

*Climate change
takes CARICOM's attention*

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By María Josefina Arce

The Forty-sixth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the CARICOM is taking place in Guyana, with climate change among its priority debates, as it represents a high risk for the

member countries of the Caribbean Community.

Despite not being major emitters of greenhouse gases, the island states have been seriously affected by the phenomena associated with this problem, such as intense hurricanes, rising sea levels, droughts and increasing coastal erosion.

CARICOM has stressed that member nations have suffered human and economic losses, while the health of the area's inhabitants is at risk.

Climate change is constantly threatening the biodiversity and ecosystems that have sustained generations of Caribbean people, affecting their food security.

It is therefore a priority for the region to agree on joint actions to move towards mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Strategies have already been adopted along this path, in which partnership has a vital role to play. Last year, the Climate Change Center launched a virtual tool on adaptation and climate risks that promotes a regional approach to the management and handling of climate hazards.

Caribbean nations are also working with international organizations such as PAHO, the Pan American Health Organization, to make health systems more resilient to increasingly extreme weather events.

With Cuba, a country also bathed by the waters of the Caribbean and highly vulnerable, CARICOM nations have maintained for decades a fruitful collaboration in this field. For example, in 2013, a Capacity Center for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation was created in Havana, where specialists from the region have been trained in this field.

Both parties have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Disaster Risk Reduction, with the support of the Cuban Civil Defense, whose actions have been internationally recognized. The Caribbean seeks to join efforts, knowledge and resources to face the challenge posed to these nations by climate change, which puts the lives of their inhabitants at risk.

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