

The RPSC is proposed to be convened in Aruba as a one-day (and possibly one-and-a-half-day if budget allows) event during December 13, 2018. The theme of the Regional Consultation will be “***Planetary Security in the Caribbean Region: A roadmap to Climate Resilience***” and it will bring together thirty (30) to forty (40) – depending on budget - technical experts, practitioners and policymakers from across the English, Dutch, French and Spanish speaking in the areas of climate change, disaster risk management and regional security. The regional consultation will provide a space for reflection on the key issues related to climate and security in the Caribbean region, to be agreed upon with the Planetary Security Initiative (represented by Clingendael).

3.1 Objectives

Considering the marketing and media requirements of the Planetary Security Initiative and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, this event will be marketed as one of CDEMA’s signature events which include Regional/International Conferences; Exhibitions; Launches and Recognition of Major Partnership Initiatives. CDEMA signature events are typically convened biennially and in alternate years to the Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management

Specifically, the objectives of the Regional Consultation will be to:

1. Facilitate the sharing of experiences and knowledge exchanges on issues related to climate and human security within the context of national and regional resilience building.
2. Provide a forum for consideration of the most appropriate pathways for the Caribbean region towards building resilience given the key issue climate and human security challenges faced.
3. Document inputs to the development of a Plan of Action on Planetary Security which will be shared at the Planetary Security Conference in The Hague in 2019.
4. Capture insights on Planetary Security that are unique to SIDS that can be shared by the COE with other SIDS around the world through various channels

The expected results of the Consultation are:

- a) Strategic realities on climate and human security in Caribbean SIDS explored.
- b) Pathway/Road Map for building resilience in the Caribbean SIDS to climate and human security challenges advanced.
- c) A Plan of Action on Planetary Security drafted.

This Regional Consultation offers a tremendous opportunity to garner the insights and experiences of technocrats, and practitioners from across the region towards a fuller ventilation of the issues around a regional Resilience Agenda as is being promoted by CDEMA. This will contribute to the ongoing process of elaboration of a Pathway/Road Map for building resilience of Caribbean SIDS to climate and human security challenges.

It is expected that the convening of this Regional Consultation by CDEMA will forge stronger linkages between the Caribbean SIDS and CDEMA with the Planetary Security Initiative, lending a stronger voice to the Caribbean case for resilience in international (UN) debates.