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News Release

CARICOM endorses new Action Plan on Health and Climate Change developed with PAHO/WHO support

Ministers of Health from the Caribbean Community endorsed the regional framework during the 53rd Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development, Health (COHSOD-Health), in Washington, D.C.



Washington, D.C., 25 September 2026 (PAHO).- Ministers of Health of CARICOM Member and Associate Member States have endorsed the Caribbean Action Plan on Health and Climate Change (2026–2031), a new regional framework developed with the support of the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) to help countries strengthen resilient and sustainable health systems and protect communities from the growing health impacts of climate change.

The endorsement took place during the 53rd Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development, Health (COHSOD-Health), held at PAHO Headquarters in Washington, D.C., ahead of the [63rd PAHO Directing Council](#).

Across the Caribbean, climate change and environmental hazards are increasingly affecting health through hurricanes, extreme heat, flooding, droughts and shifting transmission patterns of vector-borne diseases. Hurricanes have damaged hospitals, health centers and outposts, disrupting essential health services, while changing environmental conditions continue to affect the spread of diseases such as dengue.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean face particular vulnerabilities due to their geography, economic structures and exposure to natural hazards. Protecting health systems from these threats is essential to maintaining access to health services and safeguarding health gains achieved across the region.

Developed through a PAHO/WHO-led consultative process involving countries and partners across the Caribbean region, the new Action Plan sets out regional priorities for strengthening health sector preparedness, resilience and sustainability while supporting countries in addressing current and future health challenges associated with environmental and climate-related risks.

"This new regional Action Plan reflects a shared commitment to strengthening health systems and protecting communities across the Caribbean from the health risks associated with climate and environmental threats," said Dr. Jarbas Barbosa, Director of PAHO.

"Caribbean countries are demonstrating leadership on an issue that requires coordinated action across sectors. As implementation moves forward, PAHO will continue supporting Member States through technical cooperation and capacity-building to strengthen resilience and sustainability in the health sector."

"This updated Plan reflects both the progress made across the Caribbean and the challenges that remain," said Dr. Daniel Buss, Chief of PAHO's Climate Change and Environmental Determinants of Health Unit. "It places greater emphasis on strengthening health system resilience, improving access to financing, and ensuring that countries have the tools needed to protect populations most at risk from health threats associated with climate change."

The Plan is organized around four strategic lines of action:

- **Governance and leadership.** Embedding health in national and regional climate decision-making, with sustained political engagement through CARICOM.
- **Climate-resilient health systems.** Strengthening climate-informed disease surveillance, early warning systems, resilient infrastructure, and workforce preparedness.

- **Low-carbon health systems.** Reducing the health sector's own carbon footprint through renewable energy, efficient operations, sustainable procurement, and climate-smart waste management.
- **Resources and financing.** Mobilizing domestic and international climate finance, including access to the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, and other mechanisms, to sustain long-term implementation.

The Action Plan is also recognized as a public health good under the PAHO-CARICOM Joint Sub-Regional Cooperation Strategy 2025–2029, reinforcing the shared commitment of CARICOM and PAHO/WHO to strengthening health sector resilience across the Caribbean.

The updated Plan builds on measurable gains achieved under its 2019-2023 predecessor. Caribbean countries developed Health National Adaptation Plans, trained more than 2,500 health professionals in climate change and health across 15 countries, expanded multi-hazard early warning systems to seven countries, and brought health facilities in seven countries up to PAHO's SMART (Safe and Green) standards. These achievements helped lay the foundation for the next phase of regional action.

The updated framework was shaped through regional consultations with Member States conducted between 2025 and 2026, including virtual consultations, an in-person meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, and successive rounds of technical review.

It is anchored in the WHO Global Plan of Action on Climate Change and Health, the WHO Operational Framework for Climate-Resilient Health Systems, and PAHO's Policy for Strengthening Equity-Oriented Health Sector Action on Climate Change and Health.

Implementation will be country-led, with PAHO/WHO supporting Member States throughout the process.

“PAHO/WHO will continue to provide technical cooperation directly to Ministries of Health and will work through partnerships with CARICOM, CARPHA, academia, civil society and the private sector to expand the reach of our support, while joining Member States in mobilizing the resources needed to implement this Plan,” said Leah-Mari Richards, Chief of the PAHO/WHO Sub-Regional Program for the Caribbean.

Ministries of Health are encouraged to lead implementation in collaboration with other line ministries responsible for climate change, environment, finance, disaster risk management, energy, water and sanitation, and agriculture. Countries are also encouraged to align national strategies and action plans with the region's priorities.

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The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) works with the countries of the Americas to improve the health and quality of life of its population. Founded in 1902, it is the world's oldest international public health agency. It serves as the Regional Office of WHO for the Americas and is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American system (OAS).

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