



# IUR - SIDS INTEGRATED URBAN RESILIENCE IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES AND COASTAL CITIES

NATIONAL AND CITY 'STATE OF PLAY'  
BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS



## **ABOUT IUR - SIDS**

The Integrated Urban Resilience in Small Island Developing States and Coastal Cities (IUR-SIDS) is a Joint global Programme by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) processed through a Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) for urban risk reduction and resilience building action. The Joint global Programme will unfold during a 2023-2025 first phase reaching 10 countries/cities, which will lay the foundation for potential scaling-up and scaling-out of the approach to support more cities and countries in a second phase from 2026 to 2030. The overall goal of the IUR-SIDS programme is that, by 2030, at least 100 small and medium-sized cities are supported to develop risk-informed urban development plans and implement urban resilience building interventions addressing all resilience dimensions viz. physical, environmental and socio-economic -- while strengthening urban governance informed by a systems' thinking to secure resilient development outcomes. Through delivering as One, the two UN agencies will maximize synergies of action, opens opportunities and provide coherent results in SIDS and coastal cities.

### **About UNDP**

UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet.

### **About UN-Habitat**

UN-Habitat supports national and local governments, academia, civil society and the private sector, with the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and SDG11, which aims for sustainable cities and communities. We support processes of institutional capacity-building regarding sustainable urbanization and knowledge-transfer between regional counterparts, in particular through key initiatives like National Urban Policies, the City Prosperity Initiatives, Urban Integrated Solutions and others.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CONTEXT FOR RISK-INFORMED URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND RESILIENCE-BUILDING</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES IN DRR, CC-CCA, RESILIENCE</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL PARTNERS TO CONSIDER FOR ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>12</b>

# 01.

## CONTEXT FOR RISK-INFORMED URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND RESILIENCE-BUILDING

### **I. National / City policies and strategies – Priorities for action (sustainable development, climate action, urban/town planning, DRR, NAPs, etc.)**

Barbados's National Climate Change Policy was approved in 2012, representing the country's major strategy for adaptation to climate change, while ensuring alignment with the broader aspirations for sustainable development. Aimed at reducing the effects of climate change, through minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, and the design of appropriate mechanisms including engaging in regional and international negotiations on climate change, this policy brings together a broad array of sectors and stakeholders spanning institutional, administrative, economic and environmental aspects of climate change adaptation and resilience.

The Planning and Development Act, and the 2021 Physical Development Plan (PDP) represent the national urban policy and an actual translation of Barbados' effort in addressing climate change at the local level. The 2021 PDP guides development in Barbados in terms of land use, settlement patterns, food production, infrastructure, mobility and environmental management. It provides a framework for directing the public and private sectors for areas, scope, nature, and locations of investment, while ensuring sustainable and climate resilient development.

The PDP, together with the Roofs to Reefs Programme (R2RP) now provide the relevant framework for Barbados to achieve its resilience goal at the local levels by 2030. The latter represents the mechanisms to operationalise the PDP. It aims to enhance the resilience of low and middle income houses through improved access to basic services (water and electricity), increase fresh water storage, minimise greenhouse gas emissions, reduce marine pollution, investment in resilience critical infrastructure, and the protection and restoration of coral reefs and marine ecosystems.



Canva/ Houses in Bridgetown

## II. Administrative / Political structure, electoral cycle and next elections (National government; city nodal authority)

The political and legal tradition of Barbados follows, to some extent, that of the United Kingdom since the former is a Commonwealth country. Barbados is a parliamentary democracy. The government is divided into three branches: the Legislative, Executive and Judiciary branch. The highest post in government is the Prime Minister, which is selected through the majority factions of the parliament. While there are no fixed dates for holding elections, the elections for the House of Assembly must be called within 5 years.

Barbados does not have local governments. Instead, appointed councilors are assigned to administer local affairs. For administrative purposes, Barbados is divided into 11 parishes in addition to the capital city of Bridgetown. These are further divided into 30 Constituency Councils (CCs). Each Council consists of eleven persons, in addition to a chairperson, and a treasurer. The final decision on the selection of the councilors is made by the Minister of Social Care based on recommendations made by senior civil servants. Candidates often should demonstrate community experience or are representatives of interest local groups.

### **III. Local competencies and jurisdictions (relevant to interventions; key sectors and stakeholders)**

The services provided by the Constituency Councils (CCs) are broad and based on the needs of their constituents. In addition, within a framework for good governance, the CCs assist in the effective management of national resources allocated to their constituencies. As such, the role of appointed councilors and CCs, including the city of Bridgetown, are limited to service providers, and appear to have limited involvement in the design of policies and planning which fall within the ministries' competencies.

### **IV. Revenue and financing streams – national budgeting for city level planning, development and implementation, etc.**

The CCs cannot collect or raise revenue; they only receive restricted transfers from the central government and have the capacity to manage these resources. Local government income is fixed and BB\$100,000 per council is allocated annually. Constituency council expenditure is slowly reducing and is around 0.07% of total government expenditure.

### **V. Regional and international partners' engagement and investments – development investments by IFIs, regional or other entities, etc.**

The country has been successful in securing major collaboration and cooperation agreements with major regional and international actors such as the European Union, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency CDEMA, to name but a few. The Caribbean Regional Resilience Building Facility (\$31.6 million; €27.7 million for 15 Caribbean countries) is funded by the EU, aimed at mainstreaming resilience, reducing vulnerabilities, and increasing financial protection against disasters.

Barbados has sought to address climate finance both through traditional financing means and through more novel and innovative approaches. Examples include:

- The Debt for Nature Swap and associated Barbados Environmental Sustainability Fund (BESF)
- Blue Green Investment Corporation
- Blue and Green Bonds
- Bridgetown Initiative (BI)

In addition, the World Bank, and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) are widely involved in enhancing resilience through building technical capacities and climate mitigation finance. The World Bank approved in January 2023 US\$100 million in financing to support Barbados' low carbon economic development and resilience to climate change (World Bank, 2023). The Canada Caribbean Resilience Facility (CRF) is another major international partner for building resilience. The CRF allocated 15 USD millions for strengthening capacities in 9 Caribbean countries including Barbados. The main goals are: achieving effective and coordinated gender-informed, climate-resilience preparedness, recovery, and improving public finance management practices. The CRF is managed by the GFDRR at the World Bank.

## VI. Development challenges and gaps

Barbados is among the most vulnerable nations to climate change impacts, mainly sea level rise, coastal erosion, and droughts. In addition, the island is frequently hit by intense storms and hurricanes resulting in significant floods and severe damages to critical infrastructure such as roads and electricity grid. With the country facing a significant public debt - being the fourth globally in terms of highest debt to GDP ratio (175%). The country is highly constrained in responding to the array of developmental and environmental challenges it faces. These economic challenges were exacerbated as a result of Covid-19. Barbados is highly reliant on tourism and fisheries. These were highly affected during the global pandemic due to global lockdowns and disruption to supply chains and logistics.

As a highly populated Caribbean islands, urbanization has resulted in high environmental risks driven mainly by inadequate waste management and contaminated water supply. In addition, overfishing (there are over 6.000 fishers in Barbados where population is 290.000) and coastal development, have all contributed to posing serious risks to the coral reef on which the island sits, and its wider marine space. Despite the government's efforts through a series of changes to environmental policies in the country, less than 1% of the country's marine space is protected due to Barbados economic and financial constraints.



UNDP/ Zaimis Olmos

# GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT 02.

## I. Global policy frameworks and positioning

In 1994, Barbados ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Kyoto Protocol in 2000. The country's ratification of the Paris Agreement was enacted in 2016. In view of the objectives of the Paris Agreement, in particular to pursue efforts to limit the average temperature increase to 1.5 °C compared to pre-industrial temperatures, the overall level of ambition in 2015 NDCs (Nationally Determined Contribution) has been too low for achieving the goal. Barbados therefore welcomed the contribution by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2018 report on 1.5 degrees as it provides a scientific basis for countries to enhance climate ambition significantly.

Barbados has been engaging with regional frameworks that touch on the Caribbean SIDS and their challenges. The country reaffirmed its support for the 2018 Samoa Declaration on Climate Change in the Context of Sustainable Development for SIDS made by AOSIS.

In October 2021 Barbados hosted the fifteenth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, known as UNCTAD15. Secretary-General António Guterres travelled to Barbados to take part in the opening ceremony. During the visit, the Secretary-General also saw first-hand the impacts of climate change in the country. Accompanied by Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados, the Secretary-General visited an area impacted by sea-level rise, coastal erosion and land slippage, and heard about the efforts being undertaken by the Government of Barbados to address these challenges.



UN Photo/Bajanpro - Secretary-General Visits Barbados  
(left) Mr. Guterres addresses the opening ceremony of UNCTAD15  
(right) Mr. Guterres visits Folkestone Beach to examine the coastal erosion

## II. Agenda 2030

**VNR:** Voluntary National Review 2020 – main messages

**NDC:** Barbados Intended Nationally Determined Contribution released in 2015; Barbados 2021 Update of the First Nationally Determined Contribution in 2021.

**NAP:** a Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP) is under development.

**NUA national report:** Not available.

Focusing on the achievement of its national development goals, and the country's ability to ensure to leave no one behind, Barbados uses targeted policy formation and a mechanism for monitoring its progress in achieving the global agenda goals and targets, mainly inclusive development for women, youth, persons with disabilities, aged population and rural communities, ensuring that all these groups are benefitting from national development efforts.

Barbados SDGs rank is 73/163, scoring 70 on the same index, with 87.9 in spillover score. The country has been making efforts to deliver on most of the goals and targets, being described as “on track” for Goal 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation -, and Goal 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy -, “moderately improving” in Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, while decreasing efforts in goal 15 - Life on Land. Data seem to be lacking on the country's achievement track in terms of goal 11 - Sustainable cities and Communities.



Flickr/ Carolyn Sugg - Bridgetown

## III. National / local engagement (networks, MCR2030, inter-regional forums, etc.)

Barbados is a member state of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Commonwealth of Nations. Barbados is a Participating State of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), a regional inter-governmental agency for disaster management in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and a founding member of the Caribbean Development Bank (CBD).

Bridgetown is a member of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Cities Network.

# 03. ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES IN DRR, CC-CCA, RESILIENCE

---

Barbados has launched several programs and initiatives that support its legal frameworks and strategies for climate resilience and adaptation, namely the Water Resource Management and Flood Resilience Program (2013 - 2020) - a collaboration between the Government of Barbados and USAID -, the National Coastal Risk Information and Planning Platform (NCRIPP), Water Resilience Nexus for Sustainability in Barbados (2018 - 2024), Implemented by Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), Government of Barbados, and Sponsored by the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

According to the Barbados NDC update of 2021, programmes and policies can be classified into three main areas:



**Water Resources:** the main programmes are the National Water Reuse Policy, agreed on by Cabinet in 2019, the Green paper 2020 Water Protection and Land Use Zoning Policy (focused on the protection of existing groundwater through zoning policy, and proposes a new approach for the protection of all inland water resources), and the Stormwater Management Plan Update.



**Coastal Zone:** A key program in this regard is the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) from 2020 to 2030, focused on the incorporation of natural capital in the country's national assets accounting. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), established in 2018 and concerned with good governance.



**Disaster Risk Reduction:** The Barbados Comprehensive Disaster Management Country Work Program 2019-2023 includes “the financial protection mechanism for contingent liabilities from natural hazard-induced disaster shocks; system of annual stress testing of insurance firms of their capacity to absorb natural and man-made disasters and development of the appropriate measures to address identified weaknesses.”



UN/ Barbados Bajanpro - emergency reconstruction centre



UNDP/ Barbados - installing early warning signal

# ADDITIONAL PARTNERS TO CONSIDER FOR ENGAGEMENT

# 04.

As mentioned previously, some of the main development partners of Barbados are the Caribbean Development Bank, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency CDEMA, the Canada Caribbean Resilience Facility (CRF) the European Union, among others. In addition, the World Bank, and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) are widely involved in enhancing resilience through building technical capacities and climate mitigation finance in the region, and in Barbados particularly.



Flickr/ Jean-Marc Astesana - Barbados

# REFERENCES

Commonwealth Local Government Forum (2017). Barbados Profile. Available at: <https://www.clgf.org.uk/regions/clgf-americas/barbados/>

Deutsche Welle (2018). Drowning in Debt: Barbados Predicament. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/drowning-in-debt-barbados-predicament-offers-a-warning-for-small-island-nations/a-44245771>

ECLAC - United Nations. Urban and Cities Platform of Latin America and the Caribbean (n.d.). National government transfers. Available at: <https://plataformaurbana.cepal.org/en/instruments/financing/national-government-transfers>

ECLAC - United Nations. Urban and Cities Platform of Latin America and the Caribbean (n.d.). Urban municipal financing system of Barbados. Available at: <https://plataformaurbana.cepal.org/en/systems/financial/urban-municipal-financing-system-barbados>

Government of Barbados (2021). Barbados 2021 Update of The First Nationally Determined Contribution. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/2021%20Barbados%20NDC%20update%20-%202021%20July%202021.pdf>

Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (2019). Barbados is the Central Hub to Carve a Pathway. Available at: <https://www.gfdr.org/en/feature-story/barbados-central-hub-carve-pathway-towards-resilience-caribbean>

LSE Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment (2012). Climate Change Laws of the World: Barbados National Climate Change Policy. Available at: <https://www.climate-laws.org/geographies/barbados/policies/national-climate-change-policy-10c2c2bf-7205-4f08-b4ca-1624668dbffd>

The Sustainable Development Report (2022). Barbados SDGs Dashboards and Trends. Available at: <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/profiles/barbados>

The United States Agency for International Development (2021). Barbados Resilience Profile. Available at: [https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/2021-09/Barbados.May\\_.2021.Final\\_.pdf](https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/2021-09/Barbados.May_.2021.Final_.pdf)

The World Bank (2023). World Bank Approves US\$100 Million for Barbados' Green and Resilient Recovery. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/01/11/world-bank-approves-us-100-million-for-barbados-green-and-resilient-recovery>

World Economic Forum (2023). The Bridgetown Initiative: here's everything you need to know. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/01/barbados-bridgetown-initiative-climate-change/#:~:text=Barbados%20is%20one%20of%20the,coastal%20erosion%2C%20droughts%20and%20flooding>.



---

# GET IN TOUCH

## **Ronald Jackson**

Head, DRR and Recovery  
Team (DRT),  
Crisis Bureau UNDP  
[Ronald.jackson@undp.org](mailto:Ronald.jackson@undp.org)

## **Rajeev Issar**

Policy Specialist, DRT,  
Crisis Bureau UNDP  
[Rajeev.issar@undp.org](mailto:Rajeev.issar@undp.org)

## **Esteban Leon**

Head, City Resilience  
Global Programme  
UN-Habitat  
[Esteban.leon@un.org](mailto:Esteban.leon@un.org)