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**News and Public Information Release**

## **Dominican PM and PAHO Director to launch 16-country climate change and health project**

**November 27, 2020, Bridgetown, Barbados** – A new project to reduce death and disease from expected health consequences of climate change in 16 Caribbean countries is being kicked off December 1 by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and other partners, with the aim of bolstering health systems to withstand climate threats.

The beneficiary countries of the project, which is funded by the European Union, are Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

**The Strengthening Climate Resilient Health Systems project** will be officially launched on Tuesday, December 1 at 4:00 p.m. in a virtual ceremony via [zoom](#). The keynote address, “Placing climate change and health at the forefront of national policies” will be delivered by the Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

PAHO Director Dr Carissa Etienne will speak on health and climate change in the Caribbean, and Head of Delegation of the European Union to Barbados, The Eastern Caribbean States, OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM, Malgorzata Wasilewska, as well as Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, CARICOM Secretary-General, are scheduled to address the forum. Regional approaches to climate change and health and opportunities to engage across the Americas will be highlighted by Alexandra Moreira, Secretary General of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) and Dr Vinicio Cerezo, General Secretary, Central American Integration System (SICA). The project also includes linkages to the environmental determinants of health and COVID-19 prevention and control. The impact of COVID-19 has been a stark reminder of how the relationships between humans and the environment can radically influence health and economic outcomes. Climate change, like COVID-19, is a reminder that failure to take preventive measures related to human health and well-being can have far reaching outcomes across societies.

Over the next five years, the 16 Caribbean states will benefit from the project to bolster their communities and health systems to withstand the impacts from climate change, thanks to the collaboration of a network of sub-regional implementing partners. Project partners include the Caribbean Community, the Caribbean Public Health Agency, the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, the Caribbean institute for Meteorology and Hydrology and the University of the West Indies (UWI), as well as United Nations organizations and youth, environment and health civil society organizations.

**Using a multi-disciplinary approach, the project will contribute to reduced mortality and morbidity from expected health consequences of climate change in Caribbean countries.** The goal is the coordination of novel climate and health activities.

“This project emphasizes the strengthening of national and sub-regional technical capacities for the preparation, management and implementation of multi-country projects related to health and climate change, aiming to increase the climate resilience of health systems to better prepare and respond to climate threats. Specifically, it includes the promotion of tools to measure health co-benefits related to mitigation, inclusion of support for health national adaptation planning, early warning systems, monitoring of key environmental determinants of health and furthering climate change and health leadership programs,” explained Dr Jonathan Drewry, PAHO Climate Change and Health Advisor and project manager.

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