

# 2nd Caribbean Ministerial Safe School Forum

29 and 30 April 2019, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

## CONCEPT NOTE



Organisation of  
Eastern Caribbean States



United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Funded by  
European Union  
Civil Protection and  
Humanitarian Aid



Global Alliance for  
Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience  
in the Education Sector

## List of Acronyms

CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CSS	Comprehensive School Safety
CSSI	Caribbean Safe School Initiative
CDM	Comprehensive Disaster Management
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CHC	Coordination and Harmonization Council
CWP	Country Work Programme
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GADRRRES	Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WISS	World Initiative for Safe Schools



## 1. Background

### 1.1 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and reference to safe schools' initiatives

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030<sup>1</sup> was adopted by the United Nations Member States on 18 March 2015 at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan. The Sendai Framework is a 15-year voluntary, non-binding agreement, which recognizes that while the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk, that responsibility should be shared with relevant stakeholders including local government, the private sector and others. It aims for the following outcome: *The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.*

Education plays a crucial role in reducing vulnerability and building community resilience to disaster risks. Furthermore, it is also essential for empowering people and reducing poverty. Recognizing that a quality education is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the 193 countries represented by the United Nations General Assembly reflects the commitment to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" as Goal number 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. Damage to schools by disasters can lead not only to the loss of children's and teachers' lives but also to a loss of public investment in social infrastructure and interruptions to education, which in turn can have lifelong implications.

To advance this goal, the Sendai Framework recognizes that schools should incorporate disaster-resistant structures according to local risks, while at the same time calling for knowledge and awareness of hazards and risk to be part of the school curriculum in order to bring about behavioural changes that support disaster risk reduction and greater resilience. The framework also states that policies and practices for disaster risk management should be based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity, exposure of persons and assets, hazard characteristics and the environment. It also calls for the strengthening of disaster resilient public and private investments, particularly through structural, non-structural and functional disaster risk prevention and reduction measures in critical facilities, in particular **schools** and hospitals and physical infrastructure.

The [Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools \(WISS\)](#) was developed in collaboration with partners from the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction Education and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES) building on guidance from the 2009 and 2011 Global Platforms on Disaster Risk Reduction to undertake risk assessments on existing education and health facilities and the call of the High-level Communiqué at the 2013 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction "To start a global safe schools and safe health structures campaign in disaster-prone areas with voluntary funding and commitments to be announced at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015". It is a government-led global partnership for advancing safe school implementation at the national level. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was the first Caribbean country that has signed up to WISS. During the first Caribbean Ministerial Safe School Forum, 11 Caribbean governments committed to school safety under the framework of the Caribbean Safe School Initiative (CSSI), which is the Caribbean contribution to the WISS.

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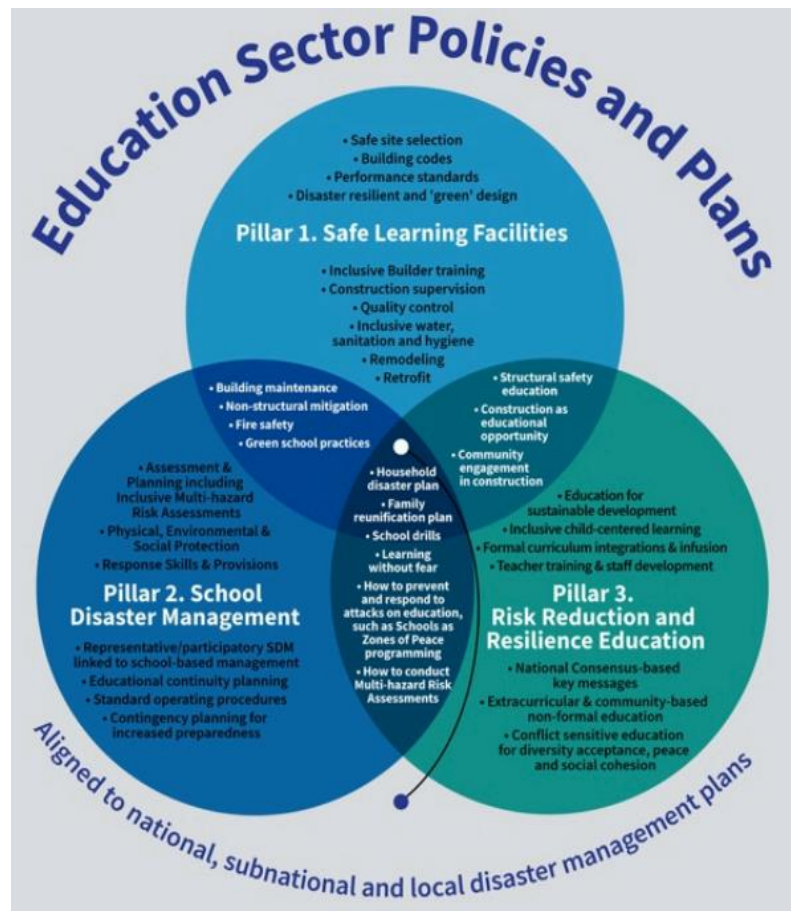
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/43291>



The Initiative seeks to motivate and support Governments to develop national strategies and implement school safety, building upon the [Comprehensive School Safety Framework](#) (see figure on the right) and defining a safe school as one that combines all of the following elements, defined as its three core pillars, which should be addressed by education policies and plans, and aligned with disaster management at national, regional, district, and local school site levels:

- Safe Learning Facilities (disaster-resilient infrastructure);
- School Disaster Management;
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Education.

Furthermore, the WISS also strives to promote the sharing of good practices and achievements in safe school implementation, as well as to help identify challenges and offer technical assistance and particular expertise around its three pillars.



### 1.2 Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy and reference to safe schools initiatives

In the Caribbean, the Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy 2014-2024 is the strategic road map for disaster risk management. The Strategy was developed through a broad-based, participatory and consultative process that was led by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and involved regional disaster risk management stakeholders including CDEMA Participating States, representative of key sectors, regional and international development partners and donors. The Strategy aims to integrate CDM more firmly into development planning and will provide broad strategic direction to addressing the challenges of disaster risk management in the Caribbean during its ten-year lifespan. Education has been given significant consideration under this regional Strategy.

The Strategy prioritizes four areas for addressing DRM issues, generally summarized as (i) institutional strengthening, (ii) knowledge management<sup>2</sup> for CDM, (iii) mainstreaming of CDM into key sectors and (iv) building and sustaining community resilience. More specifically, Priority Area 2 of the Strategy aims to achieve “Increased and sustained knowledge management and learning for Comprehensive Disaster Management”.

<sup>2</sup> Knowledge Management is the collection of processes that govern the creation, dissemination, and utilization of knowledge (Sources: What is Knowledge Management?)



A number of Regional Outcomes have been identified to support this Priority Area, as well as indicators and targets for tracking progress and achievements.

PRIORITY AREA 2			
Increased and sustained knowledge management and learning for Comprehensive Disaster Management			
<b>Regional Outcome 2.1</b> Regional Disaster Risk Management Network for informed decision-making at all levels improved	<b>Regional Outcome 2.2</b> Infrastructure for fact-based policy and decision making established/strengthened	<b>Regional Outcome 2.3</b> Incorporation of local/community and sectoral based knowledge into risk assessment improved	<b>Regional Outcome 2.4</b> Educational and training materials for CDM standardized, improved and applied in the region

## 2. School Safety in the Caribbean Context

Caribbean developing countries are exposed to a variety of similar natural hazards, namely hurricanes, floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, droughts and fires. These hazards have compromised countries' poverty reduction strategies, hindered development gains and endangered educational systems. Their impacts are likely to be magnified by the expected effects of changes in global climate and potentially more frequent and severe extreme weather events. Low-lying states in the Caribbean are especially vulnerable to these effects which pose significant risks to public safety, infrastructure and natural resources.

Disasters have a major impact on children, youth and education systems. Studies suggest that worldwide each year, 175 million children are likely to be affected by natural hazards, and children in the Caribbean are no exception. In 2004, Hurricane Ivan caused widespread destruction in Grenada damaging 73 of 75 public schools. In 2010, in Haiti, a massive earthquake killed 38,000 students and 1,300 teachers and education personnel. It destroyed 4,000 schools, as well as the headquarters of the Ministry of Education. The 2017 hurricane season affected 1, 700 school buildings in Cuba. Dominica had 18,500 school-aged children out of school, and 57 Government primary and secondary schools were damaged or destroyed. Children from Barbuda and Dominica had to be temporarily relocated to Antigua to attend classes. These figures are likely to increase unless populations improve their capacity to anticipate, prepare, adapt and become more resilient to such events.

Most countries however, are small and resources are scarce or non-existent for each to carry out tasks on an individual basis. In spite of this, major strategies have been implemented individually in different countries in order to improve school preparedness. In order to ensure political commitment at the regional and national level, the First Caribbean Ministerial Safe School Forum was organized in April 2017 in Antigua and Barbuda. Main outcomes were a Regional Road Map on School Safety, and the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration on School Safety<sup>3</sup>, which was signed by 12 Caribbean Ministries of Education,. These documents guide the Caribbean Safe School Initiative (CSSI) that was launched in April 2017 during the Ministerial Forum. The CSSI is the suggested framework to advance school safety in the Caribbean. The initiative is the Caribbean contribution to the Worldwide-Initiative on Safe Schools (WISS) and promotes the partnership for advancing

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<sup>3</sup>Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Guyana, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos, Virgin Islands.



safe school implementation. Ministries of Education lead the implementation and get technical support by international, regional and national partners.

Since the launch several activities have been implemented such as:

- Application of the Caribbean Model Safe School Programme (MSSP) and Toolkit<sup>4</sup>: A training-of-trainers was developed which includes school assessments, and further developed in training sessions in six other countries in 2017: [Saint Lucia](#), [Saint Kitts and Nevis](#), [Montserrat](#), [Guyana](#), [Antigua and Barbuda](#) and [Turks](#) with support from UNISDR, CDEMA and the respective Ministries of Education. CDEMA's [MSSP](#) comprises a set of standards for school safety, as well as a number of models, guidelines and tools which Ministries of Education and schools can use to design and implement a program of comprehensive risk management at the school level.
- A lesson learnt exercise on school safety organized by Unicef and key partners in May 2018 in Barbados to identify lessons learnt after the 2017 hurricane season, making recommendations towards updating the Caribbean Road Map on school safety based on the lessons identified.
- Caribbean Safe School Initiative website:  
<http://eird.org/americas/safe-school-caribbean/index.html>

### 3. Second Ministerial Forum on School Safety in the Caribbean

The Second Caribbean Ministerial School Safety Forum will be hosted by the Ministry of Education, National Reconciliation, Ecclesiastical Affairs and Information in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on 29 and 30 April 2019 in Kingstown. This Forum will be organized by the Ministry in close collaboration with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). The organization of the Forum is possible thanks to the financial support by the Department of the European Commission for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

#### ***3.1 Objectives and Expected Outcomes***

The Second Ministerial Forum on School Safety in the Caribbean is a follow-up on the Forum held in April 2017. It will respond to the need for a collaborative and coordinated approach among actors in the region's education sector. It will contribute to: CDEMA's Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy and Programming Framework 2014-2024; UNISDR's Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS); Caribbean Safe School Initiative; the Samoa Action Plan for SIDS, the Global Action Program on Education for Sustainable Development; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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<sup>4</sup>The MSSP was developed by CDEMA in 2014 and piloted in three pilot countries: Anguilla, Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In addition, the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Education Toolkit was also developed by CDEMA in 2014 and implemented in three pilot countries (St. Kitts and Nevis, and Turks and Caicos).





The forum will be linked to a youth forum “My Island, my life” to identify safety issues around the 3 pillars and presenting the conclusions and recommendations to the Ministerial Forum; depending on funding the youth forum will be national or regional in scope.

The forum will be based on the sustainability principles with green measure to reduce the carbon foot print (such as reduce the use of printed material, no plastic in catering service among others).

**Objectives:**

- 1) To update the Caribbean Regional Roadmap on School Safety
- 2) To facilitate adherence to the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration on School Safety and Regional Roadmap Implementation by additional member states.
- 3) To monitor progress and achievements in the implementation of the Caribbean Regional Roadmap on School Safety
- 4) To promote and raise awareness of the World Initiative on Safe Schools and the Caribbean Schools Safety Initiative
- 5) To promote the engagement of Youth in the CSSI
- 6) To facilitate a Ministerial Dialogue with donors on support for the Caribbean Safe Schools Initiative

**Expected outcomes:**

- 1) Caribbean Regional Roadmap on Schools Safety Updated
- 2) Adherence to the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration on School Safety by additional member states
- 3) Progress report on the implementation of the Caribbean Regional Road map on School Safety
- 4) Awareness of the Caribbean School Safety initiative and the World Initiative on School Safety raised
- 5) Youth contributions to the Caribbean Regional Road map on School Safety harnessed
- 6) Donor support for the Caribbean Safe Schools Initiative identified
- 7) Inputs for the Global Platform 2019 and Regional Platform 2020 defined
- 8) New Chair of the Caribbean Safe Schools Initiative and next host state identified

**3.2 Participants**

The Forum is primarily targeting Ministries of Education<sup>5</sup>, Ministers themselves, as well as technical advisors; national disaster management agencies will also be invited if funding is secured. In addition, regional organizations that support the implementation of School Safety in the Caribbean will be invited.

The estimated number of participants is 110 with 27 countries invited:

18 CDEMA Participating States, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Dutch Sint Maarten, Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao. Puerto Rico as observer.

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<sup>5</sup>Representatives from the Ministries of Education shall be given signing authority in order to sign the declaration on behalf of the Ministry.



Although it is noted that relevant work has been undertaken by many Caribbean countries in enhancing School Safety, the Forum will focus on CDEMA Participating States and other countries in the Caribbean.

- Ministries of Education (Ministers and technical personnel)
- Intergovernmental, United Nations and regional organizations (CDEMA, OECS, UNESCO, Unicef, UNISDR, IFRC, etc.)
- Members of CDEMA's Comprehensive Disaster Management Coordination and Harmonization Council sub-committee on education (ESSC)<sup>6</sup>: University of the West Indies
- Media
- National Disaster Management Agency of the host country, and also from the CDEMA Participating States (depending on funding availability)
- Development Banks (Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Inter American Development Bank (IDB), The World Bank, etc.), and interested donors and countries Development Agency.

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<sup>6</sup>For information regarding members and objectives:

[http://www.cdema.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=949&Itemid=444](http://www.cdema.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=949&Itemid=444)