



Fourth OACPS/EC/UN-Habitat International Tripartite Conference

‘Slum Upgrading and Prevention in the Decade of Action’

Regional Consultation for the Caribbean

7th July 2021, 10:30-12:30 (Eastern Caribbean time) and 17:30-19:30 (EAT)

Venue: Online

About the Fourth OACPS/EC/UN-Habitat International Tripartite Conference

The three-day Fourth OACPS/EC/UN-Habitat International Tripartite Conference on Slum Upgrading and Prevention in the Decade of Action has been organized within the framework of the global policy dialogue of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP). PSUP was initiated by the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and has been implemented by UN-Habitat in 190 cities in 40 ACP countries since its inception in 2008, with funding from the European Commission (EC). The Tripartite Conference seeks to take stock of progress made in transforming living conditions in informal settlements and slums, and examine the lessons learnt, recommendations, commitments and next steps needed to meet the scale and implement the SDG and the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

Description of the session

Caribbean countries are highly urbanized, and a significant proportion of urban development occurs in areas classified as unplanned and informal. Informal urban settlements occur across the region, and their form and characteristics are diverse. They are characterized by a significant proportion of high-density populations concentrated in coastal and hillside areas located within rapidly growing urban regions. While the data is inconsistent, the proportion of people living in urban informality varies dramatically across the region. For example, it is as high as around 60 and 74 per cent in Jamaica and Haiti, respectively, and about 30 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana, and slightly less than 10 per cent in the Eastern Caribbean Countries¹. These settlements face particular challenges regarding vulnerability to climate change and disaster risk, unaffordable and sub-standard housing conditions and socio-economic inequality. These risks are traded off against access to employment, services and amenities offered. COVID-19 is another wake-up call. It is a diagnostic test to assess pre-existing vulnerabilities. For example, due to pre-existing conditions for water and sanitation, adequate housing and overcrowding, and other underlying pre-existing health vulnerabilities and inequalities such as untreated illnesses and precarious

¹ Caribbean Strategy for Informal Settlements Upgrading, <https://unhabitat.org/caribbean-strategy-for-informal-settlements-upgrading>



nature of informal employment and livelihood, the policies to curb COVID-19 spread were impractical in informal settlements and slums. Therefore, the urban poor living in informal settlements and slums worldwide feel the impact of COVID-19 disproportionately

Urban informality diminishes the success rate of the Caribbean nations to meet the target of SDG11.1 1. Subsequently, it undermines the capacity to achieve the target of SDG 1 (End Poverty), SDG 5 (Achieve Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduce Inequality) and SDG 13 (Take climate action). Similarly, their ability to deliver on the promise of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action² known as the Samoa Pathway.

Response to the informal settlements' issues varied across the region and countries. The common approach has been focusing on site-specific projects with concessionary loan financing from regional development banks. For example, Inter-American Development Bank funded projects in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, and the Caribbean Development Banks programme in Saint Lucia. They demonstrated transformative power and positive results in transforming people's lives.

The need for an overarching policy framework at regional and country levels has been long recognized in the region. The Caribbean Strategy for Informal Settlements Upgrading (CSISU) provides an integrated and comprehensive approach for regional priorities, lessons learned, capacity building, guiding for countries developing their national strategies, legislation review and policy alignment. The data and capacity gap, governance and financing, are recognized as critical and enabling factors for delivering the SDGs and NUA in the Caribbean cities, including the vital need of the urban poor in informal settlements.

Expected Outcome

The regional consultations will bring together partners and ACP Member States from the region. The event will take stock of regional trends and learning. It will question what is needed next to lift the inclusive urban development agenda and transform informal settlements and slums into adequate urban settings. It will share experiences, strategic frameworks that can be leveraged at local, national, sub-regional and regional levels. It will specifically focus on the regional approach to **capacity building, data, governance, and financing**.

It will have contributions from Ambassadors from the Organization of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), Ministers, Mayors, academia, development partners, including the European Commission. It will elaborate the road map for implementing the Caribbean Strategy for Informal Settlements Upgrading, explore opportunities for increased learning in the regions, and joint target setting, monitoring and accountability for implementing the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in informal settlements.

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sids2014/samoapathway>