

COVID-19

Multi-Sectoral Response Plan for the Eastern Caribbean Funding Appeal

30 April 2020



Bathsheba Fishing Village, East Coast Barbados. Photo credit: UN/RCO



UNITED NATIONS
BARBADOS & THE OECS



Anguilla•Antigua and Barbuda•British Virgin Islands•
Commonwealth of Dominica•Grenada•
Montserrat•Saint Lucia•Saint Kitts and Nevis•
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

"It is a human crisis. It is not just a health pandemic. It is a jobs pandemic. A humanitarian pandemic. A development pandemic."

**UN Secretary-General's Address to the IMF/World Bank High-Level Meeting
(17 April 2020)**

CONTEXT

The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19 disease), which was declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a global pandemic on 11 March 2020, is an unprecedented worldwide crisis affecting all countries in different ways, but the challenges for Small Island Development States (SIDS) are much more acute given the limited health infrastructure and significant exposure of the economies to exogenous economic shocks.

In the case of Caribbean SIDS, COVID-19 threatens to erode the development gains of the last decade and undermines the region's capacity to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The outbreak is currently not only putting pressures on the small and limited health systems, but is expected to have medium to longer term effects on social and economic sectors with negative consequences for economic growth, job creation, citizen security and the state's capacity to provide health and social services especially for those in vulnerable circumstances. This includes children, youth, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities and migrants.

Additionally, as the Caribbean enters the 2020 hurricane season with a forecast that the Atlantic will have above normal activity, it is important that countries rapidly put the necessary buffers and mechanisms in place to reduce the multidimensional impact of COVID-19 and minimize the chances of exacerbating the fiscal and social challenges should 2020 hurricanes make landfall.



'Me and My Granny'
UN Human Rights Day Youth Photo Contest 3rd Place entry from Dominica.
Photo credit: Nia Williams

NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

With increasing cases detected in Eastern Caribbean Countries (ECC), the capacities of existing human resources will be stretched thin. Surveillance teams will also need to be strengthened to conduct case investigations and contact tracing.

Additionally, some countries have developed and are developing national laboratory capacity for differential diagnosis or confirmation of unusual respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

Challenges include ensuring availability of reagents and tests, as well as adequate and safe shipping of samples and supplies to ensure continuity of services, as demand for testing grows.

The lack of appropriate medical equipment for treatment, lack of trained personnel (at all levels including pre-hospital), and inadequate referral systems in countries may hinder access to timely provision of care necessary to save lives.

Challenges to reducing human-to-human transmission in healthcare facilities stem from limited availability of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and trained human resources. Healthcare facilities and healthcare services will need to be reorganized with a focus on improving triage and isolation to facilitate the flow of patients and reduce nosocomial infections.

Capacity for risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) must be improved to ensure evidence-based information is regularly shared with residents and commuters to reduce transmission.

Further, the COVID-19 health crisis threatens to strike a devastating blow on the economies of ECC. Restrictions on movement, both at home and abroad, have brought economic activity to a stand-still.

Governments' ability to respond quickly and decisively to both the immediate health needs and the economic disruption is severely hindered by countries' high indebtedness and limited fiscal space.

Impacts are already turning into lost income, with an April 2020 CARICOM rapid impact survey finding that nearly half of respondents had experienced job loss or reduced income/revenue.

The main source of economic shocks will be through commodity prices, tourism receipts, foreign direct investment and remittances. Caribbean economies depend significantly on the tourism industry, and commodity sectors for its economic security.

KEY CONCERNS

- **Health and Wellness**
- **Food and Nutrition Security and Standards**
- **Economic Recovery and Livelihoods**
- **Education**
- **Social Protection**
- **Gender based Violence and Violence against Children**
- **Protection of the most Vulnerable and Human Rights**
- **Logistics and Supply Chain Management Challenges**
- **Limited Fiscal Space and Access to Funding**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

According to IMF estimates on impact of COVID-19, for 2020 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) percentage change (constant price), countries will range from -10.0 in Antigua and Barbuda to -4.5 in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Government fiscal accounts will be stressed as fiscal deficits expand due to a reduction in tax revenues and the necessary expansion of expenditure to fight the health pandemic and provide fiscal support for the economy.

Therefore, the level of debt as a percent of GDP will increase. Together, these macro stresses will lead to higher levels of unemployment, poverty and other social deprivations.

Additionally, Caribbean goods and services supply chains have been impacted. Given the reliance of the region on food imports, this has highlighted a major vulnerability which could have significant repercussions for immediate food security should there be notable interruptions to food imports. Not only are supply chains expected to be compromised, but productivity in countries which practice social distancing will likely be severely undercut as a large swath of the labour force will be at home and not fully engaged in productive activity.

Even in cases where working from home is an option, the closure of schools means that parents with young children will have to split their normal working time with parenting and home-schooling duties.

COVID-19 has prompted varying degrees of physical distancing and lock-down measures which increase gender-based violence (GBV) and protection risks, exacerbating gender imbalances and the burden of unpaid work on women and children.

Online platforms are being accessed (where possible) to not only educate caregivers on how to safeguard their own mental health and that of their children, but also to keep children learning, entertained and connected to the outside world, while being protected from the associated online risks.

Given the powerful benefits for households, the macro-economy and cost-savings, social protection must feature as a central policy response to COVID-19.

While some countries have expanded social assistance schemes, and instituted fiscal measures to bring relief to individuals and companies, including small businesses which are disproportionately affected by the crisis, domestic resources can cover only a fraction of the unprecedented funding that is required to avert catastrophe.

At the cost level, proactively investing in social protection systems in the early onset of a shock can save governments and donors up to 30 per cent in future humanitarian assistance needs and avoided losses.

RESPONSE STRATEGY FOR THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

'The Multi-Sectoral Response Plan (MRP) is part of the UN's effort to support countries in fostering international solidarity and to help mobilize financial resources to meet the needs of Barbados and Eastern Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS)'

This Barbados and Eastern Caribbean MRP aims to support countries in the Eastern Caribbean to scale-up their respective national actions to respond to COVID-19 through a multi-dimensional approach. In partnership with national authorities and regional institutions, this UN strategy aims to support countries to tackle the immediate challenges and build the conditions necessary for faster recovery post COVID-19. In this regard, the MRP is aligned with the global “**UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID 19**” report, which provides the strategic framework to the response that goes beyond the health impacts.

In line with the United Nations (UN) Reform, the MRP is an important tool to facilitate a coordinated response of the UN Barbados and the OECS Sub-regional Team in support of countries' COVID-19 related needs. It aims to address the immediate health and medium-term socio-economic needs in seven Eastern Caribbean countries and three Overseas Territories through the following strategic objectives:

- 1: Further contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in the region;**
- 2: Minimize the social and economic impact and ensure resilient recovery; and**
- 3: Promote protection and well-being of the most vulnerable.**

These objectives address the following marginalized and vulnerable groups, or people made vulnerable due to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19: **women, children, elders, persons with disabilities and migrants**, through eight pillars. The initiatives proposed in this MRP, are based on countries' needs and requests for support from the UN Barbados and the OECS Sub-regional Team and will be implemented over a period of eight months - May to December 2020.

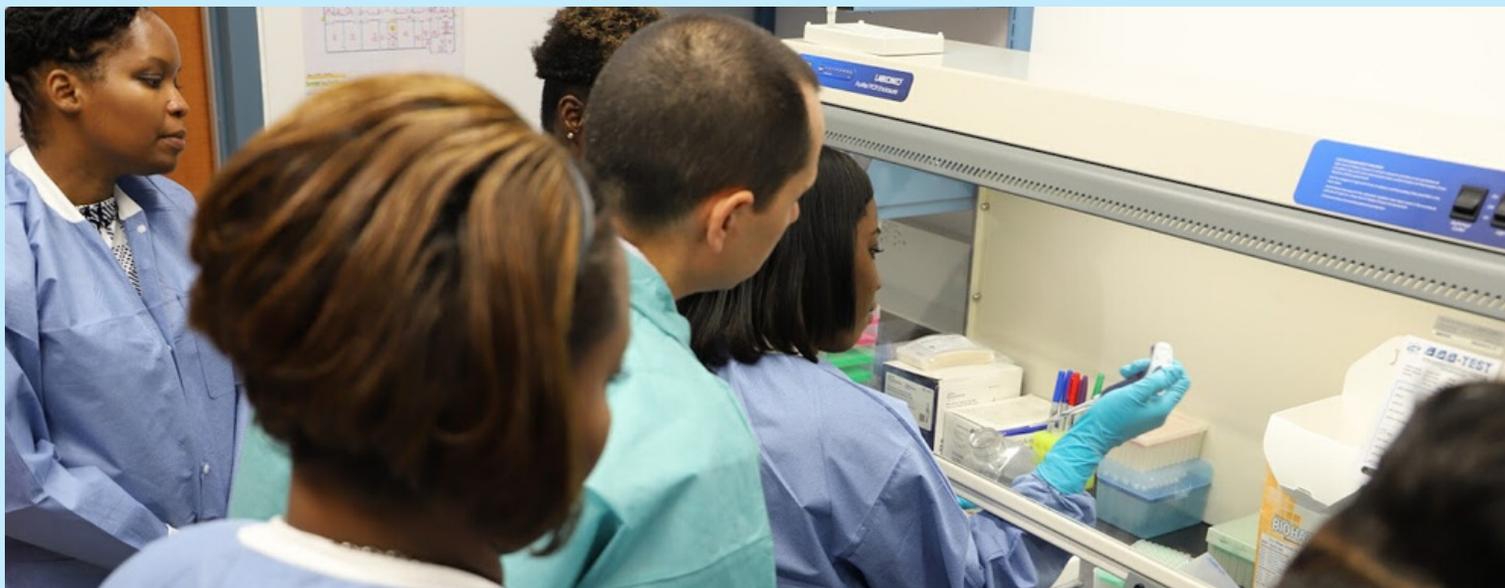
Eight pillars of work have been identified and linked to the foregoing objectives for which the UN system has existing technical and operational capacities to support Member States. The UN Multi-country Office Barbados and OECS covers seven countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and three British Overseas territories: Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat.

UN Barbados and the OECS Funding Appeal US\$29,700,000

To accomplish the set objectives the UNST is seeking to mobilize these estimated resources from different funding sources - including bilateral and multilateral donors, private sector, and international financial institutions.

PILLAR 1: HEALTH AND WELLNESS INTERVENTIONS

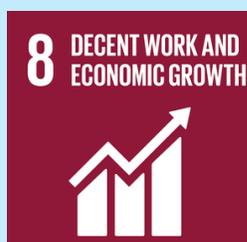
- Reorganizing health services to limit human-human transmission within health facilities.
- Procurement and distribution of appropriate PPE and essential medical devices.
- Enhancing existing surveillance systems to monitor COVID-19 transmission.
- Ensure availability of laboratory supplies, reagents and test kits for COVID-19 diagnosis.
- Training and sharing of updated guidelines as the information becomes available.
- Communicate rapidly and transparently to populations, including through production and dissemination of RCCE materials.
- Expansion of Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) telemedicine to ensure continued access to life-saving sexual and reproductive health services and supplies.
- Supporting risk communication and community engagement (RCCE), and infection control messaging to promote personal hygiene and improve protective hygiene practices, including age and gender-tailored psycho-social support.



PAHO/WHO trained laboratory technicians of the Best-dos Santos Public Health Laboratory on SARS-CoV-2 in Bridgetown, Barbados.
Photo credit: PAHO/WHO. February 2020

PILLAR 2: FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY STANDARDS INTERVENTIONS

- Conduct assessment of impact of COVID-19 on agricultural livelihoods and on food and nutrition security.
- Provide support to vulnerable households that are involved in the agri-food sector (farming/ fisheries/agro-processing) taking into consideration the upcoming hurricane season). Assist countries develop policies, programmes and plans that would facilitate the development of the agriculture sector in the post-COVID recovery (including development of the Post-COVID Response Plans).
- Provide risk communication on food safety and food & nutrition security.
- Conduct food safety training to businesses and authorities on incorporating physical distancing and sanitizing protocols into routine hygiene practice in food production facilities.

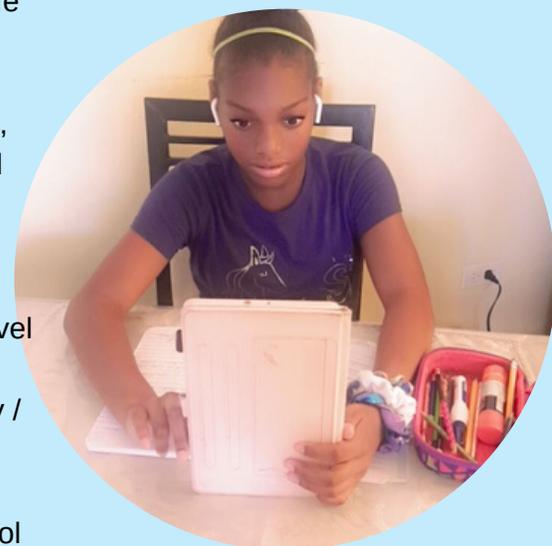


PILLAR 3: ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS

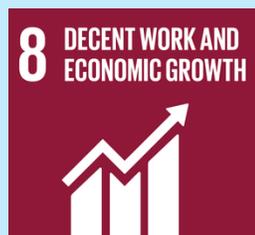
- Assess Economic and Human Development Impact and support implementation.
- Support to Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) on economic transformation, digitalization and e-commerce.
- Support Women's Economic Empowerment and Financial Inclusion.
- Strengthen the soft and technical abilities of receivers of public financial support, through the provision of conditional short and targeted skills trainings, to increase their employability and/or entrepreneurial outlook.
- Improve working conditions through increased occupational safety and health (OSH).

PILLAR 4: EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

- Support the Ministries of Education to adapt and implement guidelines for safe school operations during a prolonged COVID-19 outbreak (e.g. promotion of hand hygiene).
- Provide guidance to Ministries of Education for the safe reopening of schools, small repairs to handwashing facilities and distribution of critical hygiene and prevention items for use. (School-level Hygiene Kit).
- Training of school principals and teachers on use of hygiene kits and preventative practices.
- Support for the delivery of education, through online platforms, community level connectivity as well as the provision of tablets for under privileged children.
- Support Ministries of Education to update or develop education in emergency / contingency plans at education sector and school levels.
- Support the Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Health, Social Services and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to adapt existing school feeding programmes during periods of school closures.



Barbadian Primary school student participating in on-line learning during COVID-19 lock down.
Photo credit: UNICEF



- Support the design and implementation of cash-based interventions through existing social protection programmes and systems.
- Provide technical assistance to adapt social protection programmes and safety-nets, including school feeding and Public Assistance Programmes.
- Undertake assessment and analysis on economic and social impacts, risk and vulnerability.
- Reinforce the capacity of national Social Security Organizations.
- Provide technical assistance with provision of child-care support, including public-private partnerships, for essential workers including nurses, cleaners, domestic workers and others.

PILLAR 6: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN INTERVENTIONS

- In collaboration with key partners (OECS and national Ministries of Education, Health and Social Services) provide: i) support or referrals for psychosocial support (PSS) to children, parents, social workers, caregivers, education and community workforce; ii) provide child protection and parenting support.
- Provide guidance to Ministries of Social Development for the safe operation of children’s homes, juvenile detention centres and national foster care programmes. To include the distribution of critical preventative Personal care hygiene kits for use in these homes.
- Provide support to women and the most vulnerable segments of the population through activities in the EU funded Spotlight Initiative and the Canadian and UK Department for International Development (DFID) funded Engender Project.
- Provide shelters with necessary equipment and civil society organizations (CSOs) representatives with necessary training to support an increased number of survivors of violence against women and children.
- Support the preventive capacity of Security Forces.
- Adapt and strengthen GBV referral pathways for provision of multi-sectoral services and information to GBV survivors.



Support for survivors of Gender-based Violence training will also feature in COVID-19 response. Photo credit: UNFPA



PILLAR 7: HUMAN RIGHTS INTERVENTIONS

- Provide policy guidance and advice for the protection of the most vulnerable groups and to facilitate referrals to governments and CSOs.

PILLAR 8: LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

- Ensure logistics coordination through the COVID-19 Logistics Cell.
- Provide Common Logistics Services in aviation, shipping, storage, domestic transport and delivery.
- Roll-out, with Caribbean Disaster Management Agency (CDEMA), the end-to-end supply chain management system.



Vulnerable families in Dominica being provided with hygiene supplies as part of the response to hurricane Maria. Photo credit : UNFPA.

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| 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS | 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS |
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FUNDING STRATEGY AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

To accomplish the stated objectives, the UN Barbados and the OECS, through this **Funding Appeal** seeks to mobilize approximately US\$29.7 million from different funding sources including bilateral and multilateral donors, international financing institutions, private sector and foundations. The MRP is expected to be financed through the following funding streams:

1. Responding to the immediate needs, UN Agencies will contribute by repurposing existing programme funding. As such, the existing Joint SDG Programme on Social Protection and the Spotlight Grenada Joint Programme will redirect funds for COVID-19. In this vein, UN Agencies' programmes are being reviewed with a view to target resources to buffer the immediate impact while more longer-termed funding is secured.
2. Existing funding mechanisms and call for proposals such as the India- UN Development Partnership Fund grants to each CARICOM country, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), WHO/PAHO Americas Appeal etc.
3. The COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), launched on 31 March 2020, is an inter-agency financing mechanism to support low and middle-income countries in overcoming health and development issues related to COVID-19. The fund will focus on three prioritized areas: health emergency, socio-economic impact and recovery and 'building back better', through systems strengthening.
4. National resources, particularly for the purchasing of equipment, for which the UN will contribute with its joint inter-agency procurement task force.
5. Support reprioritization of domestic funds and the mobilization of additional financing from bilateral and multilateral development partners, international development finance institutions, private sector, foundations and non-traditional donors, for which the UN will provide technical expertise, operational capacity and implementation support.

COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

The UN Resident Coordinator leads and has overall oversight for the UN Multi-sectoral response to COVID-19, in collaboration with PAHO as the global lead agency for COVID-19 and the Head of Agencies of the UN Sub-Regional team for Barbados and the OECS. In response to COVID-19, the Sub-regional team has established a COVID-19 Inter-Agency Committee which is co-led by PAHO and the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO). This Committee is responsible for ensuring the operational coordination and coherence of the needs (assessment, analysis and countries' requests) linked to the response of the priorities defined in the MRP and overall monitoring of the response. Thus far, the Committee, based on the countries' gap analyses (conducted by PAHO) and additional countries' needs, has prepared the Country Preparedness and Response Plan which is available in the Partners Platform, as an accountability, transparency and monitoring instrument of the COVID-19 response.

The UN Resident Coordinator, with the support of UN Agencies as Pillar leads, will facilitate the coordination of the MRP's priorities both with UN Agencies and external development/humanitarian partners. This will be done in coordination with the CDEMA Regional Response Mechanism, through the Eastern Caribbean Development Partners Group on Disaster Management (ECDPG-DM) co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the Executive Director of CDEMA.

Due to the pressing urgency for medical equipment to be made available (ventilators, PPEs, vehicles, etc.) the UN Resident Coordinator established an inter-agency Procurement Task Force comprised of PAHO, UNICEF, UNDP and UNOPS to better assist CARICOM countries in their efforts to undertake joint procurement and address supply constraints.

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS AND TIMELINE

The UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund will be the main instrument for mobilization of resources for this MRP and will serve as a financial vehicle for earmarking resources mobilized locally for countries covered under this COVID-19 MRP. In addition, efforts will be made to access the Global Humanitarian Response Plan, Agency appeals and the PAHO regional appeal. The time-frame for implementation of activities financed under this Multi-sectoral Response Plan is **May - December 2020**.

| PILLARS | TOTAL | PILLAR LEAD |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| Health and Wellness | \$8,150,000 | PAHO |
| Food and Nutrition Security and Standards | \$1,940,000 | FAO |
| Economic Recovery and Livelihoods | \$2,465,000 | UNDP |
| Education | \$1,009,750 | UNICEF |
| Social Protection | \$8,251,240 | UNICEF and WFP |
| Gender Based Violence and Violence Against Children | \$2,718,000 | UN WOMEN and UNFPA |
| Human Rights | \$100,000 | OHCHR |
| Logistics and Supply Chain Management | \$5,000,000 | WFP |
| Total | \$29,633,990 | |

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