Meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR)

Thursday, June 23, 2022

* *Excellency Nestor Mendez, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States*
* Excellency Elizabeth Darius Clarke, Ambassador of Saint Lucia
* *Distinguished representatives of the Permanent Council*
* *Esteemed Presenters of today’s meeting*
* *Members of the Inter-American Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction*
* *Regional Coordinators and Permanent Observers*

Good afternoon….

1. It is my distinct pleasure, as the representative of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) to participate in today’s meeting which is aimed at facilitating coordinated efforts and plans of various stakeholders in preparation for the hurricane season.
2. Though this is well known among the participants, I wish to start by reiterating that IICA is the specialized agency for agriculture of the Inter-American System that supports the efforts of its Member States to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being. The Institute’s mission is to encourage, promote and support the 34 Member States in their efforts to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being through international technical cooperation of excellence.
3. In acknowledging the inextricable link between agriculture and environmental matters, IICA is committed to continue working with its farmers and other stakeholders in promoting a more productive, competitive, and sustainable agriculture sector. Therefore, there is a clear recognition of the need to view agriculture as an important part of the solution to the environmental and extreme weather conditions we face through the integration of science, technology, innovation and new paradigms for transforming the agrifood systems in the Americas.
4. In practical terms, the role of the Institute is to simultaneously act as a leader and a collaborator (acting as a bridge among multi-stakeholders) in developing a more sustainable and resilient agriculture sector is strongly linked to nature and climate actions that preserve and protect the natural environment. *This role is actualized through the strategic orientation and actions of the Institute towards natural disaster reduction, and climate mitigation and adaptation.*

*STRATEGIC ORIENTATION & ACTIONS*

1. From a strategic stand-point, IICA’s **Medium Term Plan 2022 – 2026** provides the policy framework and basis for its response to national disasters in member countries. Within this umbrella framework, IICA is committed to promoting agro-ecosystem recovery and regeneration; promoting practices that contribute to climate resilience and mitigation; and promoting the circular economy.
2. Through the IICA Dominica office, a Hurricane Resilience and Food Security Mapping initiative has been undertaken to measure and evaluate household resilience to hurricanes and its impact on food security in some key agricultural-based communities in Dominica. This initiative has the potential to capture baseline and monitoring information to better inform allocative efficiency for enhancing resilience capacity in Dominica and the Region by Extension. The results of this initiative revealed that adaptive capacity and assets were the most important dimensions contributing to household resilience while increasing savings was identified as the main future action to mitigate against future hurricane shocks. The methodology used, rapidly measures household resilience to hurricane and infers it's impacts and relationship to food security in the absence of panel data, which is the case in most SIDS of the Caribbean. As such, we strive to gain access to funding for full-scale hurricane resilience mapping in Dominica, after which the hope is to extend this initiative to the other countries in the Eastern Caribbean to foster evidence-based decision making in an effort to advance actions on the ground and build sustainability and accountability in the sector in response to the impact of natural disasters on household resilience and food security.
3. Further, through IICA’s Dominica office we are currently collaborating with the Red Cross with a specific focus on disaster risk in the agriculture sector, in an effort to reach out to and support farmers with the issues of inputs and water scarcity.
4. Through our Barbados office, consultations and ongoing conversations are being held with CEDEMA, USAID, and other key partners along the lines of initiatives that can be collectively implemented to address agriculture hazards.
5. Through the Director General’s Special Fund, which provides quick access to funds for affected farmers in countries with disaster related impacts. In recent times, Guyana and Suriname have benefit from this fund to help with recovery from flood events, while St. Vincent and the Grenadines received support during the volcanic eruption of La Soufriere.
6. Through key strategic partnerships, such as with World Vision, IICA is also focussed on strengthening the institutional framework and capacities of its Member States in the Dry Corridor (*especially those in the Dry Corridor - Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua*) to anticipate, prepare, react, and recover from environmental risks (extreme events) that may affect agricultural production and the well-being of agricultural producers.
7. The Institute has developed key tactical actions that are usually implemented in the event of a natural disaster in its Member States. These actions include:
8. Coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and other Development Partners (inclusive of international and regional institutions and donor agencies). Supporting the Ministry of Agriculture and other national authorities in the Agricultural Sector includes, inter alia,
* Project preparation for medium to long term responses inclusive of the development of reconstruction and recovery programs for the agricultural sector and the affected rural territories
1. Coordination with national emergency offices and regional committees (for example in the case of Central America, there is coordination with CEPREDENAC[[1]](#footnote-1) and in the Caribbean with CDEMA[[2]](#footnote-2)).
2. The use of IICA’s technical experts to participate in Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis for the Agricultural sector.
3. The provision of food and agricultural inputs, using local resources where possible. This action is implemented in close collaboration with other partners that are experienced and have access to resources in Crisis Response.
4. Ongoing consultation with national partners, especially the farmers and other key stakeholders to adopt on-farm natural disaster prevention and management. This action is implemented with national authorities and institutions with the support of the regional and international communities to enhance sustainability of the interventions.

***CONCLUSION***

1. Fellow participants, cognizant that the LAC region represents some of the most vulnerable countries (particularly the Caribbean countries) to natural disasters, IICA will continue to work hard in a collaborative, proactive and responsive manner to enhance resiliency and sustainability of the agricultural sector to natural disasters where the implementation is in concert with environmental and climatic considerations.
2. IICA, therefore, remains steadfast in its belief that its role within this Committee will contribute to enhance the region’s preparedness and capacity to face the upcoming hurricane season.
3. Thank You!

*By Beverly Best*

1. CEPREDENAC: Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres en América Central y República Dominicana [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. CDEMA: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency [↑](#footnote-ref-2)