

2ND CARIBBEAN SAFE SCHOOL MINISTERIAL FORUM

Media Kit



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Relevant Links :

[Second Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum](#)
[Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools \(WISS\)](#)
[Comprehensive School Safety Framework](#)
[First Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum](#)

A. School Safety – The Global Framework

Disasters have a major impact on children, youth and education systems. Studies suggest that each year, 175 million children worldwide are likely to be affected by disasters, and children in the Caribbean are no exception. In 2004, Hurricane Ivan caused widespread destruction in Grenada, damaging 73 of 75 public schools. In 2010, in Haiti, an earthquake killed 38,000 students and 1,300 teachers and education personnel, and destroyed 4,000 schools as well as the headquarters of the Ministry of Education. These figures are likely to increase unless populations improve their capacity to anticipate, prepare, adapt and become more resilient to such events.

Recognizing that a quality education is the foundation for improving people's lives and sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 1995 by the 193 countries represented in the United Nations General Assembly reflects the commitment to *“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”*.

Supporting this goal, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, adopted by UN Member States in 2015, recognizes that **schools should incorporate disaster-resistant structures according to local risks, while at the same time calling for knowledge and awareness of hazards and risk to be part of the school curriculum in order to bring about behavioural changes that support disaster risk reduction and greater resilience**. One way in which governments have advanced towards these goals is through the engagement as “Safe School Leaders” and committing to the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS).

The [Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools \(WISS\)](#) was developed by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) in collaboration with partners from the [Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector \(GADRRRES\)](#) in order to enhance school safety. So far, 52 countries worldwide have endorsed the WISS, committing to make school safety a national priority and to facilitate its implementation at the national level. The Initiative seeks to motivate and support governments to develop national strategies and implement school safety, building on the Comprehensive School Safety Framework and defining a safe school as one that combines all of the following elements - defined as its three core pillars: Safe Learning Facilities, School Disaster Management and Risk Reduction and Resilience Education - which should be addressed by education policies and plans, and aligned with disaster management at national, regional, district, and local school site levels.

The [Comprehensive School Safety Framework](#) aims to reduce the risks of all hazards to the education sector. Over the past decade, children's advocates have come together to:

- Improve children's equal and safe access to quality, inclusive, and integrated basic education;
- Monitor and evaluate progress of initiatives that reduce disaster and conflict risks;
- Increase availability of and access to hazard-related evidence (such as multi-hazard early warning systems data and disaster risk information);
- Promote risk reduction and resilience in the education sector. This also includes clear focus in major international agreements (for example, Sustainable Development Goals and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030);
- Strengthen coordination and networks for resilience, from local to national, regional, and international levels;

- Strengthen education governance and local participation in order to prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to all hazards and risks, and to increase preparedness for response and recovery, and strengthen resilience.

Pillar 1. Safe Learning Facilities:

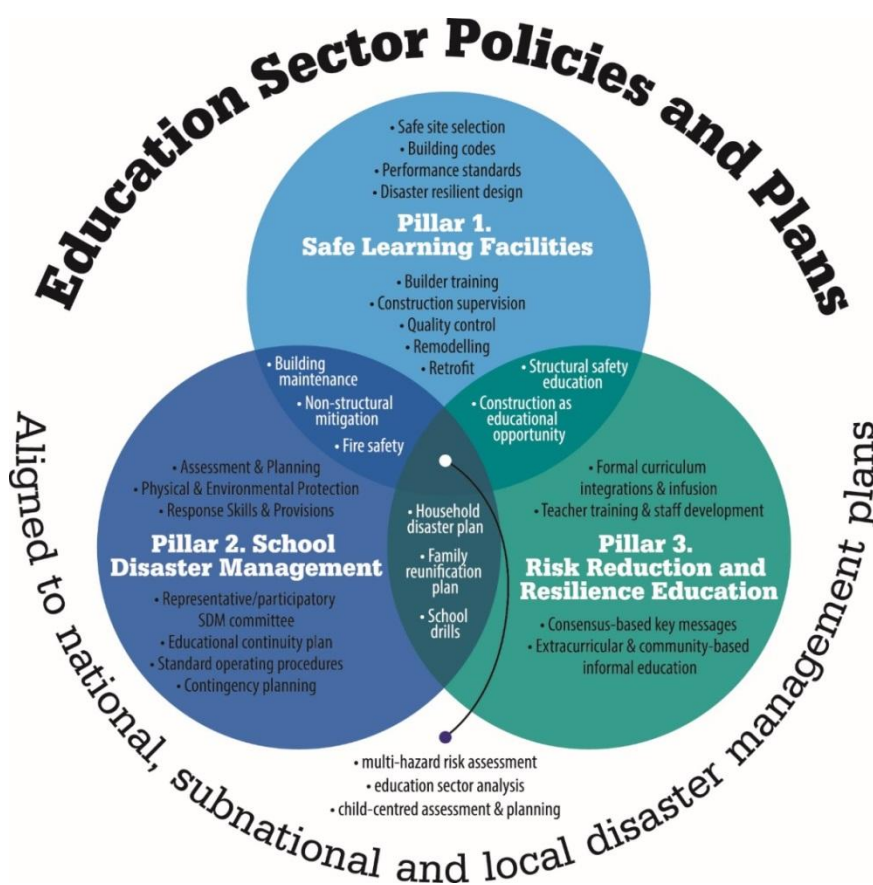
- Key actors: Education and planning authorities, architects, engineers, builders, and school community members who make decisions about safe site selection, design, construction and maintenance (including safe and continuous access to the facility).

Pillar 2. School Disaster Management:

- Key actors: Education sector administrators at national and sub-national education authorities, and local school communities who collaborate with their disaster management counterparts in each jurisdiction. At the school level, the staff, students and parents who are all involved in maintaining safe learning environments. They may do this by assessing and reducing structural, non-structural, infrastructural, environmental and social risks, and by developing response capacity and planning for educational continuity.

Pillar 3. Risk Reduction and Resilience Education:

- Key actors: Curriculum and educational materials developers, faculty of pedagogic institutes, teacher trainers, teachers, youth movements, activity leaders, and students, working to develop and strengthen a culture of safety, resilience, and social cohesion.



B. School Safety in the Caribbean

The Caribbean is a region of high exposure to multiple natural hazards including hurricanes, floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, windstorms, tsunamis, landslides and droughts. Vulnerability combined with exposure to such hazards can serve to drastically undermine poverty reduction strategies, hinder development gains and jeopardize educational systems. At the same time, the Caribbean region is acutely exposed to the negative effects and impacts of the increased frequency and magnitude of extreme weather and climate-related events, which are exacerbated by climate change and variability. Such events, if left unmitigated, can lead to devastating consequences to a nation's economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

In line with global recognition, the importance of school safety had also been long acknowledged in the Caribbean. The 2014-2024 Comprehensive Disaster Management strategy calls for increased and sustained knowledge management and learning for Comprehensive Disaster Management, as well as standardization and improvement of educational and training materials.

In addition, political will for action was demonstrated by previous experiences in the Caribbean, such as the Living Schools Project, the [First Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum in 2017](#) as well as the [Caribbean Model Safe School Programme \(MSSP\)](#) developed by CDEMA in 2014 and implemented in three pilot countries (i.e. Anguilla, Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).

The [MSSP](#) comprises a number of models, guidelines and tools that Ministries of Education and Schools can adapt and/or use to design and implement a programme of comprehensive risk management at the school level. It was endorsed by the CDEMA Council in 2015 as the standard for school safety programmes in CDEMA. The standards address a broad spectrum of safety and greening issues that influence vulnerability in schools, incorporating climate change and environmental management considerations.

C. About the Second Ministerial Forum

In April 2017, the first Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum was held in Antigua and Barbuda, during this conference, the Caribbean Declaration and the Road Map on School Safety were adopted. The Second Ministerial Forum on School Safety in the Caribbean is therefore a follow-up on the first forum.

This Second Forum that will be hosted by the Ministry of Education, National Reconciliation, Ecclesiastical Affairs and Information in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines from April 29 to 30, 2019 in Kingstown, will respond to the need for a collaborative and coordinated approach among actors in the region's education sector. It will particularly contribute to: CDEMA's Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy and Programming Framework 2014-2024; UNISDR's Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS); Caribbean Safe School Initiative; the Samoa Action Plan for SIDS, the Global Action Program on Education for Sustainable Development; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Forum will be also linked to a Youth Forum "My Island, My Life" which will identify safety issues around the three pillars of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework. The conclusions and recommendations of the Youth Forum will be presented during the Ministerial Forum.

Attendees

The Forum will be attended by Ministers of Education and high-level representatives in the Caribbean and their technical advisors, as well as representatives from regional and United Nations organizations. Representatives from the following countries are attending the Forum: Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

Partners

The event will be hosted by the Ministry of Education, National Reconciliation, Ecclesiastical Affairs and Information in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in collaboration with:

- Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF),
- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

The organization of the Forum is possible thanks to the financial support of the Department of the European Commission for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

D. Questions & Answers

What is the Worldwide Initiative for School Safety (WISS)?

The Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS) is a government-led global partnership for advancing safe school implementation at the national level. The Initiative is coordinated by UNISDR and was developed in collaboration with key partners from the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction Education and Resilience in the Education Sector as a response to the High-Level Dialogue Communiqué at the 2013 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools focuses on motivating and supporting Governments to develop national strategies and implement school safety. The Initiative builds on the Comprehensive School Safety Framework. The Initiative also promotes good practices and achievements in safe school implementation for replication in other countries and regions, helps identify challenges and offers technical assistance and particular expertise around the three pillars to support interested Governments in implementing school safety at the national level.

What is the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSS)?

The Comprehensive School Safety Framework aims to reduce the risks of all hazards to the education sector. It brings into focus child-centered and evidence-based efforts to promote disaster risk reduction throughout the education sector and to assure universal access to quality education. This allows education sector partners to work more effectively and to link with similar efforts in other sectors.

The three core pillars of the CSS - Safe Learning Facilities, School Disaster Management and Risk Reduction and Resilience Education - shall be addressed by education policies and plans, and aligned with disaster management at national, regional, district, and local school site levels. Each of these pillars assigns key responsibilities and present actions that can be taken.

What is the Caribbean Safe School Initiative (CSSI)?

The Caribbean Safe School Initiative is the suggested Framework to advance school safety in the Caribbean, which was launched during the Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum on 4 April 2017 in Antigua and Barbuda. It is the Caribbean contribution to the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS). The CSSI shall be a government-led partnership for advancing safe school implementation at the national level. International, regional, national and local partners shall support governments in the implementation.

The Antigua and Barbuda Declaration on School Safety and the Road Map for School Safety that were endorsed at the Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum (3-4 April, Antigua and Barbuda) ensured the political commitment and guided activities at the regional and national level.

Why is disaster risk reduction in the education sector important?

On the one hand, it seeks to guarantee safe learning environments through structural and non-structural disaster risk reduction actions. Children, teachers and the education community will be better protected from hazards and better prepared to respond to emergencies.

On the other hand, the knowledge transfer to children, adolescents, youth and adults on hazards and vulnerabilities that result from or exacerbate the effects of natural or man-made adverse effects help them to reduce risk, prepare for response and recover successfully. Furthermore, it provides live saving knowledge that children and adolescents will be able to apply throughout their lifetime for their own, their family's and/or their community's benefit.

Why is the Second Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum important?

Following the adoption of the Caribbean Declaration and the Road Map for School Safety in 2017, and after the devastating hurricane season of 2017, the Second Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum aims to update the Regional Road Map, involve new countries in this initiative, track progress and

achievements in the implementation of the Road Map but will also help promote the WISS and the CSSI.

The Forum will therefore provide the enabling environment for specific strategies and actions to be implemented in a comprehensive and lasting way. Through the Forum governments will commit to advancing in school safety by building on past achievements, advocating and working for the further development of policies, plans and actions at national level. At the same time, synergies between countries, regional and international organizations will be identified, further enabling the strengthening of school safety.

By when should commitments be implemented?

Based on regional priorities identified by Caribbean countries, the Caribbean Road Map for School Safety will guide future interventions. It will provide an overview on the general timelines for specific activities, implementing entities and supporting partners. In general, the Caribbean Safe School Initiative builds on and contributes to global and regional agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 as well as 2014-2024 Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy. Those outline expected outcomes to be achieved within specific timeframes.

What does it mean for children, parents and teachers?

Through the implementation of the Comprehensive Safe School Framework, children, parents and teachers will enjoy safer learning environments and increase their knowledge about disaster risk reduction. This is achieved through the incorporation of disaster risk management topics in teacher training as well as school curricula. Children, teachers and the education community as a whole will acquire knowledge and skills to identify risk, reduce risk, prepare for response, and recover from disasters. In addition, school disaster plans and educational continuity plans are developed or updated. Furthermore, school infrastructure will be made safer either through retrofitting or building of new schools, considering safe site selection, disaster-resilient design, building codes and construction quality control.

Does this mean there will be a big investment in school safety?

Governments are responsible of sourcing financial and other resources from the national, regional, and the international community, from public and private sectors, to be channelled towards strengthening efforts towards integrating disaster risk reduction into the education sector.

Is school safety applied differently in public and private schools?

School safety applies to private and public schools alike. There might be, however, differences from country to country regarding policies and norms of the implementation of their existing school safety regulations in each type of school.

Does school safety only refer to risk caused by natural hazards or social risk as well?

The Comprehensive School Safety Framework addresses physical, environmental and social protection. It also fosters conflict-sensitive education for diversity, acceptance peace and social cohesion.