

# *The Caribbean united in natural disaster risk reduction*

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By María Josefina Arce.

A common strategy for the reduction of the risk of natural disasters, increasingly frequent due to phenomena associated with climate change, was one of the aspects addressed in Guatemala by the ACS, Association of Caribbean States, at its Ninth Summit at the highest level, which was preceded by ministerial and expert meetings.

The nations of the area are considered highly vulnerable. Island states are threatened by events such as tropical cyclones and flooding due to heavy rainfall, while for those located in Central and South America this risk is also associated with landslides.

In addition, the occurrence of earthquakes and the eruption of still active volcanoes, events that cause a high number of casualties and considerable material damage.

Hence the importance of joining efforts and developing joint initiatives to minimize the loss of human lives and property.

Cuba, a member country of the Association of Caribbean States, which has also suffered disasters, has developed a management strategy that has made it possible to reduce the impact in all areas, and which is recognized by international organizations.

This is why it has placed its experience at the disposal of its Caribbean brothers and sisters, through the various initiatives in which it actively participates, such as the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Natural Disasters, signed by the ACS in 1999.

Likewise, in recent years, specialists from the region have been trained with Cuban tools in the management of these situations, with the participation of the scientific community and the support of the United Nations system.

The chief of the General Staff of the Cuban Civil Defense, Major General Ramón Pardo Guerra, has stressed that rescue corps from Latin America and the Caribbean have participated in the courses offered by our country at the Regional Fire and Rescue Training Center.

During all these years, Cuban authorities, scientists and specialists have supported research workshops, exchanges, training courses and multiple projects.

In Guatemala, delegations from several nations highlighted Cuba's active and constructive role within the consultation and cooperation organization. The largest of the Antilles, they noted, participates in collaborative projects of common benefit.

The fight against the effects of climate change and the commitment to advance towards sustainable development are efforts that unite the Caribbean, with Cuba's contribution.

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