



Joint Statement
of
The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
and
UN Environment Caribbean sub-regional office
on
The risk of invasive alien species associated with emergency relief, aid and response efforts
in
Small island developing States in the Caribbean

Small island developing States are vulnerable to natural disasters and various pressures from anthropogenic changes. Currently, Caribbean island States are devastated by Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria, and suffering from the severe consequences.

We express our great appreciation to all involved in the emergency response with the prime concern of saving lives and livelihoods in the Caribbean.

At the occasion of capacity-building workshop for Caribbean small island developing States towards achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 in Kingston, Jamaica, 18-22 September 2017, organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with support of UN Environment Caribbean Sub-regional Office in Jamaica, the representatives of Caribbean small island developing States and United Kingdom Overseas Territories, while dealing with the devastating impacts of the hurricanes, also, expressed their concerns on the risk of biological invasions in disaster zones.

Attention was drawn to the Caribbean Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy 2014-2024¹ aimed to establish *Safer, more resilient society through Comprehensive Disaster Management* among the member States of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency. The Strategy provides regional guidance on coordinated and effective response to natural hazards, such as hurricanes, including appropriate planning, technical advice and the application of customs procedures, without delay of the relief effort.

The workshop participants noted that in 2006 the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) urged Governments and donors to take measures to prevent and minimise the introduction and spread of invasive alien species as part of their emergency relief, aid and any response

¹ Caribbean Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy 2014-2024. <http://www.cdema.org/CDMStrategy2014-2024.pdf>



efforts, and to take into account any relevant codes of practice or guidelines that may be developed at international level, or national legislation as appropriate, in their national aid operations or in the operations of non-governmental organisations within their country (paragraph 42 of decision VIII/27²).

To that end, and in accordance with the relevant international guidance³, we encourage the actors who plan and operate the disaster management and emergency response in the Caribbean:

- To minimize the transfer of untreated soils, sands and construction materials from outside islands to the disaster zones;
- To minimize risk of biological invasions from the inputs for landscape recovery, agriculture and forestry to be released in the disaster zones;
- To minimize risk of contamination on vehicles, machinery and equipment in prior use for agriculture, forestry, horticulture, earth moving, surface mining, waste management and by the military outside the disaster zones;
- To support the island states to take early detection of, and rapid response to establishment of invasive alien species in the disaster zones.

Ensuring adequate consideration of environmental issues in humanitarian response actions is important to increase ecosystem resilience and reduce future risks. Moreover, with careful planning and coordination, this does not have to be expensive or time consuming.

Achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 on invasive alien species, in particular with its element on “measures to be in place to manage pathways to prevent introduction and establishment of invasive alien species” is critically important to protect and improve the status of biodiversity in the Caribbean after the devastating impacts of disasters and the response to them.

² Decision XIII/27 on invasive alien species <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-08/cop-08-dec-27-en.pdf>

Article 8(h) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, <https://www.cbd.int/convention/articles/default.shtml?a=cbd-08> and the Guiding Principles for the Prevention, Introduction and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species that Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species, <https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=7197>

The International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures No. 20, https://www.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2017/08/ISPM_20_2017_En_2017-06-26.pdf

The International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures No. 41, https://www.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2017/05/ISPM_41_2017_En_2017-05-15.pdf