

The ACS Hosts Webinar on Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems



On October 11 2022 the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), in collaboration with the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), the Kyoto University, the Office for Disaster Preparedness and Management of Trinidad and Tobago (ODPM TT), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean (UNDRR ROAMC), the Caribbean Meteorological Organisation (CMO) and the CADENA Foundation hosted a virtual webinar entitled “Investing in Multi-hazard Early Warning Systems to Empower those Most at Risk” in anticipation of International Disaster Risk Reduction Day which is observed internationally on October 13 2022.

Secretary General ACS Rodolfo Sabonge in his opening remarks took the opportunity to express the ACS’s solidarity with Caribbean neighbours who have been affected by intense tropical storms, hurricanes and heavy rainfall which has resulted in serious injuries, deaths and extensive damage to critical infrastructure.

He noted that the simultaneous and cascading impacts of these incidents are a reminder of the urgent need for risk mitigation in complex disaster scenarios. The need for early warning systems that are inclusive and participatory, supported by effective governance is necessary to build resilience. Early action has become more urgent as these hazards will be faced more frequently and more intensely in the medium term according to scientific projections.

Ambassador Clarems Endara Vera, Permanent Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and His Excellency, Álvaro Enrique Sánchez Cordero, Chairman of the Special Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction were also asked to speak at this important occasion.

The webinar also featured presentations from specially invited subject matter experts who discussed the status of early warning systems in different contexts as well as best practices and lessons learned.

These presenters included:

Dr Jair Torres;

Dr. Jair Torres is an international consultant on sustainability, adaptation and resilience. He holds a PhD on Risk and Emergency Management and a master's degree on Development Studies. He is also currently acting as a Disaster Risk Reduction advisor for UNDRR supporting programmes, initiatives and activities in the Caribbean region and is supporting the International Network for Multi-hazard Early Warning Systems (IN-MHEWS) and the Climate Related Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative.

Genta Nakano

Genta Nakano is an assistant professor of Disaster Prevention Research Institute, Kyoto University, Japan and a visiting researcher of the institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage, Ritsumeikan University, Japan. He holds a PhD in Informatics and is deeply interested in human behavior in disaster situations, disaster risk reduction education and community-based disaster risk management. He also contributes as a member and advisor for local government, NPOs, NGOs, and private companies.

Dr Arlene Laing

Dr Arlene Laing is the Coordinating Director of the Caribbean Meteorological Organization (CMO) Headquarters Unit. Dr Laing is known for research on a range of topics related to meteorology and hazards and is also the lead author of "Introduction to Tropical Meteorology", a peer-reviewed online textbook used globally. She has helped to develop strategic plans, policies, and legislation for National Meteorological Services and their partners and is also a member of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Executive Council and the WMO Research Board.

Anwar Baksh

Anwar Baksh serves as the Planning and Development Officer and lead of the Mitigation, Planning and Research Unit at the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management Trinidad and Tobago. Critical to his function is the advancement of the Governance framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Trinidad and Tobago in support of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. To this end, Anwar has worked in several areas including Early Warning Systems.

Dr Rodrigo Garibay

Rodrigo Garibay holds a degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Philosophy of Sciences from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. He was also awarded the Master of Philosophy, Science and Values at the University of the Basque Country and the Doctorate in Logic and Philosophy of Science at the University of Salamanca, Spain. Currently, he is studying for a second Ph.D. within the Kyoto University Disaster Reduction Research Institute. He also has 20 years of experience in topics such as psychology in emergencies, search and rescue, disaster response and civil protection.

Dr Benjamin Laniado

Dr. Benjamin Laniado has dedicated his life to supporting those in difficult circumstances. In 2005, he organized a relief mission to the state of Chiapas, delivering supplies to those affected by Hurricane Stan. This was the birth of CADENA, an organisation that has now provided assistance to

4 million people around the world. He also founded Alta Prevención México, a company that aims to provide tools to strengthen resilience and integrated risk management. He is also an author, professor, and participant in global forums and advocacy circles.

Camilo Beltrán Montoya

Camilo Beltrán Montoya is a Colombian agricultural engineer. He holds a Master's Degree in plant protection and has over ten years of experience working on subregional trade, pests management, and the development of regional laws for registering the Agricultural Use of Chemical Pesticides. Moreover, he also has experience as an external project evaluator for other Colombian organisations and teaching experience in agricultural microbiology and agricultural production subjects.

If you are interested in receiving a recording of the webinar or have any further questions regarding the content, please send an email to decsdirect@acs-aec.org