Ministers of Education throughout the Caribbean Region and representatives of donor agencies convene at the Opening Session of the Review on School Safety in the Context of Systemic Risk: The Virtual Pre-Ministerial Forum being held during March 15-26, 2021

The Caribbean Safe School Initiative (CSSI) Virtual Pre-Ministerial Forum opened on March 15, 2021 under the theme Regional Review on School Safety in the context of Systemic Risk. More than 20 countries and territories as well as multilateral agencies and other partners attended the event that addresses the Caribbean’s response to economic, human, natural and health crisis in the education sector.

The organizers of the 10 day event include the Ministries of Education of St. Maarten and St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), UNESCO, ISRAAID, and UNICEF.

Keynote speaker Raúl Salazar, Chief of UNDRR-Regional Office for the Americas and Caribbean highlighted that the COVID 19 pandemic has demonstrated the systemic nature of risk generated by the extreme high levels of inter-connectivity in our world today. Mr. Salazar pointed out that the education system is susceptible due to the physical condition of their infrastructure and to the social, economic and environmental factors that affect the region. A local crisis can quickly cascade across sectors and countries, leaving devastating impacts. Prolonged interruption of education brings greater risk. He therefore championed the call for a systemic approach to better understand the complexity of challenges that the education sector faces.

Some of the drivers of risk include limited budgets on school safety actions, gender inequality, deficiencies in school infrastructure, poor access to water and sanitation, limited access to internet connectivity, multi hazard vulnerability, inadequate use of preventative health services, slow economic growth, high debt, and lack of economic diversification. All of this is further compounded by the fact that the Caribbean is located in a basin prone to natural hazards such as hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

This multi stakeholder Virtual Forum will therefore promote the sharing of lessons learnt from COVID-19, register improvements for existing policies and tools and lobby for the support of more countries in signing the Antigua & Barbuda Declaration on the Caribbean School Safety Framework at the third Ministerial Forum. It also sets the agenda for the Third CSSI Ministerial Forum to be held in St. Maarten in 2022. The CSSI is directly linked to the international agreements of the Agenda 2030, notably the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

While education systems in the Region continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, executive director (ag.) of CDEMA, Elizabeth Riley charged the High-level delegations to recalibrate...
based on lessons learnt. She implored, “we are more successful when we work together…sign the Declaration, stake your claim in the CSSI, in many ways our future depends on it. She added that the CSSI had only come this far because of strong political leadership and support and a clear pathway for achieving an agreed vision.

“While in the midst of a prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, the existential threat of climate change persists, there is an ongoing effusive disruption of Mt Soufriere in St. Vincent & the Grenadines and early forecasts reveal that we might be in for another active Atlantic Hurricane Season. If ever there was a moment in time which reinforces that we live with systemic risk, it is now.”

Since 2017 CDEMA has mobilized approximately US $2.5 million through the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Government of Norway, UNICEF and USAID. Its Model Safe School Programme (MSSP) has also delivered standardized school safety assessment tools including a mobile application. Among Riley’s key recommendations are for ministers to anchor schools’ resilience policies through a fully integrated school safety program in Education Ministries, budgeting for this and leveraging external funding such as the Green Climate Fund and the explicit inclusion of digital solutions in school safety programs.

Dr. Aloys Kamuragiye-UNICEF Representative for the Eastern Caribbean noted that a pre-existing learning crisis has been exacerbated by COVID 19 in the Region. He further stated that there is significant evidence globally that schools are not among the main drivers of the pandemic. “Governments must prioritize opening of schools in a safe manner. Schools should be the last institution to close and the first to open. Investments in strengthening capacity and distance education is needed,” he added.

In her opening remarks, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction Mami Mizutori said that the Caribbean is exposed to the entire spectrum of natural hazards. “This has been a tremendous test for the Caribbean…nevertheless more than half of Caribbean countries now have their schools open...it is testament to the value of cross-cultural collaboration to mitigate systemic risk”, Ms. Mizutori affirmed.

Drawing from his own country’s experiences the Hon. Curtis King, Minister of Education and National Reconciliation in St. Vincent & the Grenadines and co-host of the virtual forum called for countries to build resilience in the education sector. Hon Minister King stated that Dengue Fever outbreak, La Soufriere volcano eruption, COVID-19 and the hurricane season highlighted the nature of systemic risk. He stated that COVID-19 has impacted every sector of our region in ways we did not imagine. He further stated that St. Vincent & the Grenadines were far from ready for online teaching, but despite the odds, the Ministry of Education developed plans and put measures in place for continuity of education.

“We must integrate comprehensive disaster management policies,” the current chair of the CSSI said. He made an appeal to stakeholders, development partners and governments to work together to create safe spaces at schools and make school safety a top priority in the region.

Incoming chair and co-host of the Virtual Forum, St. Maarten, has also seen its share of disasters. The Hon. Minister of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport drs. Rudolph E. Samuel highlighted that immediately following the devastation of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, St. Maarten St. Maarten installed the Safety & Emergency Management Committee (SEMC). The SEMC is commissioned to adapt the Comprehensive School Safety Framework at the national level; set up plans and strategies for safety and emergency management; continuous disaster preparedness and maintenance; and crisis management. That same year, St. Maarten began the consultative process on the school safety Roadmap; trained stakeholders on assessing hazards in schools; safety & Emergency Response guidelines were approved and schools began to work on their school safety & emergency plans. In 2019, safety & Emergency teams were installed in each school; school safety material was distributed to schools, school evacuation procedures were drafted and work began on the Safety Ambassadors Program for elementary schools.

In giving brief remarks on school safety, the hon. Minister of Education, Science, Culture & Sport of Curacao. Mr. Steven Croes stated that COVID-19 impacted financial, education and social sectors. Curacao has no experience in handling systemic risk, he stated. Policies on Safe School Infrastructure and Operations were
DISASTER THREATS EXPOSE WEAKNESS IN REGION’S SYSTEMIC RESPONSE

“Prepare for Risk Reduction”, aid agencies tell Ministers of Education

By: Torana Granston

there are some minimum needs when it comes to access to education that we need to focus on. Simple things like transport, food, shelter, academic resources & support for psychosocial development. He further added that the added value of trained teachers was seen and that we must continue to recognize their innovation despite the many challenges.

Later in the day, Permanent Secretaries of the Region provided updates on their preparation and response to COVID-19 and the hurricane season. They all related that while disasters exposed the severity of weaknesses in education management, opportunities have emerged to build back better and this must follow a systemic and inter-sectoral approach.

The Virtual Caribbean Safe School Initiative Pre-Ministerial Forum runs from March 15-March 26, 2021. Apart from the opening session, technical sessions have been planned surrounding School Safety Focal Points, National Disaster Management Directors, Inter Sectoral Partners, Youth, Education Practitioners and Finance Ministries.

For more information about the Virtual Forum, please access the Forum Platform: https://pheedloop.com/cssi2021/site/home/
DISASTER THREATS EXPOSE WEAKNESS IN REGION’S SYSTEMIC RESPONSE
-“Prepare for Risk Reduction”, aid agencies tell Ministers of Education

By: Torana Granston

DID YOU KNOW?
In the education sector alone 1.5 billion students globally have had their education interrupted by COVID-19. According to UNESCO, 3 out of 5 of these students live in Latin America and the Caribbean. Primary & Secondary students lost 158 out of 190 days in the school calendar in 2020.
Objectives: Share and discuss how Permanent Secretaries can make further progress towards achieving the CSSI objectives and expected outcomes

Number of Attendees: Approximately 30

Welcome: Dr. Saadia Sanchez-Vegas, Director and Representative, UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean

The protection of the right to education is a key priority in all disaster management policies. UNESCO has initiated discussions on the future of education. The Forum gives the opportunity to prepare for hazards. Education for Sustainable Development 2030 has started defining key strategies in times of multiple crisis. A systemic approach for disaster risk is needed.

Moderator: Dr. Faryal Khan, Programme Specialist for Education, UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean

Speakers:
- Dr. Jair Torres, Disaster Risk Reduction Advisor, UNDRR
- Dr. Angeela Jokhan, Permanent Secretary, Fiji Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts

1. Presentations:

Setting the context
Dr. Jair Torres, Disaster Risk Reduction Advisor, UNDRR

It is important to put the education sector in the context of systemic risk and link the CSS framework to development, climate change and resilience issues to achieve the 2030 SDGs. Different risk management systems operate interconnectedly: national, regional and global. Each of these connect with different sectors, one of them being education. On the other hand, the education sector is working with different sectors to achieve the SDG. This interconnectedness is what requires the 3rd CSS Pillar to be broadened to also include education for sustainability, adaptation and resilience. The CSS framework needs to be opened to other sectors to make sure we really address risk in the education sector with a systemic risk approach. Try to influence the way how other sectors can help to implement the school safety agenda such as telecommunications sector, public infrastructure, among others. Social systems are interacting with natural systems creating additional risk. The way forward is to further develop the different risk management levels, from school to global level, from a child-centred approach.

Experiences from the Pacific

Associate Professor Anjeela Jokhan, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts, Fiji.

In the COVID-19 context challenges existed to deliver education remotely, mainly due to issues related to access to internet, easy access to written materials, access to digital devices, and insufficient support at home. In response, actions were taken to support remote learning. This included worksheets and study guides made by staff, 750 videos for ECE, Primary and Secondary school students with lessons broadcasted through agencies, social media used by teachers to connect with students, home visits/teaching by teachers for students with special needs. Also, programmed where aired on radio, focused on developing literacy and numeracy. The Commonwealth of Learning created the Pacific Regional Channel with videos on demand with lessons in practical sciences (chemistry, biology, physics and mathematics) for secondary schools. These can be watched online or downloaded to on mobile phones to the watched offline.

During 2019 and 2020 Fiji had to deal with two important cyclones. Close coordination with the national disaster management agency was carried out in preparation for both events. Following disaster impact, rehabilitation and repair of school started immediately. Also, psychosocial support was offered to affected families. Food student severely affected was provided for 3 months, schools were equipped with water tanks, solar power projects in schools were implemented and school structures were rebuilt in a stronger manner.

2. Discussions with Permanent Secretaries

Moderator: Marcel Goyeneche M., Event Facilitator

Provide insight on measures in place for safe learning environments in Covid-19 context?

Guyana-Alfred King, Guyana

COVID-19 exposed on the weaknesses in the system. Rapid assessment was done and work with development partners carried out. Technology use not widespread in education hence it was difficult in remote hinterland areas. A Blended Education approach was chosen, MOE owned Learning Channel
Broadcast but with no local content. Working on redesigning education system. Outsourcing ICT strategic plans. Provision of Smart Gadgets to students and concessionary data rates to teachers.

**Wesley Clerveaux, Turks & Caicos Islands**
Affected by 2017 Hurricanes Irma & Maria, several schools relocated to off-site locations. Use of ICT gap was glaring back then, and ICT investment were made. Hence, delivery of education upgraded to ICT before Covid-19. Pandemic fast tracked procurement of ICTs, with Smart boards in classes and cameras will follow. Special needs students also being catered for. Focus is on Building Back Better & Resilience.

**St. Vincent & the Grenadines**
Challenged in managing the pandemic because of fear and scepticism by the response of public. General protocols prepared but each school revised it to its needs. Increased janitorial staff, thermometer checks, vaccination campaign has been resisted, making Public Education campaign difficult.

**Grace McLean, Jamaica**
Training & development of emergency management manual. Following the school closure in March 2020, the National School Management System implemented virtual learning. Team worked on developing new content and multimedia engagements. Teachers visited communities to follow-up. Psychosocial support was provided, also trying to address fear and scepticism. One Laptop per Child approach was advanced, with a stimulus to parents to purchase devices. Mobile intervention program: literacy & numeracy specialists deployed to reach students in remote areas. Teachers were among priority group for Vaccination. COVID-19 was a crisis but also a great opportunity.

**PS Greenaway, Antigua & Barbuda**
Collaboration with the Ministry of Health to distribute PPEs to teachers and students. Adjustments were made for social distancing, followed by schools on a shift system since September 2020 reopening. Daily temperature checks, handwashing, isolation rooms have been implemented. Additional teachers and janitorial staff in light of social distancing Covid-19 protocol monitors hired as there were challenges in adherence to protocols, school transportation and hiring school nurses with loss of income from tourism.

**Betty Alleyne-Headley, Barbados**
Public-private partnership for procurement of ICT devices. Various systems for delivery of education, with a blended approach most popular. School monitors and safety officers installed, and training of teachers carried out. Challenged in producing content, connectivity issues, need for water tanks, generators, renewable energy in schools. Education monitoring unit launched to look at building a new approach.

**Lyneth Monteith, The Cayman Islands**

Shermina Powell-Richardson, St. Maarten
UNICEF supported implementation Comprehensive School Safety Plan, Education Continuity Plan adopted. There is a unique nature of 2 island nation. There is a connectivity issues with devices. In addition, cross border agreements affected movement of teachers and students. Adoption of policies and legislation with changes in exams and others took place. Looking for regional best practises on how to ensure education continuity.

3. Key messages coming out of the session- conclusions
- Further strengthening the CSSI requires better inclusion of a systemic approach into the Comprehensive School Safety Framework.
- Cooperation across sectors is key to make schools safer and more resilient.
- COVID-19 has exposed weaknesses of the education sector.
- While every country is implementing the best strategy for its contexts, we must collectively search for best practices and develop approaches that can cater for the needs of everybody in the education sector.

Participate in the collaborative diagnosis on systemic risk in education
Join Into Systemic Risk Padlet (English | Español | Français)
Objectives: Garner positive and challenging experiences, lessons learnt, Plans, Strategies, Implemented Methodologies and Reports on Good Partnerships

Number of Attendees: 130 Participants + 20 Social Media Viewers

Moderator: Dr. Kerry-Ann Thompson, Facilitator, CSSI Program Officer-CDEMA

Dr. Thompson outlined the advocacy meeting scenario. School Safety Focal Points were placed into four groups for the purpose of developing a clear and simple plan for advocacy to influence national policy. The four areas of focus were child abuse, infrastructural investments, school engagement in DRR & curricula review

1. Presentations:

Group 1 - Effectively addressing abuse and violence in the education sector
David Maximea, Dominica; Camila Ferreira, The Cayman Islands; Dr. Idealia Ferdinand, St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Violence against children is a human rights violation and a growing problem globally. About 61% of abuse cases reported in EC and 39% of child sexual abuse cases never reported. Findings suggest lack of awareness, lack of continuous training on child abuse. Limited personnel with skill set to address issue. Stakeholders are urged to know protocols & legislation for child protection, remove barriers & enforce protocols and increase media coverage on issue. It is important that every case is dealt with. There must be a focus on quality education assurance. Every school must be a safe space and must maintain cycle of trust. This requires dedicate human and financial resources for a holistic program. High-level commitment needed to address this issue.

Group 2 - Importance of maintenance programs and budget allocations to protect investments in the education sector
Bernez Khodra, St. Lucia; Nicole Johnson, Guyana; Hyacinth Brown, Montserrat; Rolston Nlceo, Antigua & Barbuda

Today there is a significant gap in maintenance of facilities. Also, they are often used as Emergency Shelters. Facilities exposed to abuse eg lack of security, degradation and external shocks. Maintenance critical to structural integrity of buildings and protecting past investments in the education sector. Stakeholders are urged to influence policy makers, authorities in charge of public buildings and budget offices. Maintenance software can be used to prepare budgets, follow up on maintenance implementation, retrofiling or construction. Also, it’s important to allocate funds for ICT integration in education and employ data driven interventions, launch awareness campaigns with stakeholders and seek technical support from NDMD. Utilize CDEMA School Safety Assessment Tool.

Group 3 - Fostering engagement by schools in school disaster management, including risk identification, emergency plans, training, equipment and drills
Petrina Clarke-Archie -Trinidad & Tobago; Michelle Carter-Trinidad & Tobago; Tonya Hyacinth-Grenada; Bernez Khodra-St. Lucia; Glyne Price-Barbados

Absence of a dedicated unit with authority for this. Skill set, competency level, staffing challenges. Prohibitive nature of systems for standardized approach. There is an insufficient budgetary allocation. Stakeholders urged to increase budgets to close gaps in DRR, provide continuous training, prepare a national plan for DRM in schools, organize intersectoral arrangements for drills for greater stakeholder involvement, encourage NGO membership and volunteerism, offer Government scholarships/incentives for DRR specialization, engage and involve youth in process, design Innovative strategies and create DRR management teams in schools.

Group 4 - Curricula review to incorporate disaster risk resilience education in coordination with examination bodies
Sean Cahill, The Cayman Islands; Arthur Selwood, The British Virgin Islands; Tonya Hyacinth, Grenada; Ciria Jean Francois, Haiti; Higgs, Bahamas

Region is exposed to multi hazards and COVID-19 affected every territory, thus there is a shared experience. Absence of enabling environment for curricula review. Integration is relevant for individual, family and community awareness on DRR. Education is a key concern in Sendai Framework and school is second to family as institution of significance. Stakeholders urged to draft a Disaster Resilience Curricula Framework for all grades. Best
Practice: Use Infusion approach to create opportunity for DRR messages in all subjects, develop a Regional survey for DRR data collection, increase awareness & planning to protect the Caribbean from systemic risk and overcome challenges.

2. Questions & Answers:

What is the Route to approach to request to create a safe NETWORK for abused children to seek help?
Group 1: Integrate child protection awareness in social studies curriculum. Filter all reports through a clear chain of command

Identify other areas for budgetary allocation for safe schools apart from structural integrity?
Group 2: Finances can also be allocated to psychosocial support, CCTV systems, fencing, environmental conditions, spiritual interventions, interagency approach e.g. M.O.H

What has been the experience with schooling arrangements during the pandemic and how is safety considered in this context?
Group 3: In T&T, teachers prepared learning packages and left them at schools for children to pick up Online teaching has been challenging Disparity exists between ICT access and connectivity. Media programs used to fill the gaps. Schools closed except for exam students. Safety protocols in place and isolation rooms for limited student population

Explain further, the infusion approach?
Group 4: Ask students to write on their understanding of DRR. Use existing subjects/disciplines to teach about DRR. Infuse/integrate/incorporate DRR into projects. E.g., For Science students-build a volcano, research how hurricanes are formed.

Is there a relationship between racism and disaster, how can we work on this at the school level?
Arthur Selwood: Transfer knowledge on caring for each other especially during disasters. The Caribbean is a diverse Region, teach on this Celebrate our diversity in education.

Petrina Clarke-Archie: Teach children that disasters do not discriminate.

Hyacinth Bramble: Embrace the cultures of different countries at special events e.g., culture day.

Bernez Khodra: Use the curriculum to underscore the importance of sharing, teach lessons on equality, disaster preparedness & recovery process.

Simon Boxall: People with economic vulnerability are less likely to bounce back from disasters e.g. single mothers who are burdened. After Hurricane Ivan, Caymanian children lost approximately 40 school days because schools were used as shelters. The Cayman Islands is looking at ways of providing additional support for single mothers and psychosocial support for children during and after disasters

3. Poll results

What does advocacy mean to you?
2. Key messages coming out of the session- conclusions

- Violence in school is a very real problem, creating silent and deep impacts in society. Therefore, this is a key issue to address in our approach to school safety.
- Neglecting education sector infrastructure is a costly matter. Governments are much better off protecting past investments than protracting expensive construction to due infrastructure deterioration.
- There is not sufficient collaboration in school-level disaster management. This results in dissimilar efforts and achievements.
- While local efforts have been made to incorporate risk management into curricula, this is very insipient. Building professionals with a risk reduction and resilience focus starts by teaching children today.

Participate in the collaborative diagnosis on systemic risk in education
Join Into Systemic Risk Padlet (English | Español | Français)
Objectives: capturing good practises in responding to multi hazard risk; collaboration with Ministries of Education

Number of Attendees: 111 Participants + Social Media Viewers

Moderator: Mr. Nahuel Arenas Garcia, UNDRR Deputy Chief of Regional Office for Americas & Caribbean

Panel:
- Mr. Jasen Penn, Director (ag), Department of Disaster Management, British Virgin Islands
- Ms. Andrew George, Program Director, National Emergency Management Organization, St. Lucia
- Ms. Michelle Forbes, Director, National Emergency Management Organisation, St. Vincent & the Grenadines
- Ms. Andria Grosvenor, Deputy Executive Director (ag), CDEMA CU

1. Opening remarks:

Mr. Nahuel Arenas Garcia, UNDRR
We see this session as a particular step in contributing to a permanent dialogue and enhanced coordination between national entities in charge of DRM and Ministries of Education to ensure school safety. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how a local crisis can quickly cascade across sectors and countries leaving devastating impacts on economies and the health and wellbeing of millions of people, including the impact on the education of millions of children. This pandemic has been an example of the systemic nature of risk generated by extreme levels of interconnectivity in our world.

To address systemic risk, we require a systemic approach. This means to institutionalize and strengthen multi-sectoral, inter disciplinary and trans disciplinary management of different hazards including biological ones. It also includes promoting an enhanced collaboration between DRMOs and authorities and platforms as all key sectors such as education, health, food systems, transportation, planning and finances. It must ensure a human centred approach with the focus on the most vulnerable, so that no one is left behind. The engagement of the private sector and civil society is of utmost importance, as well as promoting a greater articulation of science, policy and practise.

Connect and articulate Evidence-based decision making. This is the type of risk governance architecture that we need to build we aim to capture some of the good practises and lessons learnt from those directly involved in managing hazards that interact with each other which challenge national and regional capacities. We are pursuing insight and opportunities for further collaboration between NEMO and MOE.

3. Presentations:

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<tr>
<th>Mr. Jasen Penn, BVI Lessons Learnt</th>
<th>The Way Forward</th>
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<tr>
<td>Safety First: Protecting persons from immediate or physical harms, BVI took the decision to close schools after Hurricanes and during COVID-19 Temporary classrooms were also erected, partnering with civil society and volunteers to ensure safe environments. Children reassigned to schools in their neighbourhoods and at all age facilities. This made room for larger schools to be used as shelters by families who were impacted by Hurricanes. NEMO did oversight and inspections before reopening, preparing modified learning environments and ensuring that sanitization systems were in place.</td>
<td>Certify all schools as safe-this requires collaboration so that environmental elements can be incorporated. BVI Piloted PARRO SMART CARE FACILITIES CONCEPT. This has 4 pillars: 1. Making learning safe and healthy 2. Integrating disaster management into the curriculum 3. Promoting Climate Adaptation 4. Supporting Resilient Education.</td>
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<td>Access is Everything-Remote Learning must consider devices and data Devices were donated by the private sector, civil society and individuals to students who lacked Students &amp; teachers who lacked internet connectivity were able to benefit from discounted rates on internet from Digicel &amp; Flow service providers. Service providers also offered free data once students visited educational websites.</td>
<td>Development of SMART SCHOOLS with UNICEF’s support who provided a toolkit. UNICEF brought in consultants to assist in disaster preparation education for students, teachers and parents.</td>
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<td>Flexibility: Blended Learning, Classroom &amp; Online. Different student populations require different needs. The staggered approach or shift system was used to ensure that students who faced learning challenges were prioritized.</td>
<td>Continuous Assessments building on work started since 1998.</td>
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<td>4 Safe Schools have been certified and 5 more to be established in 2021</td>
<td>Training was given to teachers by health, environmental and fire authorities.</td>
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<td>SAFE (physical) +HEALTHY (meals) +GREEN (green spaces, water conservation, environment) =SMART</td>
<td>For more information about the Virtual Forum, please access the Forum Platform: <a href="https://pheedloop.com/cssi2021/site/home/">https://pheedloop.com/cssi2021/site/home/</a></td>
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In school attendance and to make up for insufficient classrooms.

Collaboration: DMOs, local NGOs and Aid Agencies & Private Sector resulted in School Emergency and Education Continuity Plans being completed

Adventist Disaster Relief Agency Wash Program provided portable toilets and wash stations. Some schools rebuilt by business persons. Repairs and Retrofitting done by local volunteers. Public health partnerships were reached for Social Distancing taskforce with smaller teams at schools.

BVI is continuously striving for the SMART Standard!

2. Questions & Answers:

What are the essential actions for safe return to schools in a COVID-19 environment?

Michelle Forbes-SVG: Dialogue with MOH on what must be in place for the safe opening of schools. We also indicated to the MOH and MOE that we have PPEs in stock should they need when schools are reopened.

Besides a structurally sound facility what other factors are considered for a school to be utilized as an emergency shelter?

Andrew George-SLU: Sourcing funds for multipurpose emergency shelters construction. Exploring the use of private sector property as shelters with MOU signing. Preparing for the influx of displaced and migrant vulnerable populations from other territories. Increasing shelters to reduce density of shelter population

What kind of interactions with sectors such as telecommunications, energy for business continuity have you had?

Jasen Penn-BVI: MOU was signed with telecom providers for open networks during disasters. Utility companies agreed to restore power to key buildings first during an emergency Unite BVI support saw donations of satellites, communication devices, beds, clean water, food etc, relief supply distribution

How do we ensure that NEMOs radically focus more on prevention, mitigation, preparation and preparedness for school safety rather than on response and recovery?


3. Remarks by Ms. Andria Grosvenor, CDEMA

How is CDEMA supporting school safety?

- Education is a key priority in CDM.
- Advancing CSSI development
- Partnering with donor agencies
- Institutional Support
- Coordination of 4 countries NEMO: ANU, SLU, ANT, SVG
- Development of MSSP, Training of Assessors
- Governance-networking of Safe School Working Group

Main recommendations for SS Focal Points and NDMO

We don’t have the benefit of time for the CSSI Agenda to evolve because of cascading systemic risk. We have to move more rapidly, we can’t play catch-up because of the multi hazard nature of the Caribbean Region, battling on all fronts such as COVID-19, hurricane season and drought. Things are happening that push the exposure agenda so rapidly that we have to move at a quicker pace towards response and resilience.

Conversations on Financing at the National Level are Priority. Integration in risk management is Critical and should be strengthened at the national level. Leveraging of experiences over the last year can help move the agenda forward

4. Key messages coming out of the session- conclusions

- Risk Governance Architecture needs to be built at the national level
- Increase capacity for risk assessments, data collection and financing
- Response and collaboration with MOE must be anchored in legislation for NEMO mandate & authority
- Do not create more risks but build resilience
- Rely on Evidence based decision making
- DRR is a shared responsibility and every sector must do its part to achieve resilience
- Engage private sector for more public-private partnerships for shelter management, relief distribution, fundraising, utilities, data etc

Participate in the collaborative diagnosis on systemic risk in education

Join Into Systemic Risk Padlet (English | Español | Français)

For more information about the Virtual Forum, please access the Forum Platform: https://pheedloop.com/cssi2021/site/home/
Objectives:
Promotion of Open Discussions between SS Focal Points and active or potential partners in water, sanitation, health, infrastructure, telecommunications etc.
Capturing positive experiences of interactions
Exploring opportunities for further collaboration

Number of Attendees: 110 Participants + Social Media Viewers

Facilitators:
Mr. David Knaute, UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Area - Climate Change and Environment Consultant, Dr. Bella Kovner, Head of Technical Unit, IsraAID

Session Format:
Panel Discussion, Questions & Answers, Group Work, Polling

1. Panel: Experiences of good practices of school safety inter-sectoral initiatives

Mr. Jacob Voss, Water Mission, Project Engineer Hurricane Dorian Solarization Project in The Bahamas
Dr. Idelia Ferdinand, Ministry of Education and Reconciliation, St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Mr. Samuel Katipa, Ministry of Education and Training, Republic of Vanuatu

2. Presentation: Overview of inter-sectoral work

Mr. David Knaute, UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Area

Storm activity seems to be accelerating in the Caribbean Region and this has had a dramatic effect on education. Children are also affected because certain territories face water scarcity. There has been a projection of 300% increase in water borne diseases such as dengue fever, 1 of 3 children live in poverty, 80% of the food supply is imported leading to overweight and obesity among children. This is one of the main indicators for the prevalence of NCDs. Therefore, the Region’s response must be based on a multisectoral approach. CSSI is the ideal framework to make meaningful interventions in education since it focuses on 3 pillars; Safe Facilities (Infrastructure), DRM and DRR infusion in Curriculum. But this cannot be done in isolation as education collaborates with other sectors such as energy, water, social protection, health and environment. The CSSI needs other sectors, and every other sector starts with education. There is an interdependence. Eg. Investments need to be made in youth now so that they can become our future green engineers.

Four examples of this interconnectivity are:

Regional Integrated Protection Protocol: during emergencies, all services (health, education, social protection etc) are to remain available to children

Climate Change Targets: Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted by countries between 2021-2021 as a unique opportunity to renew commitments to the education sector. Initially most countries did not take education into account in drafting their Climate agenda but this is changing as education has become very strategic. Make sure that your country’s Climate agenda is aligned with the education sector priorities. Bridge the gap between DRR and Climate change agendas. We cannot work in a silo.

Climate Finance: Since the creation of the Adaptation Fund & Green Climate Fund in 2015, more Caribbean countries now have access to Climate financing such as ANU (infrastructure), BGI (water), DOM (integrated resilience), SLU (mitigation) and GRE (water). These are significant projects averaging $15 million USD per country. Connect with your territory’s GCF representative to access these funds for education.

Private Sector Engagement: working with non-traditional partners in education on projects such as the introduction of renewable energy in education. Public-private partnership is a reality in the Region and should be leveraged.

Remarks: Dr. Bella Kovner, ISRAAID

In recent years, the Caribbean has been experiencing monster storms that are becoming frequent and more destructive. Some of the consequences that we have experienced include an increase in acute poverty, malnutrition in children between 1-3 years, water borne diseases and obesity.
3. Panel Presentations

Mr. Jacob Voss, Water Mission-Post Hurricane Dorian Solarization Project in The Bahamas

Water Mission is a non-profit specialised ministry that works in the water sector. We understand the importance of doing this work inter-sectorally, so our impact is felt in health, infrastructure and education. In response to Dorian, we partnered with UNICEF and Bahamas Water & Sewerage Corporation. Two projects were introduced that have had an effect on local schools in Abaco, the region that was affected by Hurricane Dorian.

a. Abaco Sunny Waters Project: Solarization & Power blending design to improve resilience and uptime while reducing operational costs. The systems were designed to withstand Category 5 windspeeds and has a Primary Well Field and Pumping Station Distribution. This project allows for education continuity with a constant supply of water. Previously schools would be closed when there was no water availability.

b. Rainwater Catchment & Water Treatment System were installed at 6 schools in Abaco. This is a secondary water system that caters to more than 1200 student and staff. Training was conducted with the school population, maintenance plans drafted and remote monitoring is done from HQ to evaluate the systems’ success.

Ms. Jo-Anne Rolle-Carrette, DOM -Post Hurricane Maria Psychosocial support to Teachers and Students

In 2015, Tropical Storm Erika impacted the South-east of the island with loss of life, property and security. However, in 2017, this was eclipsed by Hurricane Maria, which was expected as a Category 3 but made landfall as a Category 5. 90% of housing was either damaged or destroyed. Schools serving as shelters were destroyed and populations displaced. Unlike the TS Erika relief, Hurricane Maria relief was slow because other countries were also devastated by Hurricane Irma at the same time and supplies were limited. Everyone was traumatized by this catastrophe.

The MOE recognised that recovery efforts had to take into account the psychosocial needs of students and teachers. MOE piloted a program with UNICEF, ISRAID and IOM called Return to Happiness (RTH) Program training teachers who would then conduct trainings at the school level. Teachers were allowed to express their trauma and were equipped with skills to assist them on their road to recovery. Sessions were delivered in 1-2 days format for teachers and 3 days for students covering Early Childhood Education to Secondary levels. Dominican psychologists from US also assisted and faith based agencies also partnered with MOE for psychosocial interventions. The program focused on using the arts to help students express their experiences, renew hope and restore trust in adult protection.

Intersectoral Partners assisted in overcoming challenges such as:
- Challenges in communication, road networks were compromised, telecommunications unreliable
- Limited availability of persons trained in RTH
- Insufficient counsellors
- Unavailability of materials
- Lack of safe spaces for sessions in school community because these were being used as Hurricane shelters

UNICEF assisted by providing water tanks, tents and tarpaulins to cover some school roofs. OECS gave psychosocial support to Counsellors. Return to school was done after assessments with the least damaged schools being opened first. Teachers are being trained in the RTH programs at the school and community level but a complete roll out in schools was affected by COVID-19. Support of the Schools’ Welfare Division will be sought. MOE now has a greater appreciation for international partners and remains committed to maintaining a good working relationship with them while establishing new ones.

Dr. Idelia Ferdinand, SVG-Inter Sectoral Collaboration: The design and implementation of Climate Change Migration/Adaptation (CCMA) and DRR Curriculum for Lower Secondary Schools

SVG is prone to multi hazards; dengue fever, mudslides, droughts, hurricanes, volcanic eruption, COVID-19. Building a culture of safety through education and influencing behaviour change is key to reducing disaster risk. Support of Curriculum was made possible through Regional Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project (RDVRP). Financing was achieved through grants and credits from the World Bank, European Union and CIF Pilot Program for Caribbean Resilience (PPCR). UK based consultants Sustainability Frontiers were contracted to execute the project.

To develop the Curriculum, research was first done. The data and information gathering process was very detailed with searches in print media, primary and secondary curriculum review, interviews with teachers and student focus groups. Meetings were conducted with Curriculum Developers, DRR and CCMA experts, civil society, youth NGOs, educators etc. A Workshop on Curriculum Review was hosted and site visits done throughout SVG to get an understanding of the gaps. Collaborations with various ministries contributed to the diversity of the Curriculum and has now increased resource capacity for teaching of the Curriculum topics. It can be integrated in all subjects.

For more information about the Virtual Forum, please access the Forum Platform: https://pheedloop.com/cssi2021/site/home/
The DRR Curriculum comprises:
1 model per Form, 10 strands for each module and 91 learning activities

Program pilot involved 7 schools from Forms 1-3. Student are encouraged to develop their family emergency plan, then work with the school disaster plan and finally, the wider community. The modules show a gradual progression. Feedback on the curriculum was invited from stakeholders during community meetings and also virtually. Training was done to implement the curriculum at the In-service and Pre-service teacher levels. Integration of the Curriculum at the Community College level is also being pursued. Final review, editing and publishing of curriculum is pending. This was delayed by Covid. Curriculum will be disseminated electronically. SVG is seeking partnership and funding to develop a curriculum at the primary level.

Mr. Samuel Katipa, VAN-DRR a National Priority

Republic of Vanuatu is located in the South-Pacific islands and comprises 83 volcanic islands. It is considered one of the world’s most vulnerable nations to natural hazards such as hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruption, tsunami and flooding. Over the last 5 years, it has experienced major disasters. Total losses 48.6 billion or 64.1% of GDP between 2017 and 2019. Tropical Storm Harold made landfall in the Pacific Island of Vanuatu on April 6, 2020 causing widespread damage. It struck 4 islands Santo, Malo, Pentecost and Ambrym with windspeeds of up 235 km/hr. One third of the country’s population (92,300) were affected including 24,300 children. They all live in the most affected areas. 885 schools have been destroyed. The economic losses are still to be determined.

Education Cluster and EOC was activated. A Taskforce was also activated. MOE and NDMO deployed rapid impact assessment teams for psychosocial support, shelter, food, water, facilities damage etc. Schools are still being used as temporary evacuation shelters while homes are being rebuilt. Monitoring was done for the restoration of schools to a safe and hygienic condition. Workshops were held with DRR and MOE clusters. Among the lessons learnt was the establishment of a multi sectoral cooperation platform to advance school safety, development of a comprehensive school safety policy, DRR training in a participatory manner and stronger relations with international partners. Had the DRR measures been in place, the severity of the disaster could have been lessened. Stakeholders must have a good understanding of the role of education in DRR. Data gathered and monitoring from the Harold has been important to have information and data available for future responses. Programs are in place to promote school safety pre, during and post disasters.

Mr. David Knaute -UNICEF’s relief response to TS Harold has been in the context of COVID-19, relying mainly on local resources. Immediately after the Storm, UNICEF partnered with government emergency teams to provide relief supplies and support to the affected population. Simultaneously, it focused on immunization of the population, water distribution and neonatal care. Emergency kits, educational and medical supplies were also donated. More than 25,000 people including children have benefitted from psychosocial support. Recovery efforts are now focused on Resilience. Vanuatu’s experience is very similar to the Caribbean having endured Hurricanes Irma, Maria and Dorian recently. DRR is a national priority of Vanuatu.

POLL QUESTION: What can we learn from the Vanuatu experience?
Consistent monitoring of protocols is vital to ensure the preservation of human and other resources
Standardization of assessment instruments allows for efficient data retrieval
Important to have information and data available

4. Questions & Answers

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| Have you tried to use this project to engage students and schools in understanding the water sector and the water resources? | Jacob Voss-Water Mission  
 a. Part of the Abaco Sunny Waters Project was an awareness campaign executed by local NGO Friends of the Environment. Water Mission has also collaborated with the Ministry of Works in producing educational materials for students and operators. School involvement is critical and it is built into this program, we are pushing for student ownership and understanding of the facilities |
| How has the project been affected by COVID-19 pandemic?                   | b. Covid-19 has emphasised the importance of hygiene, using treated water and using hand washing stations. We have also focused on public awareness in education on water filtration, treatment and COVID-19 prevention. |
| What would be the criteria for replicating Water Mission’s intervention in the Bahamas in other Caribbean islands? | c. We work around the globe and are open to many nations. A lot of our work comes out of disaster response but I am not the ultimate decision maker. |

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Is the Return to Happiness program applied to all age groups? If so, how?

Were you able to apply the MHPSS content also among school communities such as youth groups and parents? If so, in what ways?

What specific methodology or programs were used to support Counsellors? What advice would you give to other islands in the Caribbean?

Ms. Jo-Anne Rolle-Carrette-DOM

a. It is for school children but we rely on teachers to execute the program. The same format is used for teachers and students.

b. At the time we were overwhelmed and did not have the personnel to reach youth groups etc. However, faith-based organizations bridged that gap at the community level.

c. Train staff in psychological first aid or RTH program so that they can be prepared in the event of a disaster.

Tell us more about the resources required to develop such as a curriculum and whether you have the resources to implement it beyond the pilot phase.

Can you explain about the feedback received from teachers and how this curriculum can be linked to activities under the CSSI?

Dr. Ideila Ferdinand, SVG

a. We utilised existing text books, we consulted SD Unit for additional information on persistent pollutants, World Bank also provided information, archives and library. Implementation beyond pilot phase has been stalled due to COVID-19

b. In drafting process, Teachers were consulted from primary, secondary and special needs schools. Teachers’ panel also reviewed the material but complained that they were a bit burdened with additional responsibilities. After completion, a more effective feedback session was held with teachers. They were all happy and positive. 3 Pillar approach of the CSSI was integrated into the curriculum. Linkages are also being done on national and regional plans, as well as developing school safety plans

c. 1 Year, because consultants were from the UK, they had an intense schedule once they landed in SVG. There was a lot of follow-up working around a tight schedule.

How long was the process from consultation and review stage to pilot implementation?

What are the lessons learned that can be applied in your context?

- Collaboration with CDEMA
- Having up to date building codes
- Consistent Monitoring and evaluation
- Curriculum Integration: integrating DRR principles in Curriculum

Additionally, at the national level, intersectoral linkages should be institutionalised so that they can be operationalised

5. Key messages coming out of the session- conclusions

- Shared experiences have been to the advantage of the Region.
- There is a lot of room for inter-sectoral efforts and partnerships such as in Curriculum Development
- Multisectoral partnerships must be a national priority in preparing for DRR
- Climate agenda must be aligned with the education sector priorities
- DRR & CC experts must work together
- Leverage CIF Funding
- Successful implementation of the CSSI relies on other sectors
- Improve communication among stakeholders
- Consistent Monitoring & Evaluation

Participate in the collaborative diagnosis on systemic risk in education

Join Into Systemic Risk Padlet (English | Español | Français)

Group Discussion on the Systemic Risk Padlet

What are the challenges and barriers for intersectoral cooperation?

- Communication & Collaboration-The lack of effective communication or limited communication
- Everyone is working in their own corner. There is also the hoarding of information
- Priorities are different for each sector and although it may be important for some sectors, it is not as important as others. There is not enough collaboration between sectors.
- The availability of resources, lack of skills
- Movement between nations create challenges for regional intersectoral linkages and we should leverage the support of regional and international partners

For more information about the Virtual Forum, please access the Forum Platform: https://pheedloop.com/cssi2021/site/home/
THE VIRTUAL CARIBBEAN SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE PRE-MINISTERIAL FORUM:
Regional Review on School Safety in the Context of Systemic Risk

TECHNICAL SESSION 4 INTER-YOUTH
Monday March 22, 2021 - 10:00 am-12:00 pm

Objectives:
Building on the Outcomes of the Youth Forum that took place during the 2nd Ministerial Forum
Focus on Partnership & Support that Youth can provide to the SS Focal Points on the Implementation of the CSSI Road Map

Number of Attendees: 85 Participants + Social Media Viewers

Moderator: Mr. Phael Lander, Dominica National Youth Council 1st Vice President

Session Format: Panel Discussion, Questions & Answers, Videos from Caribbean Youth Leaders

1. Panel: Experiences of good practices of school safety inter-sectoral initiatives
Ms. Angelen Dover, Dominica, Youth Leader Representative
Mr. Brendon Taylor, Barbados, Youth Representative CDEMA Youth Steering Committee for Comprehensive Disaster Management
Mr. Adelin Pierre, Haiti, Focal Point for LAC at United Nations Group for Children and Youth
Ms. Priyanka Lalla, Trinidad & Tobago, UNICEF youth advocate for the Eastern Caribbean

2. Welcome & Introductory Remarks: Ms. Annel Lewis, Dominica CARICOM Youth Ambassador, Program Assistant-ISRAAID Dominica
Throughout the Region, safe school environments have always been a common theme in the context of climate resilience and youth empowerment to foster growth and sustainable development globally. In Dominica, many NGOs and CSOs have contributed significantly to the CSSI, one of whom is ISRAAID. The approach of Compassionate Assistance Reaching Everyone (CARE) has restored happiness to Dominica. Psychosocial support, recreational kits and rebuilding of homes and schools were done by ISRAAID. In combatting COVID-19, training was conducted on safety and DRR. Our united voice as it relates to safe schools in the Region will not only blaze the trail for a generation that will be inspired to care but this will also remind us of the pivotal role youth play in sustainable development and climate resilient societies.

3. Presentation: Mr. Clive Murray, Community Resilience Specialist, CDEMA
The Current Opportunities & Challenges of Caribbean Youth Governance and Advocacy in a Systemic Risk Approach
Caribbean Reality: The Region is considered the second most vulnerable in the world with multi hazards and high degrees of exposure. Our fragile ecosystems are often linked to socio-economic development and large populations live in areas prone to hazards. Experience of multi hazards amplifies the nature of systemic risk that the Caribbean faces.

Systemic Risk Environment: This occurs when a hazard will not only lead to negative effects in parts of the system but also to failure of the system as a whole. Risk becomes systemic when a society’s essential systems such as telecommunications, infrastructure and health are potentially threatened. (Kaufmann & Scott, 2003; OECD, 2003). CDEMA concurs with the UN GAR on DRR that the traditional understanding of risk as events distinct from each other has given way to the reality that the world is subject to a system of risk elements that constantly interact and build up, unfold and manifest as the world’s most visible disaster. Through its harmonized, multi sectoral governance mechanism, CDEMA has long adopted, what the GAR refers to as a network perspective to risk governance, needed to effectively counter systemic risk. The guiding CDM strategy considers all hazards, phases, sectors, institutions and levels. If there is ever a time when the Caribbean is experiencing systemic risk, it is now e.g. Climate Change is increasingly being seen as a COVID-19 patient.

COVID-19 Impacts: Students are falling behind because of school disruptions or closures and the digital divide. We need to anchor schools’ resilience through the development of safe schools’ policies, full integration of CSSI with the MOE programs, focal points must become the norm, develop strategies to adequately resource the CSSI, explicit inclusion of digital transformation and monitoring and reporting. There has also been an increase in unemployment rates (10.6%) largely due to the loss of tourism income according to the ILO. Youth participation and employment rates fell by 5.5% in the first quarter of 2020. Additionally, there is a lot of fear and uncertainty surrounding the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines. 1 in 4 youth have lost their jobs. The smallest drop in employment was recorded in agriculture. The Healthy Caribbean Coalition has also registered increased instances of mental health issues and depression.

Youth Governance & Advocacy: Young people are in the position to voice and manage the issues that affect them. They have actively participated in a number of International, Regional, National and Community level fora. A number of governance issues exists that give the youth the opportunity to make their voices heard.

Challenges & Opportunities: The youth face many challenges such as involvement in the decision-making process, participation in agenda setting or development planning and lackluster interest in advocating on CC/ DRR and other issues. The exclusion of DRM in the curriculum also places young people at a disadvantage while DRR awareness is poor at the community level.

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Youth are an untapped resource that can be engaged to drive the DRR agenda. They bring vibrancy, creativity and tech savvy skills to the table. Stronger connections can also be made between Caribbean youth as they work on national projects.

4. Round Table Discussion

**Opening Remarks: Phael Lander** - Youth across the Region have displayed resilience to its core. Youth movements such as national youth councils, youth parliaments, CARICOM ambassadors and other youth advocacy movements have embarked on many campaigns to advocate for breakthroughs in climate change, gender equality and equity, education and other issues that affect them.

**Can you share examples of how COVID-19 combined with the Hurricane Season impacted your activism?**

**Brendan Taylor** - In 2020, the Eastern Caribbean was not greatly affected by Hurricanes but by COVID-19. Our social activities have been modified. Everything has to be done via virtual platforms. The level of fear has dampened our level of activism such as beach clean-ups and other outdoor group events. Young people do not want to be responsible for transmitting COVID-19 to family members, having engaged in super spreader events.

**Phael Lander** - My level of activism and volunteerism was directly affected. Working as a student nurse meant that I was in the centre of it all. This heightened my defence mechanism. Activism is more impersonal now, when you are together you get to engage more with the young people.

**Adelin Pierre** - We have had to postpone activities to 2022 based on government regulations. We are also affected by connectivity issues but we are forging ahead to ensure that young people have access to information through virtual means.

**Priyanka Lalla** - COVID-19 has changed our way of life and the way we communicate. I have continued to use my social media platforms for child rights and advocacy. However, I cannot visit schools to meet with other interested students with the COVID-19 restrictions in place. There is a different impact when I meet other young people in person. It has affected our way of learning and social interactions.

**What Recommendations do you have to promote student engagement in remote learning?**

**Angelen Dover** - As a college student, we did assignment and tests on a virtual platform. It did pose a challenge because our mindset was on vacation mode. When you are at home, it calls for greater discipline to remember that you are still in school. I also saw my sibling struggling to pay attention online. I would recommend shorter classes but more structured classes on Zoom. The child must feel as if they are in school. Discipline must be enforced and teachers should encourage participation on the virtual platform. Zoom should also be introduced in a gradual way. A plan should have been in place. Education interruption affected some students, so they did not respond well to the virtual classes.

**Brendan Taylor** - Barbados MOE has instituted a policy of a maximum of 25 minutes for class sessions. You can be easily distracted or become fatigued. Infusion of online educational games during classes and adult supervision in the homes are also suggested. We have seen more success in the attendance rate of students who have adult supervision to coach them along. This is not always possible but should be embraced wherever possible.

**Phael Lander** - Identify areas where gaps exist. Identify students who have device or connectivity issues and make them a priority in education delivery. Listen to the young people’s voice on such an important issue.

**What kinds of participatory platforms do you recommend to strengthen the involvement of youth in taking responsibility within the community and DRR actions?**

**Priyanka Lalla** - Children are the key stakeholders for the future and must be included in decision making. Children with disabilities must be given resources and information to help them understand the challenges of climate change as well as information on disaster preparedness. The CSSI platform plays a critical role in helping youth find their voices and share their recommendations. Technology also plays a crucial role as it allows the youth to do their own research and find innovative solutions to problems. Use of mobile apps to communicate the information, books, flyers and other forms of media can also be produced on how to reduce our carbon footprint. We rely on adults to support us in helping to shape our voice, harness our creativity and planning for disasters. In Trinidad & Tobago we have setup a steering committee where I give representation for children and youth on Resilience.

**What do you believe will happen if young people underplay their part in efforts to strengthen climate resilience?**

**Adelin Pierre** - Young people make up the majority of the Caribbean population. They must play a role in strengthening climate resilience. Assist the government in achieving goals relating to DRR. People can also bring new ideas and take initiative with concrete actions to fight against Climate Change.

**Phael Lander** - We must take our own responsibility if we want to secure our future.

**How do you think Governments can help in order to achieve Safer Schools?**

**Brendan Taylor** - Governments cannot do everything. We have to begin to think on how we can tap into external sources of funding such as grants to push the CSSI. An example of this is CDEMA’s partnership with Norway for school renovations in the Region. However, safer schools must be made a top priority for governments. The 3 Pillar approach of CSSI is the key to resilience.

**Phael Lander** - We must advocate for a multi sectoral approach, everyone has a role to play in DRR.

**Adelin Pierre** - We need to integrate DRR and CC in the Curriculum. We need safer facilities. Governments must also implement the Sendai framework to make schools safer and train teachers.

**4. SLIDO Questions & Answers**

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3. Discussion on safer schools. There are so many things young people can do such as participating in many opportunities. Young people need to recognise that they have a voice and can contribute to beach clean-ups, reducing plastic usage and educating themselves on marine biodiversity. My focus is on change your society for the better.

LUCIEN YORK-St. Kitts & Nevis

All stakeholders need to be trained and re-trained in DRR and DRM. COVID-19 has introduced an additional layer of constraints for our schools and communities but presents the opportunity for one thing to protect the environment, we will see the manifestation of safer schools. Two of the activities that we have engaged in are the introduction of school-based activities and community outreach actions to raise awareness on climate resilience. Of concern is the fact that additional masks, gloves and sanitisation containers have increased garbage on the landfills.

Participant in the collaborative diagnosis on systemic risk in education
Join Into Systemic Risk Padlet (English | Español | Français)

5. VIDEO CONTRIBUTION FROM YOUTH ACROSS THE REGION

HEATHER BROCKBANK-The Bahamas

We support climate resilience by using alternative energy sources with solar panels being installed at primary and secondary campuses. We utilise the rainwater catchment system to hydrate our school gardens and Zoom to hold our advocacy meetings. We remain committed to this cause.

SEAN COOK-Barbados

Youth leadership is important because the youth are the future. They will make positive contributions on issues of change. Youth can use their social media platforms and also engage in their school community to tackle environmental issues. When you have a clean environment, you will learn better. Clean air leads to a longer life. During the COVID-19 lockdown, the environment was able to breathe.

Don’t give up, the voice of the youth is as important as anyone else’s. Use what you have learnt to change your society for the better.

SUMMER BENJAMIN-USVI

As the POP Youth Ambassador for the Caribbean, I believe youth leadership and climate resilience contribute to safer schools. Cross generational collaborations have opened up many opportunities. Young people need to recognise that they have a voice and can contribute to the discussion on safer schools. There are so many things young people can do such as participating in beach clean-ups, reducing plastic usage and educating themselves on marine biodiversity. My focus has been ocean health and plastic pollution. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on school life. Our schools have to become safer in order to reopen. Caribbean leaders need to include young people in policy making and direct actions.

LUCIEN YORK-St. Kitts & Nevis

Participate in the collaborative diagnosis on systemic risk in education
Join Into Systemic Risk Padlet (English | Español | Français)

6. CASE STUDY PRESENTATION: Inclusion in Cayman: Stories and Solutions from Our Caymanian Youth Ambassadors

Cristin Jackson-Inclusion means equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized e.g people with physical or mental disabilities, or minority groups.

Sadie Finch-In the Cayman Islands, the problem is that people see inclusion of the disabled as requiring extra resources. It’s not extra it’s different, visible vs invisible disabilities, mental health impact etc.

Two solutions are education on awareness on disabilities and Person-first vs identity-first language. There is more to a person than their disability. More parking spaces and facilities also need to be reserved for persons with disabilities.

Jhadarie Lumley

-Oppression of the LGBTQ+ community affects their mental health. Verbal, physical and mental abuse of this community is not acceptable. These communities have also been marginalised during COVID-19 and are struggling with mental health issues. Advocacy groups in Cayman have been providing support to this community. Do not discriminate and provide awareness among school officials so that this can be addressed in schools.

Cristin Jackson-Racism & Colourism-institutionalised during slavery, this is the systematic discrimination of people based on their race. Colourism encourages division on the different shades of colour. Both racism and colourism, impact mental health. People of colour have a harder time getting access to healthcare. Children are socialized to protect the lighter shade of their skin and in recent we have observed more Black people have died from COVID-19 because of limited access to resources. We can solve these problems through unconscious bias training, teaching the full truth in schools, reflection and discussion.

Dylan DaCosta-Advocacy on Wage & Income Disparity-lower income leads to lower accessibility to housing, increasing the housing crisis. There has been a link between low-income families and mental

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health issues, as well. Two solutions I can offer are company-based scholarships (income bracket quota), medical access and insurance coverage for therapy.

**Cristin Jackson**—The YAP is interested in furthering the conversation on inclusion and shaping young leaders for the future.

### 7. Key messages coming out of the session- conclusions

- The Youth are key stakeholders in any discussion on the Region’s future
- Youth want their voices to be heard on issues such as inclusion, the digital divide, school safety, child protection, cyber bullying and the environment
- Youth must not only participate in the consultative but also the decision-making process
- More DRR & CC awareness programs need to be done targeting youth
- Youth are an untapped resource that can be engaged to drive the DRR agenda. They bring vibrancy, creativity and tech savvy skills to the table. Their support and partnership cannot be understated.
Objectives:
Exposure of School Safety Focal Points to targeting practitioners, including teachers, principals, and other members of the school community, that have implemented good practises over the last year in response to education disruption that took place due to COVID-19.

Discovering Practises developed by Practitioners throughout the Region that can be adopted and adapted and that require support for their establishment as long term prevention and mitigation actions.

Number of Attendees: 85 attendees + Social Media Viewers

Moderator: Dr. Laurette Bristol, Programme Manager-HRD, CARICOM Secretariat

Session Format: Interviews & SLIDO Questions & Answers

1. Country Case Interviews-Inspiring Practices in the Caribbean

Highlighting Special Education in Cayman Islands
Ms. Janice Headley, Principal (ag) Lighthouse Special Education Institution
Interviewer: Ms. Lilach Grunfeld Yona, Head of Education, IsraAID

Advancing Psycho-Social Support in St. Lucia & St. Maarten
Mrs. Valerie Henry, President of the National Principals’ Association, St. Lucia
Mrs. Olga Mussington-Service, Manager Student Support Services Division, MOE, St. Maarten
Interviewer: Dr. Allison Flax-Archer, Secretary General, BVI National Commission for UNESCO

Navigating Widespread School Population in Guyana
Dr. Marcel Hutson, Chief Education Officer of Guyana
Interviewer: Ms. Natasha Forde, Ministry of Education, Sint Maarten

Exploring Multi-Hazard Context – The Bahamas
Ms. Benita Adderley, National School Safety and School Lunch Administrator, MOE, Bahamas
Ms. Sharmaine Sinclair, Assistant Director of Education, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, Bahamas
Interviewer: Ms. Gayle Drakes, CDEMA

2. Welcome & Introductory Remarks: Dr. Laurette Bristol, Programme Manager-HRD, CARICOM Secretariat

The COVID-19 pandemic generated an acute crisis in education systems worldwide leading to prolonged school closures to prevent spread of the virus regionally and internationally. Regionally, the MOEs have implemented emergency, remote and distance learning procedures in order to try and ensure the continuity of education and minimalization of gaps. But dealing with the aftermath of climate disasters is not new to the Caribbean education systems. Now we are required to ensure sufficient preparation for any possible future hazards. Our mitigation responses must therefore consider the impacts at all levels of the education system. The Caribbean can also congratulate itself on how it has been able to cater to the needs of its learners, so far, in a systemic risk environment.

3. Country Case Interviews Presentation: Highlighting Special Education in the Cayman Islands

Ms. Janice Headley, Principal (ag) Lighthouse Special Education Institution
Interviewer: Ms. Lilach Grunfeld Yona, Head of Education, IsraAID

a. Interviewer: Briefly describe your school’s mission and the profile of the students who attend there?
Response: To help our students with challenging needs develop their unique abilities to their full potential. We do this through innovative and individualised programs, parent and community partnerships. Our current student population is 120, 5-17 years old, with moderate to more severe learning disabilities. We also cater to students on the autism spectrum.

b. Interviewer: In what ways, did the unique needs of your students influence your response to the pandemic?
Response: Cayman Islands went into lockdown quite early to prevent a community spread, therefore our students were back at school since August 2020. We really had to think long and hard about how

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we were going to approach distance learning. The first thing we did was to ensure that we communicated with our students. Special needs students need support. We did social stories that parents would read to their children explaining why they had to be away from school. We also did videos and held meetings with parents and students. We had to ensure that the parents were ready to support their own children hence the reason for our parents’ series that focused on managing behaviour, zones of regulation, sensory integration etc Specialised equipment for communication, wheelchairs, walkers, sensory related tools and tach boxes were sent to the students’ homes as preparation for teaching and learning. Meetings were held with speech and language therapists, vision and hearing teachers and other support staff to have a multi-disciplinary approach. We also integrated tele therapy into the virtual learning experience.

c. Interviewer: With all of the knowledge and experiences that you have gained since COVID-19, is there anything you would have done differently?
Response: During the initial stages of the pandemic, we had to think on our feet. Now that we have a template and policies for distance learning, we would ensure that parents are trained in using the online platform. We have also continued the use of online learning even while the students are back at school, in the event of another disaster.

d. Interviewer: Any additional lessons that you would like to share?
Response: We need to close the digital divide, staff, student and family well being is also very important. Ensure that we have our policies and guidelines are in place. Upon return to school, continue to use several online platforms so that students can easily transition in the event of a disaster.

SLIDO Question: What was the greatest challenge you encountered? Thinking on our feet as leaders and pioneers in the absence of a distance learning policy, access to devices (private sector assisted) and recognising that teachers have families too and they were struggling to cope. Having a recovery plan in place also contributed to a smoother transition in returning to schools.

SLIDO Question: What specific strategies worked for students on the Autism spectrum? We utilised social stories, videos and also parent-teacher collaboration. It’s all about training, routine, practise and reinforcement.

SLIDO Question: What underlying issues did COVID-19 expose? The lack of parental involvement in Education, the lack of policies and training of parents etc

Advancing Psycho-Social Support in St. Lucia & St. Maarten

Mrs. Valerie Henry, President of the National Principals’ Association, St. Lucia
Mrs. Olga Mussington-Service, Manager Student Support Services Division (SSSD), MOE, St. Maarten
Interviewer: Dr. Allison Flax-Archer, Secretary General, BVI National Commission for UNESCO

Response: Mrs. Henry-Psychosocial concerns that evolved included increased level of child abuse and neglect, separation anxiety, depression and cyber bullying as more students were exposed to the internet. Distance learning meant that teachers were not able to pick up certain issues with students that they would readily spot in the classroom. Additionally, special needs students were a major concern, as the active visible presence of a teacher is very reassuring for them. At the secondary level, we registered increased levels of high school dropouts, student difficulty in navigating the online world and excess pressure was placed on exam students by parents. Teachers had difficulties coping with juggling work and home responsibilities. Teachers were also frustrated with students not signing in for online instruction. Further, teachers had to adjust schedules and also learn to use the technology. It was on the job training.

b. Interviewer: To what extent the psychosocial, mental and socio-economic wellbeing of key beneficences factored in to the COVID-19 response or decision making?
Response: Mrs. Mussington-Service- This was addressed in our Education Continuity Plan that caters for psychosocial and socio-economic wellbeing. They were considered in all important decision-making on issues such as which student groups would return to school first, who are the vulnerable students, what can we offer them and how could we adjust our promotion criteria. We conducted surveys with all stakeholders and beneficiaries that gave insight on their mental well-being, socio-economic conditions and views on the reopening of schools. Some schools conducted daily emotional classes where teachers tapped into the feelings of their students and held healthy conversations with them. Upon returning to school, the classes continued. Staff participated in mindfulness, stress management and self-care sessions, the RTH programs were also tweaked upon the opening of the new school year. Teachers were also encouraged to share reflections on how they were navigating the online world. One school introduced a fitness program to help teachers release anxiety and stress. Therapists were made available to teachers who needed them. A cadre of SSSD experts continued to monitor the progress and well-being of teachers. Teletherapy was also used. Care providers of support were grouped into 2 WhatsApp groups so that they were not neglected.

Response: Mrs. Henry, RTH Program was conducted for the first 2 weeks of the new school year. This prepared students for smooth transitioning into academics. Special sessions were held with teachers prior to the reopening of schools. District counsellors also visited schools and provided guidance
classes. It was very interactive and well received. Multimedia productions were done too. The School Feeding Program continued with deliveries being made at the home of students. All Counsellors were given a telephone to handle referrals and provide support. Workshops were also held with parents on managing at home learning. They now see the value of teachers.

c. Interviewer: What strategies are being used to help students and teachers who are coping with the pandemic?

Response: Mrs. Mussington-Service- The schools on St. Maarten have care teams which include social workers, guidance counsellors and special needs teachers. Care teams reach out to students and teachers through wellbeing magazines, e-newsletters and sessions. There was continuous monitoring of students even during the lockdown using Google forms, check ins etc. Students were given extensions on submitting assignments, if needed. Some schools granted teachers days off for their mental wellbeing. Student referral to care teams or the SSSD is structurally available. Food voucher assistance programs were also made available and at one school 100+ families were invited for a Christmas lunch prepared by teachers. This was done through donations from the private sector, furthering strengthening relations. Some schools also assisted parents with housing rent payments. Teachers were paired as accountability partners to check on each other. Teachers with pre-existing conditions, were allowed to remain at home and continue instruction, even after school reopening. The private sector also made donations of e-books and tablets.

SLIDO Question: What do we need to do to reinforce the dual role you mentioned for teachers? What should that support look like?

Mrs. Henry-Teachers need more support and resources as they function as parents and teachers. They are doing on the job training with online instruction. This improves the quality of teaching. Therefore, teachers should be given time for continuous training.

SLIDO Question: How do you ensure that all these support services reach all students and teachers, as it is hard to sustain them. What do you recommend?

Mrs. Mussington-Service-I would recommend serious collaborations. We have to be smart in terms of how we expend funds. Redirect funds to where the priority areas are. Stakeholder consultations, the Mrs. Mussington-Service -Service clubs can also play an important role in identifying needs. Child Protection Services are being actively engaged as vulnerabilities have increased since COVID-19. The business community can also offer family assistance programs to their staff. Skills training at the level of the Ministry of Labour is an opportunity. It takes an entire village to raise a child.

Navigating Widespread School Population in Guyana

Dr. Marcel Hutson, Chief Education Officer of Guyana

Interviewer: Mrs. Natasha Forde, Ministry of Education, Sint Maarten

a. Interviewer: As Chief Education Officer covering the entire 83,000 square miles of Guyana, what would you say are some of the underlying issues that were uncovered during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Response: Guyana’s situation is unique. We have approximately 163,000 students spread across 11 educational districts. The topography of the land means that some of our Regions can be harsh. We have discovered that we were never really prepared to meet the needs of our students, in responding to a pandemic of this nature. In the hinterland and riverain communities there is no access to internet, so we had to become innovative. We have spent $1.5 billion (GUYD) in producing worksheets to keep our students engaged. We have seen the importance of collaboration. Without this approach, we would not have made any inroads because we were taken by surprise.

b. Interviewer: How relevant was technology in teaching and what effective strategies did you implement, in areas of low-tech or no-tech availability?

Response: We prepared worksheets that matched a consolidated curriculum for areas with no internet penetration. Delivery of these worksheets meant travelling through rough terrain and then fostering parent-teacher collaboration. Where technology was available, we developed internet hubs for students. Free internet access was also given to some teachers. There was also training of 4000+ teachers through Coursera and 2000 through Profereto in the use of online teaching. It is not just about interacting with children but teachers have to become familiar with the different learning modes. We have also added 6 Learning Channels to our television transmission, allowing students’ access to all forms of education delivery.

c. Interviewer: Describe a few of your approaches to addressing the challenges derived from the COVID-19 pandemic

Response: Our ability to mobilize, we quickly called zoom meetings between stakeholders to gain support and strategize. The MOE did not make decisions in isolation. Education delivery cannot be
Reduced to one sector or one group of persons. But we have learnt the significance of collaboration for collective impact. We are also now integrating pandemics into our safe school policy.

Response: Ms. Adderley - Increased relationships with multi-sector stakeholders, the private sector and international partners. Our MOE sits on the NDMO and was able to make strong representation for education. Personnel were still on the ground evaluating our Hurricane Dorian recovery efforts when COVID-19 arrived. Because of these evaluations we were able to conclude that there was a need to develop additional policies. Our response was to create a strategic plan for safe reopening of schools, install SS committees at schools and conduct trainings in DRR. We have also maintained the partnerships came as a result of Hurricane Dorian.

Response: Ms. Sinclair - Because we had a plan in place for a virtual learning network reaching students in the remote islands of the Bahamas before Hurricane Dorian, we were able to quickly mobilise and begin instruction. One week after lockdown, we instituted online learning. We also crafted a plan for 3 instructional models; hybrid, face to face and virtual in the event of a future disaster. We needed to be able to quickly communicate with and train parents. Our partnerships resulted in devices being donated to teachers and students. Dialogue we are still working on some policies for inter-sectoral agreements. A national pacing guide was developed so that we would all know where each student was despite the instructional model.

Response: Ms. Sinclair - Knowing where our resources are and good dialogue to be able to address learning gaps. Having a strategic plan available also helps to guide our response and place teachers, students, parents, unions and the community at ease.

Response: Ms. Adderley - Hurricane Dorian left catastrophic devastation resulting in loss of documents and psychological damage, among many other effects. We responded by instituting an assistance program at the national gymnasium to regularise the education of students who were displaced. All key sectors were represented so it was one stop shop for assistance on records, insurance, housing etc. Persons were also given vouchers after needs evaluation. Management of the employee assistance program-guidance counsellors and psychologists to help teachers and students suffering from PTSD. We also had assistance from UNICEF and ISRAID in the creation of safe and happy places for children. The Bahamas Psychologists Association and MOH spearheaded programs that also assisted survivors of Dorian. This continued with the advent of COVID-19. The structured food voucher program also continued.

SLIDO Question: What about other support systems apart from technology? For example, some of the institutions’ overhead costs such as electricity were being reduced and transferred to teachers. In addition, power cuts and bandwidth issues are frequent problems.

Exploring the Multi-Hazard Context - The Bahamas

Ms. Benita Adderley, National School Safety and School Lunch Administrator, MOE, Bahamas
Ms. Sharmaine Sinclair, Assistant Director of Education, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, Bahamas
Interviewer: Ms. Gayle Drakes, CDEMA

a. Interviewer: How did the impact of Hurricane Dorian, better prepare you for the impact of COVID-19?

b. Interviewer: Share some of the most effective practises in managing multiple crises in a multi-island state such as the Bahamas?

SLIDO Question: Using worksheet and hubs, to what extent do you think the quality of education can be at par with regular classroom teaching? Any curricula considerations? There is no substitute for face-to-face interaction and classroom settings. But we must adjust to our new reality. We cannot afford education interruption. Implementing a consolidated curriculum was a timely intervention.

SLIDO Question: Have we evaluated the effectiveness of online learning for focus and attention issues, particularly for ADD/ADHD students?

We have started an evaluation in this area but it is incomplete. We want to ensure that our investments in education were well worth it. We have gotten anecdotal evidence from parents and teachers that they are pleased with the effectiveness of online learning.

SLIDO Question: Even with the setup of tech centres in the hinterland, what digital literacy challenges on the user side have you encountered and what must be done about them? Teachers were challenged with transitioning into online instruction. Head teachers had to be called in for training and monitoring as well.

Response: Ms. Adderley - Increased representation for education. Personnel were still on the ground evaluating our Hurricane Dorian recovery efforts when COVID-19 arrived. Because of these evaluations we were able to conclude that there was a need to develop additional policies. Our response was to create a Strategic Plan for Safe Reopening of Schools, install SS committees at schools and conduct trainings in DRR. We have also maintained the partnerships came as a result of Hurricane Dorian.

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For more information about the Virtual Forum, please access the Forum Platform: https://pheedloop.com/cssi2021/site/home/
Ms. Sinclair—Everyone was made aware of the deficiencies and collaborated on arriving at solutions such as the provision of electricity, solar energy, a specific amount of bandwidth for teachers, coordinating partnerships etc.

**SLIDO Question:** How do we ensure plans can be effectively implemented and proper coordination across sectors?
Ms. Adderley—You must have the buy in of the stakeholders, we have to consistently monitor and evaluate what is happening in the programs to guide how we coordinate the roll out of policies.

5. **Key messages coming out of the session—conclusions**
   - Develop policies where none existed. We must plan for crisis
   - We must become agile thinkers, recognizing that teachers are executing complex roles in this new reality
   - In the new forms of stakeholder collaboration, education becomes everybody’s business
   - Greater consideration is to be given to adjusting the promotion criteria as part of the psychosocial response
   - The importance of the response targeting parents
   - Develop site based, culturally relevant response for education delivery
   - The creation of WhatsApp groups at various leadership level, reducing bureaucracy and resulting in efficient communication
   - Build Capacity, Mobilise Resources; human and otherwise
   - Continuous monitoring and assessments of teachers and students
   - Be innovative, create safe and creative spaces for students to restore normalcy
   - Close data gaps so that learning loss is not too significant

**Participate in the collaborative diagnosis on systemic risk in education**
Join Into Systemic Risk Padlet [English | Español | Français]
Objectives:

Establishing a meaningful dialogue between representatives from Ministries of Finance and the school safety focal point at the Ministries of Education

Highlighting the fact that ensuring school safety is the starting point for reactivating the economy

Discussing the fiscal limitations that might impact the region due the economic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 disaster

Number of Attendees: 78 + Social Media Viewers

Welcome: Saskia Carusi, External relations officer, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean.

This is really a normative framework within the CSSI and so I am looking forward to the excellent participation of our contributors.

Moderator: Dr. Isaac Solomon, Vice President-Operations, Caribbean Development Bank

Session Format: Presentations & SLIDO Questions & Answers

1. Setting the Context

Simulating the Potential Impacts of COVID-19 School Closures on Schooling and Learning Outcomes: A Set of Global Estimates

Dr. João Pedro Azevedo, Lead Economist, Education, World Bank Group

Using Data to make more efficient investments in safe school infrastructure

Cynthia Hobbs, Education Division, Inter-American Development Bank

Investing in Education and School Safety to Build more Diversified and Resilient post COVID-19 Economies

Hon. Andrew A. Fahie, Premier and Minister of Finance, British Virgin Islands

Hon. Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, Minister of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture, British Virgin Islands

Hon. Fayval Williams, Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Jamaica

Economic returns of investing in school safety actions

Dr. Kamal Ahmed, International Consultant on Disaster Risk Financing, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

2. Introductory Remarks: Dr. Isaac Solomon, Vice President-Operations, Caribbean Development Bank

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the systemic nature of risk generated by extreme levels of interconnectivity in our world today. The complex and interconnecting nature of risk, biological, natural or manmade has the potential to disrupt the normal functioning of society through a multiplicity of cascading effects, as we have observed.

The Region faces many economic challenges:

- Low growth and lack of competitiveness
- Aggravating accumulation of current account deficits
- Unsustainable debt levels
- Fiscal constraints are affecting public investments in social areas

The Region is experiencing the effects of inherent systemic risk. The enormous economic burden caused to the education systems has a direct consequence of COVID-19 has emphasised the need to enhance the overall investments in the education sector and the Comprehensive School Framework, in particular. Governments are facing challenges with limited capacity to respond. The lack of specific preparedness methods to face natural hazards and COVID-19-like pandemics are causing further strain on education. Disasters from the past decade have caused colossal setbacks to the development gains in the Region and have affected the investments made over a period of time.

Whereas the total economic cost to the Region stands at $98 billion, insured damages were a total of $37.7 billion. The fact that merely one third of total damages were insured underline the fiscal pressures each country on its own and the entire Region has had to undergo as a direct result of natural hazards and disasters. Besides these hazards affecting more than 20 million people with the death toll standing at 224,285 in only the last 10 years.

The economic returns to school safety investments are tremendously high because the investments to school safety are very low and will yield diminishing returns as the investments in school safety keep increasing.
Some of our main results are:
Quantity and Quality of education will be affected
Learning adjusted years of schools will fall to 6.7%, this is a 14% reduction from Pre-COVID levels
Expected earnings per year will fall by $1200.00 (individual) and 1.5 Trillion dollars in losses in Latin America and the Caribbean. Investments in education will go to waste, if not mitigated, by 25%

Initial assessments are getting worse by the day due to the length of this shock.

During our exercise we looked at what was the expected learning loss due to school closure and income shock, according to different mitigation assumption and what are the life-cycle earning effects of the shock on students. COVID will be a setback for the SDG goal of lowering learning poverty by 2030. Pre-COVID we were off track already (from 53%-43%), progress was expected to be slow according to the Learning Poverty Measure. The situation is worse. Our simulation now suggests that the Caribbean will move from 53% to 27% progress in reducing learning poverty.

We have tried to assess the potential consequences of the pandemic. It has been a triple shock; health, education and economy. Many governments have deployed mitigation strategies utilizing multimedia. Our model captured this, building on scenarios. Mitigation means government supply of distance learning, access to distance learning and effectiveness of distance learning. If any of these components are not well executed, the entire mitigation strategy has failed. We have considered that we do not have scientific evidence of the effectiveness of distance learning as yet.

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There is no precedent for pandemic shocks of this size. Income shocks mostly affect older children. But the results of our simulation are not set in stone. We still have time if we deploy the right policies to minimize the effect on education. In systems with a severe learning crisis pre-COVID, learning losses can’t be high. Income shocks mostly affect enrollment of older children. Test and trace, do student assessment to assess learning loss, prepare rapid recovery plans and ensure health and safety first. Do not reopen schools based on learning losses only. Also plan for re-enrolment campaigns, conditional cash transfers and lower examination standards. The biggest concern that I have for education is that we may not reach the stage of knowing or identifying what has worked in order to mitigate learning losses. We need to adopt an aggressive agenda in measuring the success of mitigation efforts.

Outcomes: A Set of Global Estimates

Dr. João Pedro Azevedo, Lead Economist, Education, World Bank Group

The findings of our research have just been released in the World Bank Research Observer 2021 and is now available for download. There are potential consequences for in action, as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic. All simulated effects are forward looking and do not consider any government response to remediate negative effects after schools reopen. The simulations can be used to help to motivate the importance and need for an education sector response strategy and should not be used to guide decisions on reopening of schools. We adopted a pessimistic outlook but our initial assessments are getting worse by the day due to the length of this shock.

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Using data to make more efficient investments in safe school infrastructure

Cynthia Hobbs, Lead Education Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank

Some MOE still use traditional methods of record keeping, leading to inefficient systems. When disasters strike, good data makes an enormous difference in how quickly schools can be repaired or re-opened. It also gives a clear picture of how schools prepare in cases of emergency. There is a digital divide in the Caribbean eg in Suriname, only 30% of the population have access to internet and devices, 25% of teachers lacked home computers. This led the Suriname MOE to conclude that ICT readiness of teachers is very low. The IDB has done an in-depth study in 18 countries across the region and also collected additional information when the pandemic hit on digital readiness for online learning. It has concluded that Education Management Information Systems are lacking.

The Education Management Information System (EMIS) is the set of educational management processes that design, record, exploit and generate strategic information online in a comprehensive manner, framed by a specific legal, institutional and technological infrastructure.

The EMIS has 6 Tools for strategic management processes:
Physical infrastructure and equipment
Schools
Human Resources, budget and finance
Students and Learning
Digital content for teacher training
Digital content for students learning

It also possesses 2 Structural Conditions: Technological Infrastructure & Governance and Institutionality

In terms of management of physical infrastructure and equipment, there are 3 Aspects in the collection and use of data:
1. Systematized Baseline Data-identification and location of each building on a school campus
2. Data on School Buildings-how the schools are used, condition of furniture, infrastructure and needs, and the basic utility services available. Internet connectivity should be considered a basic service from now on.
3. Use of Data for Management and Action-priorities for maintenance and repairs, real time information on condition and quality. The minimum standards for infrastructure depending on the type of school/curriculum. A good maintenance program will decrease the amount of money that is spent on emergency repairs.

In our study, only one country had a well-established process for managing school infrastructure; Peru.

Regional examples on the use of real time data
In Jamaica, information is helping to determine targeted investments in digital infrastructure and connectivity
In Suriname, recent infrastructure census has allowed for targeted interventions in school sanitary facilities in order to reopen schools safely following the pandemic.

Hon. Fayval Williams, Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Jamaica

Hon. Andrew A. Fahie, Premier and Minister of Finance, British Virgin Islands

Hon. Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, Minister of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture, British Virgin Islands

Moderator: The CCSI should be prioritised on the agenda of Caribbean governments due to the importance it has on the development agenda and its impact on the economies of the Region. From your perspective, how can national governments move towards enhanced development resulting from budget allocations for school safety expenditures?

Responses:

Hon. Andrew A. Fahie-One of the challenges of countries is high demands and low resources. Coming on the heels of 2 category 5 hurricanes, we have not had time to breathe. We have seen the need for resilience in education. Teach our teachers how to master technology. We will never go back fully to chalk and talk. We have to build our minds around technological solutions. Students are more tech savvy than teachers, so teachers are feeling intimidated. Teachers have the content but students have the competency to navigate the online world. We can share in terms of teaching resources. Innovation and resilience are the only solution. We cannot allow perfection to be the enemy of the greater good. The world is our classroom. It’s amazing that there are challenges in access to technology when so many teachers and students spend a lot of time surfing the internet and on social media.

Hon. Dr. Natalio Wheatley-The BVI has a model for Safe Schools with the extension of SMART schools. We have had a unique opportunity because over 80% of our school infrastructure were destroyed by multi hazards. We are in the recovery process and we are rebuilding SMART schools. We are allocating resources into education. Our money services legislation was amended recently to allow for 20% of levy going directly into educational infrastructure. We are at a better advantage having our resources into education. Our money services legislation was amended recently to allow for 20% of multi hazards. We are in the recovery process and we are rebuilding SMART schools. We are allocating resources into education. Our money services legislation was amended recently to allow for 20% of levy going directly into educational infrastructure. We are at a better advantage having our resources into education. We have had a unique opportunity because over 80% of our school infrastructure were destroyed by multi hazards. We are in the recovery process and we are rebuilding SMART schools. We are allocating resources into education. Our money services legislation was amended recently to allow for 20% of levy going directly into educational infrastructure. We are at a better advantage having our resources into education. We must train more people to provide psychosocial support in times of crisis. Students must also have access to devices and connectivity to actively participate.

Hon. Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley-The CCSI should be prioritised on the agenda of Caribbean governments due to the importance it has on the development agenda and its impact on the economies of the Region. From your perspective, how can national governments move towards enhanced development resulting from budget allocations for school safety expenditures?

Moderator: Based on the Jamaica experience, what ways would you suggest to governments to better prepare schools to be more resilient in order to withstand future shocks?

Response: Hon. Fayval Williams-There will be challenges. There are many similarities but every territory has its peculiarities and we have to plan with this in mind. Using an education in emergency manual as a guideline we were able to transition into online learning. Here are our Proposals:

1. Strengthen our capacity across the region to respond quickly to disruptions. This means having access to emergency funding and PPE supplies. It also envisages taking steps to extend social outreach programs to the most vulnerable due to sudden loss of income.

2. Trained personnel and info systems that can identify those at risk and the vulnerable, we must invest in the data management systems for mapping to determine targeted interventions.

3. Modernise telecommunications sector despite our varying topography. This will better prepare our students for contemporary realities

4. Prepare the students for online student

5. School must be furnished with equipment to execute online learning

6. Students must also have access to devices and connectivity to actively participate

7. We must train more people to provide psychosocial support in times of crisis.

8. Invest in diversifying our education programs. Move to stave off potential health crisis by having public education programs

9. Educate our population on how their social and agriculture practises can have negative impacts on the environment

10. To the extent that our budgets allow this, revisit our school infrastructure, they should have environments rich in sensory experiences that are environmentally friendly and resilient.

Moderator: According to ECLAC, Caribbean economies are projected to fall by 6.2%. Do you think MOFs will be open to forming more public-private partnerships and explore innovative financing for funding school safety initiatives?

Hon. Andrew A. Fahie-We are open to public-private partnerships, but more so, intersectoral partnerships. Given that we have to generate new revenue without increasing taxes on the population, we have to be innovative. Improvements in telecommunications can be done across territories so that we can connect our teaching experiences. When it is physically impossible for teachers to visit various territories, they can teach a class online serving several countries at the same time. The private sector can facilitate this. Governments have to push the education agenda while improving the telecommunications infrastructure. Social clubs and civic organisations can also play a part in our collaborative efforts. Wherever there are challenges economically, there is usually a correlation with crime. Leverage this risk to engage the private sector in contributing to a more harmonious society.

Hon. Dr. Natalio Wheatley-BVI partnerships are not only based on theory. We have had private donors rebuild schools completely. We also encouraged companies to adopt a school leading to the provision of solar panels, devices etc. CDB also provided resources in rebuilding to SMART standards. Development opportunities in Tourism must also take into account social responsibility or partnership. Lending institutions also play a role.

Moderator: Designation of schools as temporary shelters, costs the country. How can we come up with a solution that shifts the designation of schools as temporary shelters?

Hon. Fayval Williams-We support the use of schools as emergency shelters temporarily. This makes sense for us in Jamaica and it has served us well. In disaster times, schools are closed, so there is an alternate use for the building. Our DRR experts coordinate the use of the schools. It is not wise for us to spend money on building additional infrastructure for emergencies that are under-utilized or unused. Community centres are used, but ideally our education facilities are primary shelters. We need
to develop policies regarding the safe use of our facilities during times of disaster and that our facilities are properly maintained.

Hon. Andrew A. Fahie - We had to move away from using our schools as shelters and sought funding for the redesign of our community centres as shelters.

Hon. Dr. Natalio Wheatley - We moved away from schools as shelters because of the delays in reopening when the displaced still do not have a permanent housing situation.

SLIDO Question: To what extent is the challenge of resilience/safe school about institutionalizing or safe culture in our school operations?

Hon. Fayval Williams - With the violence in the country some of it spills over to the schools. We have had to invest in security equipment.

Hon. Dr. Natalio Wheatley - Building a culture of resilience is more than theory. DRR is built into the curricula. Many of our schools are now recycling centres. Students are also engaged in environmental awareness and ownership activities.

5. Presentation on the Way Forward: Economic returns of investing in school safety actions

Dr. Kamal Ahmed, International Consultant on Disaster Risk Financing, UNDRR, Regional Officers for the Americas and the Caribbean

Because of the Regional and geographical locations, countries in the Caribbean are at very high risks. Dominica, Guyana, Antigua & Barbuda have been listed as the Top 3 in Risk Ranking. Data was taken from the World Bank Risk Index with slight modification.

Belize and Grenada have the highest poverty rate based on demographics.

Although we do not have robust data, wherever you see increased government spending, the risk index declines.

Our Diagnostic Methodology was a 2-Pronged Approach.

The Region has suffered significant losses due to natural hazards over the last 10 years. Almost 97% of them are linked to Climate Change.
Our study was limited by data of systemic risk.

Between 20 to 40 weeks have been lost in academic year by school closures. We also anticipate the re-closure of schools with the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are ripple economic effects of systemic risk.

The poverty rate among children and youth is also very high. The school feeding programs are sometimes the only meal they receive. When education is interrupted, it disrupts their school feeding. There is also the loss of labour force when parents have to stay home to supervise their children. Therefore, there is a direct correlation between education disruption and poverty in a country.

To cushion the effect of limited resources and higher demand, we recommend the ex-ante approach to financial planning that will bend the demand curve a bit.

We have several Recommendations for Ministries of Education and Finance. However every intervention must be inclusive.

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<td>Avoid Schools as Temporary Shelters</td>
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<td>Risk Reduction &amp; Resilient Curricula address all 3 pillars of CSS</td>
<td>Emphasise on ex-ante financial planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compensating Loss Learning</td>
<td>Innovative financing and impact bonds</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Inclusive Growth</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6. Key messages coming out of the session- conclusions

- We were on a learning crisis prior to COVID-19, 53%-43%, this has now been exacerbated
- $1200 Per year in individual losses due to COVID-19
- One third of the Regions assets are insured
- Healthy and safety of schools must be considered, beyond learning losses
- Implement emergency management systems
- Data gathering and monitoring is very important for decision making
- There needs to be a paradigm shift in our mindset
- In instances where we have low or no investments in school safety, the vulnerabilities increase
- Increasing the basket for social expenditure while ensuring school safety is an enormous opportunity for Caribbean countries.

Participate in the collaborative diagnosis on systemic risk in education
Join Into Systemic Risk Padlet (English | Español | Français)
Objectives: PS of Ministries of Education will be briefed on the proceedings and key findings from previous sessions to allow for the understanding of the range of issues and take-aways.

Number of Attendees: 47+ Social Media Viewers

Welcome: Mr. Marcel Goyeneche, Event Facilitator

We have had a number of exciting sessions. I am very impressed with the level of participation and contributions. It has been an enriching experience for the CSSI agenda. We have to remember that this is an intermediate step towards the Ministerial Forum in St. Maarten in 2022. In this regard, there are some meaningful lessons that we can take away from this event. This is a closed session to allow us to discuss what has come out of this virtual forum and also brief your MOEs ahead of our closing session. There are a lot of commonalities that exist and opportunities for further collaboration.

Session Format: Presentations, Open Discussion

1. Outcomes from Special & Technical Sessions with Key Messages

Mrs. Olga Mussington-Service, M.S, Manager Student Support Services Division, MOE, St. Maarten

Approximately 380 people have attended the sessions so far, 77 of whom were speakers. Based on our preliminary data, 24 Caribbean countries have been represented at this Virtual Pre-Ministerial Forum. We do hope that you will make the best use of the key messages to guide further discussions with your MOE.

SPECIAL SESSION 2-PERMANENT SECRETARIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TECHNICAL SESSION 1-SCHOOL SAFETY FOCAL POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explore in which way the development, implementation and monitoring of legislation, institutions and protocols can address abuse and violence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify opportunities to protect investments in the education infrastructure through maintenance, repair and retrofitting programmes with budget allocations, reduced use as emergency shelters, technology and awareness raising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find opportunities to support the implementation of national programme-based school disaster management actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a disaster risk and resilience curricula framework for all levels to be used as a regional reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse in which way disaster risk and resilience education is being carried out today and how it can be further infused into existing national curricula.</td>
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TECHNICAL SESSION 2-NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TECHNICAL SESSION 3-INTERSECTORAL PARTNERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appraise collaboration opportunities and synergies between Ministries of Education and NEMOs or equivalent, including its foundation in legislation/policies and programmes to implement school safety agendas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess ways in which capacity for understanding risk in the education sector can be increased, while feeding into evidence-based decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elaborate on strategies to involve the private sector in disaster preparedness and response in the education sector</td>
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TECHNICAL SESSION 4-YOUTH

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<tr>
<th>TECHNICAL SESSION 4-YOUTH</th>
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<tr>
<td>Determine how youth can contribute to inclusion, reducing the digital divide, improving school safety, foster child protection, address cyber bullying and the protect the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide youth with an opportunity to contribute to regional decision-making processes related to the CSSI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree on ways in which national school safety agendas can involve and profit more effectively from the Youth</td>
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**TECHNICAL SESSION 5-EDUCATION PRACTITIONERS**

Exchange on how to better address requirements of Early Childhood and Special Needs Education in school safety policies and agendas.

Outline best practices to apply Psychosocial Support strategies for students, teachers and staff and families.

Develop parent support and teaching programmes to reinforce safety of students

Revising the promotion criteria of students, using new monitoring and evaluation tools to close learning gaps during emergencies.

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**TECHNICAL SESSION 6-SCHOOL SAFETY INVESTMENTS AS A KEY ELEMENT OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

Discuss in what ways temporary shelter infrastructure can be diversified or strategies found to minimize the use of schools for such purpose.

Foster data-driven decision-making and action to protect school infrastructure through the use of Education Management Information Systems.

With learning poverty being augmented by COVID-19, the reduction of learning losses must be minimized to limit its effect on economic losses.

Reduce fiscal pressures through more comprehensive insurance coverage of education infrastructure.

Explore ex-ante financial planning for safe schools, with a systemic risk approach and in view of its potential for economic recovery and cost-analysis benefits.

Devise strategies to reduce the gap separating vulnerable schools from more resilient educational establishments.

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### 2. Open Discussion/Clarification

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<tr>
<th>Questions/Clarifications</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For you as PS, what is your perception of this Forum. Do you think it has made a difference?</td>
<td>Shermina Powell-Richardson (SXM)-This is a very positive initiative and it has supported SXM in an immense way. Within MOE, we do have a safety and emergency management committee and our participation has allowed us to sharpen our skills, response to DRR and collaborations. The best practices that exist and the experiences shared will certainly contribute to our policy interventions. Betty Alleyne-Headley (BGI)-This is my first time participating. It has been very educational. I was intrigued by the Education Emergency Plan. The</td>
</tr>
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### What do you consider to be the main challenge to policy making in the context of the CSSI agenda?

PS Greenaway (ANU)-The initiative is a positive one and it has brought many working groups together in Antigua. Our national committees are very motivated. The support and buy in of the MOE have made the CSSI very productive. We conduct continuous training on school safety and every one is very much involved.

Betty Alleyne-Headley (BGI)-This is my first time participating. It has been very educational. I was intrigued by the Education Emergency Plan. The best practices that exist and the experiences shared will certainly contribute to our policy interventions.

Richard Troupe (JA)-The fiscal space is getting tighter especially because of the impact of COVID-19. We will have to be very creative in terms of how we pursue alternative funding sources. Additional challenges are the lack of a strategy for treating with cybersecurity and having a reactive rather than proactive and innovative approach.

Roberto Suarez (DOM.REP)-We salute this initiative. But the important thing is that we must deal with challenges in a unified way. Abuse and violence of children, maintenance of facilities, budgetary constraints and contingency plans to mitigate disasters are challenges. It is important to maintain this initiative. We need to become strongly linked in the Region to respond to geopolitical challenges, as well.

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### What topics would you have liked to see more of during this Pre-Forum?

Betty Alleyne-Headley (BGI)-Apart from cybersecurity, I believe this was a very comprehensive forum.

Richard Troupe (JA)-The number of school dropouts and behavioral challenges among returning students, and strategies for re
engaging boys. Our education continuity plans must cater for this.

Juliana & Annel - Youth ISRAAID
We would have liked to expand the youth session around students at the primary or high school level. It is important to include a diversity of voices. Also, the infusion of DRR in the Curricula.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What forms of immediate engagement between PS and School Safety Focal points can you foresee?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Bonie Richardson-Lake (ANG) - As part of our recovery efforts, we would want to focus on ensuring that we are creating safe structures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Idelia Ferdinand (SVG) - We have had some really good ideas coming out of the forum. A document should be produced of Good Practices so that we can see what is transferrable for our MOEs throughout the Region.</td>
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3. Key messages coming out of the session- conclusions

- We may be looking at more short-term priorities at this point in realizing the CSSI agenda
- Great consideration needs to be given to our agenda points for the Ministerial Forum in St. Maarten in 2022
- All Ministers will be given a 3-minute window to focus on their priorities at the Closing of the Virtual Pre-Ministerial Forum. Discuss with your Minister and prepare to engage
- At the end of the Forum, we will compose two documents; forum conclusions and best practises. These will be disseminated to all participants.
- Feedback on this School Safety is critical to successful implementation of the CSSI.
- Revisit the technical sessions, especially the focal point, economy and intersectoral ones to see the insights shared and opportunities that exist
- Make use of the Resources provided by the School Safety Working Group

Participate in the collaborative diagnosis on systemic risk in education
Join Into Systemic Risk Padlet (English | Español | Français)
The deliberations/discussions this week highlighted the need for a more systemic approach to school safety programmes. We need to work more collaboratively to see which approaches can be adopted. However, we need to advocate for more financial investment, policies and plans to support school safety programmes. We were able to highlight the significance of intersectoral collaboration, including working closely with the private sector to support the implementation of many initiatives. We are grateful for the relationships, financial and technical support from the various sectors and development partners and look forward to the continued support while welcoming others.

Child protection was highlighted as an emerging issue and we need to ensure that our approaches are more children-centered and inclusive. This Forum also helped us to share our COVID-19 experiences and the lessons we have learnt from our different approaches and how we are ensuring that education continues, and that no child is left behind. I know it is still a challenge for many of us as we continue to engage in online learning while looking for creative ways to return to face-to-face education.

Thanks to all who helped to shape this Forum into a successful platform for highlighting and promoting the Caribbean Safe School Initiative (CSSI).

We hope that those countries who have not yet signed the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration are well placed to do so in St. Maarten in 2022. The School Safety Road Map is the tool that has been developed to guide this approach. To those countries that are already on board, thank you for your commitment.

2. United Nation Support to the Caribbean Safe School Initiative

Mr. Didier Trebucq, UN Resident Coordinator Eastern Caribbean Countries

Congratulations to the 18 countries and territories participating in the Caribbean Safe School Initiative (CSSI) for your commitment to the shared vision of school safety, evidenced by this successful pre-Ministerial Forum.

As we are well aware, the region’s education sector is highly vulnerable to the impacts of natural hazards, and susceptible to systemic risks as evidenced during COVID-19. If not adequately mitigated, these risks can seriously jeopardize progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Disasters have a major impact on children, youth, and education systems, with approximately 175 million children worldwide likely to be affected by natural hazards.

Closer to home, the temporary closure of educational facilities in the Caribbean, due to COVID-19, impacted nearly 12 million learners in over 29 countries. The impact for disadvantaged children and families has been even more severe, causing interrupted learning, compromised nutrition, potential exposure to sexual exploitation, childcare problems and consequent economic costs to families unable to work. The transition to online learning has also exacerbated pre-existing education and inequality disparities, leading to potential increases in dropout rates. We wish to encourage you to consider progressive and safe reopening of schools, applying all safety protocols that have proven to be effective.

Let me turn to past recent events in terms of natural disasters. In Dominica, the 2017 hurricane season displaced 18,500 school-aged children and damaged or destroyed 57 Government primary and secondary schools. More recently, in 2019, Hurricane Dorian, devastated Grand Bahama and Abaco islands in the Bahamas, affecting 10,546 students and 796 teachers with widespread damage to educational facilities amounting to $72 million.

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In the event of such disasters, ensuring that shelters are safe spaces for children and families, and supporting rehabilitation of schools for shelter use and to resume education, brings back a sense of normalcy for students, teachers, and families.

Integrating comprehensive school safety into sustainable development and DRR policies, therefore, not only improves children’s equal, inclusive, and safe access, but supports education sector resilience. In this regard, ensuring school safety has emerged as a key policy issue for governments you represent; it is very encouraging to that, given the nexus between education, resilience, and national development. I want on behalf of the UN system to commend you for this endeavour, as well as CDEMA.

Be rest assured that the UN, (UNDRR; UNICEF; UNESCO) working in partnership with CDEMA, national Governments and other regional partners, remains committed to working with you to mainstreaming school safety into the region’s sustainable development agenda. With UNICEF support, 10,172 direct and indirect beneficiaries (including policy makers, teachers, and principals), have enhanced knowledge and skills on DRR, DRM & Resilient Education, and 32,846 students have benefitted. Over 400 school principals also increased their capacity to map their schools’ hazards, and establish standard operating procedures and humanitarian education sector responses. Support was also provided to enhance coordination with programme countries, and for creation of Design Guidelines for Disaster Resilient schools (2019) and training of Safe School Focal Points (2020). To ensure resilient education within a more holistic framework, discussions are currently underway with the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) to mainstream the Safe School Programme. Consideration is also being given to the inclusion of pandemics in the initiative, subsequent to its response to COVID impact.

To be clear, resilient education is increasingly being understood as a holistic framework that includes any external shock, beyond disaster risk reduction and climate change, but also physical and mental health education.

While progress has been made, there is still more to be done. The biennial Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum, supported by the pre-Ministerial Forum that ends today, are very positive steps. You must be commended for that. I also give assurance of the UN’s continued support for the work of the CSSI and the safe school working group. This includes support for the Antigua and Barbuda declaration on School Safety and for the agreed roadmap for its implementation. By adopting a new approach to risk reduction efforts, we encourage you to take steps to plan thoroughly for school re-openings; build resilient education systems for equitable and sustainable development; and accelerate change in teaching and learning. Back to normal is not good enough; we must recover better; the education sector can lead with the necessary innovation.

3. Remarks and invitation to III CSSI Ministerial Forum

Hon. Rodolphe E. Samuel, Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport of Sint Maarten

Like many, St Maarten had to respond to a pandemic while we are in recovery from a major hurricane. When we became a signatory to the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration on School Safety in 2019 during the Second Ministerial Forum in St Vincent and the Grenadines, it was at a significant juncture for the nation as St. Maarten was forced to define and reaffirm its commitment to resilience. In signing the declaration, we committed to:

1. Building resilience in the education sector
2. Mobilizing resources to strengthen disaster risk reduction efforts to the education sector
3. Integrating Comprehensive Disaster Management into education sector policy, plans and operations
4. Building stronger collaboration among Ministries of Education in the Caribbean and with stakeholders across all levels
5. Defining and putting in place a framework for monitoring progress against the Road Map on School Safety.

We are making strides but there is so much work that still needs to be done. We are thankful for the CSSI because through local, regional and international partnerships, we will be able to accomplish even more.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, St Maarten wishes to thank the partners who have worked together to make this event possible. I thank all Ministers of Education who are signatory to the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration. Your presence demonstrates your commitment to the dialogue around Safe Schools. I would also like to thank the Ministers of Education who are not yet signatory to the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration for their interest in this event. I hope that you found the forum engaging, and that it will motivate you to join the CSSI and sign the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration in St Maarten in 2022.

I thank you for your engagement and for your contribution towards the agenda of the 3rd Ministerial Forum on Safe Schools. We look forward to welcoming you to St Maarten in 2022 and sharing our hospitality with you. We will be providing you with a save the date within the next quarter.
### Ministerial Dialogue on Country Priority Areas & Potential Agenda Points for III CSSI Ministerial Forum

**Chair:** Hon. Curtis King, Ministry of Education and National Reconciliation of St. Vincent & the Grenadines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Minister</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
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| Anguilla | Hon. Dee-Ann Kentish-Rogers, MOE | Examining ways in which online and blended learning can be reinforced for teacher training  
Identifying budgetary allocations  
How to combat cyberbullying  
Providing psychosocial support |
| Antigua & Barbuda | **Absent** | |
| British Virgin Islands | Carolyn Stoutt-Igwe | We will continue to work with our NEMO on DRR in preparing safe and smart schools  
Maintenance plan for our school  
We look forward to the sharing of experiences and best practices |
| Barbados | Hon. Santia Bradshaw, MOE | This has given us an opportunity to be proactive and come out stronger from the experiences we have shared. For a such as these should become abit more frequent. Priority areas include strengthening students councils and school safety committees. We have to engage with our youth since they have been impacted in learning, mental health and well-being. Expansion of the Curriculum to ensure that teachers and students can adjust coming out of a disaster  
Assessment of our educational facilities to be safe and smart with internet connectivity, considering that our schools are multipurpose facilities  
Exploring different models of teaching to accommodate special need students. No child should be left behind. |
| The Cayman Islands | Cetonya Cacho, PS, MOE | Discussion on Safety Monitors in our schools. We have done this but the more we talk about what we are doing, it will strengthen our position  
Development of a National School Safety Policy |
| Curacao | Susan Larmonie, Policy Director, MOE | Currently we do not have a great presence of COVID-19 based on the response mechanisms we had in place during its onset. This Forum has shown us the resourcefulness of the Region when faced with disasters. It has given us a lot of insight on best practices  
We advocate for Further collaboration  
We want to continue and contribute to work on developing a DRR Curriculum Framework |

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Absent/Presence</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Moving forward, our priority areas are: Staggered return of students to the classrooms. We have collaborated with the MOH and along with the aid of international partners and the teacher’s association, we have prepared a protocol. This will have strict control measures with the main priority being safety and security of teachers and students. Improve basic needs of schools to improve the healthy status of the community. Maintenance of our educational facilities. Improving drinking water facilities and access at schools with partnerships with donor agencies. Autonomy in electricity supplied to schools. Improved access to technology with installation of WiFi access in all schools and devices to students. Reduction of violence in our schools eg bullying. Encouraging resilience through public awareness and training. Further collaboration on DRR.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Hon. Ligia Perez, Vice Minister, MOE</td>
<td>We have also tried to include these items at the tertiary level. We want to organize a government body that will be in charge of Inspections. This will assist us in data gathering and policy making. The digital divide is also a major challenge for us and we need to address this.</td>
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<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Ms. Grace McLean, PS, MOE</td>
<td>We support that our next Forum be premised on the sharing of best practices and us collectively adopting some of these models. Implementation of EMIS. Safeguarding children from violence. Expand preparation of education through emergencies initiative. Revision of the National Schools Safety Policy to reflect the COVID-19 reality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>Hon. Emmalin Pierre, MOE</td>
<td>Increased and more frequent collaboration between countries. Strengthening management and response systems eg leadership capacity, policies, simulation exercises. Education &amp; Training. Policies for Physical Infrastructure and special needs students. Repairing and maintenance. School infrastructural Development with the help of international partners. Revisiting plans that include skills training for the society. Further collaboration on DRR.</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>Mr. Bernez Khodra, SS Focal Point, MOE</td>
<td>We commend the organizers of this Pre-Ministerial Forum. In St. Lucia, we intend to: Fast track ICT integration into our schools. Installation of a School Safety Unit in the Department of Education. Resources will be allocated to School Safety from our national budget. Our Curriculum will be reviewed to infuse DRR in all subject area. Finally, we will focus on strengthening our legislation as it relates to Security and Child Protection. We recommend multi country collaboration for sourcing funds for School Safety and Climate Change. Further we hope to see more best practices being shared at the next Forum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Cirta Jean Francois, SS Focal Point</td>
<td>We thank the Forum, as we have been very inspired and will try our best to adapt the good practices. DRR program. We have integrated some DRR into our Curriculum. We would like to develop these further for secondary schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>We support that our next Forum be premised on the sharing of best practices and us collectively adopting some of these models. Implementation of EMIS. Safeguarding children from violence. Expand preparation of education through emergencies initiative. Revision of the National Schools Safety Policy to reflect the COVID-19 reality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent &amp; the Grenadines</td>
<td>Hon. Curtis King, MOE</td>
<td>We intend to pursue the development of a DRR and Climate Change Curriculum for the Primary School to complement that of the Secondary School. We are convinced that education is the foundation to build a Culture of Safety. We are also cognizant of giving priority to ensuring that New and Refurbished School</td>
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Facilities incorporates inclusive consideration for the differently-abled students as well as tools to complement their diagnosis and learning and enhance the quality of their learning experience.

Our present high-risk status has further highlighted the need for better Contingency Planning that is functional and will guide emergency operations as well as education continuity in times of crisis.

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<tr>
<th>Update on Effusion of Mt. Soufriere Volcano</th>
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<td>On March 23, 2021, we registered heightened activity at the Mt. Soufriere. We are hoping for the best but preparing for the worst.</td>
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