



# Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change

Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Eastern Caribbean

POLICY BRIEF

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# Executive Summary

Protocol Member States of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) enjoy freedom of movement of citizens, by virtue of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre (RTB) and its policy on contingent rights. In March 2020, months before the official June commencement of the annual hurricane season, the OECS region, like the rest of the world, began experiencing the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. Having been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020, COVID-19 has caused, and continues to inflict, significant economic contraction in the OECS Member States (MS), including temporary but often extended, closure of borders. With support from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), through its Global Programme “Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change” (GP HMCCC), the OECS Commission sought to explore the implications for human mobility in the event of a hurricane impacting MS during the COVID-19 pandemic. This policy brief seeks to better understand the nexus between COVID-19, climate change/hurricane season and human mobility in the OECS region.

The Eastern Caribbean region is currently faced with a dilemma: On the one hand, the region is struggling with the management of the COVID-19 pandemic which has necessitated extended State of Emergency periods with established curfews and other measures to encourage people to stay home, practice social distancing and move as little as possible. Also, borders are largely closed, hence,

the Free Movement of People Regime in the OECS region is restricted due to COVID-19. These situations imply that people cannot move within the region and internal movements are also restricted. On the other hand, the OECS region was expecting an above-average active hurricane season which, based on past experience, might require people to move within their countries or across borders as a result of hurricanes or other climate-related events. These two different crises demand contrasting kinds of action: remaining versus moving. This creates a challenge which shall be discussed in this policy brief. Furthermore, possible opportunities which occur due to this particular situation are taken into account.

Through primary (survey and semi-structured interviews) and secondary (literature review) data collection, evidence was gathered to inform this policy brief. Responses were received from climate change, social and human services, immigration and disaster management professionals from eight (8) OECS MS, namely, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Montserrat, Commonwealth of Dominica and Anguilla. In addition, seven expert interviews were conducted.

The findings showed that COVID-19's significant adverse impact on the economies of OECS MS originated firstly with the main economic sector – tourism. This resulted in a chain of effects across other economic sectors. Consequently, widespread unemployment, eventually led to the need



for economic and social stabilization measures. This necessitated governments seeking extra budgetary support from development partners such as the World Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. Private sector entities in the OECS MS also demonstrated corporate social responsibility by providing support in various ways, including resources to purchase critical supplies, provision of meals, grants, and payment breaks for utilities.

As COVID-19 continued its spread, social, legislative and security measures were taken to reduce the importation of cases and contain community spread. Measures included border closures, declaration of states of emergency, curfews, limitations on mass gathering, early closure of schools and transitioning to online learning, legislating health protocols such as the requirement to wear masks and improved hygiene practices. Development partners also provided psycho-social support through various programmes.

Both internal and cross-border migration within OECS MS has been managed at a personal and at a governmental level, as a result of the provisions of the RTB. This was demonstrated in a significant way after the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 which resulted in many persons being displaced. The regional mechanism through the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) allows for the support to disaster displaced persons, once activated by OECS MS National Emergency Coordinating Offices. Despite the strengths of the regional mechanism, some weaknesses have been identified, such as a lack of human resources, specifically leadership capacity; insufficient financial resources and a lack of political will to approach disaster management in a 'non-episodic' manner.

COVID-19 and hurricane convergence poses many complications, mainly due to the varied and partly contradicting responses that these two events require. COVID-19 requires social distancing, while hurricanes often result in mass gathering in shelters. The need for high com-

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pliance with hygiene practices can be thwarted in the aftermath of a hurricane with adverse impacts on water infrastructure, resulting in quick depletion of stored water and water rationing. Movement within countries and across borders has been curtailed with COVID-19 but a hurricane can result in displacement, causing the need to flee either internally or across borders. COVID-19 requires a well-functioning healthcare system to preserve lives and functioning telecommunication systems, while a hurricane can damage or destroy all infrastructure.

In responding to the above, OECS MS must embrace a coordinated approach and proper planning across all sectors and at all levels in seeking to make allowances for human mobility issues which may arise in the event of a hurricane occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic or similar future incident. A total of twenty (20) recommendations have been identified in the recommendations table below to assist with a coordinated approach. These need to be addressed in the short, medium and long term. The supporting sources, whether based on the survey, interviews or literature review are also identified. Two key recommendations are "to develop national and/or sub-regional financial mechanisms for supporting displaced persons and cross-border migrants from the adverse impacts of climate change" and "to sensitize vulnerable populations and communities on the options for risk pooling and securing livelihood protection policies".

# Introduction

The populations in atoll and island states as well as coastal regions of the Caribbean are hit especially hard by the impacts of climate change, with more intense storms, flooding and rising sea levels posing a particular risk. Human mobility in the context of climate change (HMCCC), which is one related effect, encapsulates migration, displacement and planned relocation<sup>i</sup>.

There are several international and regional documents providing a framework for action in relation to HMCCC. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognises migration as a strategy for adapting to climate change. The Task Force on Displacement of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM) has been tasked “to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change”. The Global Compact for Migration (GCM) also acknowledges climate change as a driver for migration and demands that we improve our understanding of, and find solutions to, migration in the context of natural disasters and climate change. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) recognizes that displacement and migration (both internally and across borders), resulting from the impacts of climate change, are on the rise. The Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) is to follow up on the work started by the Nansen Initiative, and to implement the recommendations of the Protection Agenda, a toolbox to better prevent and prepare for displacement

and to respond to situations when people are forced to find refuge within their own country or across the border.

For large ocean states such as those in the OECS region, issues of loss of land arising from sea level rise, extreme rainfall events, hurricanes and tropical storms or droughts can result in displacement and migration. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), through its Global Programme “Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change” (GP HMCCC), supports the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission in developing their capacities to deal with HMCCC, for instance by providing policy-related advice, supporting organisational and strategic development and identifying, and through rectifying knowledge gaps.

<sup>i</sup> Human mobility in the context of climate change: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/67177.html> last accessed 30th October 2020.

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is an international organisation dedicated to economic harmonisation and integration, protection of human and legal rights, and the encouragement of good governance among independent and non-independent countries in the Eastern Caribbean. The OECS comprises seven (7) protocol members and four (4) associated members. The OECS was established through the Treaty of Basseterre (1981), which was revised in 2010. The Revised Treaty of Basseterre (RTB) has created an economic and customs union and facilitates free movement of goods, capital and persons<sup>ii</sup>. The RTB also allows for common approaches on key sectoral issues including environment and health. Although only six (6) of the protocol members are Party to the UNFCCC<sup>iii</sup>, all MS are exposed to the adverse impacts of climate change by virtue of their geographic location within the hurricane belt. Their common characteristics as large ocean states further compound their vulnerability, placing both their economies and people at tremendous risk.

**The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is an international organisation dedicated to economic harmonisation and integration, protection of human and legal rights**

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the novel coronavirus which was initially discovered in December 2019. By January 2020, cases of COVID-19 had been reported in Europe, the United States of America and the United Arab Emirates. By March 2020, due to its global spread with 118,000 cases, COVID-19 had been declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO)<sup>iv</sup>. In March 2020, the OECS region recorded its first cases of COVID-19.

While the region grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 hurricane season has been classified as “possibly extremely active”<sup>v</sup>. With support of the GP HMCCC, the OECS Commission seeks to examine the combined implications of COVID-19 and climate change for human mobility in the region.

<sup>ii</sup> The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission: <https://oecs.org/who-we-are/about-us>, last accessed 30th October 2020.

<sup>iii</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

<sup>iv</sup> World Health Organization. “Timeline of WHO’s response to COVID-19”: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/29-06-2020-covidtimeline>, last accessed 28th August 2020.

<sup>v</sup> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association: <https://www.noaa.gov>, last accessed August 7, 2020.

# Methodology and response summary

The research approach for this policy brief relied upon a combination of primary and secondary data-gathering. A survey instrument targeted disaster management, climate change, human and social services and immigration practitioners in OECS MS. The survey was available for a period of eighteen (18) days from 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to 19<sup>th</sup> August 2020. From a sample frame of sixty-six (66) individuals provided by the OECS database of relevant professionals, fifteen (15) responses (22% response rate) were received with 46.7% of the responses from climate change practitioners, 40% from social and human services and the remaining 13.3% from immigration and disaster management offices. It should be noted that, for social and human services, multiple individuals in each agency were contacted. The MS which responded to the survey were Saint Lucia (3), Saint Kitts & Nevis (2), Antigua & Barbuda (2), St. Vincent & the Grenadines (2), Grenada (2), Montserrat (2), Dominica (1), and Anguilla (1). Despite the low response rate, the responses were rich and in-depth and contributed meaningfully to the recommendations. The survey instrument is appended to this policy brief. Nine (9) experts were targeted for interviews, with whom seven (7) semi-structured interviews were conducted.

The interviews were semi-structured with general questions to frame the discussions. The experts list and general questions are appended to this policy brief. A literature review was also undertaken, which provided the basis for anchoring the recommendations. A duration of ten (10) days was allocated for the data capture, processing and analysis to produce this policy brief. This is a limiting factor in the level of depth of analysis which could be undertaken.



# Effects of COVID-19 in the OECS region and response measures to address the effects

## Effects of COVID-19

Shortly after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, several OECS MS announced travel bans, both regionally and globally. As tourism-dependent economies, OECS MS faced reduced visitor arrivals. This resulted in loss of room nights, halting of cruise services and therefore loss of income for the tourism sector. Consequently, hotels began operating at reduced capacity and, in some instances, halted their operations. This translated into a ripple effect of increased unemployment as laid-off hotel workers, and tourism dependent-livelihoods such as tour services and taxi services, beach and craft vendors, farmers and fishers and related businesses were impacted. The severe economic contraction arising from COVID-19 poses unprecedented challenges to the socio-economic development of OECS MS.

In addition to the economic fallout arising from low visitor arrivals, the OECS region recorded the first cases of COVID-19 in March 2020. This prompted border closure across the region. During the initial closure period, countries allowed a narrow window for re-entry of returning nationals and residents. The consequences for travelling for regional professionals, university students and regional tourism have been dire. Travel between the islands is a key aspect of the freedoms enjoyed by the citizens of the OECS MS and the economic buoyancy of the region.

Recognizing that border closure and limited entry had not insulated the OECS MS from the spread of COVID-19, internal measures were instituted to prevent and/or contain community spread. These measures included declared states of emergency, curfews, cancelling or limiting of mass gatherings, early closure of schools, curtailing of religious gatherings, traffic restrictions, closure of businesses, social distancing and other health protocols as well as complete lockdowns for certain periods. These measures were accompanied by sanctions for non-compliance. The measures, in some instances, were based on existing emergency management legislation, in other instances on amendments to existing legislation, and still in other cases completely new legislation. Appendix 3 provides further details on some of the measures undertaken.

**The severe economic contraction arising from COVID-19 poses unprecedented challenges to the socio-economic development of OECS MS.**

The result was a further deepening of the economic contraction in OECS MS. The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) reports that “the pandemic has resulted in a drastic reduction in jobs and incomes, lower government revenues and elevated unemployment. Real GDP in the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union (ECEU) is projected to decline within a range of 10% to 20% in 2020, whereas, before COVID-19, the anticipated growth for the region was 3.3%”<sup>vi</sup>. Economic recovery in 2021 is contingent upon, inter alia, the absence of natural disasters and a swift global rebound.

The capacity of the healthcare systems within the OECS MS to cope with the mass entry in the time of COVID-19 was also a consideration in the decision to close borders. OECS MS now had to make provisions for strengthening healthcare systems and services. In addition, COVID-19 resulted in mental health challenges as a result of significant restrictions imposed on social interactions and limited movement of persons. An escalation of social issues, such as domestic violence, elder and child abuse, suicides and deepening gender inequalities are also associated impacts.

## Response measures to address the effects

In response to the economic contraction across all sectors and the resultant hardships faced by citizens, governments across the region announced a number of economic stimulus and social stabilization measures. These included temporary unemployment benefits, advisories on easements for tenants and curtailing of evictions, suspension of disconnections and easements for delayed utility payments, deferred payment on loans, grants for employees and small businesses, provision of food hampers to needy persons and prepayment of pensions. Relief funds were set up by governments and the local private sector alike. As a case in point, the Marine Association of Antigua and Barbuda – a private sector entity – launched the Marine Relief Fund<sup>vii</sup> to assist yacht workers affected by COVID-19. Textbox 1 provides further details on

some of the measures undertaken by the private sector in the OECS region.

In addition, governments provided resources to facilitate transitions in modes of engagement with students such as online learning, and initially funding quarantine of travellers into the country. The latter became quite expensive and eventually, persons were required to cover the cost of being quarantined. Due to the loss in revenue, the governments of the OECS MS sought support from development partners to fund their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments have accessed emergency resources including from the World Bank Contingency Emergency Response<sup>viii</sup> and Emergency Response and Policy Based Loans from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)<sup>ix</sup>.

The ECCB Monetary Council proposed “the determination of an optimal framework for the financial system of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) and the enactment of a financial stability framework” as part of the measures to address the significant economic contraction brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>x</sup>. Governments of the region have also called on the international community to revisit their approach in providing financial support to CARICOM<sup>xi</sup>.

<sup>vi</sup> Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. n.d. “Communique of the 96<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECCB Monetary Council”: <https://www.eccb-centralbank.org/news/view/communique-of-the-96th-meeting-of-the-eccb-monetary-council>, last accessed 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

<sup>vii</sup> Government of Antigua & Barbuda. “ABMA Launches Marine Relief Fund”: [https://ab.gov.ag/media\\_page.php?page=257](https://ab.gov.ag/media_page.php?page=257), last accessed 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

<sup>viii</sup> World Bank. “World Bank provides US\$10.5M to Saint Lucia for COVID-19 response”: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/30/world-bank-provides-us105-million-to-saint-lucia-for-covid-19-response>, last accessed 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

<sup>ix</sup> Caribbean Development Bank. “CDB to provide almost US\$67M to seven Caribbean Countries to counter the COVID-19 crisis”: <https://www.caribank.org/newsroom/news-and-events/cdb-provide-almost-us67-million-seven-caribbean-countries-counter-covid-19-crisis>, last accessed 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

<sup>x</sup> Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. n.d. “Communique of the 96<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECCB Monetary Council”: <https://www.eccb-centralbank.org/news/view/communique-of-the-96th-meeting-of-the-eccb-monetary-council>, last accessed 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

<sup>xi</sup> ECLAC. “Borrowing is not an option for Caribbean Countries, access to concessional funding and debt relief is urgently needed to face the COVID-19 crisis”: <https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/borrowing-not-option-caribbean-countries-access-concessional-funding-and-debt-relief>, last accessed 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

The COVID-19 response by governments also meant strengthening health systems and purchasing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), respirators and testing kits. Notwithstanding the strain on healthcare services, in August 2020, the OECS region has recorded a high recovery rate of the 2045 confirmed cases of COVID-19, as well as 689 recoveries and only 37 deaths<sup>xii</sup>. Support from the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), which included testing of samples collected and support from Cuba through the Henry Reeve International Medical Brigades, contributed to this success<sup>xiii</sup>.

A joint CDB and Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) programme, “Stronger Together” seeks to address the mental health impacts brought about by COVID-19 in the region. The campaign is expected to address the stigma associated with mental health services and places focus on vulnerable persons. It will also address a possible rise in gender-based violence during the pandemic and the importance of ensuring that all communication products are more accessible to persons with disabilities<sup>xiv</sup>.

Border re-opening commenced in July 2020, with limited entry. In some instances, only nationals and residents have been allowed re-entry while in other instances, allowances have been made for other CARICOM nationals<sup>xv</sup>. Stringent protocols, including the requirement to produce a negative COVID-19 PCR test prior to travel, were instituted. However, it was generally understood that a surge in cases might result in MS reverting to closed borders. At the wider CARICOM level, Heads of Government have mandated the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) “to prepare a framework for the protocols to operate a bubble within the region to facilitate travel and boost domestic tourism”<sup>xvi</sup>. A more comprehensive documentation of COVID-19 measures taken by OECS MS is represented in Appendix 3.

### Caribbean Private Sector demonstrates Corporate Social Responsibility during COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Massey Stores (Saint Lucia): Donated USD100,000 to OECS Commission to purchase ventilators
2. Charles Wilkin Q.C. (St. Kitts & Nevis): EC\$21,000 to cover the cost of 100 tests for persons who cannot afford it
3. Eastern Caribbean Central Banks: \$4M to OECS-ECCU countries donations will be made through regional operating companies to purchase testing kits
4. Mr. Maher Chreiki and Group of Companies (St. Lucia) donated EC\$100,000 in cash and EC\$105,000 for the following items: 10,000 masks for distribution to the public, 1000 KN95 masks for doctors and nurses at hospitals and clinics, 100 blood testing kits and 50 temperature testing kits
5. Secret Bay/Fort Young/Dive Resort (Dominica) donated 50 meals per day to frontline workers and healthcare professionals for at least 30 days. The initiative is called ‘Koudmen Kitchen’. Koudmen is Creole for ‘helping hand’

Source:

<https://www.apanamagazine.com/people-and-organisations-donating-to-fight-covid-19-in-the-caribbean/>

<sup>xii</sup> Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. “OECS Response to COVID-19”: <https://www.oecs.org/coronavirus-covid19>, last accessed 30th August 2020.

<sup>xiii</sup> Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. “Statement by OECS on Cuba Medical Brigades”: <https://pressroom.oecs.org/statement-by-the-organisation-of-eastern-caribbean-states-on-cuban-medical-brigades>, last accessed 30th August 2020.

<sup>xiv</sup> Caribbean Development Bank. n.d. “Stronger Together” campaign to highlight importance of psychosocial support during times of stress and crisis”: <https://www.caribank.org/newsroom/news-and-events/stronger-together-campaign-highlight-importance-psychosocial-support-during-times-stress-and-crisis>, last accessed August 10th 2020.

<sup>xv</sup> CARPHA. Update 11 August 13 Caribbean Countries Reopening Plans and Initiatives: <https://www.carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus/Prevention-Measures-Travel-Advisories-and-Reopening-Plan>, last accessed 18th August 2020.

<sup>xvi</sup> CARICOM. Secretariat. “CARICOM leaders prepare for hurricane amid COVID-19 pandemic”: <https://caricom.org/caricom-leaders-prepare-for-hurricanes-amid-covid-19-pandemic/>, last accessed 30th August 2020.

# Human mobility-related responses to climate change and related events in the OECS

## Approaches to manage migration and transparently reduce (internal) displacement

The citizens of Protocol MS<sup>xvii</sup> of the OECS, through the provisions of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre (RTB), in particular articles 12.1 to 12.4 and 20(f), enjoy freedom of movement across borders. Despite this freedom, the OECS Authority<sup>xviii</sup> may allow MS to regulate the movement of citizens based on article 12.5. MS currently implement the contingent rights enshrined within the RTB to varying degrees.

The OECS Authority at its sixty-second (62<sup>nd</sup>) meeting in 2015 expanded rights previously conferred to Protocol MS as part of the management of migration in the region. Whereas since the fifty-third meeting of the OECS Authority, MS have been able to travel hassle-free to other protocol MS and remain indefinitely with the ability to work, the sixty-second meeting sought to improve coherence through the adoption of the Policy on Contingent Rights<sup>xix</sup>. In addition to a right to be employed, the policy provides rights to healthcare, social services and education to both citizens of protocol MS and their families.

At the national level, OECS MS are required to ratify the RTB and enact supporting legislation. All Protocol MS – with the exception of Montserrat – have ratified the revised treaty. All have enacted legislation to some or all aspects of the revised treaty. These provisions provide the framework within which migration can occur. OECS citizens, being aware of the general provision, have also utilized the provisions to migrate to less affected MS prior

to or in the aftermath of disaster events related to climate change. This was the case after the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017.

After Hurricane Maria in 2017, many persons left Dominica and migrated to other OECS MS as well as the wider Caribbean. Departures were mostly via ferry while flights were reserved for transporting individuals with emergencies and transporting relief items<sup>xx</sup>. Displaced persons accessed health services and displaced students attended school in receiving OECS MS. Other benefits provided by the receiving OECS MS were determined at the national level<sup>xxi</sup>.

<sup>xvii</sup> Associate Member States are not afforded the benefit of contingent rights.

<sup>xviii</sup> The OECS Authority are the Heads of Government of the Member States made up of the Prime Ministers/Chief Ministers of each Member State and is the supreme policy-making body. The Authority is the supreme policy making body of the OECS and is responsible for the general direction and control of the performance and functions of the Organisation. The Authority can enact Acts of the Organisation within the areas of legislative competence of the Organisation conferred upon it by the Revised Treaty of Basseterre. Decisions of the Authority are binding on all Member States and Organs of the Organisation.

<sup>xix</sup> OECS Commission. "OECS Policy on contingent Rights within the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union (ECCU). 2015

<sup>xx</sup> The New Humanitarian. "Exodus from hurricane hit Dominica as recover remains elusive": <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/feature/2017/10/18/exodus-hurricane-hit-dominica-recovery-remains-elusive>, last accessed 15th August 2020.

The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season demonstrated the region's approach to movement of displaced persons and cross-border migration in the aftermath of a disaster. The OECS MS recorded significant displacement of persons with the passage of two hurricanes. As a result of Hurricane Irma, it is reported that 1,500 persons were displaced in Guadeloupe, 1400 persons were displaced from Barbuda mainly to Antigua, 500 persons were displaced in Anguilla, and 33 persons in Saint Kitts and Nevis. It is further reported that 35,000 persons (representing 47.4% of the population) from Dominica were displaced by Hurricane Maria<sup>xxii</sup>. In Dominica the entire country was impacted, affecting 56,890 persons with significant damage to the housing stock, flooding of the capital, damage to the Roseau hospital, and heavy siltation of Canefield Airport. In Saint Kitts, the Old Road building was severely eroded while, in Nevis, the housing stock was damaged, the agriculture sector was severely impacted, electricity poles were downed island-wide and the entire island was without electricity with extensive damage to the coastline. Tortola experienced damage to infrastructure and minor landslides<sup>xxiii</sup>.

Apart from personal arrangements for cross-border movement, in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, there is a broader CARICOM regional mechanism to assist with disaster management, which incorporates movement of persons. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) provides support to OECS MS through a well-established process of engagement. CDEMA utilizes a Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) approach which encompasses "all hazards through all phases of the disaster management cycle"<sup>xxiv</sup>. This CDM approach is therefore executed through the various teams of the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM). The RRM is triggered for an event in which the affected state is unable to respond adequately on its own. This regional approach is underpinned by the Regional Disaster Response Support Doctrine (RDRSD), the basic principle of which is that "each state has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of emergencies occurring on its territory by initiating, organizing, coordinating and implementing humanitarian assistance"<sup>xxv</sup>.

Movement of displaced persons within an emergency management context forms part of the work of the RRM through its evacuation mechanism. National Emergency Operation Centres (NEOCs) activate a sub-committee of various sector representatives to assist with the response efforts. These sub-committees include health, police, military, public works, transport and social services. Through them, support is provided for shelter management and evacuation of displaced persons.

### Policy considerations for sustainable management of human mobility

Notwithstanding the strengths of the disaster management mechanism in the region, a lack of human resources, specifically leadership capacity, insufficient financial resources and a lack of political will to approach disaster management in a 'non-episodic' manner have been identified as persistent constraints. These must be addressed to ensure increased effectiveness. Additionally, there is need for the regional collaborative efforts to positively impact the national systems which should facilitate free movement of persons in the OECS region as well as access to services and effective communication between relevant agencies<sup>xxvii, xxviii, xxix</sup>.

xxi Survey results

xxii Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID). Spotlight- The Atlantic Hurricane Season and the importance of resilience: [https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2018-GRID-spotlight-atlantic-hurricane-season\\_0.pdf](https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2018-GRID-spotlight-atlantic-hurricane-season_0.pdf), last accessed 12th August 2020.

xxiii CDEMA. Hurricane Maria Situation Report No 1. 2017

xxiv CDEMA. The Regional Response Mechanism. 2016

xxv Ibid

xxvii Trotz, Neville. Climate Change Expert perspectives on Human Mobility in the context of Climate Change and COVID-19". Interview by Neranda Maurice-George, 31st July 2020.

xxviii Durand, Yoshabel, Social Sector Expert perspectives on Human Mobility in the context of Climate Change and COVID-19". Interview by Neranda Maurice-George, 31st July 2020.

xxix Survey results



Reflecting on the case of the passage of Hurricane Maria in Dominica, IOM identified “creation of dedicated funds and protocols to manage large-scale population movements, strengthening of mechanisms to track and assist displaced populations and improved procedures and protocols for inter-agency coordination in the events of a border crisis”<sup>xxx</sup> as imperatives to improve the management of mass migration in the region. IOM also recommended to improve tracking of evacuees and displaced person. In particular “increased institutional capacity for emergency and disaster management including building capacity for more effective cooperation with immigration authorities and local governments”<sup>xxxi</sup>.

Updating of national contingency management plans of NECOs to address and ensure capacity for responding to cross-border displacement and migration has also been identified as another area to be addressed<sup>xxxii</sup>. This could also include re-deployment of staff to complement the work<sup>xxxiii</sup>.

As one measure to prepare for future similar situations of disaster, OECS MS should be encouraged to elaborate policies which address the needs of cross-border displaced persons and migrants including the possibility of formal Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) or similar arrangements with non-protocol OECS MS since the contingent rights do not currently apply to them<sup>xxxiv</sup>.

Governments in the Eastern Caribbean have utilized sovereign level events pay-outs from the Caribbean Catastrophic Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) to provide food and shelter for displaced persons<sup>xxxv</sup>. In addressing human mobility, there is further opportunity through CCRIF for governments to broaden their CCRIF policy uptake with additional policies that specifically address social protection and “factor the construct of leaving no-one behind”. Government could encourage vulnerable communities to pool their resources and purchase community level micro-insurance. Individuals should be encouraged to purchase Livelihood Protection Policies (LPPs)<sup>xxxvi</sup>.

The OECS Policy on Contingent Rights does not address displaced persons and migrants in the context of climate change. Consideration should be given to further strengthening the policy in that regard. This can be done by including provisions which respond to the needs of citizens of MS who migrate as a result of climate-related disasters and pandemic related events. In addition, more work needs to be done to address perceptions that citizens from OECS MS ‘do not belong’ when they seek to exercise their rights under the RTB<sup>xxxvii</sup>.

<sup>xxx</sup> IOM. “Migration Governance in the Caribbean: Report on the island states of the commonwealth Caribbean”. 2018.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Ibid

<sup>xxxii</sup> Jackson, Ronald. “DRM Expert perspectives on Human Mobility in the context of Climate Change and COVID-19”. Interview by Neranda Maurice-George, 21st July 2020.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Survey results

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Ibid

<sup>xxxv</sup> CCRIF. “Policy brief linking social protection with climate resilience and adaptation”. 2019

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Emmanuel, Elizabeth. “CCRIF “DRM Expert perspectives on Human Mobility in the context of Climate Change and COVID-19”. Interview by Neranda Maurice-George, 5th August 2020.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Survey results

Viewing climate-related displacement and cross-border migration from the context of risk reduction and as part of the human justice aspect of climate and less as a security issue will reduce some of the current challenges. Any framework going forward should build on the progress to date at the multi-lateral, regional, bilateral and national levels and seek to focus more on the persons affected and less on the political expediency<sup>xxxviii</sup>. Such an approach would be anchored within the context of the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 and in particular paragraphs 30 (l), 31 (e) and 36 (vi), which addresses the adoption of policies, programmes and measures to address disaster induced human mobility. Additionally, the framework should be responsive to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 10 which addresses the reduction of inequalities within and among countries.

**The OECS Policy on Contingent Rights is silent on the issue of displaced persons and migrants in the context of climate change. Consideration should be given to further strengthening the policy in that regard.**

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Felson, Janine. "AOSIS perspectives on Human Mobility in the context of Climate Change and COVID-19" Interview by Neranda Maurice-George 27th July 2020.

# The nexus between human mobility, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic

## Policy considerations to manage the overlap

The occurrence of extreme climate events often results in persons moving from highly-impacted areas to low-impact areas. In the OECS region, persons displaced by hurricanes or other climate-related events often moved from one OECS MS to another. COVID-19 has restricted movement of persons within states and across borders. Both COVID-19 and an extreme climate event puts lives, livelihoods and safety at risk.

Convening in January 2020, the Caribbean Emergency Community discussed the implications of the COVID-19 outbreak considering, inter alia, “the region’s low to medium level emergency preparedness that has characterized the region in the best of times”<sup>xxxix</sup>. Early lessons from COVID-19 in the Caribbean pointed to the need for a coordinated response on policy decisions to flatten the curve such as coordinated border closures. Additionally, ensuring that national disaster management mechanisms are comprehensively engaged is critical<sup>xl</sup>. On 11th. August 2020, heads of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) received proposals from CDEMA and CARPHA for dealing with a hurricane occurring during COVID-19. CARICOM heads noted that there is a need for vigilance by health and border security personnel in preventing the importation of new cases of COVID-19. At the same time, the heads mandated the preparation of a framework for protocols to operate a bubble within the region to facilitate travel and boost domestic tourism<sup>xli</sup>.

### COVID-19 & hurricane convergence

Tropical storm Laura made landfall in Haiti during the COVID-19 pandemic killing 31 persons, damaging 8,835 houses, destroying crops and forests causing widespread flooding and damaging roads and bridges.

Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Haiti- Tropical Storm Laura: Situation report No 4, August 28, 2020

<sup>xxxix</sup> Jackson, Ronald. “Initial Lessons from the National Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic”. 2020

<sup>xl</sup> Ibid

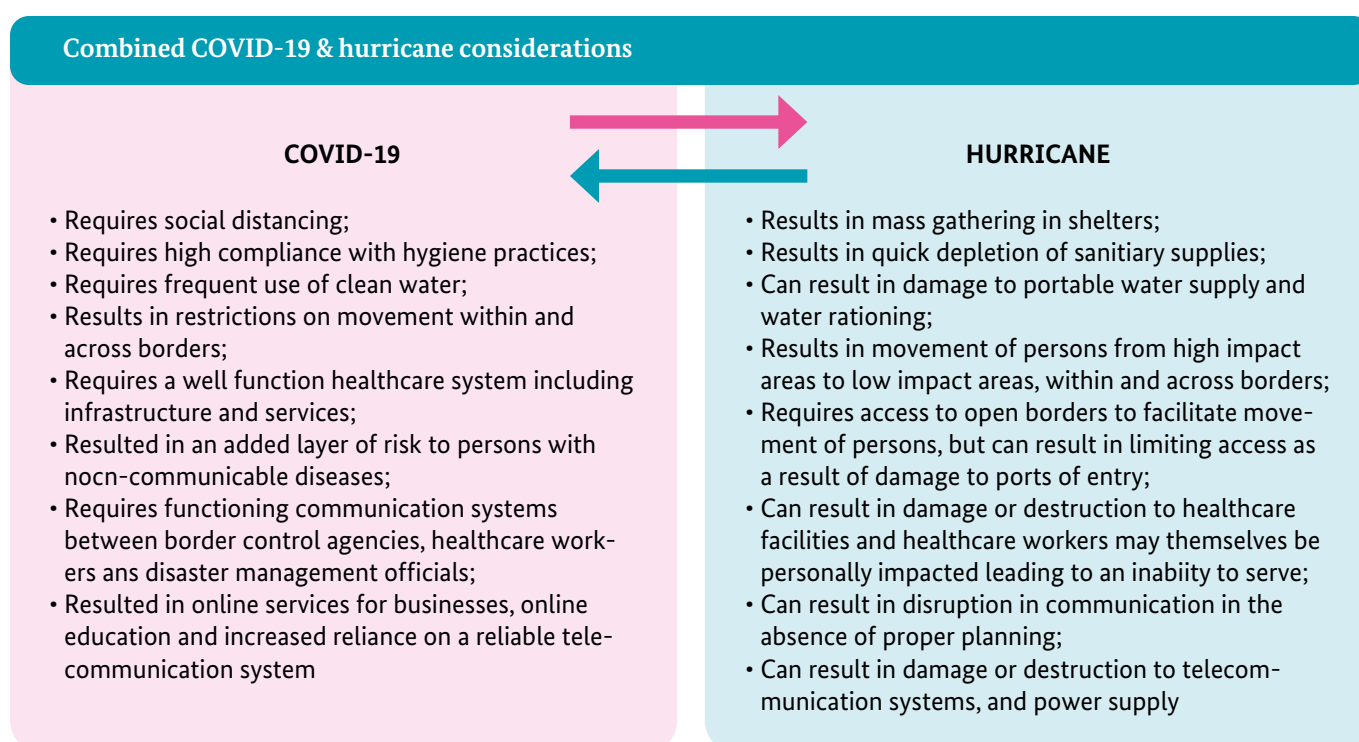
<sup>xli</sup> CARICOM. Secretariat. “CARICOM leaders prepare for hurricane amid COVID-19 pandemic”: <https://caricom.org/caricom-leaders-prepare-for-hurricanes-amid-covid-19-pandemic/>, last accessed 30th August. 2020.

Although it does not specifically address disaster displacement, it is assumed that these two agencies will ensure that disaster displaced persons will be taken into account. The COVID-19 pandemic and hurricane season convergence poses many complications, mainly due to the varied – often contradictory – conditions that these two events would pose. The graphic on **Combined COVID-19 and Hurricane Considerations** outlines eight areas of variance which must be addressed simultaneously.

In addition to the areas of variance considered in the graphic, challenges such as the requirement to produce negative PCR tests to facilitate entry into receiving MS can be delayed or rendered impossible in the event of a hurricane. The likelihood that testing facilities are damaged or destroyed in the sending country as a result of a hurricane is high. The requirement to be quarantined once in the receiving MS may also prove difficult for the case of vulnerable disaster displaced persons as this may not be economically feasible.

Therefore, OECS MS face the need to review border control policies in order to facilitate quick movement of disaster-displaced persons, without compromising national security – despite the limitations of COVID-19. Such an approach would be consistent with the recommendation of the United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development of focusing on vulnerable groups including “internally displaced persons and migrants in policies and actions”<sup>xiii</sup>.

<sup>xiii</sup> UN-ECOSOC. Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2020 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Council, on the theme “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26780MD\\_2020\\_HLPF\\_HLS.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26780MD_2020_HLPF_HLS.pdf), last accessed 19th August 2020.



Further, arrangements for the operation and management of shelters and quarantine facilities require conscientious planning to reduce community spread of COVID-19 while at the same time ensuring that disaster-displaced persons can find adequate shelter. Early actions are needed to assess emergency shelters and consider other possibilities for sheltering persons as was done for COVID-19 quarantine policies.

Additionally, CARPHA has highlighted the mental health challenges associated with climate-related events, e.g. need for support for traumatized displaced persons<sup>xliii</sup>. CDB and PAHO have already commenced cooperating on mental health issues arising from COVID-19. This type of collaboration by the various agencies on addressing mental health issues during COVID-19 should be promoted and continued in the event of a hurricane impacting the islands.

OECS MS therefore need to ensure a coordinated approach and proper planning across all sectors and at all levels in seeking to make allowances for human mobility issues which may arise and in the event of a hurricane during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Lessons from COVID-19 & hurricane convergence in pacific sides

Enhance multi-hazard disaster preparedness efforts

Revise standard operating procedures and contingency plans

Be proactive in reducing COVID-19 vulnerabilities and climate disaster exposure

Prioritize disaster risk governance

Source: UNDRRR Asia Pacific, 2020

<sup>xliii</sup> CARPHA. "State of Public Health in the Caribbean 2017-2018 Climate and Health: Averting and Responding to an Unfolding Health Crisis. 2018



# Summary of policy recommendations

Based on the literature review, the survey and the interview, policy recommendations have been formulated to inform the development of an OECS policy to address human mobility in the context of a COVID-19 pandemic and climate change event convergence. A key consideration for the OECS Commission, while focusing on COVID-19, is that of a broader pandemic approach in the policy development. COVID-19 may just be one of the many challenges that the region, and indeed the world, will face while we continue to address human mobility in the context of climate change. In the following, the main recommendations are elaborated. All twenty (20) recommendations are included in the recommendations table.





















The need to “develop national and/or sub-regional financial mechanisms for supporting displaced persons and cross-border migrants from the adverse impacts of climate change” has been identified as one of the main recommendations. The financial mechanism would utilize various financial instruments including insurance through the CCRIF which can create an immediate injection to address issues arising from disaster displacement and cross-border migration. Relief funds have been established to support COVID-19 responses. Some of these resources could be allocated as seed funding for mechanisms addressing HMCCC.

It can furthermore be recommended to “sensitize vulnerable populations and communities on the possibility of being displaced by a climate related event, including providing information on and options for risk-pooling as well as securing livelihood protection policies”. It is important to equip and empower the most vulnerable groups of OECS citizens with the information and tools needed to positively impact their future. Furthermore, gender dynamics should be given particular recognition in all processes and in the development of policies or guidelines.

The supporting sources for the recommendations presented below are indicated by LR - Literature Review, I - Expert Interview and S - Survey. The time-frame for implementation is captured as S-Short, M-Medium or L-Long-Term.



Policy Recommendations	Supporting Sources			S, M, L
	LR	I	S	
Develop national and/or sub-regional financial mechanisms for supporting displaced persons and cross-border migrants from the adverse impacts of climate change including risk insurance, expanding social protection funding to include displaced persons and cross-border migrants and budgetary allocations by national governments.				M
Sensitize vulnerable populations and communities of being displaced by a climate-related event and inform on the options for risk pooling and securing livelihood protection policies.				S
Promote and facilitate improved coordination between key agencies such as immigration and security/police, disaster risk, health, social and human services in planning for and responding to the convergence of a climate event with the COVID-19 pandemic.				S
Facilitate the coherence of key policies, mechanisms and approaches among OECS MS in order to minimize differences in responding to displaced persons and cross-border migrants.				M
Promote the adoption of a whole-of-society approach, recognizing that private actors, civil society and faith-based organisations have a critical role to play in supporting the efforts of reducing risks to displaced persons and cross-border migrants.				S
Promote and support the establishment of MoU between all OECS MS, including non-protocol OECS MS who do not benefit from the contingent rights.				L
Promote and facilitate the coordination of mental health programmes to support displaced persons and migrants within the OECS region.				S
Encourage the updating and/or adoption of pandemic plans based on the work done by PAHO in 2005.				M
Promote the strengthening of emergency management plans, climate change policies and other relevant legislation to thoroughly address human mobility in the context of climate change and disasters. Legal protection for such person should be included.				L
Facilitate comprehensive and systematic data collection and analysis as well as data sharing on displaced persons and cross-border migrants.				S

Policy Recommendations	Supporting Sources			
	LR	I	S	S, M, L
Encourage the establishment of “receiving desks” as part of protocols at ports of entry to facilitate disaster-displaced persons. This will support tracking of disaster-displaced persons.				S
Support the improved capacity, encourage resolute leadership and promote adequate financial resources of NECOs.				M
Encourage adherence to established COVID-19 health protocols as part of emergency shelter management, while establishing clear SOPs in the event that a strict adherence to the COVID-19 health protocols cannot be adhered to is impossible in the interest of saving lives.				S
Update the OECS policy on contingent rights to include provisions for protection of disaster-displaced persons and their families and other rights as appropriate.				L
Develop regional migration policies/frameworks which cover all forms of human mobility including HMCCC. These should consider the risk reduction and climate justice dimension of human mobility.				M
Encourage assessment of emergency shelters with a view to extreme climate events such as hurricanes of Category 5.				S
Promote and facilitate the development of a plan of action to improve the infrastructural integrity of emergency shelters.				L
Consider revision of border control policies for the scenario of an extreme climate event during the COVID-19 pandemic.				S
Support OECS MS in their efforts “to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change”, following the advice from the Task Force on Displacement of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM).				S
Support the efforts of CDEMA in promoting the full disaster management approach over an episodic approach to managing disasters.				S

# Conclusions

Cooperation among OECS MS on human mobility is not a novel idea. By virtue of the RTB, MS have enjoyed many freedoms as it relates to movements of persons in the OECS region. However, there is a need to include HMCCC and address gaps as it pertains to disaster (including climate change) related mobility.

The survey and the interviews revealed that one of the most urgent needs is to strengthen the institutional and financial mechanisms which support HMCCC in OECS MS. Weaknesses in the existing systems in absence of COVID-19 have been reported. In addition, coordination in responses will ensure that human, physical and financial resources are efficiently allocated.

A final consideration is that future climate change related impacts may include pandemics, as science has revealed that with the melting of the permafrost, new diseases may begin to affect human beings. COVID-19 therefore can be considered as just one major issue, with others becoming more prevalent in the future. As such the OECS region must be positioned to respond to any future pandemics by ensuring that pandemic plans and climate change and migration policies provide the basis for timely action.

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# APPENDIX 1 – List of experts consulted & guiding questions for semi-structured interviews

## Experts List

1. Mr. Ronald Jackson, UNDP – DRRR Head and former CDEMA Executive Director
2. Ambassador Janine Felson – Lead Climate Finance Negotiation, AOSIS
3. Dr. Lisa Indar – Assistant Director Surveillance, Disease Prevention and Control CARPHA
4. Dr. Ulric Trotz – Scientific Advisor, CCCCC
5. Ms. Yoshabel Durand – Operations Officer, Social Department, OECS Commission
6. Mrs. Elizabeth Emmanuel – CCRIF Technical Assistance Manager and Head CCRIF Corporate Communications Manager
7. Mrs. Dawn Pierre-Nathaniel – Deputy Chief Sustainable Development & Environment Officer, Saint Lucia and AOSIS Loss & Damage Negotiator

## Guiding questions for semi-structured interviews

1. Does the region have in place, robust procedures, policies, legislation etc. to navigate such a convergence?
2. If not, what are the potential response challenges/gaps (preparedness challenges, institutional coordination, vulnerabilities of most at risk groups, etc.)?
3. What are the potential opportunities (proposed means of addressing those)?
4. Which of these are immediate, and which can be applied in the medium to long term, in the event of possible convergence?
5. Any other thoughts?

## APPENDIX 2 – Survey

Dear Regional Stakeholders,

My name is ..... and I am providing consultancy services to the OECS Commission on the development of a policy brief on the nexus between COVID-19, climate change/hurricane season and human mobility in the OECS region.

The OECS Commission has received support from the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) to support this work. Human mobility is the umbrella term to describe changes of residence, and encompasses migration, displacement and planned relocations. This survey targets climate change, immigration, regional integration, social and economic development and emergency management practitioners in the OECS region. Your contribution will improve the knowledge of the sustainable management of human mobility in the context of climate change and COVID-19 in the OECS region. The survey will require at most 15 minutes of your time. Thank you in advance for your time, careful consideration of the questions and your responses toward the elaboration of this policy brief.

Please note the link below for the survey.

1. Please select the OECS MS and/or regional organisation which you represent, form the drop-down menu.

- ☐ Antigua and Barbuda    ☐ Commonwealth of Dominica    ☐ Grenada    ☐ Montserrat
- ☐ Saint Kitts and Nevis    ☐ Saint Lucia    ☐ Saint Vincent and The Grenadines    ☐ Anguilla
- ☐ The British Virgin Islands    ☐ Martinique and Guadeloupe

2. Select your primary work area from the drop-down menu.

- ☐ disaster management    ☐ climate change    ☐ social/human services    ☐ immigration
- ☐ economic department    ☐ regional integration

3. Do you view displacement of persons and migration as critical considerations your primary work area?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. Based on your response to 3 above, in one (1) sentence please provide a rationale for your response.

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5. To your knowledge, was your primary work area taken into account with respect to its impact on displacement of persons and migration in COVID-19 management in your country?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I am not aware

6. If yes to 5, please state how in one or two sentences.

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7. The Sendai Framework 2015-2030 encourages the adoption of “policies and programmes addressing disaster-induced human mobility to strengthen the resilience of affected people and that of host communities as per national laws and circumstances”. Within that context, do you consider that there is an enabling environment in the region to facilitate, displaced persons and cross-border migration if the region is adversely impacted by a hurricane, given the current COVID-19 pandemic?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I am not aware

8. If yes to 7 above, please provide reasons for your answer.

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9. What policy responses, if any do you think should be considered at the regional level to address the possibility of a hurricane resulting in the displacement of persons and cross-border migration impacting the region during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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10. What policy responses, if any do you think should be considered at the national level to address the possibility of a hurricane resulting in the displacement of persons and cross-border migration impacting the region during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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11. Do you foresee any challenges for the region in managing displaced persons and migrants (both internal and cross-border), during this COVID-19 pandemic in the event of adverse impacts during this 2020 hurricane season?

☐ Yes

☐ No

12. If yes, please indicate two foreseen challenges, which must be urgently addressed at the regional level.

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13. Are there any lessons from past hurricanes or other climate change related event resulting in the displacement of persons and cross-border migration, that can be applied to the management COVID-19 pandemic during/in the event of adverse impacts during the 2020 hurricane season?

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14. How critical do you think it would be to plan for the following in the event of a hurricane resulting in the displacement of persons and cross-border migration occurs during the COVID-19 pandemic? Please apply the scale of 1-5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

a. Accommodation for displaced persons and cross-border migrants

b. Access to health and social services for displaced persons and cross-border migrants?

1 2 3 4 5

c. Access to education for displaced persons and cross-border migrants

1 2 3 4 5

d. Responsive immigration protocols for displaced persons and cross-border migrants

1 2 3 4 5

e. Facilitation of inter-island transportation for displaced persons and cross-border migrants?

1 2 3 4 5

15. Please identify one critical factor for achieving transparent, participatory and demand-oriented relocation.

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## APPENDIX 3- Examples of COVID-19 measures in OECS MS

### Examples of COVID-19 measures in OECS MS

OECS Member State	Economic & Social	Security	Legislation
Antigua & Barbuda	<p>three months suspensions on disconnections for water &amp; electricity, disconnected customers (within the past 3 months) to be reinstated (starting in March 2020)</p> <p>US\$66.7 million loan to the government from CDB</p>	<p>border closure, curfews, state of emergency declared (based on the constitution) 28th March -11th April 2020</p> <p>border re-opened on 1st June 2020, negative COVID-19 PCR test required 7 days prior to arrival</p> <p>11:00 p.m. - 5:00 a.m. curfew is still in effect</p>	<p>amendment to Public Health Act ((Dangerous Infectious Disease) SI 27 of 2020: curfew, closure of all businesses, education &amp; religious gatherings, social gatherings and beaches, social distancing protocol, etc.</p> <p>Quarantine Act Corona Virus Disease Order 17 of 2020</p>
Anguilla	<p>temporary unemployment benefit</p> <p>advisory on tenants' rights to avoid/curtail evictions</p>	<p>border closure until 30th October 2020 with exceptions for nationals, residents and medical transfers overseas but all subject to prior approval and PCR tests upon arrival</p>	<p>COVID-19 related public health and quarantine regulations and rules namely Bill for Quarantine (Amendment) Act 2020, Public Health (Temporary Closure of Ports) (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations, 2020; Public Health (Quarantine) Amendment Regulations; and Quarantine (COVID) (Arriving Passengers Health Clearance) Rules 2020</p>

## Examples of COVID-19 measures in OECS MS

OECS Member State	Economic & Social	Security	Legislation
British Virgin Islands (BVI)	\$40 million towards providing social and economic relief and stimulating economic activity	<p>Phase 1- Controlled re-entry since 2nd June 2020 of Virgin Islands belongers, permanent residence and naturalized overseas territories citizens.</p> <p>Phase 2- restricted border opening from 1st September 2020 for work permit holders and work permit exception holders, residents, students from the medical university etc.</p>	<p>Public Health (COVID-19 Control and Suppression Measures) Order (No. 4), 2020, made under the Public Health Act: limitations on all gatherings, closure of schools and all school related extra-curricular activities</p> <p>New immigration and prohibition order for the period 15th August – 30th August 2020</p>
Commonwealth of Dominica	Employee and small business loans and grants	<p>state of emergency, curfew, border closure</p> <p>curfew hours reviewed June 2020</p> <p>from 29th July 2020 borders open only to nationals</p> <p>COVID-19 PCR test required 72 hours prior to travel</p>	Existing emergency act
Grenada	<p>COVID 19 Response Fund: support payments for nutmeg and poultry farmers, economic stimulus package</p> <p>2,000 Grenadians have benefited from the payroll and income support initiatives</p> <p>unemployment benefits</p> <p>suspension of the 2% increase in NIS payments</p> <p>Corporate Income Tax and instalment payments on the Annual Stamp Tax suspended</p> <p>reduced interest rate of 3% is being offered to people involved in agriculture, fisheries and agro-processing for loans from small business facility</p> <p>30% reduction in electricity bills</p>	<p>border closure, curfew, state of emergency prohibiting carnival</p> <p>border reopened on 15th July 2020 to nationals and to regional travellers with no pre-testing and from 1st August to international travellers with PCR within 7 days prior to travel</p>	Existing emergency act

## Examples of COVID-19 measures in OECS MS

OECS Member State	Economic & Social	Security	Legislation
Guadeloupe		border closure  lockdown with progressive exit from May 2020  colour coding and zoning of areas and activities such as gyms, parks and beaches  from 1st July 2020 re-opened to all except travellers from USA, Brazil, India, Russia and Turkmenistan	
Martinique		lockdown  progressive exit from lockdown from 11th May 2020	
Montserrat	stimulus package	border closure, state of emergency, curfew  curfew lifted 1st July 2020  border re-opened to nationals and residents 29th July 2020  technicians and medical staff can enter freely but must abide to mandatory 14-day quarantine upon arrival	Immigration (Prohibition on Entry Order) S.R.O 19 of 2020 & Public Health (COVID-19 Control and suppression) order S. R.O. 18 of 2020
Saint Kitts and Nevis	St. Christopher and Nevis Social Security COVID-19 Relief Fund  COVID-19 Relief to protect businesses, jobs and economy	state of emergency, curfew, border closure  29th July 2020 border re-opened to returning nationals and residents including students of international universities	state of emergency legislation passed
Saint Lucia	Economic Recovery and Resilience Plan supporting households who are currently on poverty assistance - the benchmark is approximately 3600 households  tax filing deadline extension  social stabilization programme	state of emergency, curfew, border closure  6th August 2020 border opened to all  persons from 'OECS travel bubble' to present negative PCR test within 7 days prior to travel  quarantine for 14 days	state of emergency legislation passed

### Examples of COVID-19 measures in OECS MS

OECS Member State	Economic & Social	Security	Legislation
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	loan moratoriums (6 months)  VAT relief from 30th March until 30th June 2020 for hotel and guest house customers  one-off payment to water taxi and road taxi operations affected by cancellation of cruise line visits  temporary employment relief  2 months pre-payment of pension	border closure  border re-opened 1st July 2020	

The above is a non-exhaustive list derived from web pages of OECS MS (links per country).

CARPHA link: [Table – Caribbean countries reopening plans / initiatives post COVID-19 – as of August 20th 2020](#)



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