

Concept Note

CELAC – CARICOM Seminar “Exchange of experiences and lessons learned on the strategies applied by the countries in the framework of the COVID-19 Pandemic”

May 4, 2022
9AM a 14PM (Barbados)

1- Introduction and Background

a- Introduction

The Argentine Pro Tempore Presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the White Helmets Commission of Argentina; the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission; the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA); and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) will convene a CELAC – CARICOM Seminar “Exchange of experiences and lessons learned on the strategies applied by the countries in the framework of the COVID-19 Pandemic” on May 4, 2022.

b- The COVID-19 Pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to have widespread social and economic effects in Latin America and the Caribbean, deepening inequality in the region.

In this sense, in Latin America there is a significant inequality in the percentage of the population vaccinated against Covid-19. In March 2022, only nine countries in the region had achieved between 64% and 90% of their population fully vaccinated. Meanwhile, most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are below the global average of complete vaccination, which is currently estimated at around 64%.

The Pan American Health Organization in its February 23, 2022 briefing recognized the inequality and the contrasts within the region with Cayman Islands with 91% of people fully vaccinated compared to less than 1% of Haitians having received full doses.

However, the same report published by the Pan American Health Organization highlighted that countries in the Caribbean are making considerable progress in vaccine roll out, indicating that 63% of eligible populations have been reached by vaccines. PAHO further stated that out of the 13 countries and territories in the Americas that have not yet reached the WHO’s goal of 40% coverage, 10 are in the Caribbean.

In addition, in the Caribbean, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) is leading the regional health response using a multi-faceted approach and from a regional health security perspective. The region’s total confirmed cases at February 14, 2022 was 3,175,595 with 32,036 deaths in 35 countries and territories (including the 26 CARPHA member States). Most CARPHA Member States are reporting community spread and there have been reports of all five variants of concern of SARS-CoV-2 present in the region.

CARPHA continues to urge active surveillance, testing and COVID-19 prevention and control measures including physical distancing, hand hygiene and the wearing of masks are maintained to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. The risk of further cases occurring in the Caribbean remains very high.

II. Format

The CELAC – CARICOM Seminar “Exchange of experiences and lessons learned on the strategies applied by the countries in the framework of the COVID-19 Pandemic” will take place as a hybrid event on May 4, 2022. Officials from White Helmets, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Tourism from Argentina and CDEMA will participate in person. Other participants will be virtual. The meeting will be translated into both English and Spanish.

III. Objectives of the Experience Exchange Seminar

The objectives of the Seminar are:

To facilitate exchange of experiences and lessons learnt between CELAC/Argentina and the Caribbean in the Management of the COVID-19 Pandemic

To identify opportunities for future collaboration between CELAC/White Helmets and the Caribbean States

IV. Experience Exchange Seminar Themes and Approach

The CELAC – CARICOM Seminar “Exchange of experiences and lessons learned on the strategies applied by the countries in the framework of the COVID-19 Pandemic” will explore three main thematic areas, facilitating the exchange of experiences, lessons and identifying possible areas where cooperation between Argentina and the Caribbean can be sustained. Three presentations will be made under each thematic area bringing experiences from Argentina, Caribbean Regional institutions and Caribbean States. Each presentation will be 10-12 minutes and followed by a space for seminar participants to pose questions for deeper insight into the areas discussed. Lessons and recommendations from each thematic session will be examined during the session on Next Steps in Caribbean Argentina Cooperation.

Theme 1: Experiences and Lessons in the Management of the Tourism Sector in Pandemics

Tourism is an important economic sector for both the Caribbean and Latin America. This session will explore the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector examining how information analysis and digital tools have been utilized in managing sectorial approaches, as well as the implementation of specific programmes to promote the tourism industry during the pandemic.

Theme 2: Vaccines and the COVID-19 Pandemic – Now and in the Future

This session will examine the role of vaccines in the COVID19 pandemic to date in the COVID19 pandemic response, as well as plans for the use of vaccines in the future.

Theme 3: Cooperation and Coordination in the Humanitarian Response to COVID-19

This thematic session will examine how humanitarian systems have been leveraged to support the COVID-19 pandemic response and how strengthening social capacities is vital to transmit criteria and care about covid-19.

Opportunities for future collaboration between the Caribbean and the White Helmets will be explored in each Theme.

V. Expected participants

The following target groups from Argentina, Latin America and Caribbean States will be invited to attend the CELAC – CARICOM Seminar “Exchange of experiences and lessons learned on the strategies applied by the countries in the framework of the COVID-19 Pandemic”:

- Representatives from Ministries of Health, Tourism, Education and Foreign Affairs (White Helmets).
- National Disaster Coordinators of CDEMA Participating States and from others CELAC member States.
- Representatives from the OECS Commission; Caribbean Public Health Agency, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, University of the West Indies.