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FORTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: advancement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories through the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and beyond

Castries, Saint Lucia

11 to 13 May 2022

PRE-RECORDED STATEMENT BY

THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ECONOMIC

COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE

CARIBBEAN



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**STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Dale Alexander

Chief, Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre

Focal Point for the Associate Member Territories

Involvement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean in the activities of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Reporting period: 2021-2022

Madam Chair,

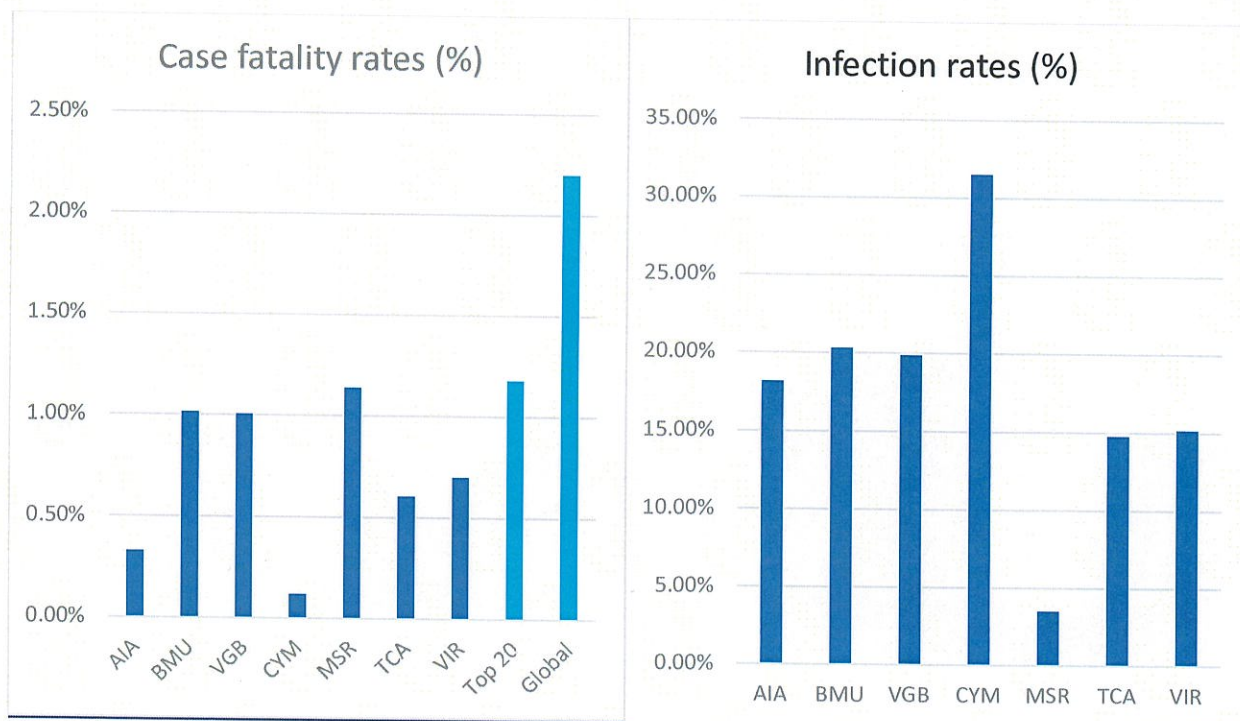
On behalf of Mr. Mario Cimoli, the Acting Executive Secretary of our regional commission, I would like to thank the Committee for once again inviting ECLAC to participate in this Pacific regional seminar.

Given the continuing impacts of COVID-19, the past year was another very challenging one for the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean.¹ Country response to the pandemic is now slowly but surely shifting towards sustainable recovery. Existing vulnerabilities, including those relating to climate change, remain a serious challenge, and strategies to improve resilience and adaptation remain high on the agenda. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda continues to be a priority, with added urgency given the setbacks caused by the pandemic.

Over the next few minutes, I will briefly elaborate on the challenges I just mentioned and share some information on the ways in which ECLAC engaged the Territories since the Caribbean Regional Seminar in 2021. A table noting which Territories were engaged in ECLAC activities is annexed to this statement.

COVID-19 responses and recovery

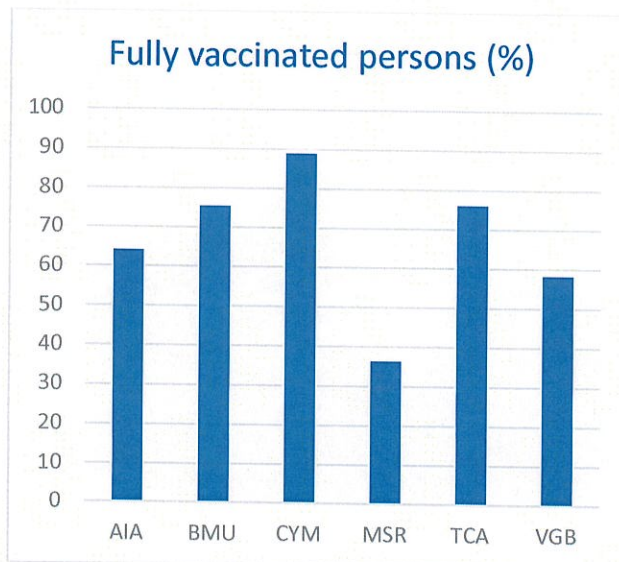
The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic varied significantly across the Caribbean, and across the Territories.



¹ Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands.

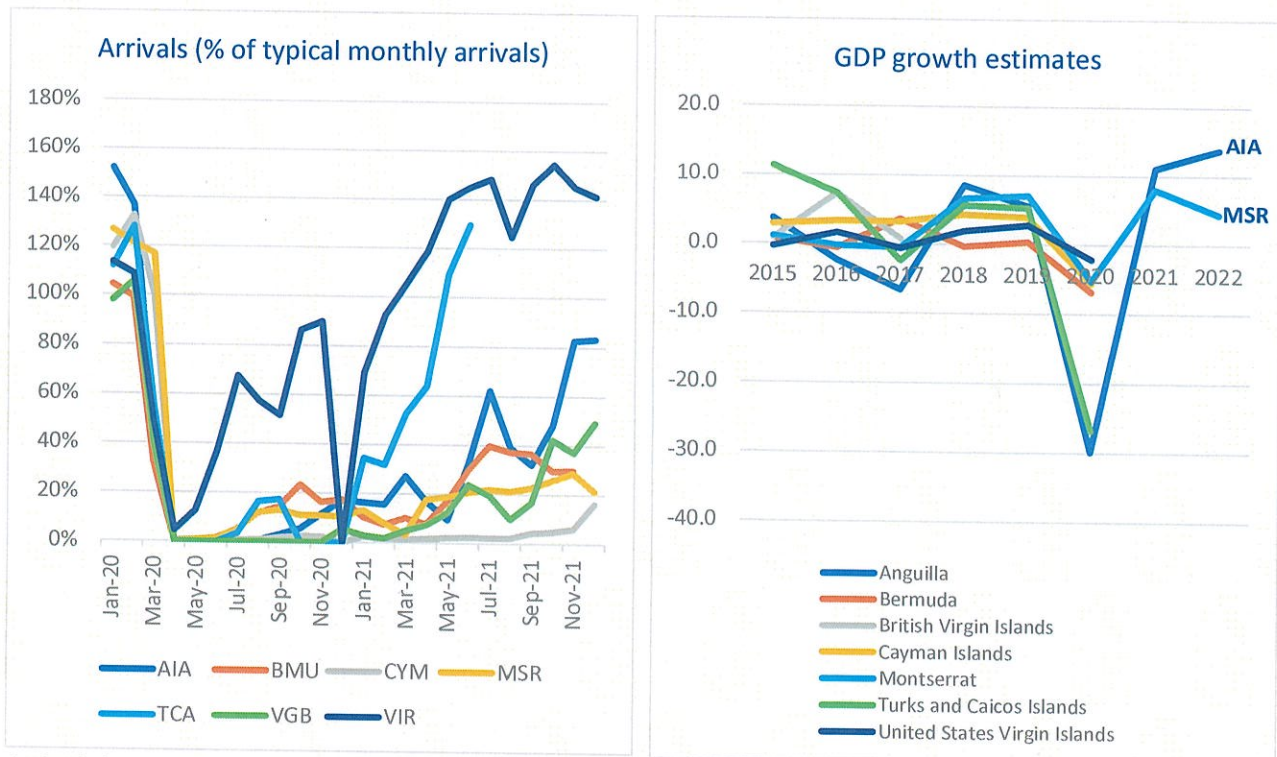
The reported case fatality rates for all the Territories were lower than both the global mean and the mean for the 20 countries that had the highest vaccination rates. However, there were large differences in reported infection rates, ranging from 3.5 per cent in Montserrat to over 30 per cent in the Cayman Islands. These variances could be explained by several factors, including availability of testing, vaccination rates, and the effectiveness of public health measures and disease tracking systems.

The Territories generally began vaccinating their populations earlier than the rest of the Caribbean, with some of the highest vaccination rates of the Caribbean being recorded among the Territories. However, these rates vary significantly.



In the Cayman Islands, over 89 per cent of the population is fully vaccinated, whereas in Montserrat, the rate is under 37 per cent. The severity of the public health measures taken in response to the pandemic also varied greatly across the Territories, with Montserrat having the most restrictive approach to COVID-19, and Anguilla, the least.

As noted at the last meeting, the impact of COVID-19 on the economies of the Territories varied greatly, with the Territories that were most dependent on tourism generally suffering the greatest impact. Currently, all Territories have reopened their borders, applying some combination of vaccination, testing and registration requirements to potential visitors.



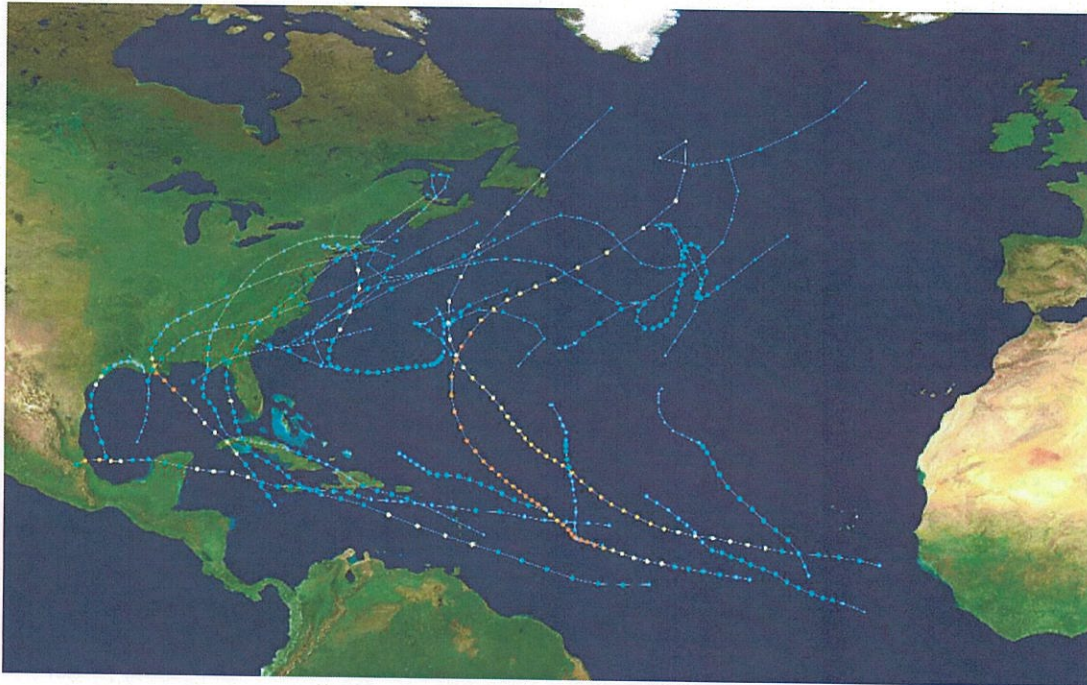
Arrivals have begun climbing for all Territories, with some seeing higher-than-average arrivals by the end of 2021. GDP estimates for Montserrat and Anguilla also point to possible growth in 2021 and 2022. While there are some early signs of recovery, the effectiveness of the measures taken, and the effect they will have on the recovery process, is not yet clear. As such, given its continued impacts on the sustainable development of the Territories, the implementation of strategies for resilient recovery from COVID-19 will remain high on the agenda for the region and for ECLAC. In this regard, much attention has been given to enhancing education systems and promoting economic recovery. As in past years, several of the Territories have been involved in our work, taking part in research, conferences, and meetings.

Resilience and adaptation

The Caribbean is located within the second most disaster-prone region of the world.² 2021 saw yet another above-average Atlantic Hurricane Season, the third most active on record, and the 2022 season is also expected to be above-average.

² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2020). Natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean: 2000-2019. Retrieved from <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/latin-america-and-caribbean/document/latin-america-and-caribbean-natural-disasters-2000> on 26 April 2022.

2021 Atlantic Tropical Cyclones



Source: Tracking data is from the National Hurricane Center's Atlantic hurricane database

The impacts of climate change continue to be felt across the Territories, and some are still recovering from Hurricanes Irma and Maria. At the same time, funding for resilience and adaptation remains elusive. For the British Overseas Territories, the loss of access to European Development Funding after Brexit left a funding gap that has yet to be filled.

ECLAC continues to work to find ways to increase the resilience of Caribbean countries and territories. Since the last meeting, ECLAC convened two technical workshops in support of disaster risk management, which were attended by representatives from the Territories. In addition, ECLAC is currently undertaking a regional study on sustainable transportation in Caribbean Small Island Developing States, which includes a case study on the British Virgin Islands. In 2021, ECLAC further supported the British Virgin Islands in the drafting of their “National Sustainable Development Plan”.³ Work aimed at establishing a Caribbean Resilience Fund to address debt reduction while facilitating investment in resilience building in the countries of the subregion is also ongoing.

2030 Agenda

Madam Chair,

³ Government of the Virgin Islands (2022). National Sustainable Development Plan for Review on January 15. Press Release. Retrieved from <https://bvi.gov.vg/media-centre/national-sustainable-development-plan-review-january-15> on 26 April 2022.

ECLAC is proud to count all the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean among its Associate Members. In line with our “Caribbean First” strategy, we strive to include the Territories in all our activities. The Territories have remained engaged and participated in a wide variety of intergovernmental and technical meetings, capacity-building efforts, and studies conducted by ECLAC over the past year. These activities were aimed at building capacity related to statistical data collection and analysis, addressing gender disparities, implementing institutional mechanisms for sustainable development planning and strategies for tackling non-communicable diseases, among others. Of particular note is our work related to the establishment of the Caribbean Resilience Fund, to which several of the Territories have contributed.⁴

During the past year, the focus of our activities shifted slightly to take more specific account of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to engender a sustainable recovery. Notwithstanding, our mission to deepen the understanding of the development challenges facing the Caribbean, including the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and to contribute to solutions, remains resolute.

CDCC resolution 85(XXV) continues to provide the mandate informing the way in which ECLAC engages with the Non-Self-Governing Territories and other Associate Members of ECLAC. We look forward to continuing our support of, and engagement with, the Territories to address these challenges and promote their sustainable development aspirations.

Madam Chair,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you.

⁴ Anguilla, Cayman Islands, and Montserrat.

Annex

Strategic engagement with the Non-Self-Governing Territories by ECLAC

(2021-2022)

Date	Title/Event	Data on NSGT/NSGT participated						
		AIA	BMU	VGB	CYM	MSR	TCA	VIR
Intergovernmental meetings								
7-9 March 2022	Fifth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development	X	X	X	X	X	X	
3 December 2021	Thirty-sixth session of the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC			X		X		
5 November 2021	Twentieth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee			X	X	X	X	
26-28 October 2021	Fourth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean	X	X	X		X	X	X
29-30 September 2021	Sixty-first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean		X	X	X		X	
Technical meetings								
21 December 2021	Expert group meeting on advancing statistical literacy towards promoting sustainable development in the Caribbean					X	X	
20 December 2021	Expert group meeting on addressing gender disparities in education and employment in the Caribbean		X			X		
23-25 November 2021	Eleventh meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC	X	X	X		X		

Date	Title/Event	Data on NSGT/NSGT participated						
		AIA	BMU	VGB	CYM	MSR	TCA	VIR
17 November 2021	Expert group meeting on the status of institutional mechanisms for sustainable development planning in the Caribbean			X				
4 November 2021	Seminar on non-communicable diseases and their impact on sustainable development in the Caribbean			X	X	X	X	X
13 August 2021	Expert group meeting on inclusive and equitable education during the COVID-19 pandemic	X	X	X		X	X	
Capacity-building								
8-15 November 2021	Regional Workshop on the Creation of Maps to Display Census and Small Area Statistics Using REDATAM and QGIS				X	X	X	
6-8 September 2021	Workshop II on technical issues towards effective applications of geospatial technologies and data in support of disaster risk management in the Caribbean			X				
30 August 2021	Workshop I on policy issues towards effective applications of geospatial technologies and data in support of disaster risk management in the Caribbean						X	
Publications								
March 2022	A review of the status of institutional mechanisms for sustainable development planning in the Caribbean			X				

Date	Title/Event	Data on NSGT/NSGT participated						
		AIA	BMU	VGB	CYM	MSR	TCA	VIR
February 2022	Economic Survey of the Caribbean 2021	X				X		
February 2022	Selected online learning experiences in the Caribbean during COVID-19			X				
February 2022	Education during the COVID-19 pandemic: Access, inclusion and psychosocial support	X				X	X	
February 2022	Proposal to establish a Caribbean Resilience Fund: A segregated portfolio trust fund	X			X	X		
9 December 2021	Conceptualizing a circular economy in the Caribbean: perspectives and possibilities. Policy Brief			X				
December 2021	The Hummingbird, Vol. 8, Issue 12			X		X	X	
November 2021	The Hummingbird, Vol. 8, Issue 11	X	X	X	X	X	X	
September 2021	FOCUS magazine, Issue 3, 2021: Strategies for Post-COVID-19 Recovery in the Caribbean	X	X	X	X		X	X
August 2021	The Hummingbird, Vol. 8 No. 8	X		X		X		