



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

ECLAC CARIBBEAN DIRECTOR
EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR
'PURPLE BENCH' INITIATIVE

ONLINE LEARNING

SELECTED ONLINE LEARNING
EXPERIENCES IN THE CARIBBEAN
DURING COVID-19



ECLAC CARIBBEAN

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About us

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

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

International Days

3 March

World Wildlife Day

8 March

International Women's Day

21 March

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

25 March

International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Upcoming Meetings

15 March

Regional workshop for Latin American and Caribbean countries presenting their voluntary national reviews in 2021 - Virtual

25 March

Virtual seminars on drinking water and sanitation in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized by ECLAC and ARESEP - Virtual

7 - 8 April

Twentieth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC - Virtual

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The 10th anniversary United Nations Economic and Social Council Youth Forum was held virtually for the first time ever!
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**ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM
10TH ANNIVERSARY**
7-8 APRIL 2021

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Latin American and Caribbean countries affirmed their commitment to the #2030Agenda for Sustainable Development and to a transformative recovery. More details: <https://bit.ly/38NMhXv>



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#ECLAC presented new figures on the impact of the #COVID19 pandemic on #poverty, #inequality and #employment in the region. Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/37V5I5I>



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Establishing a Knowledge Based Economy in Jamaica

For small countries like Jamaica to remain competitive, transformation to a knowledge-driven economy that supports development of the domestic capital-making sector and use of capital services for global exports is essential.

This perspective was shared by ECLAC Caribbean Deputy Director, Mr. Dillon Alleyne, during an online seminar series in March 2021, organized by the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) at the UWI campus in Mona, Jamaica.

As the basis for his presentation, Mr. Alleyne recognized that the changes which underpin modern production, distribution and exchange have been premised on knowledge accumulation and dissemination. Also, the process of capability building has allowed new actors to emerge in the economic development landscape.

In light of the challenges raised by COVID-19, countries should not wait for the pandemic to subside, in order to plan as the post COVID-19 world is going to be different. One difference will likely be more intense investment

in information and communication technology (ICT) and the greater use of artificial intelligence and related technologies in production processes. He stated that for countries like Jamaica to become part of this process, the foundation must be laid in four areas. Firstly, the new economy must be driven by knowledge generation and dissemination. Secondly, an ICT backbone is critical to interconnection at the community, national and regional levels. Thirdly, knowledge has to filter into innovation, resulting in new marketable products and activities. Fourthly, in the transitional phase of the development of a knowledge economy, social protection policies must assist those who are less agile to confront new processes and activities. These four pillars must be underpinned by dynamic efficiency if the new economy is to be sustainable. Mr. Alleyne outlined a possible agenda for Jamaica's knowledge economy, with limited priorities. First, he said that to become successful knowledge economies, countries have to rethink and act simultaneously on their education base, their innovation systems, and their ICT infrastructure and enabling institutions. "Policies

for these pillars have to reflect the country's level of development and will often have to be gradual."

He continued, "Secondly, many, if not most of the countries that have made rapid progress have done so on the basis of an industrial policy. Ultimately, there is need to work at the four pillars through a combination of top-down reforms and bottom-up initiatives. From Jamaica's point of view, both short and medium-term strategies are necessary to move the country towards a knowledge economy.

"In light of the severe debt problem, fiscal consolidation must be pursued in the context of both structural reforms and debt restructuring. Such programs must focus on creating efficiency in public expenditure and where there is evidence of fiscal indiscipline, spending rules may be more appropriate."

Mr. Alleyne emphasized that a critical aspect of this process must be regular public expenditure reviews, aimed at evaluating the efficiency of public spending, and determining where there is value for money.

Photo: Constantin Stanciu on Scopio

"Projects that cannot show a rate of return (including social return) greater than the investment rate, must not be allowed to continue and constant monitoring and evaluation must accompany this process."

To improve the fiscal space, where necessary, government must remove harmful tax expenditures and improve tax collections. Investment then must be made in areas that will enhance knowledge intense sectors and activities including creating more equitable access to knowledge and attendant innovation across all activities.

Thirdly, he said that a number of measures are required to improve efficiency in areas that do not necessarily require new resources, such as, improving the business environment, including the environment for small and micro enterprises. "It is also important that complementary government services which can be impactful are efficient. It is vital that there must be a positive relationship between government and private investment and this should be explored more diligently. ■



Jamaica pilots climate risk analysis programme

Jamaica has become the first country in the world to begin the process of developing a predictive climate risk assessment planning tool for major infrastructure areas, under the global private sector-led Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment.

The tool, as explained by Professor Jim Hall, Director of Research in the School of Geography and the Environment at University of Oxford, "[will enable] local decision-makers to assess climate risk to Jamaica's infrastructure networks" and "to visualize...high levels of economic and social value at risk, in relevant time horizons."

The pilot project, called 'Supporting Investment Decision-Making for Resilient Infrastructure in Jamaica', targets the energy, water and transport sectors and was launched on 10 March, with a virtual workshop that attracted more than 80 participants from a range of public and private sector entities.

It was co-created and funded by the United Kingdom Government through its Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Green Climate Fund.

University of Oxford, a global leader in the geospatial assessment of climate risks and appraisal of options for improving infrastructure system resilience, will be one of the technical delivery partners, and will work closely with the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) to ensure the alignment of the scope of work with local and institutional needs.

The project is slated to last 15 months, and will include the participation of multilateral development banks, national banks, private sector and other sources of financing. Jamaica's involvement is expected to put the island center stage at the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) scheduled for Glasgow in November 2021, where adaptation and resilience will be among the main campaigns of the UK-led COP. ■



ECLAC Caribbean Director
expresses support for
'PURPLE BENCH' INITIATIVE



Photo of Purple Bench courtesy Guardian Trinidad and Tobago

A Tobago based non-governmental organization has joined the ongoing global campaign to end violence against women and girls, by placing easily noticeable landmarks in communities across the country. The Women of Substance, as their organization is called, have been painting benches purple and placing them in strategic locations across Trinidad and Tobago.

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ECLAC Caribbean Director expresses support for 'purple bench' initiative

The group - founded by Onika Mars, herself a domestic violence survivor - provides support to persons affected by domestic violence and abuse, and organizes programmes and events to promote education and awareness of domestic violence for both targeted groups and the general population. The Purple Bench Campaign is their most recent public awareness initiative, aimed at increasing community knowledge of domestic violence and bolstering their readiness to respond to the challenges associated with it.

Following its official launch in Tobago in November 2020, the group brought the Purple Bench Campaign to Trinidad on the occasion of International Women's Day in March 2021. The event, held under the patronage of Arima MP and Minister of Housing Penelope Beckles, also featured the active engagement of local political personalities and members of the diplomatic corps, including the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom, H.E. Harriet Cross.

Speaking at the launch, ECLAC Caribbean's Director, Diane

Quarless pledged support for Women of Substance's mission, to paint benches in Trinidad purple and to raise community awareness about domestic violence. She encouraged everyone to support the group's effort, by getting out their paint brushes and getting some paint on their hands.

Quarless said she was thrilled at the idea of painting benches in every community across the country, which is seen as a powerful symbol and reminder of the serious challenge faced in bringing domestic violence





Across Trinidad and Tobago, one in three women and girls in unions have suffered abuse – and 29 per cent of those have experienced both physical and sexual assault.



Diane Quarless - Director, ECLAC Caribbean

under control, and the need for communities to work together to achieve this.

"As we reflect on recent murders that have shocked the country, including those of Andrea Bharatt and Ashanti Riley, the statistics on domestic violence and gender-based violence (GBV) are troubling. Across Trinidad and Tobago, one in three women and girls in unions have suffered abuse – and 29 per cent of those have experienced both physical and sexual assault", Quarless said. "This situation has been made that much worse over the past year, when COVID-19 has unleashed a 'shadow pandemic' of violence against women across the world. Emerging data demonstrate that Caribbean women have not been spared from this violence, with lockdowns and other confinement measures increasing pressures at home and limiting opportunities to escape abusers and access protection."

"In Trinidad and Tobago, there was a 140 per cent increase in reported cases of abuse involving women and girls in 2020 as compared with the same period the previous year. In 2020, 47 women were killed – 21 of them in domestic violence

situations – representing approximately 13 per cent of the year's homicides."

Quarless said that ECLAC Caribbean was working alongside other UN partners in the subregion to collect data on how Caribbean women's lives have been affected by the pandemic, to ensure gender-responsive economic recovery and women's leadership and participation in COVID-19 responses at all levels.

She noted that the strong, unified public reaction to the recent femicides and violence against women, has demonstrated that Trinbagonians can indeed collectively challenge GBV and fight discriminatory beliefs and attitudes that allow such violence to continue.

"The UN family applauds this effort and offers its solidarity and support of the marches, petitions, public discussions, and other initiatives of advocacy intended to move strategy and action towards ending GBV in Trinidad and Tobago," Quarless ended.

Meanwhile, group founder Mars said she felt it was a good time for keeping the issue on the frontline. "I think it's perfect now

where we are in a season where a lot of women have gone missing, so the conversation is alive in people's minds and on people's lips because it's unacceptable and it must be addressed." She said her organization was determined to change the way persons treat with the issue. And this would allow persons affected to speak out and seek help.

"We want persons to understand that in every community there is a survivor of domestic violence and abuse whether we like it or not, there exists at least one survivor because in every community there is a household who has been affected in some way or the other."

Mars explained that the plan was to place those outstanding reminders (purple benches) in every community, because the key to ending violence against women and girls was through community effort and that depended on everyone getting on board.

"The colour purple was chosen because it's the colour associated with the domestic violence movement globally," she added. ■



Selected Online Learning Experiences in the Caribbean during COVID-19

A new study from ECLAC Caribbean is proposing some best practices and recommendations to increase the effectiveness of online learning in the Caribbean, and to ensure greater inclusivity across all student populations. These provide a sustainable approach to expanding and strengthening online learning across the subregion.

Information shared in the study was based on the findings of sample case studies taken from Barbados, the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. It examines how ICTs have supported equitable development of online distance learning for students in primary, secondary and tertiary education systems across the Caribbean.

An expert group meeting was held recently to discuss the findings of the study, with participants sharing their experiences and perspectives based on the research.

They discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic brought about partial or complete school closures, to prevent its spread and limit the outbreak among the wider population. These emergency measures, while necessary, caused widescale disruption of their education systems, requiring unprecedented adaptation to ensure learning continuity for primary, secondary, and tertiary students. Given their geographic and demographic characteristics, Caribbean countries and territories faced unique challenges to adapt education in the face of COVID-19.

Delivery of ongoing education is often challenged in many Caribbean nations due to extreme weather events, and national education systems would benefit from a robust online learning approach to enable learning continuity in disaster situations, such as that reported in BVI after the 2017 hurricane season.

Online learning holds great promise for learners across the Caribbean to address the need for sustainable distance learning, and the transition from traditional in-class learning to online learning environments provides numerous advantages. However, any initiative to expand online learning must be adapted to local context and limitations, and a number of key constraints must be addressed to ensure the success of implementation and sustainability.

The ECLAC study provides a number of recommendations which could guide countries to a sustainable transition to online learning. The recommendations include expansion and strengthening of internet connectivity, expanded adoption of online learning-ready devices, development of a unified vision for curriculum and content, development of centralized learning management systems (LMS) or content pages, and training programs for all key stakeholders.

During the past year of living under pandemic conditions, and where enough infrastructure, hardware, software and training are available, online learning has played a vital role in advancing curriculum goals for students and educators alike. However, while the advent of COVID-19 created an environment to showcase the strengths of online learning, it also highlighted its weaknesses, particularly concerning issues of access and implementation. Taking up the challenge, government ministries, administrators, and educators, alongside parents, guardians and students have worked to advance learning using flexible systems composed of hi-tech, low-tech, and no-tech learning modalities. And while this addresses the emergency disruption brought on by COVID-19, it is the implementation of the longer-term solutions that will address the inequities laid bare by the pandemic. ■



Women employment in Cuba increases

Women make up 37 per cent of the 83,732 people who have taken job offers since January 2021, motivated by the economic overhaul which is being currently implemented in Cuba.

Minister of Labor and Social Security, Marta Elena Feito, posted this on Twitter and specified that young people make up 31 per cent of applications.

According to that source, 53 per cent of overall numbers worked for the State, either in the budget or business sector, and the other were self-employed or worked in agricultural cooperatives.

Granma newspaper reported that such data are 'a reflection of the impact of women employment during the current economic overhaul,' and this 'has an impact on the decrease of the economically inactive population.'

At present, 78 per cent of women work in the state-run sector, and 384,900 of the 1,506,700 people who work in the non-state sector are women, the newspaper reported.

Cuban authorities warned that there are one million economically inactive women, due mainly to an aging population and the care of elderly or disabled people, a responsibility mainly taken on by women.

In that context, Cuba approved the National Program for Women Advancement by presidential decree this year, considered the cornerstone for the development of new policies in favor of women.

Among its objectives the plan aims at women's economic empowerment, developing local alternatives to improve care services for families, and creating the conditions for a reassessment of women's unpaid work. ■



Countries renew commitment to implement 2030 Agenda and Building Forward Better

The fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development concluded on 18 March 2021, with government representatives reaffirming the urgency of building equitable, sustainable societies that would tackle inequality and guarantee citizenship and rights, and of acting together as a region to ensure access to vaccines for the entire population.

The high-level meeting was attended by representatives from the governments of the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, 20 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental organizations, financial institutions in the region, and the academic and private sectors.

The representatives also re-committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to confronting the difficulties arising from the crisis unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic with the aim of building forward better.

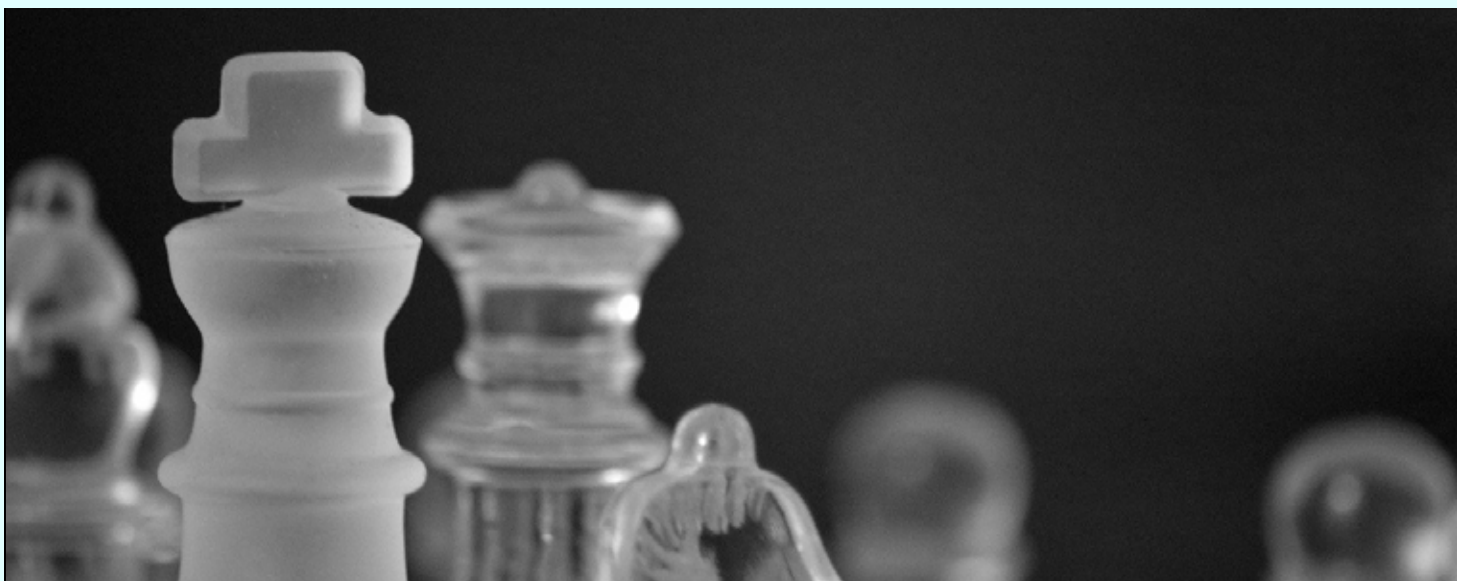
Participating delegates approved a document with 94 conclusions and recommendations that will be taken to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2021, which is held under the auspices of ECOSOC.

The recommendations include calling upon the international community to reinforce measures, aimed at addressing specific challenges that hindered achievement of some SDG targets by the year 2030, such as those to protect biodiversity, develop disaster risk reduction strategies, increase the availability of timely, quality and disaggregated data, foster youth participation, and enhance financial resources, capacity-building and technology transfer to developing countries.

Furthermore, the countries expressed their solidarity with all people and countries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and offered their condolences and sympathy to the families of victims of the pandemic and to those whose lives and livelihoods had been affected by it.

In addition, they reaffirmed their support for international cooperation, multilateralism and solidarity in the global response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, and emphasized that multilateralism was not an option but rather a necessity for the task of recovering and building back better to achieve a more equal, more resilient and more sustainable world.

Similarly, they reaffirmed their commitment to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions and to end hunger in the region; to continue promoting sustainable development, including inclusive economic growth, protecting the environment and promoting social inclusion; to combat inequalities within and among countries; as well as to respect and promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. ■



ECLAC recognizes BVI international leadership

The British Virgin Islands Premier and Minister of Finance, Andrew A. Fahie, has been hailed by ECLAC and regional partners for their steadfast international leadership, and for spearheading the first-ever high-level meeting of the Associate Member Countries (AMCs) of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on sustainable development.

The high-level meeting of the AMCs of ECLAC took place on 15 March, ahead of the Fourth Meeting of the Forum of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, which was convened from 16 to 18 March.

The meeting's objective was to accelerate the mainstreaming of the AMCs into the sustainable

development framework of the region. The participants agreed to meet again in 2021 to discuss progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

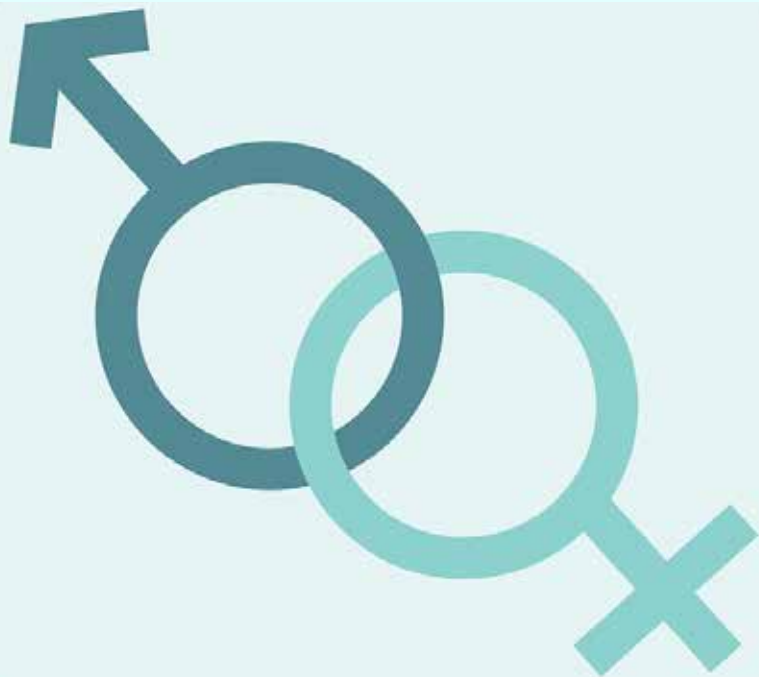
Premier Fahie chaired the virtual meeting in his capacity as vice-chair of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), a subsidiary body of ECLAC.

In his opening statement, Premier Fahie said: "The Associate Members of ECLAC as a special group of primarily small island developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean, are making genuine efforts to achieve sustainable development. However, they share common challenges that require attention and support in order to achieve the sustainable development

goals."

"Critical factors in the sustainable development process such as administrative capacity, policy expertise, technology transfer and financial resources are all areas in which Associate Members would benefit from more support. These challenges are now compounded by the pressure on governments to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and climate emergency."

"We cannot deny that COVID-19 has been a setback to the 2030 Agenda. However, I firmly believe that this is the time to strengthen our resolve and to work even harder to defeat the pandemic and promote sustainable development and green growth." ■



New ECLAC study explores gender equality in environmental migration and disaster displacement in the Caribbean

As extreme weather events intensify and sea levels rise in the subregion, there is a need to devise durable solutions to environmental migration and disaster displacement that build on the capabilities, knowledge and perspectives of women and girls, indigenous and migrant populations, LGBTI persons and persons with disabilities, and support their empowerment as active agents in pursuing mitigation and adaptation responses.

A new study published by ECLAC Caribbean explores the gender-related impacts of disaster displacement and environmental migration in four Caribbean SIDS (the Bahamas, Cuba, Dominica, Jamaica), addresses the data gap and explores how extreme weather events and climate change can amplify inequalities and the risks faced by women, girls and marginalized groups when they are in the process of migration.

Entitled “Advancing gender equality in environmental migration and disaster displacement in the Caribbean”, the study also serves as a foundation for recommendations to improve public action and policymaking in these areas. The evidence suggests that an individual’s experience of migration and/or displacement as a result of extreme weather events and climate change is largely influenced by gender. Traditional gender structures and roles not only amplify the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls, indigenous persons, and LGBTI persons in times of crisis or transition, but also determine access to resources in communities of origin, during migration, in the temporary or long-term destination and in potential return processes.

The study notes that while available information focuses on women and girls, a more comprehensive analysis of gendered impacts would imply a more nuanced understanding of the impacts of environmental migration and disaster

displacement on men and boys, non-binary people and LGBTI people as well.

In order to create policies and practices to address environmental migration and disaster displacement that better mainstream gender, the roles and conditions of women and girls, indigenous persons and the LGBTI community in origin, transit and destination countries require additional attention.

The impacts of climate change are often gender-determined, as limited access to resources, to the labour market and to decision-making power tends to affect resilience and coping capacities. Women are often marginalized in rural and coastal areas that suffer degradation from climate change impacts.

The gender division of labour markets in the Caribbean, including, for instance, the large percentage of

women employed in the services sector, influence their capacity to migrate from vulnerable areas.

According to the study, the situation of women and girls as internal migrants, notably to cities, remains under-addressed across the Caribbean. Urbanization policies and practices should explicitly integrate gender-responsive provisions to address women's vulnerabilities and facilitate their economic and social integration into urban life. Adequate access to services – health, education, social protection – remains a key concern to protect the rights of women migrants.

In the case of disaster situations, displacement and temporary accommodations require gender-responsive interventions. Disasters, especially sudden-onset events like hurricanes, disproportionately affect women and girls. Disasters amplify pre-existing marginalization and create obstacles to rebuilding lives or finding durable solutions for displacement. The study cites a review of the impact of Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas, and shows that women were displaced in larger numbers than men. The same was true for some communities in Dominica after Tropical Storm Erika hit the island in 2015. Underlying drivers include traditional gender roles of care and support for women and security and rebuilding/repair homes for men. Limited access to water, sanitation, health and child education services further strains the care-giving obligations attributed to women.

The study advances recommendations to improve action on the gendered dimensions of environmental migration and disaster displacement across the Caribbean. These recommendations are consistent with the major international frameworks relevant to these subjects, including the Global Compact for Migration, the Sendai Framework, and the recommendations of the Task Force on Displacement adopted at the UNFCCC COP24.

Read more on this study on ECLAC's website: <https://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/46737> ■

Jamaica becomes first in region to receive COVID-19 vaccines through COVAX



On 15 March 2021, Jamaica received 14,400 doses of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility, a global effort between the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI); Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; UNICEF; the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The arrival marks a historic step toward ensuring the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines worldwide, in the largest vaccine procurement and supply operation in history, WHO and PAHO said.

This delivery is part of the first phase of deliveries for Jamaica, and more vaccines are expected to arrive successively during 2021.

According to the first round of COVAX allocations, Jamaica is expected to continue receiving doses through May until it reaches 124,800, the amount specified by COVAX.

PAHO's Revolving Fund, which is responsible for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines for the countries of the Americas under the COVAX Facility, sent 14,400 doses of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine, manufactured by SK Bioscience of South Korea. The vaccines arrived at Kingston's international airport.

"Seeing this arrival is very reassuring, and it means that more people will be able to be protected from COVID-19," said Dr. Bernadette Theodore-Gandi, PAHO/WHO Representative in Jamaica.

"We will continue to work with the country to support vaccination along with the entire package of known public health and social measures that we know can help stop the spread of COVID-19, protect health services, and save lives."

The arrival of these first vaccines will serve to protect priority groups and those most at risk, such as health workers and older adults.

As of 15 March 2021, the country has recorded 31,305 confirmed cases and 492 deaths as a result of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, according to official data from the country.

The 15 Caribbean countries that will receive just over 2.1 million doses of COVAX vaccines by May 2021 include Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Six of these countries (Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) will receive the vaccines free of charge. ■



Joint report from ECLAC and UNDRR explores the challenges in moving towards a risk-informed recovery and development model in the Caribbean

The large-scale and long-lasting effects of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), combined with the possible impact of other hazards and recent events, threaten to damage or destroy vital infrastructure and the life-support systems of large parts of societies and economies.

Therefore, it is urgent for the Caribbean to move towards a systemic approach to disaster risk, given the high vulnerability to the effects of climate change, heavy debt burdens, and dependence on tourism.

This is one of the indications from a recently released joint report, which was produced by ECLAC and the

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). This report, entitled “The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: an opportunity for a systemic approach to disaster risk for the Caribbean”, emphasizes that disaster risk is systemic and generates complex interactions between human, social, political and economic systems on the one hand, and natural systems on the other.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the extent to which a single hazard has the potential to trigger a series of cascading effects, impacting the life-support systems of societies and economies worldwide.

In launching the report, ECLAC Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, said, “This crisis underscores the need for disaster risk management to be incorporated into national planning, in order to guarantee a comprehensive response to disasters. At the global and regional levels, it is crucial that those of us who work in international organizations seek ways to promote and foster a new development model, and a global framework that would enable us to provide a coordinated and adequate response to the next pandemic.”

The document indicates that the continued duration of COVID-19 increases the likelihood that the risk of disasters originating from

other threats occurs simultaneously, or that post-disaster reconstruction will be delayed. The effects and impacts of the Eta and Iota hurricanes in 2020 in Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua – combined with those of COVID-19 – are proof of this, as is the delay - prompted by the pandemic - in reconstruction efforts after the disaster caused by Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas in 2019. The report specifies that the selection of the Caribbean to exemplify the potential effects of systemic disaster risk is no coincidence. It says, "This region was chosen because it is highly vulnerable to hydrometeorological or extreme climate phenomena, it has more than 90% of the population living in coastal areas and its economies are dependent on foreign tourism and are highly indebted."

The report concludes that the situation demands an approach that transcends traditional and compartmentalized methods of disaster risk reduction. It asserts that, in order for efforts to reduce disaster impact to be effective, it is necessary to abandon the simplistic model that ignores the systemic characteristics of extreme phenomena. This applies to institutional arrangements for risk governance, community organizations, research initiatives and policymaking. Thus, development planning can play a fundamental role, helping to incorporate a systemic approach to risk governance. ■



ECCB circulates EC\$5 polymer banknotes

The new EC\$5 polymer banknotes are now available in the Commonwealth of Dominica and Grenada. These new EC\$5 polymer notes were already in circulation in Saint Kitts and Nevis.

The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) has issued the new notes to all commercial banks in the Commonwealth of Dominica and the following banks in Grenada:

- CIBC First Caribbean International Bank (Barbados) Ltd
- Grenada Co-operative Bank Ltd
- Republic Bank Grenada Ltd (Halifax Street)

The ECCB launched its family of polymer notes in May 2019 with the new \$50 note, which features former Governor of the ECCB, the late Honourable Sir K Dwight Venner. The \$100, \$20 and \$10 were issued subsequently based on stock levels at the commercial banks in the ECCB member countries.

The EC polymer notes are made from a thin, flexible and transparent plastic film. The notes are cleaner as they are more resistant to dirt and moisture; more secure as they are more difficult to counterfeit, because polymer allows for the inclusion of advanced security features. The notes are also stronger because they are much more durable than paper and are difficult to tear.

The EC polymer and old paper notes are presently co-circulating, meaning in conducting business, persons may receive both the EC polymer and paper banknotes. ■

Caribbean Cow Heel Soup

Cow heel soup is one of the most loved dishes in the Caribbean. Hearty and always filling, it is cooked with yellow split peas, vegetables and dumplings.

Cow heels are sold in almost all markets and grocery stores in the Caribbean. A pressure cooker is the best pot to use to make this soup as the cow heel takes a long time to cook. If using a pot, increase the cooking time and water. The aim is to cook the cow heel until it is 'fall-off-the-bone' tender.

What you will need:

- 2 teaspoons oil
- 1 cup onions (diced)
- 6 sprigs thyme (divided)
- 2 pounds cow heel (chopped)
- Salt to taste
- Black pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup yellow split peas
- 6 to 8 okra
- 2 carrots (cut into 1-inch rounds)
- 12 flour dumplings

How to Make it:

Step 1. Gather the ingredients.

Step 2. Heat oil in pressure cooker.

Step 3. Add onions and half of the thyme and sauté until the onions are translucent, 2 to 3 minutes.

Step 4. Add cow heel along with salt and pepper to taste and sauté for 3 minutes.

Step 5. Add 5 cups of water, stir, cover the pressure cooker and let cook for 30 minutes. Start timing after the first whistle.

Step 6. Release the valve of the pressure cooker to let out the steam. Open the pressure cooker and add the peas and more water. There should be enough water to cook the peas and make a soup.

Step 7. Add more thyme and let the peas and cow heel cook on high heat until the peas soften.

Step 8. Add okra and dumplings to pot, cover and let cook for 6 to 8 minutes or until the dumplings are cooked through. Taste soup for seasoning and adjust salt and pepper accordingly.



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