

Report to Congress on Progress to Strengthen Disaster Resilience in the Caribbean Region

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) submits this report, pursuant to Section 7019(e) of Division K of P.L. 117-328, the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2023, which incorporates by reference the requirements of House Report H. Report 117-401 on strengthening disaster resilience in the Caribbean region:

Not later than 45 days after enactment of this Act, the USAID Administrator shall submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations, detailing the uses, and intended uses, of all funds provided by this Act and prior year Acts for strengthening resilience to natural disasters of countries in the Caribbean.

Background

Congress has directed USAID to use \$10 million in Fiscal Year 2021 (FY 2021) funds and \$12 million in Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 2022) funds to design and implement interventions in the Caribbean that enhance island disaster recovery and resilience capacity and help the region to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. These funds will allow USAID to address resilience-related issues and gaps in the Caribbean region, and will complement and build upon USAID Missions' bilateral programs focused on building resilience to climate change.

In 2022, USAID launched the Caribbean Vision for Climate and Disaster Resilience (see [Attachment 1](#)) as a unifying framework for climate and disaster resilience programming in the Caribbean region. Programs under the Caribbean Vision directly support USAID's 2022-2030 Climate Strategy goals and contribute to the U.S. Government initiatives like the U.S.-Caribbean Partnership to Address the Climate Crisis 2030 (PACC 2030) and the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE). USAID, in consultation with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Office of Caribbean Affairs, has reviewed disaster resilience activities to ensure that they will support and advance the goals of these initiatives.

Under the Caribbean Vision, our focus is on effective regional response to the need to build climate and disaster resilience capacity through: 1) fostering strategic communication among governments, institutions, donors, and USAID; 2) building effective climate data systems to support decision-making; 3) strengthening existing local institutions such as government bodies, civil society, and non-governmental organizations to address climate and disaster resilience and, 4) securing effective climate financing to build climate and disaster resilience capacity.

To support Caribbean Resilience and Disaster Management, USAID allocated the following funding levels to Missions for FY 2021 and FY 2022:

- Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) in the amount of \$10.25 million - \$5 million in FY 2021 and \$5.25 million in FY 2022;
- Dominican Republic (DR) in the amount of \$2.32 million - \$660,000 in FY 2021 and \$1.66

million in FY 2022;

- USAID Caribbean Development Program in the amount of \$2.34 million - \$1 million in FY 2021 and \$1.34 million in FY 2022;
- Haiti in the amount of \$2 million - \$1 million in FY 2021 and \$1 million in FY 2022;
- Jamaica in the amount of \$3.5 million - \$1 million in FY 2021 and \$2.5 million in FY 2022;
- USAID Latin America and Caribbean Regional (LAC/RSD) in the amount of \$1.59 million - \$1.34 million in FY 2021 and \$250,000 in FY 2022.
- USAID/BHA provided \$6.46 million in FY 2021 and \$17.83 million in FY 2022 for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Caribbean region.

Eastern and Southern Caribbean - \$10.25 million

USAID/Eastern and Southern Caribbean will implement two new activities: one focused on building environmentally sustainable economies; and a second on promoting climate science data gathering and usage.

The first activity will support ESC countries characterized by mono-sector economies that are highly sensitive to natural hazard impacts. USAID will help countries develop and adopt measures to make economies resilient to climate change and disasters with a focus on agriculture, water resources, and ocean resources. Doing so will also reduce the negative impact of climate change on vulnerable populations.

A second activity will improve availability, accessibility, and use of climate data to enhance climate services and support climate-informed decision making and climate-smart planning in the ESC region. Interventions will build technical capacity to increase climate data access and use for national and regional agencies like the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency in Barbados, the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology, and others. The activity will generate climate information products to share with end-users to build resilience to climate variability and climate-related disasters.

Jamaica - \$3.5 million

In Jamaica, USAID will support an energy sector activity in partnership with Jamaican and U.S.-based private sector partners and investors. The activity will strengthen the Jamaican energy sector's capacity to rebound quickly from a natural or human-made shock by improving the operational efficiency of the national utility and leveraging private sector partners to increase the adoption of renewable energy technologies. With these funds, USAID will identify and support new solar and battery systems to enhance Jamaica's capacity to mitigate the impacts of climate change by increasing use of distributed renewable energy, and supporting the Government of Jamaica's goals of fifty percent renewable energy by 2030. The market development model for distributed renewable energy in Jamaica has the potential for replication in other Caribbean countries, and the Mission will distribute lessons learned from this project.

Dominican Republic - \$2.32 million

USAID/Dominican Republic will implement a new activity focused on climate adaptation and

disaster resilience by supporting a local agenda for climate resilience, integrating climate considerations in locally-led development among government, civil society, private sector, and vulnerable groups in the northern border region between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The activity will strengthen the national climate information system to facilitate data management, particularly improving access to climate information at the local level, allowing for timely decision making as a response to potential disasters or climate-driven events such as drought and flooding.

Caribbean Development Program - \$2.34 million

USAID's Caribbean Development Program will implement an activity focused on energy resilience, such as promoting adoption of energy efficiency (EE) standards in residential, commercial, industrial, and transport uses. USAID will 1) support the establishment and promotion of EE labeling standards; 2) support energy efficiency policy development and planning; 3) provide technical support for tax benefits for EE; 4) help update building codes with EE requirements; and 5) advance electric-powered transportation. This work will reduce electricity demand, lower consumer costs, and conserve electricity during power outages, making energy systems more resilient to climate and disaster impacts as well.

Haiti - \$2 million

USAID/Haiti used FY21 funding to implement tree planting, soil water retention, mangrove management, forest restoration, and slope stabilization as part of the Haiti Reforestation Project. By investing in landscape management and watershed restoration, the Mission helps communities reduce and prevent erosion, landslides, and flooding, which are exacerbated by climate change. The landscape restoration results of this activity will prevent long-term sedimentation of rivers and the Caribbean Sea, contributing to regional coastal conservation efforts including improving coral reef ecosystems and associated fisheries.

Through the project, USAID/Haiti planted 4.5 million trees, put over 15,000 hectares of land under improved landscape management practices, built the resilience capacity of more than 43,000 farmers, and developed 12 community-led subwatershed management plans which include a disaster risk reduction component. These achievements strengthen the capacity of beneficiary communities and individuals to respond to recurrent crises in Northern Haiti, including protracted drought seasons, floods and storm surges. USAID will continue to support climate and disaster resilience work under a new activity, presently in design, with FY22 funding.

USAID Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean/Regional Sustainable Development - \$1.59 million

USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean's (LAC) Regional Sustainable Development (RSD) office will support a regional consortium of higher education institutions to advance climate resilience in the Caribbean. Through this activity, USAID plans to partner with the Caribbean Islands Higher Education Resilience Consortium (CIHERC) to develop regional climate resilience capacity at the community level. The work will include piloting a community-vulnerability assessment and a Community Resilience Planning Methodology

(CRPM) to leverage evidence-based research into resilience strategies, adaptation policies, mitigation actions, and preparation programs. Additionally, USAID utilized funding to develop the Caribbean Vision for Climate and Disaster Resilience' which describes and guides USAID's approach and priority interventions to strengthen climate resilience and disaster preparedness across the Caribbean region (Attachment 1), as well as USAID's Climate Resilience and Disaster Assessment (Attachment 2). The assessment identified opportunities and gaps for regional programming that informed the development of the Caribbean Vision.

USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) - \$17.83 million

USAID/BHA supported the improvement of emergency preparedness and access to early warning and response systems across the Caribbean region. These activities aimed to mitigate the adverse effects of natural hazards, climate change, and technological risks through training, capacity assessments, and strengthening community-led disaster response and contingency planning. Through the technical assistance of USAID partners, at-risk communities across the Caribbean enhanced their ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a wide range of disasters during the fiscal years; such as hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and landslides. USAID strengthened the operational capacity of regional disaster risk reduction stakeholders through social protection systems, emergency telecommunications, and humanitarian supply chain management. This assistance also included enhancing early warning systems and pre-positioning logistics equipment and supplies to protect access to food and livelihood opportunities for vulnerable communities throughout the region.

Additionally in Haiti, USAID continues to improve immediate food security and nutrition outcomes and bolster long-term resilience against climatic and systemic challenges—such as frequent hurricanes and a lack of high-quality and diversified seeds—among vulnerable populations.

Attachments:

1. [USAID Caribbean Vision for Climate and Disaster Resilience Report](#)
2. [USAID Climate Resilience and Disaster Recovery Capacity Assessment for the Caribbean](#)