



Building forward stronger: towards effective COVID-19 recovery in the Caribbean SIDS

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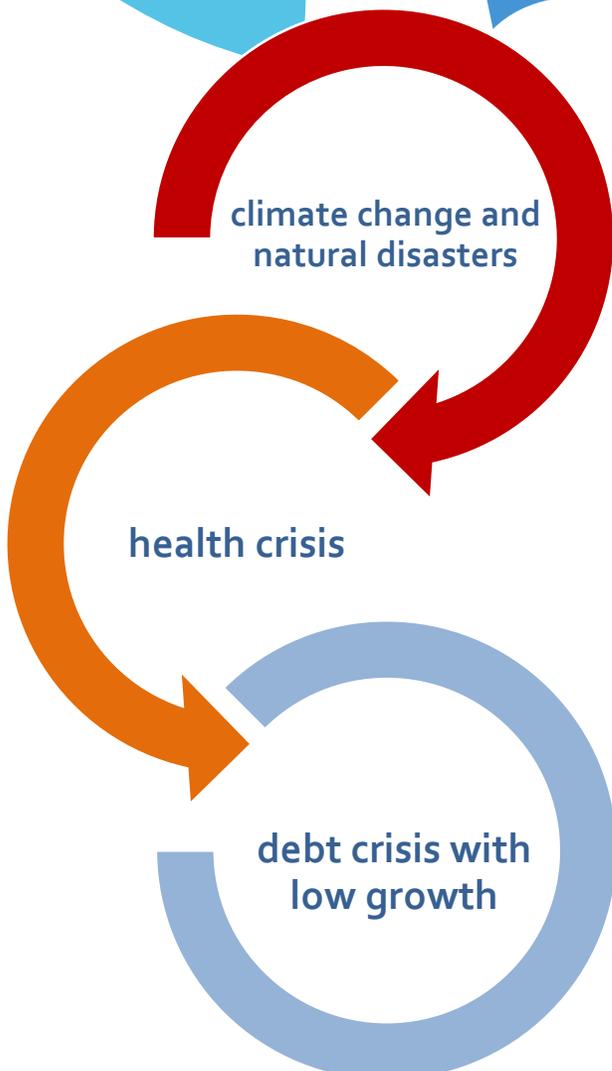
22 November 2021



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

A Triple Crisis with multidimensional impacts



climate change and
natural disasters

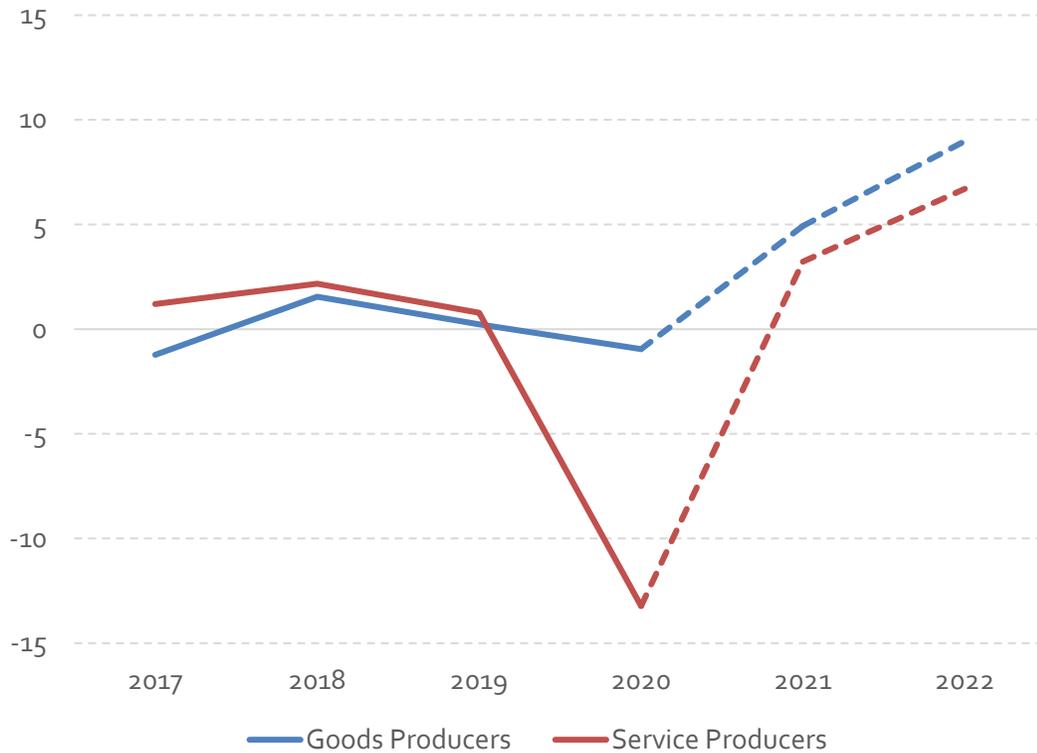
health crisis

debt crisis with
low growth

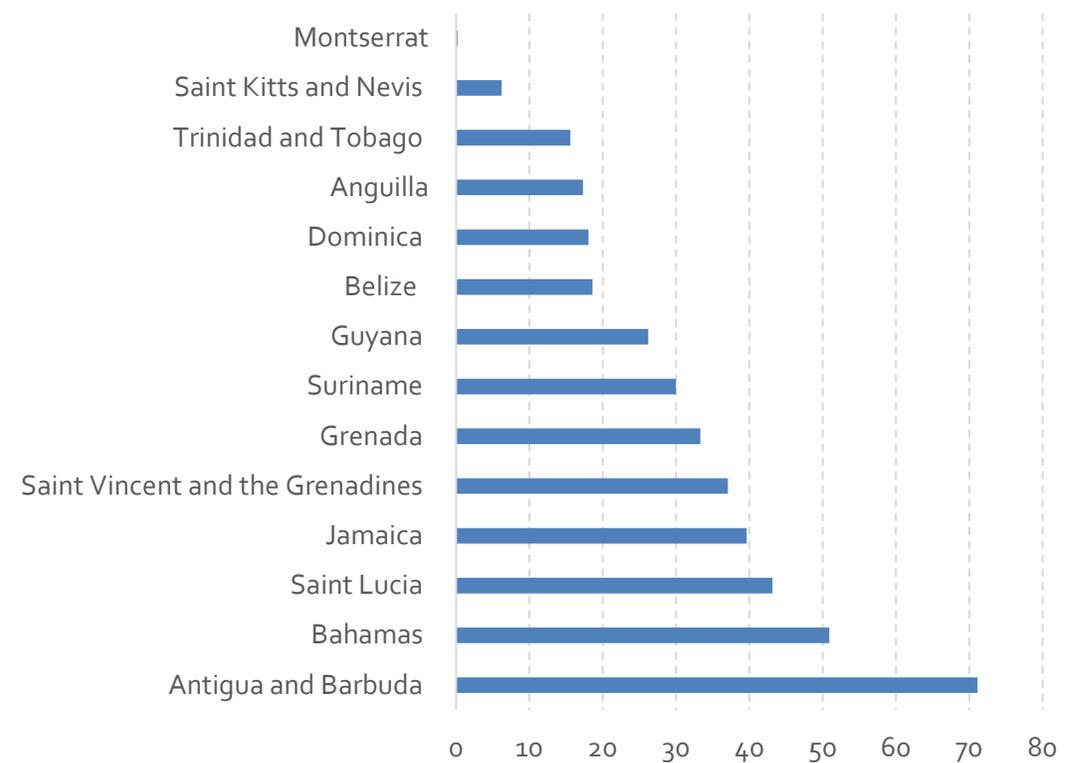
1. A protracted global health disaster that exposed structural inequalities in the region.
2. Urgent need for universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems.
3. The region is the most disaster prone of all SIDS
4. Middle-income status prevents many Caribbean economies to access concessional funding.

The Caribbean is plagued by low growth and high debt service payments

Caribbean GDP growth rate, 2017-2021
(Percentage)



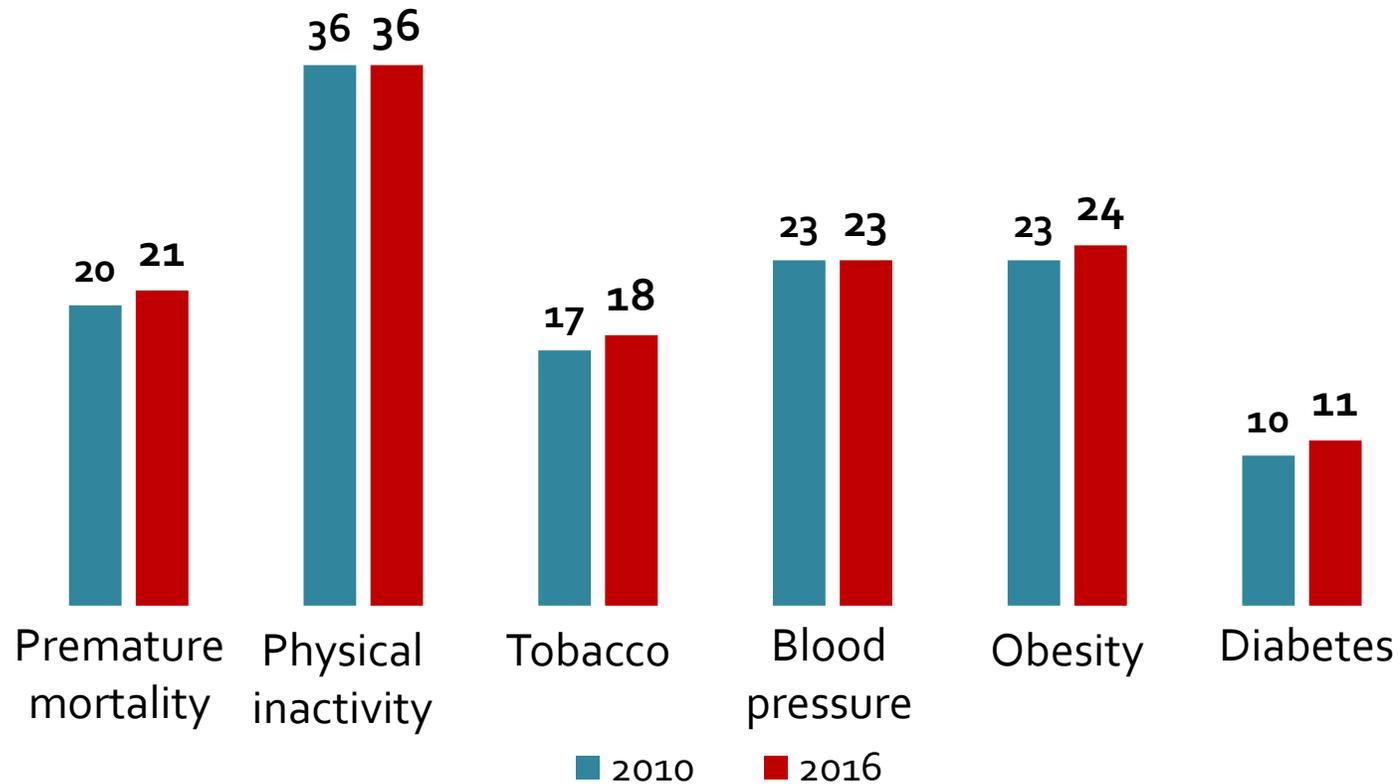
Debt service payments, 2019
(Percentage of government revenue)



Vulnerabilities aggravated by COVID-19

The Caribbean is one of the subregions with the highest prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

Prevalence of NCD risk factors in the Caribbean, 2010-2016
(Percentage)



NCDs are a predisposition to more severe illness and death from COVID-19

- Diabetes and cardiovascular diseases (three times more likely)
- Chronic pulmonary diseases (almost twice more likely)

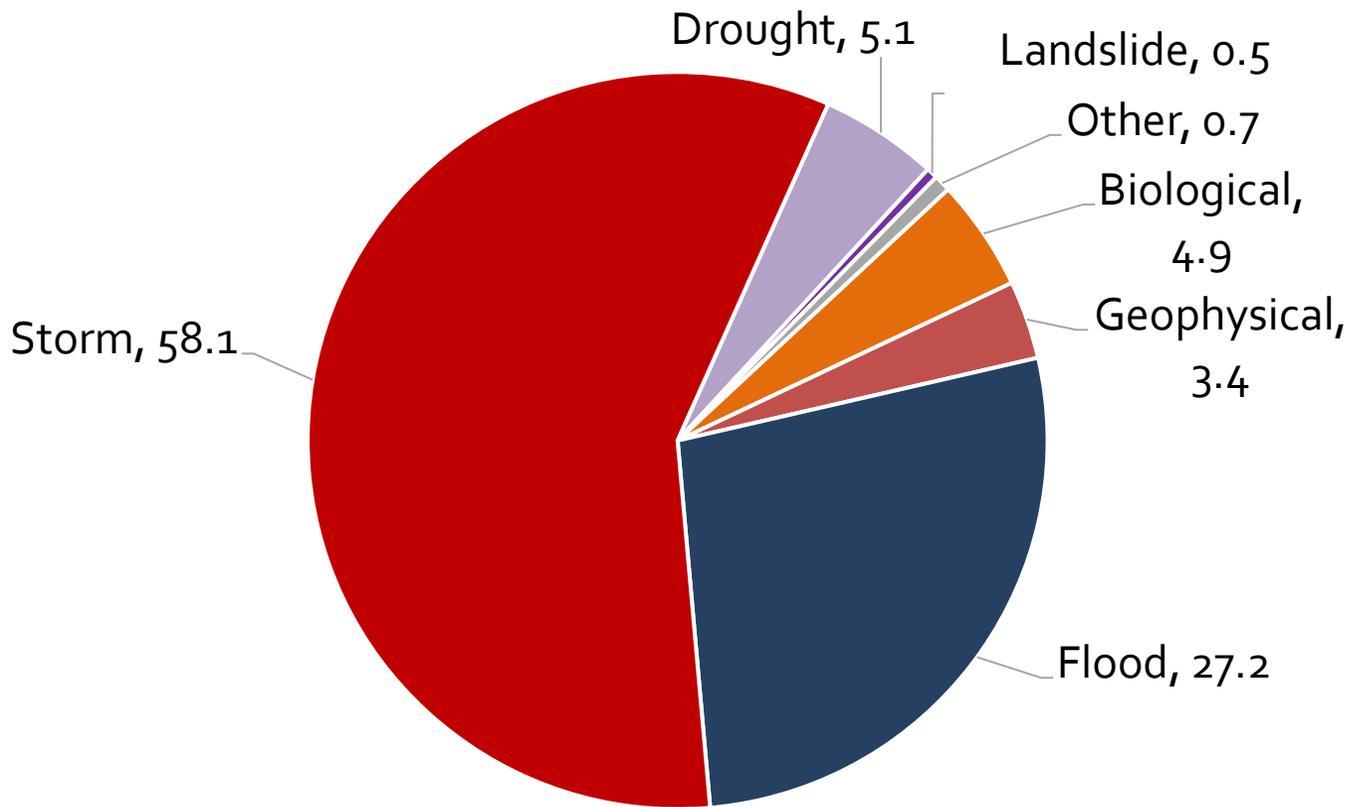
COVID-19 has stressed health care systems and highlights systemic limitations to handle public health emergencies such as pandemics

- Limited national COVID-19 testing capabilities
- Limited bed space in isolation and quarantining wards

Between 1990 and 2017, 408 Disasters hit the Caribbean 9 out of 10 were Hydrometeorological

Caribbean disasters by type 1990–2017
(Percentages)

Number of persons affected, by type of disaster:



- Storm (29.8 million)
- Biological (7.5 million)
- Drought (7.3 million)
- Flood (5.9 million)
- Geophysical (3.7 million)
- The cost of Hurricanes Irma and Maria (2017) in the British Virgin Islands and Sint Maarten was **more than 100% of their GDP**

SIDS vulnerability: major natural disasters that have recently impacted the subregion

SVG
Volcano
April 2021

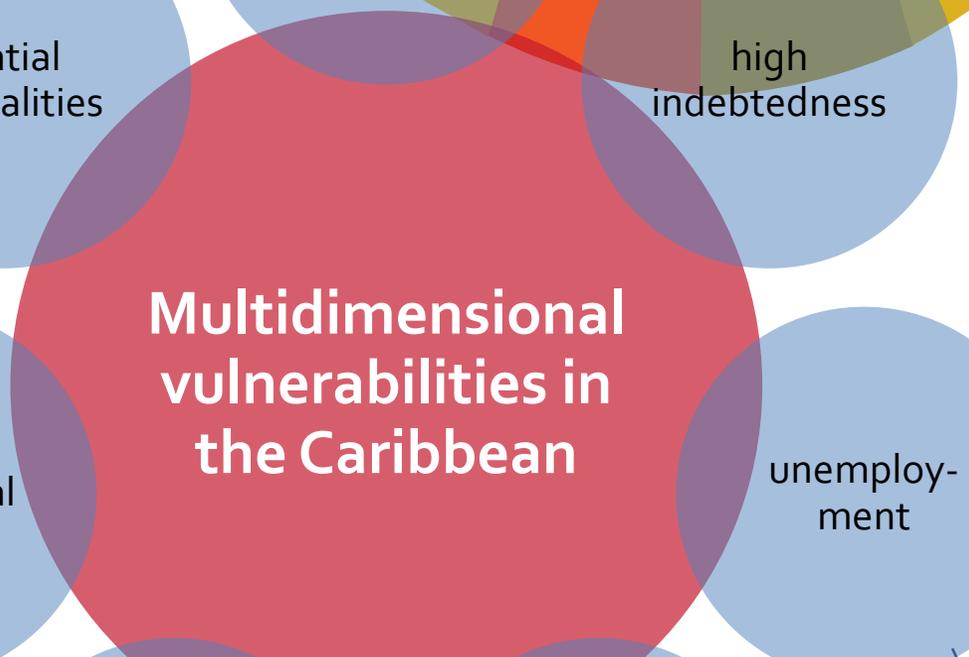
Guyana
Floods
May 2021

Saint Lucia
Hurricane Elsa
July 2021

Haiti
Earthquake
August 2021



Crisis within crises



climate change and disasters

spatial inequalities

high indebtedness

multi-dimensional poverty

unemployment

non-communicable diseases

population ageing

Multidimensional vulnerabilities in the Caribbean

- Economic activities in coastal areas
- **70% of the population lives in low-lying areas**
- High exposure to disaster risks from sea level rise

- Reduction of foreign direct investment
- **High levels of public debt (96,5% of GDP)**
- COVID-19 raised debt

- **16.1% prevalence of undernourishment** (7 million persons) in 2020
- Single parent households
- Adolescent pregnancy

- Low skill, low productivity, low pay work
- Extensive informal sector in some countries
- **Weak social protection systems**

Key Development Priorities to Build Forward Better



**Strengthen
Food
Security |
Address
Poverty and
inequality**



**Promote
economic
diversificatio
n and
blue/green
investment
for resilience
building**



**Expand
broadband
access |
promote wider
use of digital
platforms for
education and
communicatio
n**



**Strengthen
risk
assessment
and disaster
management**



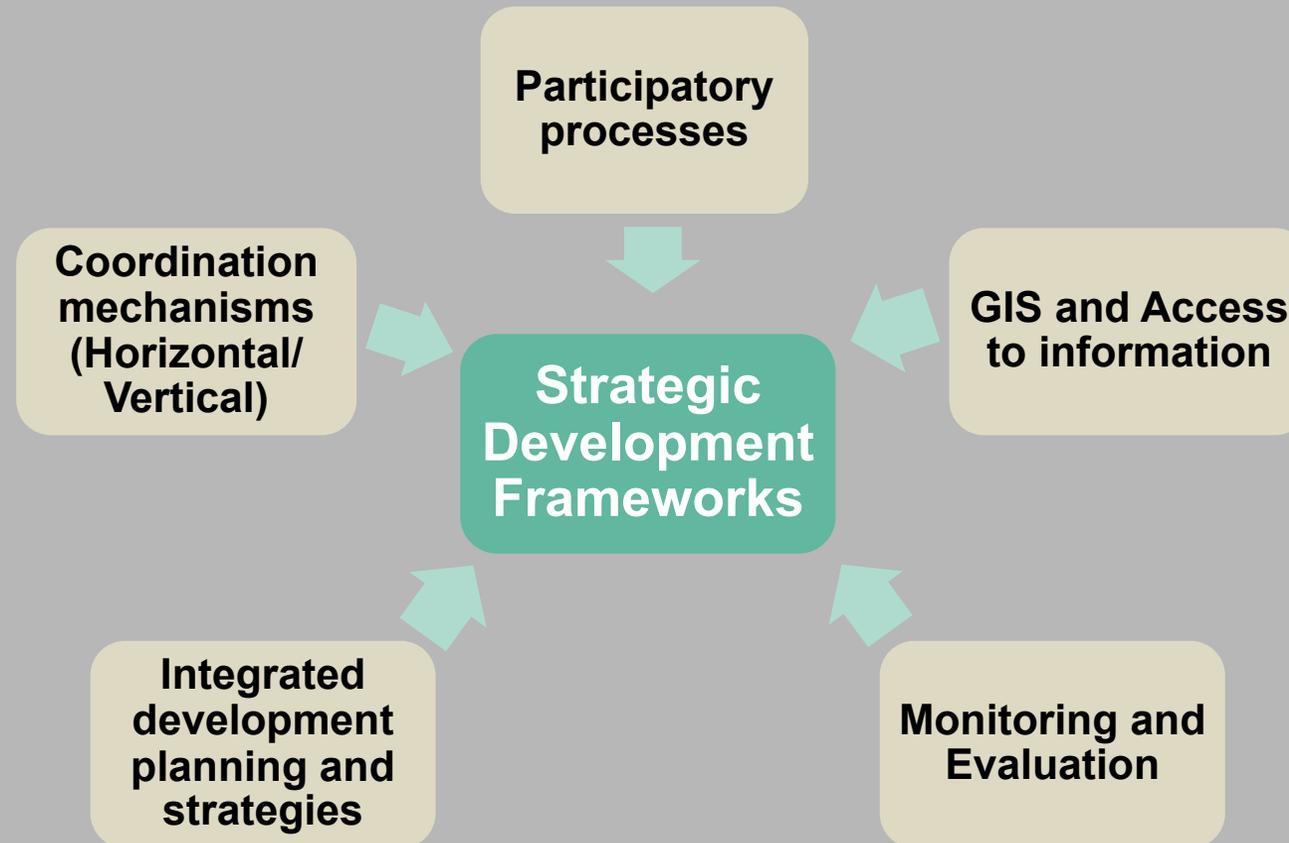
**Enhance
social
protection
|Address the
needs of
vulnerable
populations**



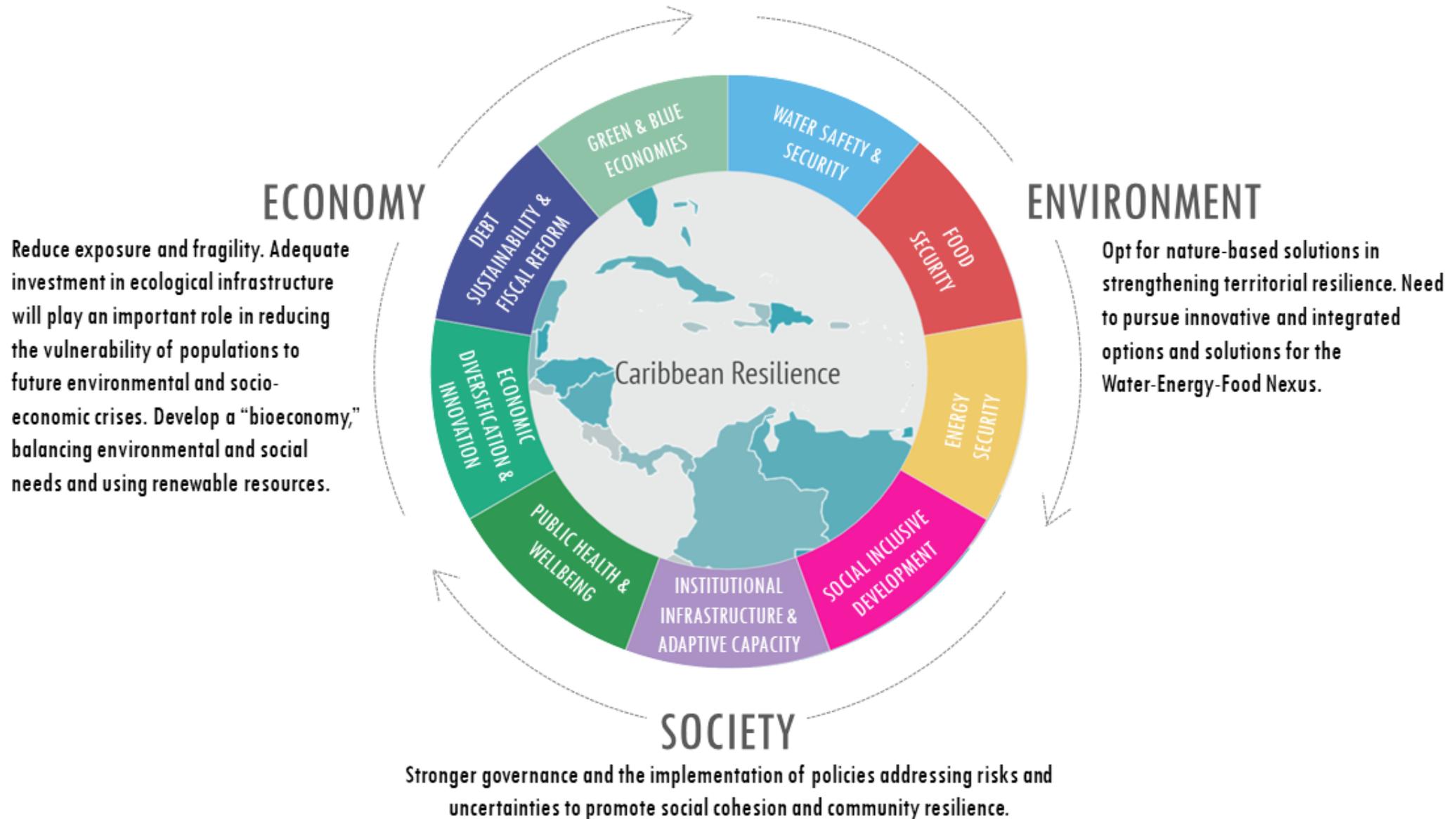
**Strengthen
health
infrastructur
e for COVID
response
|Address
NCDs**

Integrated resilience planning

**The 2030 Agenda at national level
and localising the SDGs**



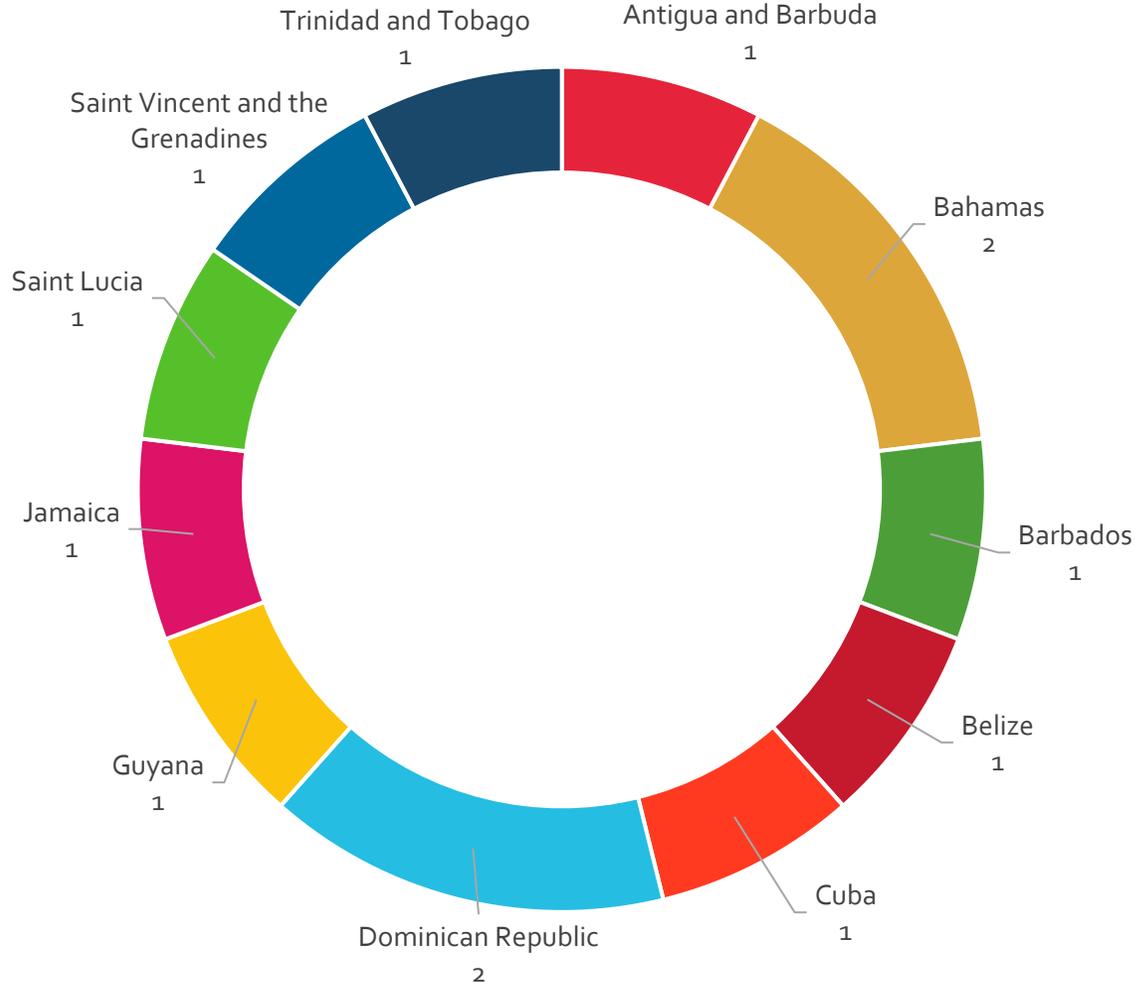
INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING TO ADDRESS EXPOSURE AND VULNERABILITY



Participatory processes

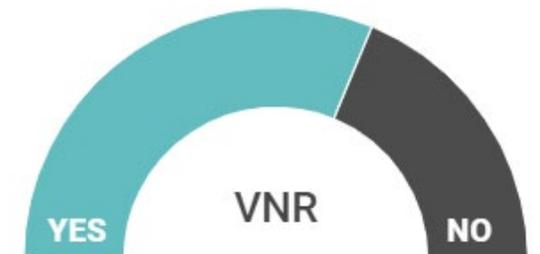
important for countries to move in the “ladder of participation”, from consultation to effective collaboration

Total number of VNR presentations by 2021



VNRs as enablers of multi-stakeholder engagement

- Lack of awareness and national ownership on the SDGs.
- Stakeholder engagement is key for future cooperation in other development planning processes – the VNR sets a good foundation.
- Countries wait too long to start the VNR preparation process – a regional timetable for preparation could be proposed.
- Most countries need support with report preparation.
- Data for SDG indicator target setting and monitoring crucial
- Better use of VNRs for integrated planning and policy coherence; VNRs a foundation for national development plans
- ECLAC supported Antigua and Barbuda’s preparation of a Citizen’s Guide on the VNR.



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Monitoring and Evaluation

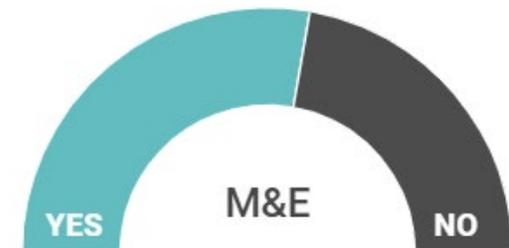
continue to strengthen peer exchange, learning and subregional cooperation

Commonly identified challenges

- lack of standardized definitions, classification
- lack of coordination among MDAs producing official statistics
- lack of dedicated staff and statistical units within the MDAs for the production of statistics.
- scarcity in environmental indicators
- competing priorities for budget

Critical areas for the Caribbean

- full criteria for multidimensional diagnosis
- risk-informed decision-making
- evidence-based policy development: measure progress, relevance, and valuable knowledge to provide feedback into the policy cycle
- policy review, adjustments and quality assurance enables policymakers to focus on building solutions that may be best fit-for-purpose and that may protect those that are often furthest left behind
- mutual accountability



Resilient institutions in the Caribbean

Areas of opportunity for integration

Building resilience in the Caribbean context

Move toward **integrated systems** to enhance diagnosis, foresight and risk-informed planning and improve action-oriented results-based management

Promote a larger degree of **vertical decentralization and horizontal integration**

Establish multi-sector and multi-stakeholder **collaboration** for the goals

Enhance **research, innovation and capacity development** for sustainable development planning agencies and GIS units by ensuring the right political, technical, coordination, and budgetary capabilities

Continue to strengthen peer exchange, learning and **subregional cooperation**



Recommendations for a sustainable and resilient recovery

- Develop an **integrated strategy** to contain the health effects of the pandemic and NCDs that have contributed to relatively high mortality.
- Design and implement better risk prevention, mitigation and transfer mechanisms, including **hurricane clauses and parametric insurance** to reduce impact of disasters and to strengthen societal resilience
- Entrench **fiscal and export-promotion** reforms to achieve **macro-stability** as a platform for sustained and stable growth.
- Focus on **upgrading and diversifying** key economic sectors by **investing in skills, digital and other technologies and innovation** to produce more sophisticated, high value-added competitive products and services. Key areas of focus include capital services such as **creative industry, education, health and business and professional services** for export.
- Establish the **Caribbean Resilience Fund** to leverage and scale up resources for a sustainable, **green** and **circular economic transformation**
- Implement a **strong advocacy and international solidarity campaign** to bolster international cooperation and support for concessional financing and technical assistance to facilitate resilient recovery and a green transition in the Caribbean.

Regional and international solidarity

- In 2020, within the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) promoted the development of a **Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) for SIDS**. Such an index will be an element in support to reconsidering eligibility for concessional financing to SIDS on vulnerability rather than just income criteria.
- Greater advocacy required on the general principles of international solidarity, multilateral cooperation and **subregional coordination** to successfully contain and control the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its impact, with the aim of leaving no one behind.
- Adopting **evidence-based public health** measures and providing the population with reliable and comprehensive information on COVID-19 treatment and immunization.
- Consider **lessons learned in the LAC Region** from the response to this pandemic to build resilience and better preparedness for future emergencies.
- Contribute to **building forward better** our health and social protection systems in light of current and future crisis.

The way forward

Strengthens statistical infrastructure and data collection capacity to support Evidence Based Decision making

Pursue innovative access to finance;
Invest in social protection;
Expand insurance schemes

Invest in national development planning;
establish or strengthen national institutions for sustainable development

Expand Health infrastructure ; invest in youth and skills development;
Reorient risk strategy in national; planning

Strengthen partnership with the private sector, global partners;
invest in technology

Enhance resilience through investment in mitigation and adaptation;
physical planning;
building code inspection



Building forward stronger: towards effective COVID-19 recovery in the Caribbean SIDS

Virtual Meeting for the National Focal Points of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS)



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