

Cartagena, June 20-22, 2018

Statement of UNICEF's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean at the Sixth Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas, Cartagena, June 20-22, 2018.

We would like to thank the Government of Colombia and the UNISDR for hosting the Sixth Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas.

The frequency of disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean has increased by a factor of 3.6 in half a century. In the 1960s, an average of 19 disasters occurred each year, but in the first decade of the twenty-first century the average rose to 68 per year.

Most disasters in the region are related to meteorological and hydrological phenomena such as hurricanes, storms, floods and droughts, but also related to violence and displacement. The limitations of statistical information make it difficult to accurately estimate the child population affected by disasters in the countries of the region. Nevertheless, just last year around 8 million children and adolescents were affected by natural disaster in Latin America and the Caribbean.

UNICEF in Latin America and the Caribbean is working with partners in the four priorities for the Sendai framework in the Americas. UNICEF would like to invite governments and partners to continue joining efforts to guarantee more resilient environment for all.

Priority One: Understanding disaster risk

- Humanitarian and development actors need stronger risk analysis with focus on vulnerable population, in order to develop more effective risk reduction and resilience building interventions.
- National, local governments and partners need to collect disaster risk related data disaggregated by gender, age, vulnerability and vulnerable groups, to design and implement public policies.

Priority Two: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk

- Governments, partner organizations and stakeholders must ensure coherence and integration of risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and resilience building in all development and humanitarian policies and programmes.
- National Ministries of Education and School communities need to engage in the multi-stakeholder "Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools", to ensure the full implementation of the Comprehensive Safe School Framework and providing financial and technical resources to work at national, regional and local levels, in a participatory approach promoting children and adolescents' ownership.
- Risk-informed planning including through inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial coordination between national disaster risk management, development planning and sectoral ministries with clearly identified roles and responsibilities.

Priority Three: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience

- “Leave no one behind”, the cornerstone of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, should be considered as a core guiding principle of all disaster risk reduction policies, strategies, plans and actions.
- Regional and national policies and programmes need to promote the integration between social protection and disaster risk management to ensure shock responsive social protection systems, which are designed and made available to those most at risk to mitigate the impact of disasters and contribute to resilience.
- Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction actors should work together. These arenas have similar aims and mutual benefits for the population. The linking of these subjects will enhance the reduction of climate-related losses, lead to the more efficient use of resources, and increase the effectiveness and sustainability of both approaches.

Priority Four: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to ‘Build Back Better’ in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction

- Children, adolescents and gender sensitive planning, budget and management in emergency preparedness, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Preparedness actions must place children and adolescents at the heart of the planning and budgetary process, and ensure their participation.
- Actors should establish standards and guidelines for attention and participation of people with disabilities in emergency preparedness and response through disability-inclusive DRR planning and timely and appropriate support to persons with disabilities in responding to disasters.
- Child protection and DRR programming needs to encompass activities aimed at preventing and responding to the protection risks for children in times of disaster and in all dimensions on child and adolescents’ development.

The effects of disasters on children are well documented and known, as well as the strategies needed to reduce the impact on children and adolescents. All the effects have long-term consequences, not only for the children themselves, but for the country and region sustainable development.

It is our duty and obligation to work together and not fail in the guarantee of the children rights, their needs and their trust.

Thank you.