







DATABASE OF NATIONAL & REGIONAL COVID-19 RESPONSES ACROSS CARICOM MEMBER STATES

This database is a compilation of the publicly reported COVID-19 related responses, at both national and regional levels across CARICOM. It includes a variety of measures, including health-related responses, social distancing measures, trade-related actions, economic stimulus packages and more. For ease of reference, we have colour coded the various COVID-19 responses of each Member State. The key is provided below:

Colour Coded Key for COVID-19 Responses

-  Measures relating to the formation of a task force, national plan, or initiative
-  Health related measures
-  Social distancing related measures (particularly curfews, lockdowns, institutional closures)
-  Travel restriction measure
-  Economic related measures (stimulus packages, adjustments to monetary & fiscal policies, etc.)
-  Trade related measures (removal of customs duties, export restrictions, domestic support to industries, etc.)

Please note that this document is updated bi-weekly. Therefore, we encourage you to regularly visit the COVID-19 Resources Tab under the Outreach section on our website: www.shridathramphalcentre.com Additionally, we do not take credit for the summaries presented in the tables below which were directly cited from the identified sources. Rather, our focus is to compile a user-friendly database of such information.

Thank you for downloading this document, continue to follow the Shridath Ramphal Centre for research and updates on COVID-19.

Database as at April 15, 2020

NATIONAL COVID-19 INITIATIVES

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

April 15, 2020: 23 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 2 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<p>The Government of Antigua and Barbuda established a national multi-sectoral COVID-19 task force which meets regularly to assess all international and regional developments related to COVID-19.</p>	<p>https://antigua-barbuda.com/covid-19-task-force-amps-up-education-and-awareness-campaign</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A retrofitted isolation and quarantine centre is being prepared at the Margetson ward, Holberton Hospital. The ward will be equipped to handle any outbreak of the COVID19 here in Antigua and Barbuda, including quarantining, isolation, treatment and laboratory testing. In Barbuda, an isolation room has also been identified at the Hanna Thomas Hospital. On March 9, 2020 it was reported that the work on these centres was nearing completion. Following a request from the government to help the country enhance its COVID-19 response, the healthcare human resource capacity was increased with an additional 31 healthcare workers from Cuba. They included 6 doctors and 25 nurses. Antigua and Barbuda will no longer have to rely solely on the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) to test persons who are suspected to have the virus since the Covid-19 testing equipment are now here on island. 1,500 testing kits have been provided by the People’s Republic of China, and 500 of a donation of 1,000 have also arrived, with others on the way. 	<p>https://ab.gov.ag/pdf/Coronavirus%20%20FAQ%20for%20travellers.pdf</p> <p>https://antigua-barbuda.com/the-government-of-antigua-and-barbuda-confirms-first-case-of-covid-19-coronavirus</p> <p>https://antiguaobserver.com/covid-19-testing-now-available-in-antigua/</p>
<p>A seven-day nationwide complete lockdown was implemented from April 2 until 6:00 on April 16.</p>	<p>https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/antigua-and-barbuda/coronavirus</p>
<p>The Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda decided on March 25, 2020 to close the V.C. Bird International airport to all incoming commercial traffic. This decision expands the previously announced ban on citizens from several identified countries.</p>	<p>https://ab.gov.ag/pdf/Antigua-and-Barbuda-Closes-Airport.pdf</p> <p>https://visitantiguabarbuda.com/response-to-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) has agreed to cease all disconnections of APUA water and electricity to households for 3 months, to re-connect those customers who have been recently disconnected, and to reduce by 20% the cost of electricity to households for a period of 3 months (April, May, June). On March 26, the Antigua and Barbuda government announced several measures, including (i) an increase in health spending (0.5 percent of GDP), (ii) a 20 percent reduction in electricity costs to the public and fuel costs to fishermen for 90 days; (iii) one-year investment incentives for home renovation and construction; (iv) suspension of the common external tariff on food imports and all new tax measures announced in 2020 budget; and (v) expansion of social safety net programs. 	<p>https://ab.gov.ag/pdf/APUAs-Assistance-COVID-19.pdf</p> <p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p>

As noted above under the economic stimulus plan, Antigua and Barbuda has announced the suspension of the common external tariff (CET) on food imports.

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19>

THE BAHAMAS

April 15, 2020: 53 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 8 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<p>The government's National Coordination Committee on COVID-19 was established to help combat the "grave threat" COVID-19 represents to the Bahamas. It features a cross section of civil society stakeholders and government representatives. These include Chief Medical Officer, Organization for Responsible Governance Executive Director, Central Bank of the Bahamas Governor, Bahamas Christian Council President, Bahamas Maritime Authority Chair, Downtown Nassau Partnership Director, Bahamas Chamber of Commerce Chair, Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association President, and Doctors Hospital Health System President.</p>	<p>https://ewnews.com/tuc-very-disappointed-about-exclusion-from-covid-19-taskforce</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During February 2020, PAHO experts travelled to Bahamas and other Caribbean countries to prepare and train staff for COVID-19 testing. PAHO has since been helping the Bahamas to build lab capacity and source additional test kits. • Local medical teams in collaboration with the Grand Bahama Port Authority (GBPA), have sourced and funded a supply of COVID-19 rapid test kits, from a United States-based company, for use by Grand Bahama Health Services. 	<p>https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15723:paho-prepares-8-caribbean-countries-for-laboratory-diagnosis-of-new-coronavirus&Itemid=1926&lang=en</p> <p>https://www.nationnews.com/nationnews/news/244964/bahamas-sources-covid-19-rapid-test-kits</p>
<p>The Office of the Prime Minister of the Bahamas has extended nationwide lockdowns of The Bahamas effective at 9:00 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 2020, through 5:00 a.m. on Monday, April 20. Another nationwide lockdown will take effect 9:00 p.m. on Friday, April 24 through 5:00 a.m. Monday, April 27. During these lockdown periods, virtually all businesses and service providers will be closed, to include all grocery stores. Hospitals, hotels with guests, law enforcement, and essential utility personnel are excepted from the round-the-clock shutdown order.</p>	<p>https://bs.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/</p>
<p>The Prime Minister of the Bahamas has closed all airports and sea ports to all incoming passengers (both Bahamian and non-Bahamian), and banned all domestic inter-island transportation (including private boats) within The Bahamas through April 30. This includes refuelling, stopping and anchoring, passing through, or innocent passage.</p>	<p>https://bs.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government announced various support measures totalling B\$65.7 million (0.6 percent of GDP), including (i) B\$4 million for the health sector and (ii) B\$4 million for food programs and B\$5.9 million as income support for the self-employed, (iii) B\$ 20 million to support business loans to SMEs and B\$30 million to provide tax deferrals (or 	<p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p> <p>https://opm.gov.bs/national-address-emergency-order-update/</p>

<p>tax credits) to companies retaining at least 80 percent of staff, and (iv) B\$1.8 million to support to Family Island administrators (local public officers).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central Bank of the Bahamas has arranged with domestic banks and credit unions to provide a 3-month deferral against repayments on credit facilities for businesses and households that were negatively impacted by the pandemic. Forbearance will be provided for borrowers who maintained their accounts in good standing before the onset of the pandemic. • State-owned electricity, water and sewerage companies are providing deferral arrangements, reconnecting services for consumers meeting certain requirements, and suspending disconnections for a defined period. 	<p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19 https://opm.gov.bs/national-address-emergency-order-update/</p> <p>https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/the-bahamas-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html</p>
<p>The Bahamas have confirmed that the United States government had seized critically needed medical supplies bound for their fight against the coronavirus, COVID-19.</p>	<p>https://barbadostoday.bb/2020/04/13/us-seized-covid-19-supplies-for-cayman-bahamas/</p>

BARBADOS

April 15, 2020: 73 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 5 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<p>The government of Barbados has appointed a COVID-19 Czar Richard Carter who is responsible for navigating the current crisis.</p>	<p>https://barbadostoday.bb/2020/04/13/covid-19-fight-far-from-over-says-czar/</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Barbados ‘Best-dos Santos Public Health Laboratory’ became one of the first in the Caribbean to acquire test kits and reagents for COVID-19 detection, with concurrent training of laboratory personnel in the new testing protocol. The provision of COVID-19 test kits and training were made possible by PAHO Health Emergencies Department. The government of Barbados has identified the old naval base facility at Harrison Point in St Lucy to be used as a quarantine and isolation facility for anyone affected by the COVID-19 virus. This refurbishment of centre has been completed. There are also other quarantine facilities including the District Hospital in St Lucy, the field hospital at the Garrison in St Michael and at Paragon in Christ Church. A medical team of 100 Cubans arrived in Barbados on April 5, to aid in the COVID-19 fight. The Government of Barbados has purchased 20,000 COVID-19 test kits from the Cayman Islands to increase its stock of the medical supplies, and also has 50,000 kits coming through PAHO. 	<p>https://www.paho.org/en/stories/paho-prepares-barbados-covid-19-testing</p> <p>https://www.loopnewsbarbados.com/content/st-lucy-facility-be-used-covid-19-isolation-center</p> <p>https://www.nationnews.com/nationnews/news/244844/cuban-medical-team-arrives</p> <p>https://www.loopcayman.com/content/covid-19-barbados-buys-additional-20000-test-kits-0</p>
<p>Barbados has extended the 24-hour lockdown until midnight on May 3, 2020. Effective Wednesday, April 15, 2020 – Residents and Citizens will be allowed to conduct essential business two days per week according to their surname.</p>	<p>https://bb.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/</p>
<p>Borders remain open but there is a mandatory 14-day quarantine in a Government facility for all persons entering Barbados. Airline crew is only allowed to disembark when absolutely necessary and must self-isolate when staying overnight.</p>	<p>https://bb.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/ https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Central Bank of Barbados (CBB) announced a series of measures (effective April 1, 2020) to help support commercial banks and other deposit-taking institution manage the economic fallout from the coronavirus shock. Specifically: i) the Bank’s discount rate at which it provides overnight lending to banks and deposit-taking non-banks licensed under the Financial Institutions Act was reduced from 7 percent to 2 percent; ii) the securities ratio 	<p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p>

for banks was lowered from 17.5 percent to 5 percent; iii) the 1.5 percent securities ratio for non-bank deposit taking licensees was eliminated; and, iv) the Bank indicated it stands ready to make collateralized loans for up to six months as liquidity support for licensees. These measures follow an agreement brokered by the Government of Barbados for commercial banks to provide forbearance in the form a 6-month debt-payment moratorium for individuals and business directly impacted by COVID-19.

- The IDB has moved swiftly to make crucial budgetary support (US\$80 million policy-based loan) available for the Government of Barbados as the country continues to contain to spread of COVID-19
- Among the fiscal measures announced by the government include:

National Insurance scheme (NIS) support – The government will provide supplemental support to the NIS Unemployment Fund as needed and within the context of available fiscal space.

Unemployment benefits –Those who are laid off fully will receive unemployment benefits for six months and those on short weeks will receive 60 percent for the days they are not working.

“Homes for All” Program – The government is to use BBD 50 million in the Housing Credit Fund to unlock a further BBD 200 million of financing from the banks to help over 1,000 households construct and own an affordable home. The project is expected to start in three months and is initially targeted at persons with a household income of BBD 4,000 per month.

Household Survival Program – A Household Survival Program (injecting BBD 20 million) will be implemented consisting of three initiatives to assist displaced workers. Those being laid off are entitled to unemployment benefits.

Welfare Support – Where, as a result of COVID-19, a household is left with no person employed, the government will provide a minimum income for those households and make available through the Welfare Department an amount up to \$600 per month during this period of hardship.

Adopt-a-Family Program – The government is working with persons who have been fortunate to be earning more than BBD 100,000 a year to “adopt” a vulnerable family and provide them with very much needed support of BBD 600 per month or to contribute to an Adopt-a-family fund chaired by the Director of Finance.

<https://www.nationnews.com/nationnews/news/244624/idb-ususd80m-barbados>

<https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/flash-alert-2020-151.html>

<p>NIS Deferral – Employers who are retaining more than [three quarters/two-thirds] of their staff complement will be able to defer the employer’s contributions to the NIS for the next three months in the first instance, with another three months if necessary.</p>	
<p>Unfortunately, around 20 ventilators which were purchased by Barbados to increase medical capacity were barred from exportation by the USA.</p>	<p>https://barbadostoday.bb/2020/04/13/us-seized-covid-19-supplies-for-cayman-bahamas/</p>

BELIZE

April 15, 2020: 18 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 2 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<p>Prime Minister Dean Barrow has announced the formation of a COVID 19 National Task Force and Oversight Committee to tackle the containment of the deadly virus. The Oversight Committee is co-chaired by the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition, with representation from the social partners and business community. The Task Force features representatives of the health and other sectors which will manage the established plan for tackling coronavirus.</p>	<p>https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/2020/03/12/government-forms-coronavirus-task-force-oversight-committee/</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During February PAHO experts travelled to Belize and other Caribbean countries to prepare and train staff for COVID-19 testing. • On March 25, a team of 60 Cuban doctors arrived in Belize to help with the national response against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. • Belize has so far received 2,500 tests from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and is expecting an additional 11,500 tests from the organization. Additionally, Belize ordered 4,000 tests from the Roche Agency in Guatemala, 2,000 of which are to be delivered this week and the remaining next week. The Office of the Prime Minister is, therefore, determining in consultation with the Ministry of Health, how many Cayman test kits to procure, and will place its order as soon as the 11,500 tests from PAHO are in hand. 	<p>https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15723:paho-prepares-8-caribbean-countries-for-laboratory-diagnosis-of-new-coronavirus&Itemid=1926&lang=en</p> <p>https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/2020/03/25/cuban-medical-team-arrives-in-belize/</p> <p>http://belizehighcommission.co.uk/2020/04/15/government-of-belize-to-procure-covid-19-test-kits-from-cayman-islands/</p>
<p>The government of Belize has declared a nationwide state of emergency for 30 days and will implement a curfew from 8p.m to 5a.m. (local time), beginning on Wednesday, April 1. Under the new measures, no one will be allowed to leave their homes except for specific reasons, including buying essential goods, attending medical appointments or to work in essential services.</p>	<p>https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/328021/belize-government-declares-state-of-emergency-and-curfew-from-april-1</p>
<p>All borders of entry to Belize are closed effective from March 23, for at least 30 days.</p>	<p>https://belizing.com/coronavirus/</p>
<p>partly through reallocating resources within the budget. The government has also introduced a statutory cash reserve requirements; (ii) extending the time period to classify targeted non- to 6 months; (iii) encouraging domestic banks and credit unions to provide grace periods for</p>	<p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p> <p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p>

(v) reducing risk-weights for banks on loans in the tourism sector from 100 percent to 50 percent. Financial services will be available to the public.

<http://health.gov.bz/www/component/content/article/177-general-health/1024-belize-announces-new-measures-in-response-to-covid-19>

DOMINICA

April 15, 2020: 16 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 0 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During February PAHO experts travelled to Dominica and other Caribbean countries to prepare and train staff for COVID-19 testing. • The Ministry of Health has announced that medical personnel from Cuba will arrive in Dominica on Thursday, March 26, to assist the country battle the coronavirus (COVID-19) contagion. The medical brigade includes 25 nurses, 5 doctors and 4 lab technicians. • Dominica and 60 other countries are set to benefit from a US\$6 million grant from the USA that will go towards the purchasing of test kits to fight the spread of COVID-19. Countries will also receive biosafety supplies, such as personal protection equipment and laboratory cabinets for the safe analysis of collected samples 	<p>https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15723:paho-prepares-8-caribbean-countries-for-laboratory-diagnosis-of-new-coronavirus&Itemid=1926&lang=en</p> <p>https://dominicanewsonline.com/news/homepage/news/dominica-to-receive-medical-help-from-cuba-to-fight-covid-19/</p> <p>https://dominicanewsonline.com/news/homepage/news/dominica-to-benefit-from-us-grant-to-buy-covid-19-test-kits/</p>
<p>A curfew is now in effect from 6pm to 6am on weekdays with a total lockdown on weekends until the 20th of April 2020. The 'Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020' extends the country's curfew for another 21 days after April 20th.</p>	<p>https://bb.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/</p>
<p>Effective 12 am on March 26, Douglas Charles Airport is closed. Effective March 28, Dominicans overseas will not be allowed to enter the country.</p>	<p>https://bb.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/</p>

GRENADA

April 15, 2020: 14 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 0 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A collaboration between 4 public health agencies has given Grenada the ability to conduct testing for Covid-19. Before the ability to test on island, Grenada's samples were tested at the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) laboratory in Trinidad. Samples were sent using LIAT or the Regional Security Services aircraft. The samples took at least 48 hours to return. The PCR machines came to Grenada through a joint initiative of Canadian Bank Note and the National Lotteries Authority, while testing kits were donated by St George's University. The other collaborating agencies are the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), the Windward Islands Research and Education Institute (WINDREF) also at SGU, and CARPHA. During March more than 300 kits were expected to come from 3 sources: a donation from the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) the new single regional public health agency for the Caribbean, the Chinese Government, and purchasing from a company which supplies the kits. During March it was announced that Grenada has been in negotiation with Cuba for nurses and medical treatment. A Reuters report later reported that Cuba sent medical contingents to socialist allies Venezuela and Nicaragua as well as Jamaica, Suriname and Grenada. 	<p>https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/04/curfew-continues-covid-19-test-can-be-done-on-island/</p> <p>https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/03/additional-covid-19-tests-for-grenada-all-results-negative-to-date/</p> <p>https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/03/additional-covid-19-tests-for-grenada-all-results-negative-to-date/</p> <p>https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-cuba/cuban-doctors-head-to-italy-to-battle-coronavirus-idUSKBN219051</p>
<p>The 24-hour mandatory curfew which should have ended on 6 April has been extended until 20 April 2020.</p>	<p>https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/04/curfew-continues-covid-19-test-can-be-done-on-island/</p>
<p>The Government of Grenada has stopped all routine commercial passenger airline traffic to and from Grenada. Ports are closed for disembarkation for all cruise ships and pleasure craft.</p>	<p>https://bb.usembassy.gov/covid-information-grenada/</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Grenadian government announced various fiscal and financial measures March 20, effective for April-June in the first instance, to mitigate the impact of COVID on the economy. These include: (i) payroll support to the affected sectors (such as tourism) and individuals, (ii) expansion of government employment programs; (iii) credit support to small businesses; (iv) increased health care spending, and (v) reduced or deferred payment of some taxes. The Government of Grenada's Covid-19 Economic Support Secretariat, (CESS) has officially been established to implement the economic stimulus package. It includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20 million dollars' worth of payroll support to the hoteliers, restaurants, bars, small travel agents, and income support to public buses, taxi drivers, tourist vendor and other such identified hospitality-based businesses. 	<p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p> <p>https://www.grenadabroadcast.com/featured/covid-19-emergency-economic-stimulus-plan/</p> <p>https://www.mgovernance.net/national-address-dr-right-honourable-keith-mitchell-prime-minister-grenada-carriacou-and-petite-0</p>

2. Adjust the small hoteliers' facility at the Grenada Development Bank to support all hoteliers by injecting an additional 7 million to this facility.
3. Work with NIS to provide unemployment benefits support due to the fallout initially estimated at 10 million dollars.
4. Suspend the 2% increase in NIS payments for the period.
5. Encourage the trade union movement to work with the business community to support the use of vacation leave as a first option in the event of the businesses having skeleton staff.
6. Expand the public sector investment programmes to boost employment at the community level.
7. Suspend the monthly advance payment on corporate income tax for the period.
8. Suspend the instalment payments on the annual stamp tax period for the period.
9. Expand the small business soft lending facility at the Grenada Development Bank by an additional 5 million.
10. Place on the price control list certain cleaning items to prevent price gouging.
11. Follow all necessary exemption protocols to provide incentives to private labs and medical facilities procuring items to support the fight against COVID-19.
12. Increase farm labour support immediately to boost agricultural production island wide - government is also giving consideration to support for farmers and fish exporters who have recently been affected as a result of international travel restrictions.
13. Government commits to ensuring that the cost of electricity will be reduced by 30% for March, April and May in the first instance to all customers. This will not apply to a few companies that have special concessionary arrangements.
14. Financial institutions have agreed to provide a moratorium on principal and interest payments to their clients on condition for the 3-month period in question, in the first instance.

As noted above under the economic stimulus plan, Grenada intends to increase farm labour support immediately to boost agricultural production island wide - government is also giving consideration to support for farmers and fish exporters who have recently been affected as a result of international travel restrictions.

<https://www.grenadabroadcast.com/featured/covid-19-emergency-economic-stimulus-plan/>
<https://www.grenadabroadcast.com/featured/covid-19-emergency-economic-stimulus-plan/>

GUYANA

April 15, 2020: 55 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 6 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<p>Prime Minister Moses Nagamootoo was appointed Chairman of the National COVID-19 Task Force. The Task Force has drafted a National Strategic Master Plan that will guide the approach to combatting the Novel Coronavirus Disease. The Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) has been making recommendations to the National COVID-19 task force to manage and control the spread of the Coronavirus Disease in Guyana. The National Task Force continues to monitor the situation in Guyana, and this includes citizens' conduct.</p>	<p>https://dpi.gov.gy/tag/guyanas-national-covid-19-task-force/</p> <p>https://dpi.gov.gy/heoc-providing-recommendations-to-national-task-force-to-control-covid-19-spread/</p> <p>https://motp.gov.gy/index.php/2015-07-20-18-49-38/2015-07-20-18-50-58/4018-statement-by-his-excellency-david-granger-president-of-the-co-operative-republic-of-guyana-on-the-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-2020-03-28</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During February PAHO experts travelled to Guyana and other Caribbean countries to prepare and train staff for COVID-19 testing. The Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) continues to support Guyana in its efforts to contain the spread of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and to detect cases of the virus, with its most recent intervention being the donation of some 1,100 test kits to the Ministry of Public Health. • In addition to building its capacity to conduct tests, the public health ministry has received 14 ventilators from its suppliers, which will go towards boosting the capacity of the ministry's "level three" facility. 	<p>https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15723:paho-prepares-8-caribbean-countries-for-laboratory-diagnosis-of-new-coronavirus&Itemid=1926&lang=en</p> <p>http://guyanachronicle.com/2020/03/28/guyana-gets-1100-more-covid-19-test-kits</p> <p>http://guyanachronicle.com/2020/03/28/guyana-gets-1100-more-covid-19-test-kits</p>
<p>On April 3rd, the Minister of Health announced that all residents of Guyana will be restricted to their homes/yards. A national curfew from 6 PM until 6 AM is in effect for one month. A limited number of essential services will be operating daily with reduced hours of service.</p>	<p>https://gy.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/</p>
<p>Airports in Guyana are closed to all international passenger flights until 1 May 2020. This does not apply to nationals and residents of Guyana. This does not apply to: Urgent health condition motive; Professional trips which cannot be deferred as authorized; Medivac flights; Technical stops for fuel only and special authorized flights.</p>	<p>https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bank of Guyana has implemented the following measures in relation to the financial sector: 	<p>https://www.bankofguyana.org.gy/bog/images/communications/press_release/COVID19release.pdf</p>

1. Grant a three-month moratorium to classify affected accounts as non-performing; Waive paragraphs 14 and 15 of Supervision Guideline No. 5 (i.e. the regulatory treatment/condition for renegotiating loans).
 2. Ensure the foreign exchange market continues to function effectively.
 3. Continue with an accommodative monetary stance to promote growth.
 4. The Bank has further encouraged financial institutions to consider the following measures: Defer loan payments to assist customers in good standing; Defer loan payments by companies to assist with their liquidity requirements; Waive or reduce fees/penalties for transactions with ATMs, POS, EFT, debit cards, loan processing, late payments on loans, etc. and; Encourage customers to reduce in-person transactions by using e-banking, ATMs, POS, telephone, etc.
- The Guyana Revenue Authority announced a number of tax relief measures:
 - Removal of VAT on Water and Electricity with effect from April 01, 2020 to June 30, 2020.
 - Removal of VAT on Domestic Air Travel with effect from April 08, 2020 to June 30, 2020.
 - Extension of the April 30th deadline for the filing of tax returns to June 30, 2020. However, estimated remaining taxes using “management financial statements”, for the Year of Income 2019 (Year of Assessment 2020) must be paid by April 30th, 2020.
 - The Authority will expedite the processing of VAT refunds for businesses and PAYE refunds for employees.
 - The waiver of VAT and duties on COVID 19 medical supplies and lab testing kits.
 - The granting of Tax deductions for all donations made by local businesses to staff and health institutions for the treatment of the virus.
 - The deferral of the payment of advance corporate and individual advance taxes for the Year of Assessment 2021 (Year of Income 2020) and PAYE for affected businesses until June 30, 2020. For example, airline and tourism and associated industries, like hotels and transportation, who continue to employ their employees, or send their employees on extended vacation leave, the payment of advance taxes will be deferred without penalty and interest.

<https://www.gra.gov.gy/publications/press-releases/1134-additional-relief-measures-to-combat-covid-19>

<p>- Affected businesses will pay advance taxes on the current year basis.</p>	
<p>Guyana has announced through its revenue authority that effective from March 26, 2020 until June 30, 2020 no import or domestic VAT is to be charged on medical supplies for the testing, prevention and treatment of COVID-19. These include COVID-19 testing kits and apparatus, thermometers, protective garments and the like, disinfectants (sterilization products), related medical devices, medical consumables, vitamin C, multivitamins, soaps and rubbing alcohol. These items would have previously attracted a 14% VAT and duties ranging from 5-20%.</p>	<p>http://guyanachronicle.com/2020/03/26/gra-waives-taxes-duties-on-medical-supplies-against-covid-19</p>

HAITI

April 15, 2020: 41 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 3 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAHO announced on March 6 that it would prioritize Haiti and Venezuela as “key countries” to support as Latin America works to manage increasing COVID-19 cases. Since then PAHO and the Prime Minister of Haiti have been working together to strengthen health system preparedness for COVID-19. PAHO provided 500 test kits for COVID-19 to the Ministry of Health, Haiti, along with a training on laboratory diagnosis and detection of the disease. The Ministry of health has quarantine measures in effect but they are prioritizing home quarantine. The situation might change with the evolution of COVID-19. The Haitian Ministry of Health have set up isolation mechanisms for suspected patients while they are conducting the test for COVID-19. The Ministry of Health has outlined a plan to combat the pandemic in Haiti, estimating a budget of \$37.2 million. Already, international and local organizations have been meeting to coordinate the response. The Haitian Government thanked Cuba for its assistance to fight the pandemic of SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, after eight Covid-19 cases were diagnosed in the country. The Henry Reeve Brigade that will support Haitian physicians to fight Covid-19 was awarded its flag at the Cuban Embassy in Haiti. The Minister recalled the 'traditional solidarity' and strong ties of friendship between Cuba and Haiti, which were strengthened during the cholera outbreak that killed 10,000 people, and later after Hurricane Matthew hit the country in 2016. 	<p>https://globalnews.ca/video/6642463/covid-19-paho-prioritizes-haiti-venezuela-migrant-populations-for-coronavirus-support</p> <p>https://www.paho.org/en/news/27-3-2020-paho-and-prime-minister-haiti-work-together-strengthen-health-system-preparedness</p> <p>https://ht.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/</p> <p>https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/covid-19-haiti-current-response-and-challenges</p> <p>https://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=r&id=53833&SEO=haitian-govt-thanks-cuba-for-assistance-to-fight-covid-19</p>
<p>The government of Haiti has implemented measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. Schools, universities, vocational centres, and factories are closed until further notice; gatherings larger than 10 people have been banned. A curfew is in place from 8 PM.-5AM.</p>	<p>https://ht.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/</p>
<p>All flights to Port Au Prince International airport and Tocap Haitian International airport are suspended. This does not apply to domestic, emergency, humanitarian, medevac and government flights.</p>	<p>https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank approves US\$20 million grant to support COVID-19 response in Haiti. This project aims to respond to the threat posed by COVID-19 through testing and improved treatment in Haiti. Haiti is the only CARICOM country covered in a United Nations (UN) response plan to fight COVID-19. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on Wednesday launched a US \$2 billion coordinated global humanitarian response plan to fight COVID-19 in some of the world's most 	<p>https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/01/world-bank-approves-us20-million-grant-to-support-covid-19-response-in-haiti</p> <p>https://www.stlucianewsonline.com/haiti-only-caricom-country-covered-in-uns-us2-billion-response-plan-for-covid-19/</p>

vulnerable countries in a bid to protect millions of people and stop the virus from circling back around the globe.

- The main economic impact from COVID-19 will come through remittances, which represent about 30 percent of GDP and are expected to drop with the income shock in the United States and other source markets. The authorities launched a public health preparedness plan for containment and treatment; they plan to boost some social programs, and are also considering additional health care and security spending, as well as transfers to support workers and households, including supporting wage payments temporarily in some sectors. Altogether, spending should increase by 1.6 percent of GDP, of which 0.4 percent of GDP on healthcare, 0.2 percent of GDP of dry food rations and 0.8 percent of GDP on transfers.
- The central bank moved immediately to ease conditions in the financial system, including reducing the refinance and reference rates, lowering reserve requirements on domestic currency deposits, easing loan repayment obligations for three months, and suspending fees in the interbank payment system.

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19>

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19>

JAMAICA

April 15, 2020: 125 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 5 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jamaica has established a COVID-19 Task Force which provides continuous updates. Jamaica has created a special COVID-19 Tourism Recovery Task Force to look at the current situation and plan for the recovery to come. Dr David Walcott, a Jamaican entrepreneur and doctor recently founded and convened Shapers Against COVID, an international task force of more than 250 young people from across some 60 countries across the globe to drive action against COVID-19. 	<p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDpa5WJnzPI</p> <p>https://ca.travelpulse.com/news/destinations/jamaica-sets-up-covid-19-task-force-for-management-and-recovery.html</p> <p>http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/business-report/jamaican-makes-mark-in-covid-19-fight-by-creating-global-task-force-rhodes-scholar-dr-david-walcott-creates-shapers-against-covid-191134?profile=1606</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During February PAHO prepared Jamaica along with 8 other Caribbean countries for COVID-19 testing. Since then the Government has received material to do about 3,000 COVID-19 tests from PAHO. The Chinese community donated \$1M in COVID-19 supplies to St James police. The donation—made at the Freeport Police Station in Montego Bay, St James—comprises spring water, hand sanitizers, face masks, hand towels, alcohol, soft drinks, biscuits, hand wipes, and disinfectants. Spokesman for the JGA, Andy Chang said the donation is testimony that the Chinese community is in solidarity with Jamaica in this challenging time. He said that further donations will be made to other institutions. On March 21, Jamaica welcomed 140 Cuban medical professionals to support the island’s national response efforts for COVID-19. The team includes: 90 specialist nurses, including for critical care, emergency, medical, surgical and primary care; 46 doctors, including internists and haematologists; and 4 therapists. 	<p>https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15723:paho-prepares-8-caribbean-countries-for-laboratory-diagnosis-of-new-coronavirus&Itemid=1926&lang=en</p> <p>https://jis.gov.jm/jamaica-gets-material-to-conduct-3000-covid-19-tests/</p> <p>https://buzz-caribbean.com/news/chinese-community-donates-1m-in-covid-19-supplies-to-st-james-police/</p> <p>https://www.moh.gov.jm/jamaica-welcomes-140-medical-pros-from-cuban/</p>
<p>Prime Minister Andrew Holness has announced a seven-day lockdown in St Catherine from 5 am on April 15 to 5 am on April 22. Meanwhile, the new nightly curfew outside of St Catherine is 9 pm to 5 am.</p>	<p>http://www.loopjamaica.com/content/live-blog-covid-19-caribbean-3</p>
<p>Passengers are not allowed to enter Jamaica until 21 April 2020. This does not apply to passengers with an authorization issued by the government of Jamaica. Passengers with an authorization issued by the government of Jamaica will be quarantined for 14 days.</p>	<p>https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government of Jamaica is providing a \$25 billion stimulus, the largest fiscal stimulus in Jamaica's history. The reduction in GCT from 16.5% to 15% puts \$14 billion back in the hands of consumers and supports consumption. The \$1 billion MSME tax credit provides critical cash-flow support to MSME's and the dramatic reduction in regulatory fees for coconut, coffee, cocoa and spice farmers incentivizes greater production. The Banking sector has volunteered to forgo the reduction of the asset tax t announced earlier, for one year, which adds \$3 billion to the \$7 billion COVID Contingency, bringing the total COVID Fiscal Contingency to \$10 billion. • The Minister of Finance announced tax cuts of around 0.6 percent of GDP, along with targeted measures for up to 0.5 percent of GDP to counteract the effects of COVID19. This is largely expected to be financed by ongoing asset divestment. Additional measures have been announced to support the most affected sectors by the virus and contain labour shedding, including SCT and custom duty waivers on medical supplies and sanitizers and a COVID-19 Allocation of Resources for Employees (CARE) program, which envisages (i) temporary cash transfers to businesses in targeted sectors based on the number of workers employed; (ii) temporary cash transfer to individuals where loss of employment can be verified since March 10; (iii) grants targeted at the most vulnerable segments of society. The Minister also noted that the Fiscal Responsibility law contains an escape clause that would allow for some temporary flexibility in meeting the fiscal targets, should the economic situation deteriorate further. • The overnight policy rate remains unchanged at 0.5 percent, but Bank of Jamaica has taken additional actions to ensure uninterrupted system wide liquidity, with an estimated J\$57 billion liquidity injection to date, and removal of limits on the amounts that deposit taking institutions can borrow overnight without being charged a penalty rate and a broadening of the range of acceptable repo collateral. The authorities are also encouraging the banking sector to reschedule loans and mortgages, in addition to the mortgage rate cuts already announced by the National Housing Trust. • The Bank of Jamaica has intervened in the FX market through limited sales of reserves, via the B-FXITT auction mechanism. 	<p>https://mof.gov.jm/mof-media/media-centre/press/2633-fiscal-stimulus-response-to-the-covid-19.html</p> <p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p> <p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p> <p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p>
<p>The Government has waived the Special Consumption Tax on approximately 100,000 litres of alcohol for use in making (or substituting for) sanitizers that will be donated to the National Health Fund and Ministry of Health. They have also waived Customs Duty on the importation of masks, gloves, hand sanitizers and liquid hand soap for a 90-day period. Under normal circumstances, Customs requires BPO firms to keep the equipment used in their operations physically at their place of business. This requirement is waived for a specific period to facilitate working from home and for business continuity.</p>	<p>https://mof.gov.jm/mof-media/media-centre/press/2633-fiscal-stimulus-response-to-the-covid-19.html</p>

Government Senator Don Wehby has called for the suspension of the importation of agricultural produce that is produced locally amid the economic squeeze farmers are now having to bear because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/lead-stories/20200330/it-burns-my-heart-govt-senator-calls-suspension-agri-imports-farmers>

MONTSERRAT

April 15, 2020: 11 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 0 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On March 31, the premier received confirmation from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) that a shipment of medical supplies consisting of Personal Protective Equipment and testing kits, has been shipped and is expected to arrive shortly, with an additional shipment to follow. The government's request for medical assistance from Cuba through our regional partner the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) has received approval from the UK, paving the way for 32 health professionals to come to Montserrat to support our over stretched medical staff. Their date of arrival is to be announced. 	<p>http://www.gov.ms/covid-19-stimulus-packages-statement-for-montserrat-premier-hon-joseph-e-farrell/</p> <p>http://www.gov.ms/covid-19-stimulus-packages-statement-for-montserrat-premier-hon-joseph-e-farrell/</p>
<p>As of March 28, 2020, Montserrat has imposed a 24-hour curfew until April 14. The 24-hour curfew has been extended until Thursday, April 30, 2020. During this period the island will be under a 7-day complete shutdown from Monday April 13 at 12 am until Monday April 20 at 12 am.</p>	<p>https://bb.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/</p>
<p>Passengers are not allowed to enter Montserrat. This does not apply to passengers from Montserrat; This does not apply to passengers who have a permit of permanent residence; This does not apply to airline crew; This does not apply to husband, wife, child or other dependents of a person who is from or reside in Montserrat.</p>	<p>https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 1, the Montserrat government announced a broad set of fiscal and financial measures, including (i) increasing the tax threshold, and a deferral of all business related taxes, (ii) providing financial support to vulnerable tourism sector employees, (iii) providing EC\$900 (US\$ 333) per month in benefit support to unemployed persons, (iv) providing additional food packages and food delivery to low income groups and (v) providing financial support to the agricultural sector to enhance food security. The economic plan outlines 4 main areas of support, notably support to workers, support to businesses, general support, and agricultural support (note all figures below are quoted in EC Dollars) <p>SUPPORT TO WORKERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the tax threshold by \$5,000, to \$20,000 from January 1, 2020. The new tax bands will be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Income of \$0.00 to \$20,000- attract 0% tax Amounts over \$20,001 and between \$25,000- attracts 10% tax Amounts over \$25,001 and between \$30,000 – attracts 20% tax Amounts over \$30,001 and between \$150,000 attracts 30% 	<p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p> <p>http://www.gov.ms/covid-19-stimulus-packages-statement-for-montserrat-premier-hon-joseph-e-farrell/</p> <p>http://www.gov.ms/government-offers-fiscal-stimulus-package-in-response-to-covid-19/</p>

v. Amounts over \$150,001- attracts 40% Tax

- Direct financial support to employees in the Tourism sector; including hotels, tour operators, restaurants, and transportation services. Government will pay at least 80% of salaries up to a maximum amount of \$3,200 per month (equivalent to 80% of a \$4,000 salary).
- Provide Covid-19 Benefit Support – to provide \$900 a month (food package and cash support) to persons who do not have any work and unable to access other Social Security benefits and other financial support.
- Social Services to provide additional food package top up for vulnerable low income earners and other low income groups.
- Additional support will be provided to the Social Security Fund as required. The Social Security is an important protection system for our island and Government stands by and fully supports the Fund.

SUPPORT TO BUSINESSES:

- Deferral (postponement) of all business related taxes (Accrued and Current) for all businesses. This support will be for an initial period of 3 months, and may be extended subject to further review.
- Deadline extension for the annual returns for businesses to the Financial Services Commission by three months, and no penalty charges will apply during this period.

GENERAL SUPPORT

- Cash injections will be provided to fund a grocery delivery service. This aims to cover the additional fuel, equipment and PPE costs to provide this essential service. This will be done in conjunction with the Red Cross. An initial allocation of \$25,000 has been provided.
- Support will be provided for food delivery to the most vulnerable in our communities, ensuring that no one goes hungry during this crisis. Government has provided an additional funding of \$50,000 to the Meals on Wheels service to enable it to make improvements in service provision.
- The Government of Montserrat has agreed with Montserrat Utilities Limited that no further disconnections of electricity and water will take place until further notice.
- The Government will, where feasible, and within the restrictions of the Government’s public health orders, continue to progress our capital project portfolio. Whilst some physical works will cease, we will continue to progress with design and procurement work to ensure that we mitigate schedule impacts to our overall capital investment programme.

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT:

(Discussed below under the trade-measures section)

The Minister of Agriculture has submitted a plan of action to boost food production in the short to medium term. Food security and production will be enhanced through direct investment in our farming operations

<http://www.gov.ms/covid-19-stimulus-packages-statement-for-montserrat-premier-hon-joseph-e-farrell/>

and support to identified producers with a total cash injection of \$641,000 which will cover a number of developments:

- o Provision of seeds and planting materials, and increase production of the government nursery;
- o Enhancement of sheltered production systems;
- o Increase in chilled storage facility to extend product shelf life;
- o Provision of irrigation systems;
- o Land preparation, where required and feasible;
- o Assistance with poultry chick purchase;
- o Provision of materials for pens or storage structures.

<http://www.gov.ms/government-offers-fiscal-stimulus-package-in-response-to-covid-19/>

ST. KITTS & NEVIS

April 15, 2020: 14 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 0 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
St. Kitts and Nevis has established a National COVID-19 Task Force.	https://www.sknis.kn/contact-tracing-is-a-critical-measure-to-contain-covid-19-in-st-kitts-nevis/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A group of health care specialists from Cuba has travelled to St Kitts and Nevis as part of its COVID-19 pandemic response. The group which comprises of 30 nurses and four doctors all trained in Intensive Care Medicine, arrived in the Federation March 28 On March 22, the Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis informed of a 27 percent increase in budgeted health expenditure specifically to deal with COVID-19. This is partly being used to acquire protective equipment masks, gloves, and ventilators. This is an additional \$16.9m investment into our health system, in addition to the \$62m already budgeted, to ensure our health system is ready. 	http://www.loopnewsbarbados.com/content/cuban-doctors-aid-st-kitts-nevis-covid-19-response-3 http://www.myvuenews.com/pm-harris-announces-covid-19-economic-stimulus-package/ https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19
The 24-hour lockdown has been extended until Thursday, April 16, 2020.	https://bb.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/
Airports in St. Kitts and Nevis are closed.	https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On March 22 March 26, the Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis announced an increase in the health budget (½ percent of GDP). He also announced a slew of fiscal stimulus measures (3¾ percent of GDP), including (i) an injection of funds to SMEs and the agriculture sector; (ii) waiving of customs duties for essential hygiene and health products imports; (iii) additional support for poverty alleviation program; (iv) a reduction of the corporate income tax rate from 33 percent to 25 percent, and of the Unincorporated Business Tax rate from 4 percent to 2 percent, for three months; (v) funding for mortgage loans to citizens of St. Kitts and Nevis; and (vi) a moratorium on payments for electricity services for affected businesses and individuals for a three months. The economic stimulus package is nearly \$120 million. This is the largest assistance package announced by any Government in the region. In addition to the current public assistance initiatives, the Government's stimulus package to cushion the impact of the health crisis on individuals and the economy would include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Postponement of the payment of Property Tax from June to September 2020(No Cost but Cash Flow Impacted). - Removal of VAT and Import Duty for six months on the following additional hygiene items: hand sanitizers, hand sanitizer dispensing machine, disinfecting wipes, rubbing alcohol, gloves, masks, 	https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19 http://www.myvuenews.com/pm-harris-announces-covid-19-economic-stimulus-package/

protective gowns and the Removal of Import Duty and Customs Service Charge for six months on the following: Vegetables, Fruits, Fruit Juices, Cough and Cold Preparations, Vitamins (3 million).

- Waiver of payments for consumption of water for the period April to June 2020 for individuals who have been laid off by businesses or experience a reduction in earnings as a consequence of COVID-19 (Cost Unknown).
- Reduction of the Corporate Income Tax rate from 33 percent to 25 percent for the period April to June 2020 for businesses that retain at least 75 percent of their employees (\$4.8 million)
- Reduction of the Unincorporated Business Tax rate by 50 percent from 4.0 percent to 2.0 percent for the period April to June 2020 (\$1.0 million)
- Injection of \$10 million to boost production in the Agriculture Sector and ensure greater food security for the Federation.
- Waiver of payments for the consumption of water by farmers for six months (April to September 2020) (Cost Unknown)
- Provision of an additional \$5 million to support the Poverty Alleviation Programme.
- Employees who contract the virus and for whom contributions were made would be eligible for Social Security benefits. The Social Security Board will establish a special fund with about \$10 million - \$15 million to assist with income support of up to \$1,000 per month for workers whose income would have been impacted by COVID-19. Registered self-employed persons who can show that they have been impacted would also qualify for this support.
- Provision of additional resources in the region of \$12.0 million to capitalize the Severance Payment Fund
- The Development Bank of St. Kitts and Nevis will facilitate a loan 6 repayment moratorium for six (6) months and the waiver of all applicable late fees and charges to support customers who are impacted by the loss of income due to COVID-19. (No Cost but Cash Flow Impacted)
- The National Housing Corporation (NHC) will implement a moratorium on mortgages for an initial period of three (3) months in the first instance for affected homeowners. (No Cost but Cash Flow Impacted)
- The St. Kitts Electricity Company (SKELEC) and the Nevis Electricity Company (NEVLEC) would implement a moratorium on payments for electricity services for affected businesses and individuals for a three (3) month period, April to June 2020. (No Cost but Cash Flow Impacted)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuation of the Fresh Start Programme with an injection of \$5 million to assist poor and marginalized youths by providing access to capital to fund small and medium sized business projects - Provide funding through the Development Bank of St. Kitts and Nevis for mortgage loans to citizens of St. Kitts and Nevis in the amount of \$30 million - The Government will reprioritize and accelerate the pace of implementation of approved Capital Projects that could have a direct positive impact on the economy. 	
<p>As noted above under the economic stimulus plan, there are some trade-related measures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temporary elimination (6-months) of import tariffs on certain products, e.g. vegetables, fruits, fruit juices, cold preparations, vitamins, hand sanitizers, hands sanitizer dispensing machines, rubbing alcohol, gloves, masks, and cleansing or sanitizing wipes (in HS Chapters 07; 08; 20; 21; 29; 30; 34; 39; 40; 48; 63; 90), due to the COVID-pandemic. Imports also exempted from VAT. - Injection of \$10 million to boost production in the Agriculture Sector and ensure greater food security for the Federation. Free Bayticol will be also be provided to farmers for the next 6 months. 	<p>http://www.myvuenews.com/pm-harris-announces-covid-19-economic-stimulus-package/</p> <p>https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/covid19_e.htm</p>

ST. LUCIA

April 15, 2020: 15 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 0 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<p>The recently established COVID-19 Caribbean Tourism Task Force is enlisting the dynamism and innovativeness of young hospitality professionals to encourage protective practices by Caribbean nationals, especially younger ones, many of whom have been slow to respond to the urgency of the outbreak.</p>	<p>http://www.govt.lc/news/caribbean-hospitality-youth-encourage-peers-to-get-behind-covid-19-directives</p>
<p>On March 23, Prime Minister Allen Chastanet announced on the response to COVID-19, that over 100 Cuban doctors and nurses will be coming to assist St Lucia.</p>	<p>https://www.loopslu.com/content/over-100-cuban-doctors-nurses-coming-st-lucia-fight-coronavirus</p>
<p>The 10-hour curfew from 7 pm to 5 am will continue to be in effect from Tuesday, April 14 until Sunday, April 26, 2020. Private vehicles will be allowed to carry only two people during the 10-hour curfew.</p>	<p>https://bb.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/</p>
<p>All airports in St. Lucia are closed until 30 April 2020.</p>	<p>https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saint Lucia’s National COVID-19 Response Telethon held April 12, 2020, raised \$2.5 million — and counting. The aim of the telethon is to raise funds to support workers on the front-liners, such as doctors, nurses, and law enforcement officials, as well as the vulnerable in society such as the poor and elderly. • On April 8, the St. Lucia government announced the Social Stabilization Plan (2 percent of GDP), including (i) temporary income support, (ii) an extension of tax payments, (iii) tax credit to companies that at least retain part of their staff, (iv) suspension of rental payments for six months for small enterprises renting from government, (v) government assistance to local entrepreneurs that produce certain sanitary products. • Details of the Social Stabilization Plan include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social support - Temporary income support will be provided to NIC contributors and non-NIC contributors for a period of 3 months in the first instance. The NIC allowance is estimated to cost between \$33 million and \$80 million, over a 3-month period, depending on the number of eligible persons. A review will then be conducted to determine whether an extension for another 3 months will be needed. - The Government will provide a subsistence allowance to persons, who have been displaced (through loss of employment or income) as a result of COVID-19. This income support will be 	<p>https://www.stlucianewsonline.com/breaking-news-st-lucia-covid-19-telethon-raises-2-5-million/</p> <p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p> <p>http://www.govt.lc/news/governments-response-to-covid-19-impact-social-stabilization-programme-phase-1-</p> <p>http://www.govt.lc/media.govt.lc/www/pressroom/news/attachments/social-stabilization-plan-april---june0.pdf</p>

in the amount of \$500 monthly for 3 months. This is expected to be in excess of \$16.8 million, based on the number of eligible persons.

- An extension of time will be granted for Corporate Income Tax instalment payments due on March 31, June 30, and September 30, 2020. The extension of time is for one (1) month in each instance.
- An extension of time will be granted for the filing of Income Tax Returns by one (1) month for all tax types administered by the Inland Revenue Department. This pertains to all individuals, individual enterprises, companies and other entities. Persons and entities are all encouraged to use the Inland Revenue Department's Electronic Filing Platform to file their tax returns and make payments online, as it is a convenient, safe and reliable medium. This will also facilitate greater adherence to the social distancing protocols currently in place.
- The waiver of interest and penalties on all tax types administered by the Inland Revenue Department due in the month of March, 2020. Similarly, all payment due dates for the months of April to September 2020 will be extended by one month (for example, Value Added Tax (VAT) payments due on April 21st 2020 will now be due on May 21st 2020; Personal Income Tax payment due on March 31, 2020 will now be due on April 30, 2020).
- In order to encourage companies to maintain their staff the Government will offer a tax credit of 30% of the employee's full salary. The tax credit will be tiered, based on the number of employees that are retained by the entity. One condition is that the company would have to obtain a tax clearance certificate from the Inland Revenue Department, to show that they are not indebted to the government for the payment of taxes.
- Barrel Concessions - As part of the Government's response to the impact of this pandemic, the annual duty-free barrel trade will take effect much earlier than normal and start in June to allow people sufficient time to receive much needed items from family members and friends abroad.

SME Measures

- The suspension of all rent payments for six (6) months for vendors and operators of hospitality operations, including restaurants, which are accommodated in units owned by the government, for SMMEs with can demonstrate loss of business.
- Provide direct support to local indigenous farmers to support increased productivity and inputs to supply the local and regional markets.
- Provide relief to minibus operators through the payment of \$1.1 million in fuel rebate.
- Provide targeted support to farmers and fishermen adversely affected through the purchase of products from farmers and fishers. On this note, I would like to encourage fishermen to participate in the COAST insurance facility in light of the impending hurricane season. In light of the difficulties experienced by Winfresh, today, the Government injected one million dollars

<p>into National Farmers Trading Organization (NFTO) on behalf of Winfresh with another payment of one million to follow soon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The government is considering special concessions to entities which are producing sanitation products and health care products such as face masks. The government will also encourage entrepreneurs to produce alternatives to imported vitamin C supplements for local consumption. - We will be developing a strong “Buy Local Campaign” to reduce our importation bill, facilitate diversification, spur investment in local enterprises, foster greater consumption and assist in generating some level of employment. 	
<p>Included within the above mentioned social stabilization plan are some trade-related measures. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The commencement of duty free barrel concessions from June 2020. - The intention to reduce the import bill by implementing a strong “buy local” campaign. - The intention to provide direct support to farmers through fertilizers, seedlings and other inputs to help increase food production in order to supply the local and regional markets. Furthermore, the St. Lucian Government noted that it would increase its purchases from local farmers and fishermen. 	<p>http://www.govt.lc/news/governments-response-to-covid-19-impact-social-stabilization-programme-phase-1-</p> <p>http://www.govt.lc/media.govt.lc/www/pressroom/news/attachments/social-stabilization-plan-april---june0.pdf</p>

ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

April 15, 2020: 12 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 0 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
St. Vincent and the Grenadines has established the HEOC COVID-19 Task Force	http://health.gov.vc/health/index.php/c/845-heoc-covid-19-task-force-update-two-negative-results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10 million of the economic recovery and stimulus plan will be spent on COVID-19 health initiatives. These include the construction of the Isolation Unit and associated facilities, equipment, supplies, materials, drugs; hiring of additional nurses and medical interns; accommodation, food transportation and associated expenses for 12 Cuban nurses and four doctors, specialists in handling infectious diseases. \$700,000 will also be used to procure a medical evacuation vessel. St. Vincent and the Grenadines has ordered stocks of Interferon from Cuba, a drug designed to strengthen the immune system, which is being used in China to stem the spread of COVID-19. St. Vincent & the Grenadines receives 3,000 rapid test kits from Venezuela. 	<p>https://searchlight.vc/searchlight/news/2020/03/27/pm-brings-stimulus-package-to-soften-covid-19-impact/</p> <p>https://www.stlucianewsonline.com/st-vincent-anti-viral-drug-ordered-from-cuba-to-treat-covid-19-patients/</p> <p>https://www.telesureenglish.net/news/Venezuela-Donates-COVID-19-Tests-to-Caribbean-Countries-20200410-0017.html</p>
The government is issuing a “Stay at Home” advisory from Friday, April 10 until Monday, April 13.	https://bb.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/
All international flights into the Argyle International Airport (AIA) have been cancelled.	https://bb.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On March 25, the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines announced a fiscal package (3½ percent of GDP). The main measures include: (i) increased health spending, (ii) waiving of VAT and duties on health and hygiene products, (iii) relief to the hardest-hit sectors (i.e. tourism, transport, and agriculture), (ii) expansion of social safety net programs, and (iv) deferred payment of personal income taxes and various license fees. Economic stimulus of just over \$74 million was announced to help deal with the fallout. The bulk of revenue for the package will come from six sources — the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the contingency fund of the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines, other financial institutions and bondholders. Additional support will also come from the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), the National Insurance Services (NIS), the SVG Port Authority, the Agricultural Input Warehouse, and the Eastern Caribbean Group of Companies. The breakdown is below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10 million of the economic recovery and stimulus plan will be spent on COVID-19 health initiatives. 	<p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p> <p>https://searchlight.vc/searchlight/news/2020/03/27/pm-brings-stimulus-package-to-soften-covid-19-impact/</p>

- Funds will also be used for the immediate generation of jobs in public works through specifically-funded roads and buildings programmes, other physical facilities, the second phase of PAVE and painting some of the government buildings. This will amount to \$30 million.
- Direct support to the tune of \$9 million will also be offered in areas of farming, animal husbandry, and fishing. There will also be \$3 million worth of support will also be given to the arrowroot industry.
- Five million dollars will be used to provide social supports for vulnerable and affected persons while \$1 million will be used for additional resources for grants under the Promotion of Youth Micro-Enterprises (PRYME).
- Four million dollars — \$2 million each — will be used to provide additional support to the Argyle International Airport for five months as well as additional support for small businesses in the field of culture and arts.
- Additional support to the tune of \$1 million will also be given to SVG Tourism Authority.
- \$700,000 will be used to procure a medical evacuation vessel and another \$350,000 will be spent on communication expenses.
- Additional are the tax relief and other measures which are estimated to cost the revenue approximately \$10 million. These include: a waiver of duty and VAT on bleach, disinfectants, liquid hand soap, hand sanitisers, rubbing alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, soap dispensers, bath soap, toilet paper, paper towels, glycerin, hydrogen peroxide, acetaminophen and oral rehydrating salts. This is valid from March 20 to June 30, 2020. Relief is also expected to be granted to airlines including LIAT and local carriers which operate in or out of St Vincent and the Grenadines in respect of certain taxes, fees and airport charges. Departure tax, which is usually US\$40 will be cut in half for holders of CARICOM passports. And a regime of duty-free barrels will be instituted from May 1 to August 31 in the first instance to allow for family members sending aid from the Diaspora. There will also be a distribution of 500,000 pounds of arrowroot starch to school feeding programmes, hospitals, prisons and others.
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Taken from the economic stimulus package above, are the trade-related measures, which include:

- The removal of VAT and customs duties from March 20 to June 30, 2020 on the importation of bleach, disinfectants, liquid hand soap, hand sanitisers, rubbing alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, soap dispensers, bath soap, toilet paper, paper towels, glycerine, hydrogen peroxide, acetaminophen and oral rehydrating salts.
- A regime for duty-free barrels from May 1 to August 31 in the first instance to allow for family members sending aid from the Diaspora.

<https://searchlight.vc/searchlight/news/2020/03/27/pm-brings-stimulus-package-to-soften-covid-19-impact/>

- LIAT and local carriers which operate in or out of St Vincent and the Grenadines are also expected to benefit from a reduction of certain taxes, fees and airport charges. For example, departure tax which is usually US\$40 will be cut in half for holders of CARICOM passports.

St. Vincent & the Grenadines launched a COVID-19 Food Security and Impact Mitigation Plan, after having already seen significant declines in exports of live lobsters. On top of this, as a part of the Ministry's, COVID 19 Food Security and Risk Mitigation Plan, the availability of items which will boost the immune system must be readily accessible to all. The Ministry is working with farmers to ensure that the entire population has access to these commodities, through an organised supply system.

<https://pressroom.oecs.org/svg-to-launch-covid-19-food-security-and-impact-mitigation-plan>

<https://pressroom.oecs.org/breaking-svg-covid-19-food-security-advisory-1>

SURINAME

April 15, 2020: 10 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 1 death

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
<p>During February 2020, PAHO experts travelled to Suriname and other Caribbean countries to prepare and train staff for COVID-19 testing.</p> <p>400 million SRD for health-related spending.</p> <p>Suriname has received aid from Cuba in the form of medicine and 50 health professionals who are in the country to assist. Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and Brazil have also provided resources.</p>	<p>https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15723:paho-prepares-8-caribbean-countries-for-laboratory-diagnosis-of-new-coronavirus&Itemid=1926&lang=en</p> <p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p> <p>https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19</p>
<p>Starting Sunday, March 29th the Government of Suriname will institute a nationwide curfew between the hours of 20:00-06:00 as a counter measure to the spread of COVID-19. The curfew will last two weeks and expires on April 12th. The Surinamese authorities have since extended nationwide COVID-19 restrictive measures until April 26</p>	<p>https://sr.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/</p>
<p>Airports in Suriname are closed. Suriname has implemented measures, including closing the borders on March 14 for 30 days, stopping all travel to/from the interior of the country as of March 25. The decision to close all ports of entry starting March 14, including airports, border ferry crossings, and land borders will be valid for 30 days.</p>	<p>https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm</p> <p>https://sr.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/</p>
<p>On April 8, the government passed the COVID-19 Exceptional Condition Act that is in force for 3 months and may be extended for another 3 months. The Act supersedes all prior law and consists of the following measures: provides 400 million SRD for health-related spending, converts all current government debt to the Central Bank to long-term debt and removes barriers to further monetary financing, removes the law on the public debt limit, allows the government to exceed the budget without having to inform the parliament, gives the government control over all media with regard to the crisis and allows the government to prosecute media for any news it deems as fake, grants the government power to take any unused private land or building for use to address the crisis.</p>	

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

April 15, 2020: 114 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 8 deaths

COVID-19 RESPONSE	SOURCE
Trinidad and Tobago has created a multi-divisional COVID-19 Task Force.	https://trinidadexpress.com/newsextra/tobago-sets-up-covid-19-hotline---dial-211/article_aff7a600-6aab-11ea-ba08-437f52455754.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 10 February the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) in Trinidad and Tobago informed that its laboratory is ready to respond to the new coronavirus. Cuban nurses to join Trinidad COVID-19 battle, after the Minister of Health announced that work permits for these individuals were secured. China to donate 4,000 COVID-19 testing kits to Trinidad and Tobago, among items, including 5 sets of body temperature measurement systems for air and seaports. These will be urgently shipped and protective gear, for example, masks, gloves, coveralls, goggles and more (quantities to be confirmed). The Chinese government said it will also facilitate technical information sharing and would be willing to provide medical expertise and video conferencing with medical professionals in China should the need arise. On March 26, the Prime Minister announced that the Ministry of Health will receive additional funding to deal with COVID-19, including spending on medical equipment and supplies, human resources, and infrastructure. 	https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15723:paho-prepares-8-caribbean-countries-for-laboratory-diagnosis-of-new-coronavirus&Itemid=1926&lang=en https://www.stlucianewsonline.com/cuban-nurses-to-join-trinidad-covid-19-battle/ https://www.looptt.com/content/china-donate-4000-covid-19-testing-kits-trinidad-and-tobago https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19
As of March 30, all non-essential activities will be prohibited until April 15. This shutdown has since been extended to April 30.	https://trinidadexpress.com/newsextra/min-of-communication-stay-at-home-or-close/article_42249b0e-78cc-11ea-a639-538adc32cc5c.html
Airports in Trinidad and Tobago are closed until 30 April 2020. This does not apply if permitted by the Minister with responsibility for national security.	https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm
The fiscal package of March 23 includes (i) salaries for up to 3 months for temporarily unemployed workers; (ii) VAT and income tax refunds to individuals and SMEs; (iii) liquidity support to individuals and small businesses via credit union loans at reduced interest rates and long repayment periods; (iv) grants to hoteliers to upgrade of their facilities; and (v) other social support measures for low-income vulnerable groups. On March 26, the Prime Minister announced that the Ministry of Health will receive additional funding to deal with COVID-19, including spending on medical equipment and supplies, human resources, and infrastructure.	https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19

On March 17, the central bank reduced the policy rate by 150 bps to 3.5 percent, and the reserve requirement on commercial bank deposits by 300 bps to 14 percent. As a result, commercial banks have reduced the average prime lending rate to 7½ percent as of April 2, from 9¼ percent previously. Additionally, commercial banks agreed to provide a 1-month moratorium on mortgage loan and instalment loan payments, without any penalty; and to waive penalty interest on overdraft facilities. Several banks have already started to offer automatic deferrals for a period of up to 6 months on loans or credit card payments due. Other government housing institutions will provide similar relief to their customers with 2 to 6 months' payment deferrals. Money lenders have been asked to arrange deferred payments and interest rate reductions for their members. Interest rates on credit cards will be reduced by 10 to 17 percentage points of the existing rates, on a bank by bank basis.

The government will increase the allocation of foreign exchange in the system, using Exim Bank and other institutions to ensure uninterrupted supply of basic items such as food and pharmaceuticals.

Trinidad unveils \$1b COVID-19 stimulus package. Included within the package is the Salary Relief Grant where citizens of this county who lose their jobs as a result of the measures being put in place to curb the spread of COVID-19 will be able to access \ \$1,500 a month for the next three months. Other measures were also outlined.

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19>

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19>

<https://www.finance.gov.tt/2020/03/24/update-additional-support-measures-to-alleviate-the-effects-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

<https://www.finance.gov.tt/2020/03/18/financial-and-economic-support-measures-to-be-put-in-place-by-the-ministry-of-finance-in-response-to-covid-19-pandemic/>

<https://www.stabroeknews.com/2020/03/24/news/regional/trinidad/trinidad-unveils-1b-covid-19-stimulus-package/>

REGIONAL COVID-19 INITIATIVES

Collectively there are approximately 594 confirmed COVID-19 cases across CARICOM Member States and 40 deaths.

CARICOM

- **February 21, 2020**

In a Communique issued after the hosting of the Thirty-First Intersessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government on 19 February 2020, in Barbados, the Heads outlined that an outbreak could reverse economic gains of CARICOM states, but said they recognised that the risk of transmission of the virus in the Region remained relatively low.

For more information: <https://caricom.org/caricom-heads-recognise-covid-19-economic-threat-maintain-risk-of-regional-transmission-low/>

- **February 28, 2020**

CARPHA Upgrades the Risk of Transmission of Coronavirus in the Caribbean to ‘Moderate to High’. CARPHA Executive Director, Dr. Joy St. John is urging health authorities of CARPHA Member States (CMS) to shift their mind-set from preparedness to readiness and rapid response and continue to do all that is necessary to strengthen their capacity to respond to possible importation of cases.

For more information: <https://caricom.org/carpha-upgrades-the-risk-of-transmission-of-coronavirus-in-the-caribbean-to-moderate-to-high/>

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For more information: <https://caricom.org/carpha-upgrades-the-risk-of-transmission-of-coronavirus-in-the-caribbean-to-moderate-to-high/>

- **March 1, 2020**

CARICOM Chair, Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley hosted a special meeting in Barbados to discuss ways of protecting the region from COVID-19. The meeting included some Heads of Government, Caribbean Ministers of Health and their chief medical officers, representatives from the Pan American Health Organization, the Caribbean Public Health Agency, the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.

For more information: <https://caricom.org/caricom-chair-to-host-meeting-on-covid-19/>

- **March 19, 2020**

CARICOM Ministers of Agriculture met 19 March 2020 to chart a food and nutrition security and availability response. Presentations were made by CARICOM Institutions, including the Secretariat, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and the Caribbean Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Caribbean Private Sector Organisation, and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). Also in attendance were representatives from partner agencies like the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the World Food Programme, Tropical Shipping, the Caribbean Poultry Association (CPA), other participants from the Region's private sector, and farmers' organisations.

For more information: <https://caricom.org/caricom-agri-ministers-meet-to-craft-covid-19-food-security-position/>

- **March 23, 2020**

CARICOM Special Rapporteur on Disability, Senator Dr. Floyd Morris, is calling on regional governments to ensure that special measures are put in place to protect persons with disabilities against the Corona Virus. "Special attention must be given to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the communication strategies for COVID-19. In particular, Sign Language must be provided at all press conferences so that persons who are deaf can access vital information on this global pandemic." The CARICOM Rapporteur also called for "special attention to be given to persons with intellectual disabilities," recommending "easy-to-read materials be provided for these individuals."

For more information: <https://caricom.org/ensure-inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-fight-against-covid-19-caricom-special-rapporteur-on-disability/>

- **March 28, 2020**

The CARICOM Competition Commission (CCC) affirms its commitment to competitive markets and consumer protection in CARICOM during COVID-19. The CCC believes that through its regional competition and consumer mandates within the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC), the challenges to commercial and consumer welfare associated with COVID-19 can be minimized.

For more information: <https://caricom.org/ensure-inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-fight-against-covid-19-caricom-special-rapporteur-on-disability/>

- **April 1, 2020**

CARICOM has launched a survey on the impact of COVID-19 on food security, livelihoods and access to markets. It was prepared by the World Food Programme with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization.

For more information: <https://caricom.org/caricom-launches-covid-19-food-security-and-livelihoods-impact-survey/>

- **April 5, 2020**

The Board of Directors of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) met this week and approved up to US\$140 million to be used by the Bank's Borrowing Member Countries to tackle the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and other shocks to their economy.

For more information: <https://caricom.org/cdb-makes-us140m-available-to-counter-covid-19-pandemic-other-disasters/>

- **April 6, 2020**

The Council for Human and Social Development (Health) met on Monday 6th April 2020 for its Fourth Special Emergency Meeting. During this meeting, representatives from regional institutions provided updates to the Ministers and Officials in relation to COVID-19. Among the updates The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) stated that they have experienced delays in receiving reagents for COVID-19 tests. Additionally, the CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) which currently conducts tests for suspected COVID-19 cases for several CARICOM Member States, highlighted that, like all laboratories world-wide, it was being impacted by global shortage of test kits for the COVID-19 tests as well as re-agents (chemicals used in testing) and protection equipment, which could

have an impact on its operations if they are not received within the next 2 weeks. CARPHA assured the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Health Ministers that along with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), it was working to address the procurement of the necessary materials and equipment to avert any shortages as a result of the delay and cancellation of orders made repeatedly since January.

For more information: <https://caricom.org/statement-covid-19-council-for-human-and-social-development-cohsod/>

Other COVID-19 initiatives by CARICOM include:

UWI COVID-19 Task Force

The UWI COVID-19 Task Force aims to leverage the University's knowledge and experts to assist the Caribbean in its readiness and response to the virus outbreak, mindful that the region's best defence is a coordinated and collaborative approach.

For more information: <http://www.uwi.edu/covid19/taskforce.php>

OECS

- **Coordinating the distribution of Direct Relief donations to other OECS Member States**

On March 14, 2020 staff members of the OECS Pharmaceutical Procurement Services and the OECS Facilities Unit coordinated the reception, repacking and distribution of multiple equipment donated by Direct Relief to support the response to the COVID-19 threat in the OECS Member states. The donated items included personal protect equipment (PPE), N95 masks, gloves, and hurricane preparedness backpacks (HPPs) among others.

- **Cooperating with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

The OECS is working in close collaboration with IAEA to support the accessibility of Member States to diagnostic equipment and tests in line with the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

- **OECS secures support from Cuba**

Health practitioners in the OECS will benefit from training and support for care and management from the Cuban authorities to strengthen the local response to the COVID-19 threat.

- **OECS secures USD 20,000 donation from Sagicor**

Following a presentation on the assessment of medical equipment needed in the OECS region, supported by a financial pre-assessment, both parties agreed on a USD 20,000 donation from Sagicor. The donation represents 50% of the regional need and will facilitate the purchase of infrared thermometers and the screening of people infected by the COVID-19.

- **OECS collaborates with Facebook and CARPHA to provide a coordinated Regional communications response**

The OECS, CARPHA, and Facebook have agreed to mobilise efforts towards ensuring the dissemination of reliable messaging on the response to COVID-19 in the region through the use of the Facebook social media platform.

For more information on any of the above: <https://pressroom.oecs.org/updates-on-covid-19-in-the-oecs>

Other COVID-19 initiatives by the OECS include:

OECS Education Sector Response Strategy to COVID-19

Decision makers and key players in the area of education in the Eastern Caribbean held the first session of a series of virtual meetings on March 17, 2020 to discuss a Regional Education Sector's Response Plan to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the main, the participants agreed to take measures as follows: transitioning schools to online learning and ensuring the access of teachers and students to the necessary equipment, infrastructure and technologies; exploring Public Private Partnerships to ensure the strengthening of necessary systems for virtual learning; envisioning the best options to facilitate pending regional and national student assessments and exams; exploring the possible repatriation of students stationed at dorms across the campuses of the University of the West Indies (UWI) which closed after the COVID-19 outbreak; and seeking alternative arrangements through the locations of UWI Open Campuses in the OECS Member States to facilitate tertiary level exams.

For more information: <https://www.oecs.org/en/our-work/r/research-and-publication/oecs-education-sector-response-strategy-to-covid-19/viewdocument/2115>

Eastern Caribbean Currency Union Monetary Policy Response

On March 19, the Monetary Council of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) approved grant funding to the ECCB Member Governments, totalling EC\$4 million (EC\$500,000 each), to help in their fight against the COVID-19. On March 20, the ECCB and ECCU Bankers Association announced a support program for customers and residents during this time of difficulty and uncertainty. The program includes: (i) a loan repayment moratorium for an initial period up to 6-months, with a possible extension upon review; and (ii) waiver of late fees and charges to eligible customers during this period.

For more information: <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19>

OECS Strengthens Preparedness for COVID-19 Through Partnership

The OECS partnered with USAID's Global Health Supply Chain – Procurement and Supply Management (GHSC-PSM) programme, to host a workshop on Emergency Supply Chain (ESC) preparedness in Saint Lucia from February 12-13, 2020. The two-day workshop sought to develop and strengthen operational plans for responding to outbreaks of infectious diseases in the region such as the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

For more information: <https://menafn.com/1099737010/OECS-strengthens-preparedness-for-COVID-19>