1. One of the key areas in the Secretariat focused on building resilience as it relates to disaster risk management and tourism in the communities whose livelihood depends on this, is the project on Building the Resilience of Small Tourism Enterprises in the Caribbean to Disasters executed since 2020 by the departments of Sustainable Development and Economic Development (with financial support by the United States). The goal is to assist Small Tourism Enterprises in the Caribbean to overcome the macro (national) and micro (corporate) level challenges that affect the business continuity during and after catastrophic events in the Caribbean. Some of the key activities and products of the project include an Integrated Assessment where over 600 small tourism enterprises participated in a survey and interviews; and a two-part Multi-Stakeholder Policy Forum on Challenges to Post-Disaster Business Continuity of Small Tourism Enterprises in the Caribbean convened in partnership with the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) and included participation of over 100 persons from the various tourism sector value chain. In partnership with The University of West Indies, a Crisis Communication Strategy A Model Post-Disaster “Open for Business” Procedural Guide for Small Tourism Enterprises) was developed; A four-part on-line Regional Workshop on Contingency and Business Continuity Planning in community emergency response teams (CERT) for owners, operators, and staff of small tourism enterprises to increase their knowledge and experiences in corporate disaster planning and response, using an overall community approach, as well as to update and implement their business continuity plans and tools was conducted by the University of West Indies with participation of over 65 small tourism enterprises. Finally, a High-level Policy Forum is being planned. The high-level Policy Forum will serve as the venue to present to Ministers and other high-level officials responsible for Tourism and Disaster Management the findings and recommendations of the root causes and key sources of vulnerability that impact small tourism enterprises during and after catastrophic events thereby forging a sense of ownership among all stakeholders, public and private and further presenting an opportunity to update public and institutional policies and strategic interventions that would enable and accelerate their implementation. This forum will bring together all stakeholders in the tourism ecosystem in the Caribbean based on consensus process that is expected to strengthen the supply chain for the benefit of all, from local communities and businesses to larger tourism operators, whether national or foreign owned.
2. Under the program Science for Decision-making, a seminar is being planned to identify critical gaps in the availability and use of science-based data to support decision-making on vulnerability reduction and resilience building in the Caribbean; to assess good practice and lessons learned from national, regional, and global resilience building; and to develop an agenda of collaboration among Caribbean governments and regional and international agencies to address these critical data gaps in the short, medium and long-term.
3. We re-affirmed our commitment to serve as Co-chairmanship of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy Implementation Plan subcommittee on Physical and Environmental Planning, in collaboration with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency’s (CDEMA) Coordinating Unit. Our functions include to provide overall guidance at the physical and environmental planning sector level to ensure Comprehensive Disaster Management is mainstreamed at the national levels and incorporated into development planning of national economies; to facilitate effective coordination and harmonization of Comprehensive Disaster Management implementation at the physical and environmental planning sector level; and to provide a forum for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on Comprehensive Disaster Management results in the sector. This commitment/role has been in effect since 2014 when the subcommittee was established
4. Support to the implementation of Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in Central America and Mexico, in collaboration with the US’ Federal Emergency Management Agency (Mexico) and the Trifinio Trinational Committee. A Basic CERT and Train the trainer training was held these past weeks in O-co-te-pe-que with participation of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador
5. Our support to the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) and its Policy committee in their decisions as they are manifested in the last regular meetings of the General Assembly continues; we are currently working with the United States and Permanent Observers in the implementation of a Western Hemisphere Database for facilitating the coordination of international disaster response. Thus far, we have designed the database, drafted a concept and scope of work document and is currently working on the implementation of the database which will include the review and restructuring of the on-line database architecture and data dictionary for incorporating new content to facilitate international disaster response, international disaster assistance capacities and legislation and regulations both national and international as well as points of contact in OAS member states responsible for offering, requesting and accepting international disaster response and assistance. And a migration to a state-of-the-art platform for easy access and query, as well as easy update.
6. The Department of Sustainable Development supports Disaster Mitigation across all areas of the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (PIDS), and particularly in Integrated Water Resources Management in transboundary basins, supporting disaster mitigation strategies and activities for slow-onset disasters (droughts) and fast-onset disasters (storm -tropical storms and hurricanes, and associated hazards such as surge storms, coastal flooding, landslides, and windstorms), and water harvesting and re-use in collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).
7. Also, in the area focused on sustainable energy, the Department of Sustainable Development supports efforts of member states to de-centralize electricity transmission and distribution systems and creating redundancy of energy sources and energy grid, with focus on renewable energy.