



SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION IN THE CARIBBEAN Regional Symposium | Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands – 27 June 2019

Towards a Safer, more Resilient, and Sustainable Caribbean: strengthening the linkages between Disaster Risk Management & Social Protection to protect lives and livelihoods and assist crisis-affected people with greater efficiency, efficacy and equity.

BACKGROUND

Disaster Risk: A significant challenge for Small Island States

The facts are indisputable: large-scale shocks in the Caribbean have become more severe, recurrent and long-term. This is causing formidable challenges for the region's small island nations to maintain their economic, social and environmental gains. It also affects their ability to protect people from collective risks and to respond to the adverse impact of natural hazards, responsible for causing an estimated USD 3 billion in annual losses¹. As climate change will likely increase the frequency and complexity of extreme weather events, significant progress towards sustainable development will continue to elude most small islands. This calls for bold efforts and swift actions to build the resilience of vulnerable countries and communities. It also requires novel approaches, investments and partnerships to strengthen operational readiness and response capacities, with a view to assist shock-affected populations with greater efficiency, efficacy and equity.

A paradigm shift for Disaster Risk Management in the Caribbean

In addressing these challenges, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and Participating States have made a significant paradigm shift from a reactive approach to disaster management to an anticipatory approach. This move is underpinned in the results-oriented [2014-2024 Comprehensive Disaster Management \(CDM\) strategy](#)² and the [Regional Resilience Agenda](#), which promote an integrated risk management approach to building resilience and safeguarding lives and livelihoods against multiple risk scenarios in the Caribbean region. These strategies advance the realisation of multiple global commitments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework, the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain, which endeavour to harmonise humanitarian and development efforts, build resilience in fragile contexts, support localised solutions and reduce needs over the long term. Key to these frameworks is the recognition of the critical linkages between disaster management, climate change adaptation, sustainable development, and the need to tackle the incidences of vulnerability through enhancing national Social Protection schemes.

¹ *The Caribbean Hazard Landscape* in the Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM): Strategy & Results Framework (Summary 2014-2024), page 6 – CDEMA, 2014

² The Regional CDM Strategy is the instrument for the implementation of the priorities set out in the Sendai Framework for 2015-2030, adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015, as well as for advancing Goals 11 and 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)



The case for Shock-Responsive Social Protection³

Social Protection is intrinsically related to shock response. It consists of policies and programmes designed to protect people from crisis and stresses throughout their lives. It is recognised as a vital mechanism for accelerating progress towards the internationally agreed sustainable development goals. It is also a key instrument to strengthen people's *ex ante* risk-management capacity. Concurrently, a growing body of evidence demonstrates the pivotal role that Social Protection can play in responding *ex post* to a wide range of emergencies through relief assistance (i.e. cash, vouchers, in-kind transfers), and in promoting recovery once the immediate crisis is over. Findings stemming from a [United Nations World Food Programme-commissioned regional study in Latin America and the Caribbean \(LAC\)](#)⁴ indicate that social protection can ensure adequate coverage and level of support in the event of an emergency; provide a quicker, more predictable, sustainable and efficient transfer of assistance; ensure that crisis-affected people and households are not pushed further into chronic poverty; and increase the overall confidence of affected people in the response. Though the recognition of Social Protection as a primary strategy to reduce vulnerabilities and risks is widely accepted, its utilisation as a frontline instrument contributing to emergency responses and recovery efforts in Small Islands Development States has so far consisted of ad-hoc measures, with limited disaster response integration and preparedness investments needed to bring it at scale when appropriate and required. It is in this context that the regional symposium on [Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean](#) will explore challenges and opportunities for linking Disaster Risk Management, Social Protection, Climate Change Adaptation and Humanitarian Action in responding to and mitigating shocks, with special focus on interoperability, coordination and financing for more integrated emergency preparedness and response actions in the region.

SYMPOSIUM'S OBJECTIVES

Strengthening the linkages between social protection and disaster risk management

Hosted in June 2019, on the sidelines of the 9th CDEMA Ministerial Council Meeting in Turks & Caicos, the symposium on [Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean](#) will be held at an opportune moment as policy makers, technocrats and operational actors will convene to share idea and perspectives on issues, challenges and options for building regional resilience in the face of existing hazards. Leveraging this occasion, the symposium will introduce innovative perspectives and approaches in the realms of disaster risk reduction, public policy, social protection and climate risk financing. It will engender thought-provoking dialogues and panel discussions with emergency, development and technical experts. And it will foster the development of strategies for future lines of action, that can contribute to a more integrated developmental and humanitarian ecosystem in the Caribbean.

More specifically the symposium will aim to achieve the following objectives:

³ Throughout this concept note, *shock* refers to *covariate shocks* - those that affect large numbers of people and/or communities at once

⁴ Between 2016-2018, research studies were conducted in [Dominica, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru](#) to generate evidence and inform practice for improved emergency preparedness and response in LAC, linked to more flexible national social protection systems. In 2019, the research will continue with focus on Small Islands Developing States of the Caribbean to 1) develop theoretical perspectives about the interface between social protection, humanitarian assistance and disaster risk management; and 2) generate policy recommendations to strengthen and enhance the emergency readiness of existing social protection schemes to respond to emergencies.



- **Objective 1:** Mainstream Social Protection within regional and national disaster management plans, frameworks and strategies with respect to five technical areas for preparedness and collaboration: 1) data management; 2) targeting; 3) delivery mechanisms; 4) coordination; and 5) financing
- **Objective 2:** Promote an exchange of experiences, knowledge-sharing and inter-institutional dialogue on Shock-Responsive Social Protection;
- **Objective 3:** Formulate recommendations, initiatives and measures to strengthen disaster risk management response plans through social protection;
- **Objective 4:** Explore possible areas for South-South Cooperation across CDEMA participating states and regional stakeholders in these areas.

Participants

The symposium will see the participation of Ministers and Permanent Secretaries with responsibility for disaster management and social protection within CDEMA's Participating States, as well as representatives of UN agencies, donors, bi-lateral organisations and private sector from the Caribbean and beyond, who will share their expertise and practices in these matters.

Expected Outcomes

1. Social Protection (SP) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) stakeholders have a shared understanding of their respective shock and crisis response mechanisms and approaches;
2. Commonalities and opportunities for linking practices have been identified and mapped out for future joint preparedness measures;
3. Proposals for South-South Cooperation projects on social protection and disaster risk management strengthening and integration are elaborated

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