



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

# Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum

3-4 April 2017, Antigua and Barbuda

## CONCEPT NOTE



Organisation of  
Eastern Caribbean States



 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Kingdom of the Netherlands

WITH FUNDING FROM  
 AUSTRIAN  
DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION



## List of Acronyms

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CSS	Comprehensive School Safety
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 other 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. The Agenda, which comprises the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets calls Members States and International Organization to "upgrade education facilities in order to provide a safe and effective learning environment" (Goal 4.a) as a way to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

In order 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 behavioral 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. Such knowledge can be leveraged for the *purpose of pre-disaster risk assessment*, for prevention and mitigation and for the development and implementation of appropriate preparedness and effective response to disasters. 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

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



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 is so far the only Caribbean country that has signed up to the World Wide Initiative on Safe Schools and participated in the global meetings in 2014 and 2015.

As a result of the First Meeting of Safe School Leaders (30-31 October 2014, Istanbul, Turkey), the Technical Meeting on the Istanbul Roadmap (23-24 February 2015, Geneva) and the working session on "Commitments to Safe Schools" at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (14-18 March 2015, Sendai, Japan), a total of 32 Governments<sup>2</sup> endorsed the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS) and the Istanbul Roadmap for the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools, committing to make school safety a national priority and to facilitate its implementation at the national level.

The [Action Plan in Support of the Implementation the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools](#) was adopted at the second meeting of Safe School Leaders on 4-5 October, 2015 in Tehran, Republic of Iran.

The main objectives of the WISS programme are:

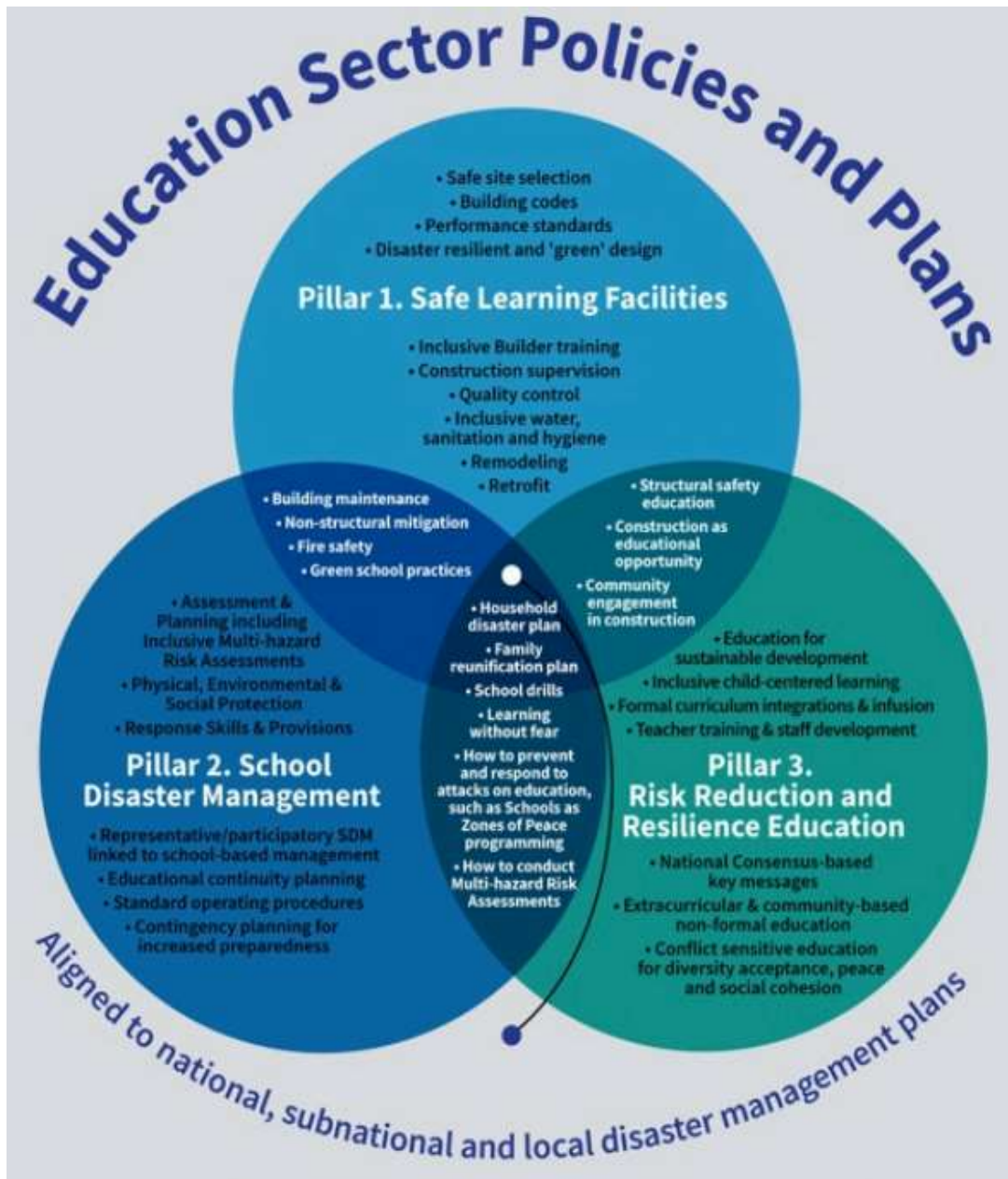
- To promote Governments' good practices, expertise and achievements in safe school implementation for possible replication in other countries and regions;
- To identify remaining challenges to effectively implement safe school;
- To support Governments in developing national strategies for school safety as part of existing national disaster risk reduction or Education plans; and
- To offer technical assistance and particular expertise as required by Governments, around the core three pillars of safe schools.

The Initiative seeks to motivate and support Governments to develop national strategies and implement school safety, building upon the [Comprehensive School Safety Framework](#) 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; and
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Education.

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<sup>2</sup> Algeria, Armenia, Brazil, Cambodia, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, Finland, Georgia, Honduras, Indonesia, I.R. Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, South Africa, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan and USA



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 prioritises four areas for addressing DRM issues, generally summarised as (i) institutional strengthening, (ii) knowledge management<sup>3</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”. 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

The Strategy also seeks to advance the integration of DRM into seven priority sectors of which the Education is one. The establishment of a Governance Mechanism for the Strategy brought together regional stakeholders to focus more directly on efficiently and effectively mainstreaming DRM at the sectoral level. One of the elements of this Governance Mechanism is the Education Sector Sub-Committee which comprises a number of regional and national level actors in the education sector *inter alia* tertiary education institutions, examination and standardisation bodies and regional agencies and development partners with specific education and child related portfolios.

## 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 country’s poverty reduction strategies, hindered development gains and endangered educational systems and 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 disasters, 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

<sup>3</sup> Knowledge Management is the collection of processes that govern the creation, dissemination, and utilization of knowledge (Sources: What is Knowledge Management?)



students and 1,300 teachers and education personnel, and destroyed 4,000 schools as well as the headquarters of the Ministry of Education. 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. Significant economies of scale however can be realized through a coordinated regional approach and efforts have been made in that regard. CDEMA has recently developed a Model Safe School Programme (MSSP) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Education Toolkit for Caribbean Schools. These initiatives speak to the three pillars of a Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Framework, namely: safe learning facilities, school disaster management and risk reduction and resilience education.

The CSS Framework was developed by the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector. UNESCO, UNICEF, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), IFRC and non-governmental organizations committed to DRR (such as Save the Children, Plan International, among others) are part of that Alliance. They each possess different tools and experiences which support CSS, some of which are already in use in the region and could complement CDEMA's initiatives. By example UNESCO's Visual Inspection for defining the Safety Upgrading Strategies (VISUS) tool facilitates efficient, economical and effective infrastructural assessments necessary to providing safe learning facilities. And IFRC's Protected School module and Public Awareness and Public Education (PAPE) for DRR guides support DM and DRR education.

In line with global recognition, the importance of school safety had also been long acknowledged in the Caribbean. As noted above, the 2014-2024 CDM Strategy for the Caribbean through its Priority Area 2 calls for increased and sustained knowledge management and learning for Comprehensive Disaster Management, as well as standardization and improvement of educational and training materials. Similarly, DRR Country Documents highlight the importance of increasing awareness on DRR as a main area to be addressed in the education sector at the country level.

In addition, political will for action was demonstrated by previous experiences in the Caribbean which have sought to address the three (3) pillars of the CSS *inter alia*:

- The Living Schools Project based on a concept developed by Brazil in 2010 and adapted by CDEMA for the Caribbean Environment;
- The Caribbean Model Safe School Programme (MSSP) and Toolkit developed by CDEMA in 2014 and implemented in three pilot countries (Anguilla, Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines);
- The Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Education Toolkit developed by CDEMA in 2014 and implemented in three pilot countries (St. Kitts and Nevis, and the Turks and Caicos Islands).

In particular, the CDEMA [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 programme of comprehensive risk management at the school level. The MSSP was endorsed by the CDEMA Council in 2015 as the standard for school safety programmes in CDEMA. The standards contained in the MSSP address a broad spectrum of safety and greening issues which influence vulnerability in schools, incorporating climate change and environmental



management considerations. The MSSP is congruent with the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES) Actions to strengthen coordination, increase knowledge, and advocate on risk reduction education and safety in the education sector.

The CDEMA Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Education Toolkit is designed to aid teachers in integrating DRR into the existing curriculum. It comprises a set of user-friendly, adaptable activities for teaching DRR concepts and practices to a wide range of ages and can be utilized in many subject areas including sciences, geography and languages. The learning activities in the DRRE Toolkit integrate gender and Climate Change.

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A recent Caribbean forum on integrating Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education sector was hosted by Saint-Lucia in October 2015 with the support of USAID/OFDA. This forum focused on DRR and Higher Learning Institutions, aiming at strengthening school safety and commitments towards the implementation of the three pillars of school safety. Good practices in terms of DRR in early childhood and higher education were been presented. It created opportunities for networking and sharing good practices as various experts were invited from different backgrounds, such as academics, private sector, local governments and Ministers of Education of 10 countries who participated in this meeting.

Another milestone in the process of building a harmonious regional initiative has been the adoption of the Tsunami Public Awareness & Education (PAE) Strategy for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions. This was the first time that a tsunami awareness and educational strategy of this scope and magnitude has been developed for this region. It was the result of over seven months of extensive research, analysis and consultation with over 30 stakeholders during 2012 and 2013. This process has been shown the potential to coordinate actions between different stakeholders and technical partners in the region, as may be use as a good practice to be enlarged to a multi-hazard perspective in the framework of a potential Caribbean Safe School Initiative,

In May of 2015, UNESCO in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of Antigua and Barbuda organized the first training programme on CSS and Education Sector Policies and Plans. Fifty educational planners from fourteen Caribbean countries attended and requested further support for implementing concrete actions on the different areas of CSS.

This Safe School Forum in the Caribbean region is an initial response to that request, and 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); the Samoa Action Plan for SIDS, the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **3. Caribbean Safe School Forum**

The Caribbean Safe School Forum will be hosted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Antigua and Barbuda from April 3 to 4, 2017 in Antigua. 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 (UNISDR), United Nations





Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The organization of the Forum is possible thanks to the financial support by the Austrian Development Agency, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and South Korea.

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

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) Promote and raise awareness on the three pillars of School Safety of the Worldwide Initiative on Safe Schools (WISS) in the Caribbean.
- 2) Identify national and joint regional achievements and priorities regarding School Safety.
- 3) Ministers of Education validate and adopt the Caribbean Declaration and Roadmap on School Safety, and commit to its implementation.

#### **Expected outcomes:**

- 1) Awareness on the three pillars of school safety and WISS raised.
- 2) National and regional priorities regarding school safety identified.
- 3) Caribbean Declaration on School Safety approved and signed.
- 4) Road Map on School Safety defined.
- 5) Caribbean Safe School Initiative launched.

### **3.2 Participants**

The Forum is primarily targeting Ministries of Education<sup>4</sup>, Ministers themselves as well as technical advisors. In addition regional organizations will be invited that can support the implementation of School Safety in the Caribbean.

The estimated number of participants is 40. Although it is noted that relevant work has been undertaken by many Caribbean countries in enhancing School Safety, the Forum will focus on seven CDEMA Participating States<sup>5</sup>.

- Ministries of Education (Ministers and technical personnel)
- Intergovernmental, United Nations and regional organizations (CDEMA, OECS, UNESCO, Unicef, UNISDR, IFRC, etc.)
- Members of CDM Coordination and Harmonization Council sub-committee on education (ESSC)<sup>6</sup>: University of the West Indies
- Media

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<sup>4</sup> Representatives from the Ministries of Education shall be given signing authority in order to sign the declaration on behalf of the Ministry.

<sup>5</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), Turks and Caicos Islands. Six of these CDEMA participating states have been selected for a project funded by ADA supporting enhancing school safety. SVG will be invited as first WISS Safe School leader in the Caribbean.

<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)



- National Disaster Management Agency of the host country as well as from the four CDEMA sub-regions (depending on funding availability)
- Youth representatives from Antigua and Barbuda and two additional countries
- Development Banks (Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), The World Bank, etc.), and interested donors and countries Development Agency.

### **3.3 Forum Methodology**

The two-day workshop will provide space to present achievements regarding school safety at the national as well as regional level. Based on national needs and gaps, priorities will be identified that will inform a Caribbean roadmap.

The roadmap, declaration, priorities as well as agenda shall be arranged around the three pillars of school safety in order to ensure that an appropriate level of contribution to each pillar (*i.e.* strengths and weaknesses) can be identified.

#### **Consultation process**

Before the workshop, a consultation process will be undertaken with the Ministries of Education as well as the National Disaster Management Offices to identify the achievements and challenges at the national level. The findings at the national level as well as the work undertaken in the Caribbean region will inform the regional roadmap.

In parallel, the draft declaration will be developed and shared with the Ministries of Education for their review prior to the meeting, to ensure that the declaration, the roadmap and the structure of the Caribbean Safe School Initiative (CSSI) can be validated and adopted during the Forum.

The organization team will explore possible funding opportunities in order to support the implementation of the roadmap and the CSSI together with development banks, such as the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), and The World Bank, as well as with other interested donors and countries development agencies.

#### **Engaging Youth**

During the CDM conference in 2015, youth presented their resolution to the CDEMA council. Building on the interest of youth to engage in disaster risk management, CDEMA is developing a Youth Programme that will facilitate this process. Some countries have already youth representatives identified. It is hoped that youth in the host country can be engaged to organize a parallel session. Space should be provided during the forum to present the outcomes and contributions of the parallel youth session and incorporated into the road map. A mechanism shall be identified to engage youth also in the process of developing the draft declaration.

#### **Monitoring, reporting and scaling up**

It is important that the declaration refers to existing monitoring and reporting mechanisms and platforms such as the biannually organized CDM conference, Regional/Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction as well as the annual WISS meeting<sup>7</sup> in which Safe School Leaders will participate.

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<sup>7</sup> Global meetings of Safe School Leaders are held annually with the 2017 meeting expected to take place in Costa Rica.



Countries shall incorporate achievements at national level in the reporting against the CDM strategy and the Sendai Framework for DRR.

It is suggested to reinforce the existing group of Caribbean Ministers of Education and to seek commitments from Caribbean countries to join the group of School Safety Leaders in the Caribbean<sup>8</sup>. These countries will represent the Caribbean in international Fora.

Ministers of Education shall define the frequency of the Caribbean Ministerial meetings on School Safety and shall designate a country focal point for leading the Caribbean Safe School Initiative and assuring the implementation of the Road map

Noting that seven Caribbean countries will be invited to 2016 Ministerial meeting, it is envisioned to engage other Ministries for upcoming meetings and activities undertaken under the framework of the Caribbean Safe School Initiative which supports WISS.

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<sup>8</sup> Currently, the only Caribbean country identified as Safe School leader is Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.



## 4. Preliminary Agenda

	3 April 2017		4 April 2017
08:30-09:00	Welcoming remarks and introduction	08:30-09:00	Recap
09:00-10:00	Concept of Comprehensive School Safety, achievements and gaps in the Caribbean regarding School Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Sendai Framework, Regional &amp; Global DRR Platform and WISS (UNISDR) (15 min)</i></li> <li>- <i>The Comprehensive School Safety Framework (UNESCO) (15 min)</i></li> <li>- <i>CDM strategy, Model Safe School Programme and other achievements in the Caribbean (CDEMA) (15 min)</i></li> </ul>	09:00-10:15	Tsunami preparedness – Relevance for the Education Sector
		10:15-11:00	Dialogue between Youth and Ministers
10:00-10:30	Coffee Break	11:00-11:30	Coffee Break
10:30-12:30	School Safety in the Caribbean - Achievements and gaps at the national level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Presentation by countries on main achievements, gaps and three top priorities (each max. 10 min) around their existing policy and plans related to the Comprehensive School Safety Framework and on the different activities undertaken in the three pillars of school safety.</i></li> </ul>	11:30-13:00	Regional Roadmap for School Safety & Caribbean Safe School Initiative (CSSI) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>Identify and agree on five regional priorities</i></li> <li>2) <i>Define realistic actions and how these can be supported by Ministries and partners</i></li> <li>3) <i>Agree on follow-up and monitoring mechanism</i></li> <li>4) <i>Identify main elements of CSSI</i></li> </ol>
12:30-13:30	Lunch	13:00-14:00	Lunch
13:30-15:00	What support can be provided by the international and regional organizations / donors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Panel with organizations to present their work on school safety with focus on the Caribbean (e.g. UNESCO, Unicef, USAid OFDA, IFRC, CDEMA, OECD, UNISDR) – questions relating to existing standards on school safety (practicable approach / tools for decision-taking)</i></li> </ul>	14:00-15:30	Validation of Declaration and Roadmap <i>Final comments from Ministers to the proposed Declaration and Roadmap</i>
15:00-15:30	Coffee break	15:30-16:00	Coffee break
15:30-17:30	Discussion on Declaration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Comments from Ministers to the proposed Declaration</i></li> </ul>	16:00-17:00	Approval and signing of declaration and roadmap, and launching of the Caribbean Safe School Initiative (CSSI) <i>(reading, final comments &amp; signatures) (Media will be invited)</i>
18:00-20:00	Cocktail reception hosted by Antigua and Barbuda		