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Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative to build political momentum for people-centred efforts to address climate-forced migration and displacement

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New York, 6 October 2022 – The Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the World Bank (WB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) announced an unprecedented partnership to harness the potential and address the challenges of climate-forced mobility in the Greater Caribbean region.

The hard-hitting impacts of the climate crisis are already widely felt across the world at the current level of 1.1C average global temperature rise and these impacts will become more intense and frequent in the future according to scientific projections. Even if global heating can be limited to 1.5C, which is rapidly becoming less realistic given the pace of change around the world, the Greater Caribbean would need to brace for the impact of a full-blown climate crisis.

Forced migration and displacement from the adverse effects of sudden or slow onset climate impacts are likely to negatively affect livelihoods in many parts of the region, affecting local and national development pathways. The ten countries and territories in the world with the highest annual internal displacement per capita are all small island developing states (SIDS), the top six of which are located within the Greater Caribbean region.

Enhancing resilience to adapt to the impacts of climate change requires an effective and dynamic evidence-based approach to inform and direct policy actions and comprehensive planning for locally anchored, people-centred development. Such an approach will help address the climate stressors behind such forced mobility.

The Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative (GCCMI) is rooted in a strategic partnership designed to support all countries of the Region to advance well-informed and comprehensive approaches to harness climate mobility for their respective and common prosperity.

The GCCMI will further its objectives through the provision of a comprehensive Report on the scope, nature, implications, and response to climate-forced displacement and migration, across all relevant areas, in the Greater Caribbean. Underpinning the Report will be cutting-edge modelling projecting climate mobility for the next several decades and field research in present-day climate mobility hotspots to take stock of the local drivers of climate mobility.

The GCCMI Agenda for Action will advance a regional vision and roadmap for people-centred, locally anchored, and evidence-based efforts to address climate mobility by strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacities of affected communities in hotspots.

“The latest science reflects that the Greater Caribbean is one of the regions of the world most at risk to the effects of climate change, threatening to disrupt the economic, social and cultural fabric of citizens. The Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative promises to be an integrated and innovative effort to assess risk and provide robust data to support a common regional agenda, that transcends borders to deliver real solutions for the people of the region. The launch of this initiative represents our full commitment to collaboratively and collectively address regional climate mobility amidst the climate crisis. The announcement now is an important milestone ahead of COP27 in November 2022, where we aim to press for people-centred climate action,” said ACS Secretary General, Rodolfo Sabonge.

“We are aware of the high vulnerability of the Greater Caribbean region. Improving resilience to the multifaceted impacts of climate change, including addressing forced human displacement and mobility resulting from the climate crisis, is a common priority for our organizations. As such, UNDP welcomes the establishment of the Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative (GCCMI) predicated on the African Climate Mobility Initiative (ACMI) where we have joined forces with the African Union Commission, the World Bank and other UN entities. We believe that the GCCMI will complement the extensive work that UNDP is already doing in the region to advance resilience and we look forward to further strengthening our partnership in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between our organizations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean” stated Luis Felipe López-Calva, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for the Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean.

“In the Caribbean, the impacts of the climate crisis – extreme weather events, coastal erosion, water stress, reduced crop productivity, and changes to marine ecosystems – are already forcing people to migrate in distress. Supporting green, resilient, and inclusive development, while cutting emissions and ensuring a just transition, is at the heart of curbing the human cost of climate change. In the face of intensifying climate migration, the Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative’s agenda for knowledge building and action will be a game-changer, helping Caribbean states to anticipate the drivers of migration, support communities to adapt in place by diversifying livelihoods, and to protect the well-being of migrants and host communities,” said Valerie Hickey, the World Bank Global Director for Environment, Natural Resources, and the Blue Economy.

“In the absence of immediate action to combat climate change, many millions more people could be

compelled to move as a consequence of climate stressors. Often, this movement puts people in situations of increased vulnerability and adds pressure to hosting communities. Unless we act fast and collectively, the climate emergency will continue putting people in this cycle of risk," said Toni-Shae Freckleton, Chief of the New York Liaison Office, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

"Slow and sudden onset events are forcing populations to move, with disasters alone leading to 13.7 million internal displacements in 2021 (IDMC)," says the International Organization for Migrations' Deputy Director General for Operations Ugochi Daniels. "As the manifestations of climate change intensify we can expect more people to be on the move in the future, particularly in countries with high vulnerability and exposure, and low adaptive capacity."

During remarks made at a high level launch event for the Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative in New York, Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change said that the issue of climate-induced migration is one that is under-reported. He said it was vital to achieve progress at COP 27, on the need to mitigate emissions to keep below the 1.5C average global temperature rise. At the same time, he called for a commitment to measures for adapting to the changes that are inevitable even under the most ambitious pathway, and to achieve results on financing. He welcomed the Initiative in its efforts to bring solutions to the table for addressing the migration impacts of climate change.

The GCCMI will close important knowledge gaps and work to achieve cooperation across the Greater Caribbean region, enabling decision makers to influence and direct investments in resilience measures, effectively ensuring green and blue growth, resilience-building and disaster risk reduction and management, and to facilitate integrated responses for prevention and protection of communities, including proactive and planned relocation, and sustainable urbanisation.

About the Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative

The Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative (GCCMI) is a joint undertaking of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) which brings together 25 member states from the region, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the International Organization for Migration. The GCCMI efforts will be coordinated by the Global Centre for Climate Mobility and the ACS Secretariat.

The GCCMI is a people-centred and evidence-based initiative, aiming to generate political momentum around a common policy agenda and mobilise resources for the implementation of comprehensive and locally anchored solutions to address climate mobility. The GCCMI's cornerstones are knowledge-building, connecting and empowering change agents and accelerating policy & projects implementation underpinned by strategic partnerships.

About the Association of Caribbean States

The Association of Caribbean States is the organisation for consultation, cooperation and concerted action in trade, transport, sustainable tourism and natural disasters in the Greater Caribbean. Its Member States are Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and Venezuela. Its Associate Members are Aruba, Curaçao, (France on behalf of French Guiana, Saint Barthélemy and Saint Martin), Guadeloupe, Martinique, Sint

Maarten, (The Netherlands on behalf of Bonaire, Saba, and Sint Eustatius), and Turks & Caicos.

About the Global Centre for Climate Mobility

The Global Centre for Climate Mobility (GCCM) is a unique partnership enabled by UN Member States and supported by relevant agencies of the UN system, the World Bank and respective regional intergovernmental organisations to address climate-forced migration and displacement. The GCCM was established to advance an ambitious vision of pursuing evidence-based, regional approaches and locally-anchored solutions to shape the future of mobility amidst the climate crisis. The goals of the GCCM are to generate political momentum, a common policy agenda, and resources to advance comprehensive, people-centred and community-based responses for climate mobility which are essential to building climate resilience and adaptation in societies on the frontlines of the climate crisis. The GCCM is currently coordinating the implementation of the Africa Climate Mobility Initiative, the Rising Nations Initiative, and the Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative.

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