

RESILIENCE IN ACTION: SOCIAL POLICIES TO NAVIGATE UNCERTAINTY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

XVI Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean
30-31 October & 1 November 2024

Wyndham Grand Barbados | Bridgetown, Barbados

Concept Note

BACKGROUND AND MAIN THEME OF THE FORUM

The **XVI Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)**, to be held in Barbados on 30-31 October and 1 November 2024, will focus on "**Resilience in Action: Social Policies to Navigate Uncertainties in Latin America and the Caribbean**". Against the backdrop of dynamic socio-economic shifts, geopolitical transitions, and the enduring impact of the global pandemic, this theme encapsulates the region's commitment to human development, inclusivity, and resilience, with a nuanced lens on various challenges, including climate-related risks.

The Forum will delve into strategies to enhance the resilience of social policies, ensuring they are adaptive and responsive to evolving needs and crises. It will provide an opportunity for Ministers of Social Development, Environment, Finance, and other related areas in LAC to collectively explore innovative approaches to address inequality, strengthen social safety nets, and promote inclusive economic growth. Emphasizing the importance of sustainability underscores a commitment to enduring positive impacts on human development.

LAC has long grappled with multifaceted challenges, from economic inequalities to vulnerabilities stemming from natural disasters and external shocks. In this context, the theme underscores the need to strengthen social policies against an array of stressors, with climate-related risks as one integral dimension, emphasizing the need for adaptability, sustainability, and inclusivity. By centering the discussion on resilience within the realm of human development, the Forum can provide a holistic platform to address the drivers of vulnerabilities, ensuring that the benefits of social policies reach all segments of society.

This theme aligns with the region's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and provides a forward-looking perspective on social development. It acknowledges that resilient societies are not merely those that can withstand shocks but those that can adapt, learn, and thrive in the face of evolving challenges. Moreover, by fostering inclusive and sustainable social policies, the theme recognizes the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental dimensions, striving for a balance that promotes equitable human development.

Building on the discussions initiated at the XIII Ministerial Forum in Antigua and Barbuda in 2021, which discussed disasters and social protection systems in a context of protracted crisis, the XVI Ministerial Forum will analyze new experiences and shocks faced by the region, such as the lasting impacts of the COVID pandemic and changing geopolitical dynamics. It will highlight the importance of enhancing the resilience of social policies and ensuring their adaptability to evolving needs and crises and provide a space to learn from

efforts in the region. The Forum will serve as a strategic opportunity to build resilience against future shocks that continue to challenge development in the region

In essence, this comprehensive thematic framework aims to inspire collaboration among Ministers in LAC, fostering a shared commitment to shaping resilient societies grounded in human development principles. The Forum aims to set the stage for transformative policy dialogues and impactful initiatives that transcend traditional boundaries, ultimately steering the region towards a more equitable and resilient future. Furthermore, it positions itself as a crucial stepping stone towards global platforms such as the G20 and COP, amplifying the region's voice in shaping international discourse on resilience and sustainable development.

THEMATIC TABLES

To delve into the central theme, four thematic roundtables are suggested. These thematic roundtables will offer a focused exploration of key aspects related to the broader theme, allowing for in-depth discussions, sharing of best practices, and the development of actionable policy recommendations. The Forum will serve as a platform for fostering collaboration and driving impactful social policies across the LAC region.

Thematic Table 1: Adaptive Social Protection Systems for Vulnerable Populations

Addressing the critical need for resilient social safety nets, this roundtable will delve into the core theme of adaptive social protection systems, exploring innovative approaches to bolster support for vulnerable populations in LAC. Particularly, the discussions will revolve around developing strategies that ensure the responsiveness of social safety nets to changing circumstances and swift adaptation to emerging challenges.

Discussion Points:

- **Adaptive Social Protection Systems:** Strategies to transform existing social protection frameworks into dynamic, adaptive systems capable of responding promptly to evolving societal needs and unforeseen crises, including the implementation of digital IDs and other technologies.
- **Climate Adaptation and Vulnerability:** Discussing the intersection of climate change and vulnerability, exploring how adaptive social protection systems can address the specific needs of populations affected by climate-related events. This includes considerations for displacement, loss of livelihoods, and access to essential services in the wake of climate shocks.
- **Care Policies:** Exploring policies that support and enhance caregiving for vulnerable populations, with a focus on adaptability and resilience. This includes examining ways to strengthen social protection systems to address caregiving needs in the face of both societal and climate-related challenges.
- **Healthcare Access for Vulnerable Groups:** Examining ways to integrate adaptive measures into healthcare systems, ensuring reliable and responsive access for vulnerable populations. Emphasis will be placed on preventive care and mental health support.

- Education Opportunities: Exploring policies and practices that embed adaptability into educational systems, guaranteeing continuous and quality learning experiences for vulnerable groups. This includes initiatives to dismantle barriers to access.

Expected Outcomes:

A set of recommendations for enhancing the adaptability of social protection systems in LAC, explicitly addressing climate-related challenges, contributing to the development of more resilient, equitable, and responsive social safety nets, particularly benefiting vulnerable populations.

Thematic Table 2: Sixth Meeting of the Presiding Officer of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

The VI Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean will be held during the XVI Ministerial Forum for the Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Presiding Officers elected at the Fifth Meeting of the Conference, held in Santiago in October 2023 is composed of Chile, as President, and Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) as Vice-Presidents. During the meeting, key regional messages will be discussed towards the II World Summit on Social Development in 2025, on the basis of a Position Document that analyses new and old critical obstacles to inclusive social development and contributions from the four thematic working groups of the Conference.

Discussion Points:

- Reducing inequality and moving towards inclusive social development with sustainability.
- Key messages from LAC to the II World Summit on Social Development.

Expected Outcomes:

A set of key messages agreed by the region's authorities to highlight the challenges ahead of the next Summit.

Thematic Table 3: Navigating Uncertainty through Inclusive Digitalization and Social Innovation

In recognition of the transformative role of technology, this roundtable will examine how inclusive digitalization and social innovation can enhance resilience. Topics may include leveraging digital platforms for social services, promoting e-learning, upskilling, and utilizing technology to empower marginalized communities, underscoring the role of innovation in building adaptive and forward-looking social policies.

Discussion Points:

- **Digital Access for All:** Strategies to ensure equitable access to digital technologies, including artificial intelligence and other innovations, addressing the digital divide and creating opportunities for all segments of society.
- **Innovative Service Delivery:** Exploring how technology can enhance the delivery of social services, making them more efficient, accessible, and responsive to changing needs, especially in the face of climate-related challenges and other crises.
- **Role of AI:** Exploring the potential of artificial intelligence in building resilience, particularly in predictive modeling, risk assessment, and adaptive strategies to address climate-related challenges. Discussing ethical considerations and ensuring the responsible use of AI in the pursuit of resilient societies.
- **Climate-Resilient Innovation:** Highlighting the importance of digital innovation in building climate-resilient societies, exploring how technology can be harnessed to address the impacts of climate change and support adaptive measures. This includes drawing lessons from the blue economy initiatives in the region.
- **Tech-driven Educational Advancements:** Discussing the role of technology in advancing educational opportunities, with a focus on e-learning and innovative approaches to skill development/upskilling.

Expected Outcomes:

A set of recommendations for leveraging technology to enhance social policies, promoting digital inclusion, and fostering innovation for resilience in the LAC region.

Thematic Table 4: Financing Resilience in Uncertain Times: Linking Fiscal Systems with the Sustainable Development Goals

In the face of evolving challenges and uncertainties, this thematic table will delve into how countries in the region are adjusting their fiscal frameworks to address critical gaps in funding and the need for adaptive, forward-thinking financial policies. Emphasis will be placed on strategies that ensure tax systems and budget allocations are directly supporting the SDGs, particularly in areas such as gender equality and climate resilience.

Discussion Points:

- **Financing for Development:** Exploring strategies to mobilize resources for social policies, acknowledging the need for sustainable and diverse funding sources that align with the region's developmental goals. Emphasis will be placed on regional cooperation, public-private partnerships, and innovative financing mechanisms.
- **Fiscal Space for Social Policies:** Examining the creation of fiscal space to accommodate and prioritize social policies, particularly in times of uncertainty. Discussions will encompass effective fiscal



management, revenue mobilization, and considerations for sustainable public expenditure to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of social programs.

- **Social Impact Investment:** Exploring the potential of social impact investment as a means to attract private capital for social initiatives, fostering partnerships that align financial returns with positive social outcomes. This includes examining successful models and best practices in the LAC region.
- **Inclusive Financial Systems:** Discussing the role of inclusive financial systems in supporting resilience-building social policies. Topics will cover the accessibility of financial services, microfinance, and efforts to ensure that vulnerable populations have adequate access to financial resources.
- **Cross-Sectoral Collaboration:** Exploring opportunities for collaboration between public and private sectors, as well as civil society, to optimize resources for social policies. This includes discussing models that promote shared responsibility, transparency, and accountability in financing strategies.

Expected Outcomes:

Proposals for sustainably financing social policies in uncertain times, considering the multidimensional aspects of resilience. The outcomes will guide policymakers and stakeholders in the development of robust financial strategies that prioritize the well-being of communities in LAC.

SIDE EVENTS

In parallel to the main agenda of the Forum, several side events will be held to delve deeper into some relevant trends and opportunities in the region. These sessions are crafted to complement the main theme of the Forum, offering participants valuable opportunities for in-depth exploration, showcasing innovation, and fostering dialogue and collaboration.

Side Event 1: Economic Impact of Malnutrition in Eight LAC Countries

This side event aims to advance the discussion of policy recommendations for reducing malnutrition in the region. The results of the joint study with the WFP on the economic impact of malnutrition in eight countries in the region will be presented. This study was conducted to provide tools to facilitate policy discussion and highlight that, beyond the ethical issue of proper nutrition for the population, there is an impact on economic and social development that affects the long-term growth of countries. Comments are expected from countries that are addressing malnutrition as a priority with comprehensive reduction strategies.

Side Event 2: From Measurement to Policy – Poverty Data to Guide Resilience-Building Policy Design

This side event will explore innovative tools arising from initiatives aimed at income and multidimensional poverty reduction, with the goal of building resilience in the LAC region. Presentations will cover topics ranging from handling “complexity” for budget allocation for multidimensional poverty reduction, to real-time welfare

measurement techniques that allow for timely policy adjustments in response to shocks. By highlighting these innovative strategies, the event seeks to identify pathways to accelerate poverty reduction even amid fiscal constraints.

Side Event 3: Innovation Showcase - Sustainable Solutions for Social Resilience

This side event will showcase innovative projects, technologies, and initiatives from the public and private sectors that contribute to building resilient societies in LAC, including community-driven initiatives and projects that have successfully enhanced social resilience at the grassroots level. It will feature presentations and discussions on cutting-edge solutions addressing various aspects of social development, including inclusive economic growth, adaptive social protection, and digital inclusion. The goal is to highlight success stories, share best practices, and encourage collaboration between stakeholders to scale up these innovations for broader impact.

Side Event 4: Social Registries and Labor Inclusion Policies for Strengthened Resilient Social Protection

The side event will address the challenges for social registers to have up-to-date and timely information required to confront shocks, disasters and the impacts of the climate crisis, assuring access to universal social protection, specially, for population groups with higher levels of vulnerability. Special emphasis will be placed on information and indicators for social protection policies that foster labour inclusion strategies, thus ensuring the livelihoods of this group and strengthen their resilience strategies for future shocks. The event is organised in the framework of the ECLAC-BMZ/giz Project “Productive, ecological and socially just economic transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean”.

Side Event 5: Bracing Against Climate Shocks in the Caribbean

This side event will spotlight strategies specifically designed to address and mitigate the impacts of climate shocks in the Caribbean. Focusing on the region's unique vulnerabilities, the event will showcase initiatives from both public and private sectors that demonstrate effective climate adaptation and resilience-building measures. Discussions will delve into the use of technology, sustainable practices, and community-driven approaches to combat the challenges posed by climate change. Presentations and discussions will highlight success stories, share best practices, and explore collaborative opportunities to scale up these innovations.