



GREEN PANDEMIC RECOVERY

ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS COMMIT
TO BETTER AND GREENER PANDEMIC
RECOVERY MEASURES

NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

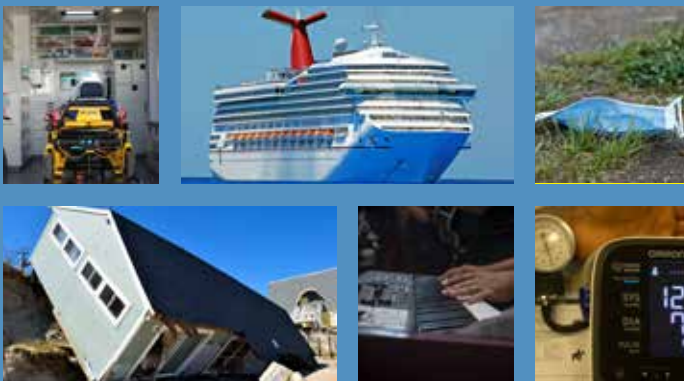
NEW ECLAC STUDY ADDRESSES THEIR
ADVERSE IMPACTS ON CARIBBEAN
COUNTRIES

CLIMATE CHANGE

SIDE EVENT TAKES STOCK OF CLIMATE
CHANGE, THE DISASTER AWARENESS
SITUATION, AND STATISTICS FOR
DISASTERS IN THE CARIBBEAN

Contents

- 4** New ECLAC Caribbean study addresses adverse impacts of non-communicable diseases on Caribbean countries
- 6** Environment Ministers commit to better and greener pandemic recovery measures
- 10** SIDS side event takes stock of climate change, the disaster awareness situation, and statistics for disaster in the Caribbean
- 12** ECLAC joins interagency committee of Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem
- 14** Caribbean resilience building in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic



About us

Issued on a monthly basis, The Hummingbird offers insights into the latest projects, publications, technical assistance missions and research carried out by ECLAC Caribbean. In addition to these, sneak previews are provided of the most salient upcoming events, alongside enriching follow-ups to previously covered issues. With a view to featuring a variety of facets of Caribbean life and lifestyle, The Hummingbird also zooms in on cultural activities and landmark occurrences through an eye-opening regional round-up.

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Please see our contact details on the back cover of this magazine.

International Days

11 February

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

20 February

World Day of Social Justice

21 February

International Mother Language Day

Upcoming Meetings

26 February

Virtual meeting of experts on policies of the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus and projects of transboundary relevance in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

15 - 18 March

Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development 2021 - Santiago, Chile.

16 March

#ForumLAC2030 Event: "Rights-Based Sustainable Recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean – placing human rights and the 2030 Agenda at the core of the responses to build forward better"





New ECLAC Caribbean study addresses adverse impacts of non-communicable diseases on Caribbean countries

The high prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the Caribbean is an issue of continuing concern, demanding sustained efforts to control their causes, these diseases and their risk factors.

The Caribbean Heads of Government have recognized the threat posed by NCDs and seek to mitigate their effects, often articulating the critical relationship between health and development. This position aligns well with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's commitment to ensure that individuals fulfil their potential in a healthy environment.

Economically, NCDs constitute a major burden on the healthcare system, significantly impacting low- and middle-income developing countries. A global challenge, data from the World Health Organization (WHO) show that ischemic heart disease, stroke, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), all of which are NCDs, represented the three leading causes

of death globally in 2019. In fact, up to 36 million people die annually from all NCDs (equivalent to 63 per cent of global deaths) and of this number, 14 million die prematurely. Premature deaths can reduce a country's labour force, compounding the economic disadvantages already caused by NCDs.

Manifesting its effects across all social strata, NCDs in the Caribbean have caused between 57 per cent (Haiti) and 83 per cent (Barbados) of all deaths (WHO 2018). Risk factors such as alcohol consumption, tobacco smoking, physical inactivity, and obesity, which are common to NCD patients, are also prevalent throughout the subregion and are a cause for concern. Even more concerning is the subregion's high rate of childhood obesity, which was recognized by Caribbean Heads of Government as "the greatest threat to the health of future generations".

The prevalence of risk factors throughout the subregion, coupled with already high NCD statistics,

spell a future of rising healthcare expenses. Public expenditure on health, however, remains below the recommended level. In fact, a recent ECLAC study highlighted this concern, explaining that healthcare expenditure across the Caribbean should be about 6 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The study also finds that, in reality, figures are quite low, ranging from 0.8 per cent of GDP in Haiti to 4.4 per cent in Barbados (ECLAC 2020).

In its study, ECLAC makes a case for a renewed focus on addressing NCDs, given their potential to constitute an even greater burden in the future. The prevalence of NCDs and of the risk factors which amplify them will only increase healthcare costs. The example of Trinidad and Tobago is given, where NCDs accounted for 53 per cent of hospital admissions between 2010 and 2015. Similarly, in Anguilla, about half of all deaths annually are due to popular NCDs such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes. For Anguilla, NCDs account for more than 50



per cent of the annual cost of providing healthcare in the country (PAHO 2017). During 2011–2012, the National Health Fund (NHF) in Jamaica paid individual benefits amounting to US\$30.65 million for subsidies to cover medication costs for individuals with NCDs, representing 7.63 per cent of Government Expenditure on Health for 2011. Through these examples, the study emphasizes that NCDs should not be overlooked or dismissed as negligible but instead considered strategically.

NCDs are slowly paving the way for a range of problems across the subregion. Decreased labour productivity, workforce morbidity, and increased healthcare costs are all strains to Caribbean economies. Thus, early preparation serves as the subregion's best defense against the expensive and literally life-threatening costs of ignoring NCDs. ■



International organizations seek to assist and support Caribbean tourism

Some international tourism organizations have signaled their intention to boost the travel industry in the Caribbean, which has been negatively affected by the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This comes on the heels of a UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) study of data to solve the most important problems facing the sector in the subregion, caused by the pandemic.

The UNWTO and the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) recently announced their common intentions and the search for strategies to assist the economic sector in the Caribbean.

Both entities gathered their members virtually, for two days in February 2021, to address the main challenges, especially the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic (travel and movement restrictions) in the Caribbean area. The workshop brought together 130 participants from 23 States, including the heads of national tourism administrations, national statistics offices, central banks and authorities addressing migration.

CTO's Acting Secretary-General, Neil Walters, welcomed the technical assistance offered by UNWTO and spoke to the importance of data and statistics in the preparation of post-pandemic recovery programs. ■



Environment Ministers commit to better and
**GREENER PANDEMIC RECOVERY
MEASURES**



A new landmark agreement was recently signed by Caribbean Environment Ministers, outlining a set of concrete decisions which will boost green recovery in the subregion, following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[READ MORE](#) 

Environment Ministers commit to better and greener pandemic recovery measures

On 2 February 2021, the signing of the Bridgetown Declaration took place at the XXII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean organized by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Government of Barbados.

The Bridgetown Declaration includes the establishment of a subregional Action Plan to restore ecosystems, a Circular Economy Coalition, an Integrated Environmental Information System, and a second, updated Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Programme.

The Ministers called for the integration of environmental issues to be placed at the heart

of the subregion's COVID-19 recovery strategies, with economic reactivation based on social inclusion, low carbon and resilient economies, and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

"The impending global response to the COVID-19 pandemic teaches us to work together to combat the common challenges to the planet and humanity," said the Ministers in the Declaration.

The Ministers considered that economic, fiscal, and financial packages and recovery investments should stimulate sustainable development efforts, both in the short and the long term, in order to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the

Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Ministers agreed to eight decisions that will be presented at the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The Assembly, the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, will be held under the overarching theme, "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals."

Further detail on the eight decisions is as follows:

1. A commitment to tackle all forms of pollution. An integrated approach to address the threat of pollution, with



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