

Caribbean Sub-Region

Situation Report – March 2019



Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela

Caribbean Sub-Regional Refugee & Migrants Response Plan – Summary Figures

Dominican Republic



Trinidad and Tobago



Guyana



Aruba



Curaçao



35

Appealing Partners



177K

Refugees & Migrants in Need



141K

Refugees & Migrants Targeted

25K

Target Host Community



35M

Financial Requirements

In recent years, **five countries** in the sub-region have been hosting growing numbers of refugees and migrants from Venezuela: Aruba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago. It is estimated that around **146,900¹** have arrived by air, land, and sea to date, including some returnees in Guyana. Through the **2019 Regional Refugee and Migrants Response Plan (RRMRP)**, partners have identified the priority needs for both refugees/migrants, and host communities. These are: protection, shelter, access to food, adequate nutrition and health care, including psychosocial support, as well as the provision of livelihoods, and self-reliance opportunities. The RRMRP outlines the intended interventions to address these priority needs and their related financial requirements for the sub-region, in support to the response of national governments. Through the **inter-agency coordination platforms** (Refugee and Migrants Working Groups) that are being established at the sub-regional and national level, United Nations (UN) agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and civil society aim to meet the emergency assistance, protection, and integration needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, in complementarity and support to existing government's responses.

KEY FIGURES (as of March 2019)

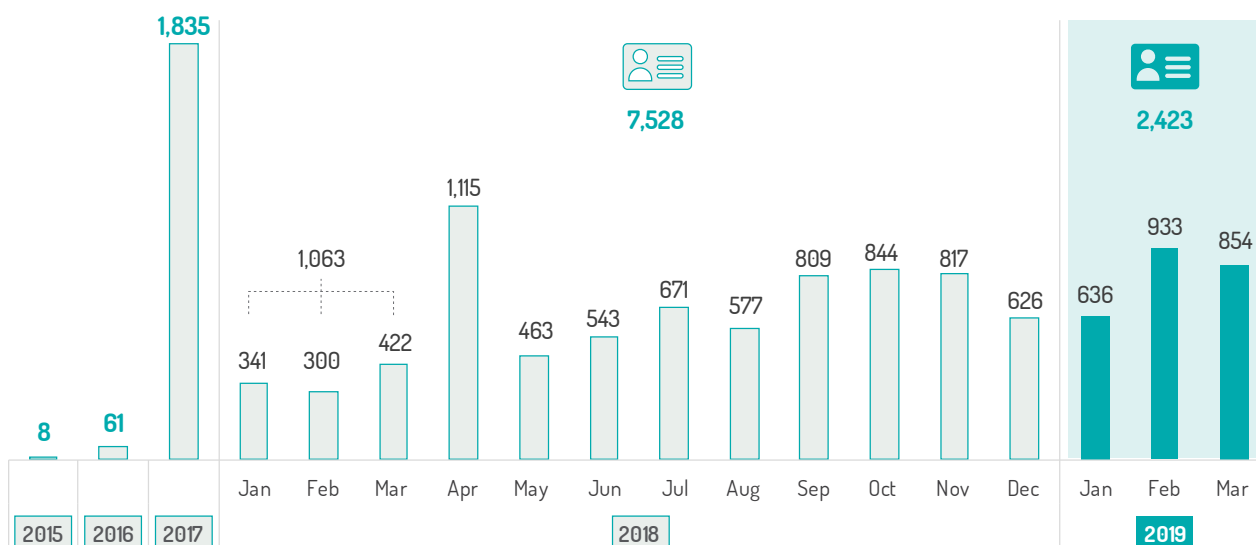


Over **146,900** Venezuelans arrived in the Caribbean sub-region since 2015.¹



11,855 Registered Venezuelan asylum seekers in the Caribbean sub-region since 2015.²

No. of registered Venezuelan asylum seekers (2015 – Mar 2019).



¹ Caribbean sub-region operational planning figures end of 2018. Source: RMRP Jan-Dec 2019.

² The chart shows the monthly registration of new Venezuelan asylum-seekers in Aruba, Curaçao, Dominican Republic, and Trinidad and Tobago. Figures by month are not cumulative.

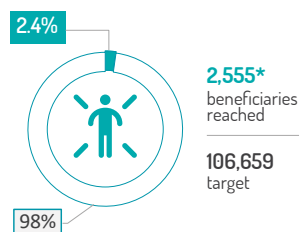
OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

- Caribbean countries vary in terms of their geography, linguistic, legal and socio-economic backgrounds, which results in diverse local operational environments and humanitarian responses. Considering the small size or limited absorption capacity of the concerned countries, the increasing number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela has had an impact on their host communities. Concerns about the growing numbers have led countries in the Caribbean to introduce **restrictions on regular migration** such as reinstating visa requirements for Venezuelans and issuing visas with more limited time periods. Many people who entered regularly are now finding themselves in situations where they are unable to extend their stay and are falling into irregular status. As a result, refugees and migrants from Venezuela face greater **protection threats and risks** and may have limited **access to public services**. Shrinking regular routes out of Venezuela to the Caribbean have made refugees and migrants, especially women and children, particularly vulnerable to **human trafficking and smuggling**, as well as to increasing risks of exploitation and abuse. As vulnerabilities grow, they also become more susceptible to resorting to negative coping mechanisms, including survival sex for many women. Furthermore, given the absence of, or nascent asylum systems and lack of asylum legislation in many Caribbean countries, those in need of international protection do not always have access to territory and asylum procedures.
- Faced with these challenges, several initiatives were announced or undertaken by partners and host governments during the reporting period. In March, the Government of **Trinidad and Tobago** announced the adoption of an amnesty policy to allow Venezuelans of regular and irregular status to live and work in the country for up to one year¹. This measure is expected to be implemented in April - June 2019. In **Guyana**, the Government is working with partners to digitalize the current system for the registration and documentation of Venezuelans, which is expected to be rolled out in the upcoming months. Following the arrival on 20 March 2019 of 140 individuals from the border district of Region 1 to the capital, Georgetown, the Government of Guyana also announced that internal movement from border areas to the capital will be discouraged, unless persons can demonstrate that they have a family member already living there.
- To address the critical lack of information on in-depth multi-sectoral needs, partners continued to conduct **needs assessments** with the engagement of both communities and local authorities, in the areas of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Early Childhood Development (ECD), English as a second language (ESL) and general protection and humanitarian needs. The results will help to better inform the response taking into consideration the specific needs of men, women, boys and girls, as well as those of persons with specific needs.

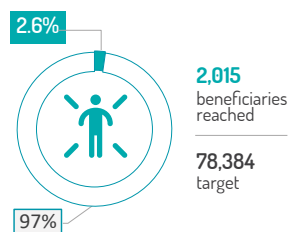
¹ For more details please see: <https://www.opm.gov.tt/venezuelan-registration-policy-gets-green-light/>

RESPONSE OVERVIEW AND FUNDING UPDATE³

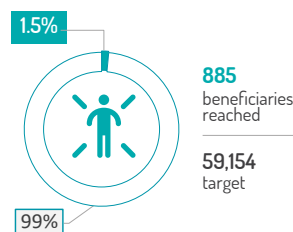
Area of Intervention 1 Direct emergency response



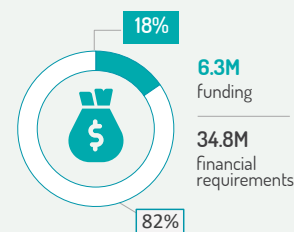
Area of Intervention 2 Protection response



Area of Intervention 3 Socio-economic & cultural inclusion



Funding Status Update Funds received/funding gap



*The decrease in the number of beneficiaries reached under Aoll in March is due to double-counting of beneficiaries in January and February, which has now been corrected.

Source: RMRP Caribbean Sub-Region Appealing and Implementing Partners (as of 5 Apr 2019).

Source: FTS (as of 16 Apr 2019).

³ The activities described under the "Area of Intervention" sections are based on the monthly contribution shared by the appealing partners. The contents included in those sections are intended to provide an overview of the status of the response in the five Caribbean countries within the framework of the RMRP, by presenting some of the key highlights per country and are therefore not exhaustive.

AREA OF INTERVENTION 1: DIRECT EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

During the reporting period, direct emergency assistance continued to be provided by partners in **Guyana, Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago**, both to Venezuelan new arrivals and to those already present in these countries. Direct emergency assistance included shelter, cash-based interventions (CBI), food and non-food items (NFIs), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and emergency medical assistance.

In **Guyana**, during the month of March, 20 boats transporting 398 individuals from Venezuela - including 71 returning Guyanese - arrived at the Guyanese port of entry of Charity, in Region 2 (see map in "3Ws" section below). The majority (60%) were women, followed by 37% men and 16% children, denoting a slight increase of men and children arriving compared to the previous month. Food, water and NFIs, such as personal hygiene kits, were handed out by partners to meet their immediate needs.

On 20 March, 140 Venezuelans arrived in the capital, Georgetown, moving from the district of Region 1, bordering Venezuela, where access to basic services, such as food and water, has become increasingly challenging in the last months. This prompted a coordinated response from partners at the request of the Government, which included the distribution of food and NFIs, as well as counselling support on key issues such as documentation, legal residency, GBV, and referral information to available government services. Among the 140 Venezuelans arrived in the capital, 39 vulnerable individuals were also provided with temporary accommodation.

During March, new assessments - including one on Early Childhood Development (ECD) - were conducted in the border districts of Region 1, Region 7, and in the capital Georgetown, to better identify and respond to the needs of Venezuelans. Overall, 337 Venezuelans were interviewed, of which 35% were women and 31% boys and girls. The findings of this assessment will be available in the upcoming months.

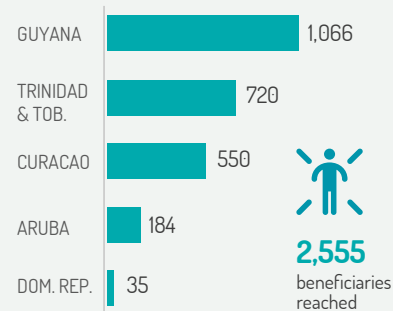
In coordination with the Government of Guyana and other stakeholders, partners have carried out activities aimed at improving the living conditions of both Venezuelans and local communities. In Region 1, a rainwater harvesting system (RWH) and 6 ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines, 2 for host families and 4 for Venezuelan families, were established with the involvement of the local community, who contributed to the design and construction of the facilities.

In the **Dominican Republic**, partners continued to respond to the inflows of Venezuelans by providing key information on access to the national asylum system, and by delivering different forms of emergency assistance - mainly through cash-based interventions - to help the most vulnerable meet a variety of needs, including access to food, shelter (i.e. temporary accommodation and rent) and WASH (distribution of hygiene kits).

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, partners are working together to improve referral systems on child protection, GBV, victims of trafficking and to ensure that basic needs of vulnerable Venezuelans are covered. In March, emergency assistance was provided to 213 vulnerable Venezuelans, from 155 families, through multi-purpose cash grants. This assistance modality enables vulnerable individuals and households to access basic goods and services in the country, in order to alleviate their particular needs in a dignified manner. Of all beneficiaries, about 94% reported having difficulty paying their rent, 77% had reduced their food intake in the 30 days prior to their interview, and more than half had members going entire days without eating.

In the Caribbean sub-region, **Area of Intervention 1** is targeting **106,659** people in 2019. As of March, **2,555** people (**2.4%** of the target population) - including Venezuelans and host communities - have received different forms of assistance to address their protection, food, health, shelter and information needs.

AoI 1: No. of beneficiaries (Venezuelans & host community) reached as of March - by country



\$ 10.1 million
financial requirements

ARUBA	\$ 0.8M
CURACAO	\$ 0.5M
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	\$ 2.0M
GUYANA	\$ 3.3M
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	\$ 3.5M



Arrival of 140 Venezuelans in Georgetown, Guyana.
Source: RMRP Appealing Partners (Mar 2019).

AREA OF INTERVENTION 2: PROTECTION RESPONSE

Throughout March, legal aid continued to have a prominent role in the protection response across the Caribbean sub-region.

In **Aruba**, partners engaged with the local Bar Association and provided training on international refugee law to 35 lawyers and court officials, to build capacity and establish pro bono legal aid in the country. During the reporting period, partners have also continued to advocate with the Government of Aruba for alternative legal pathways, alternatives to detention, and the implementation of the asylum system in the country.

In the **Dominican Republic**, an outreach volunteers program was launched in March - within the framework of the community outreach and engagement strategy - in five provinces: Santo Domingo, Santiago, San Cristóbal, La Romana, and Bávaro. Prior to the launching of the program, five volunteers - one for each of the provinces covered - were recruited and trained on protection monitoring, and on identification and referral of cases. This community-based identification and referral mechanism was put in place to identify persons in need of international protection and/or in need of broader humanitarian assistance and other protection services. Community planning meetings were also held in the same five prioritized provinces, involving 119 Venezuelans, of whom 68% were women. This will facilitate the identification and prioritization of needs to enable tailored response interventions. Enhanced coordination, mapping of services and existing referral procedures, are still required to strengthen the existing structure.

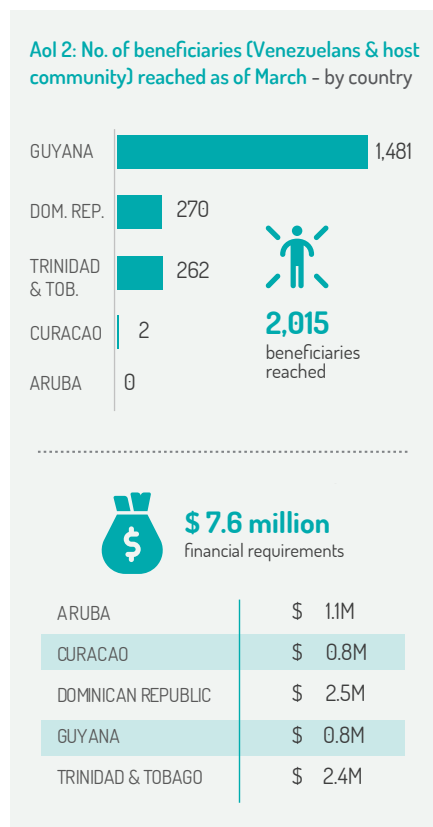
In **Trinidad and Tobago**, partners continued to facilitate access to medical services, including specialized services to support cases of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and victims of trafficking, and to provide psychosocial support and counselling services to 112 Venezuelans, including women and children. 61 persons of concern (18 men, 22 women, 14 boys and 7 girls) participated in activities in which the community offered assistance, such as teaching English in classes.

In **Guyana**, partners involved Venezuelan students and local teachers in assessing the level of knowledge of English language in the border district of Region 1, and facilitated five focus group discussions to identify education gaps, both in terms of access and quality of the curricula. Overall, the initiative involved 187 beneficiaries, including 148 Venezuelans and 39 host community. This initiative will continue in April and will inform the design of a project for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in this area.

Through the support of the R4V Regional Platform, a UN Inter-Agency GBV-focused assessment also took place in Guyana - in Region 1, Region 7, and the capital Georgetown - to better understand the situation of Venezuelan women at risk of exploitation, including survival sex and trafficking. The mission involved Venezuelan persons of concern, as well as non-governmental stakeholders and national and local authorities. As part of the GBV mission, seven focus group discussions were held in these regions. The findings, which will become available in April, will inform inter-agency coordinated response interventions to prevent and address GBV in Guyana.

During the reporting period, protection activities were scaled up particularly in Guyana's Region 1 and Region 7. As a result, an increased number of Venezuelans and returning Guyanese were assisted compared to previous months. 1,049 Venezuelans (968) and members of the host communities (80) received legal assistance and counselling support.

Area of Intervention 2 is targeting **78,384** people, of which **2.6%** (**2,015** people) were reached as of March.



ESL classes in Guyana. Source: RMRP partners (Mar 2019).

AREA OF INTERVENTION 3: SOCIO ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION

Dialogue with governments and local authorities was maintained across the Caribbean sub-region to advocate for legal status and access to basic rights, including access to employment, of Venezuelan migrants and refugees.

In **Guyana**, partners advocated for accessible work authorization to Venezuelans to promote economic self-sufficiency and to reduce exploitation. Consultations with relevant authorities on the inclusion of Venezuelans in existing public livelihood programs are ongoing. Enabling access to public services is another important area of intervention of the humanitarian response plan for persons coming from Venezuela. In March, 575 persons (504 Venezuelans and 71 members of the host community) benefitted from accompanied visits to government service providers.

As part of ongoing efforts to promote socio-economic and cultural inclusion in **Dominican Republic**, partners have carried out joint community outreach and mobilization activities in collaboration with a women’s community network assisting sex workers.

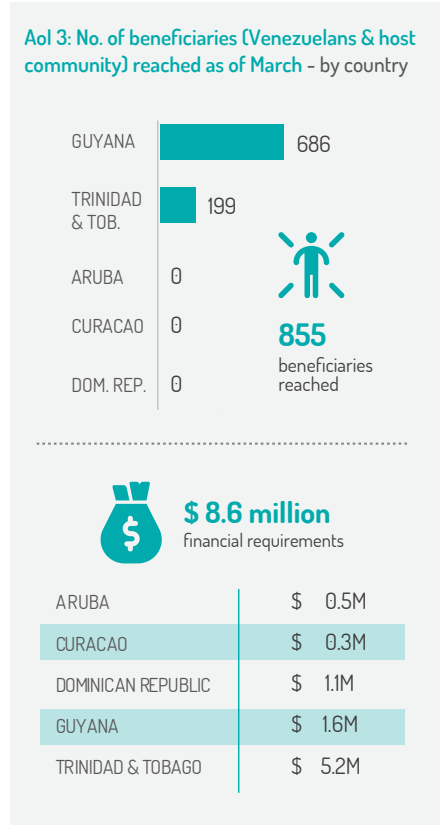
Access to education remains a concern in most of the Caribbean sub-region. In **Trinidad and Tobago**, partners have offered temporary learning spaces to 143 Venezuelan boys



Model UN – Refugee youth empowerment workshop. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Source: RMRP Appealing Partners (Mar 2019).

and girls (81 and 62, respectively) and are currently developing an online accreditation program for primary- and secondary-age children to be rolled-out in the second half of 2019. Extensive efforts were also made by partners to increase public awareness on the plight of Venezuelan migrants and refugees. During the reporting period, several projects were completed in Trinidad and Tobago, including a Model UN event which involved over 100 students debating on themes related to asylum and migration; and a short film on the impact of the Venezuelan crisis, showcasing instances of solidarity with the host community. The short film was promoted at the Caribbean film festivals in Guadeloupe and New York City.

Area of Intervention 3 is targeting **59,154** people, of which **885** (1.5% of the total target) were reached as of March.



AREA OF INTERVENTION 4: STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF HOST GOVERNMENT

Partners have continued working with host governments across the Caribbean sub-region to support access to and the delivery of essential services such as education, health, and social protection, while strengthening governments’ capacity to ensure international protection for those in need.

In **Aruba**, partners continued to provide support and technical advice to the Government with respect to the establishment and implementation of its asylum system. A collaborative exercise to map existing services and referral pathways for Venezuelans was also initiated by partners in March.

In the **Dominican Republic**, partners have supported the launching and facilitation of two Diploma degrees on refugee law in close cooperation with the National School for Migration and the National School for the Judiciary. These initiatives targeted approximately 55 individuals from border, migration and asylum authorities, civil society, academia and the judiciary.

In **Guyana**, partners have been engaging in ground work consultations with the government to explore opportunities to support the expansion of existing public legal aid services for children – currently available only in Georgetown – to the interior of the country, namely in Region 1, 7 and 9. The successful implementation of the plan would strengthen access to basic social and legal services for both Venezuelans and host communities living in these prioritized areas of intervention.

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, sensitization activities on international refugee protection were conducted for 41 local police officers. Additionally, through the use of an online learning platform (Caribbean Basin Initiative), training was broadcasted to Police Academies in Guyana and Suriname, reaching an additional 29 officers.

COORDINATION

The Caribbean sub-region coordination platform covers **35 appealing partners**, including **13 unique UN agencies**, in five Caribbean countries, namely Aruba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. However, not all R4V partners have a permanent presence in these countries and some are based in another country that is currently not part of the R4V Caribbean sub-region.

Between March and April 2019, the sub-regional coordination platform set up **three national coordination platforms** – the Refugee and Migrant Working Groups (RMWG) – in Dominican Republic, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago/Lesser Antilles. The RMWG, co-chaired by **UNHCR and IOM**, is a coordination mechanism that brings together United Nations Country Team (UNCT) member organizations and various governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations of civil society or other international cooperation bodies. Its main objective is to promote coordination of the activities in the countries impacted by the Venezuela situation. It aims to ensure the recognition and protection of refugees, the protection of migrants, and an effective and efficient coordinated humanitarian response to their material needs to the extent possible. This work is done in complementarity, and reinforcing, each country’s government’s response. As such, the RMWG serves as a support forum for the Resident Coordinator in the concerned countries, facilitates strategic planning, operational and inter-agency coordination, and provides information management and technical support, including inter-agency reporting against the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RRMRP) and the development of standard operating procedures.

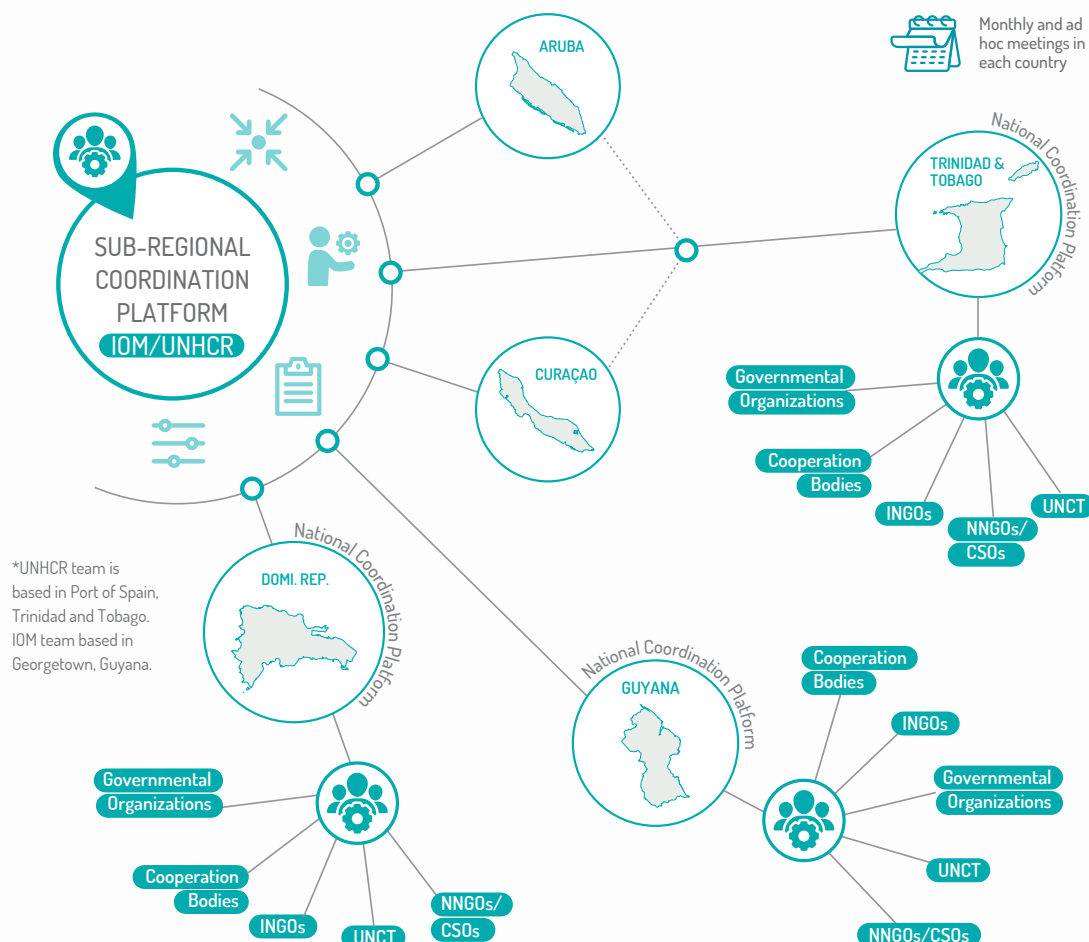


First RMWG meeting in Georgetown, Guyana (Mar 2019).

During the first round of monthly meetings held between March and April, the partners of the RMWGs came together to discuss the current status of the response, including operational, monitoring and reporting challenges, accountability and information sharing, funding shortages, as well as opportunities and way forward. The next round of meetings will take place during the month of May in Dominican Republic, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago (covering also Aruba and Curacao).

R4V - CARIBBEAN

STRUCTURE OF THE SUB-REGIONAL AND NATIONAL INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION PLATFORMS



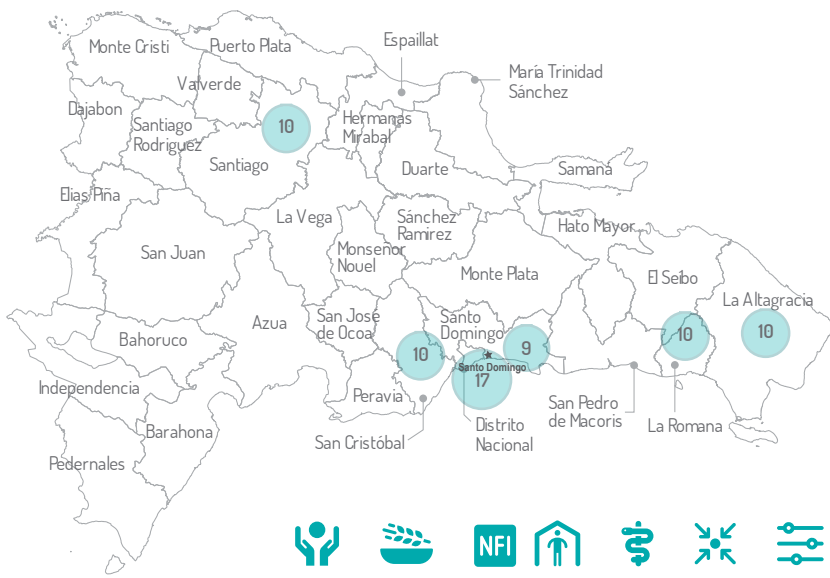
OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW - WHO does WHAT and WHERE (3Ws)

NO. OF ONGOING ACTIVITIES BY COUNTRY (as of March)

Cash-based assistance	Health
Coordination	Information Managt.
Education	Multi-Sector
Food Security	Protection
GBV/Child Protection	NFI Shelter/NFIs

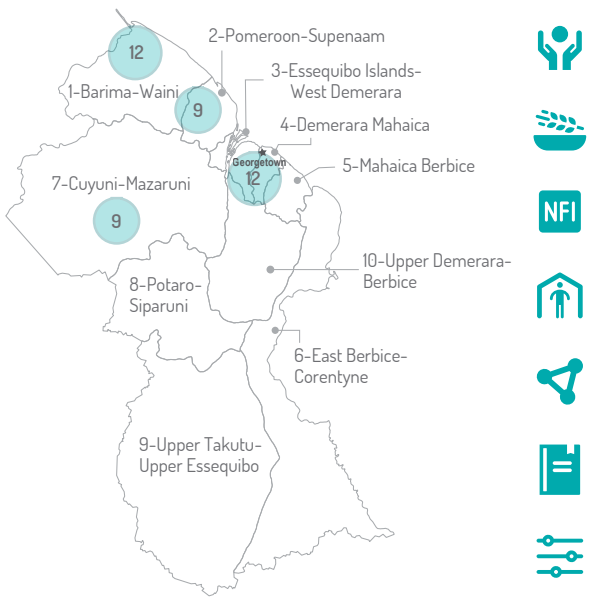
DOMINICAN REP.

66 ongoing activities **2** appealing partners



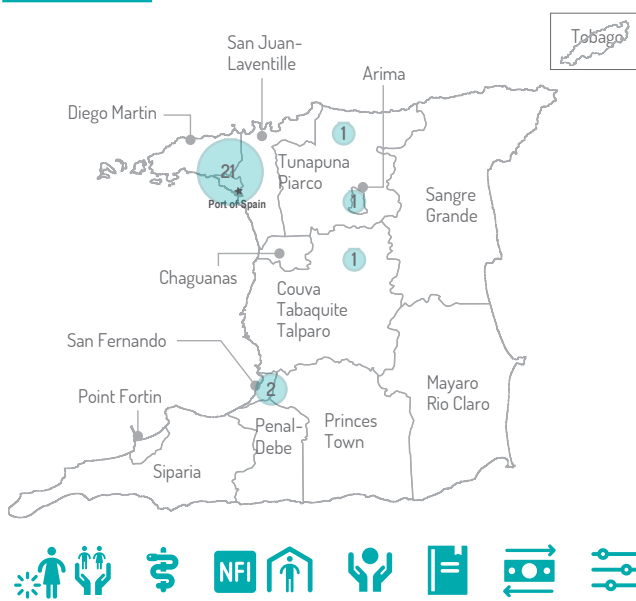
GUYANA

42 ongoing activities **3** appealing partners



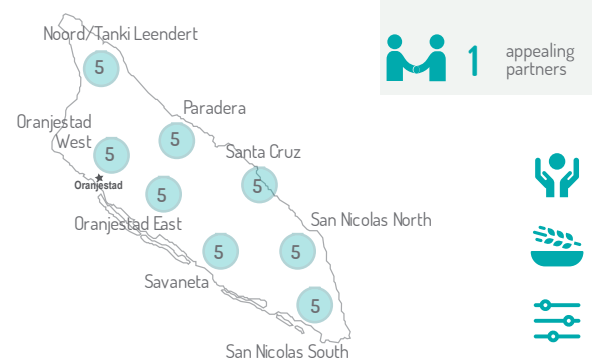
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

26 ongoing activities **5** appealing partners



ARUBA

40 ongoing activities **1** appealing partners



CURACAO

3 ongoing activities **2** appealing partners



NO. OF ONGOING ACTIVITY BY COUNTRY AND BY AREA OF INTERVENTION (as of March)

Country	No. of activities	Aol1	Aol2	Aol3	Aol4
Aruba	40	8	24	8	
Curacao	3	2	1		
Dominican Republic	66	28	34		4
Guyana	42	27	8	6	1
Trinidad & Tobago	26	8	12	3	3
Total	177	73	79	17	8


177

ongoing activities

NO. OF ONGOING ACTIVITY BY COUNTRY AND BY SECTOR (as of March)

Sector	Aruba	Curacao	Dom. Rep	Guyana	Trinidad & Tob.	Grand Total
Protection	24	1	42	13	5	85
Information Managt.	8	1	1	10	1	21
Shelter/NFIs		1	12	6	2	21
Food Security	8		5	7		20
Health			5		4	9
GBV/Child Protection					6	6
Other					6	6
Multi-sector				5		5
Education				1	1	2
Cash assistance					1	1
Coordination			1			1
Total	40	3	66	42	26	177


13

appealing partners

CONTRIBUTIONS

Partners in the response are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors, contributing to their activities with un-earmarked and earmarked funds.

Brazil | CERF | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Holy See | Italy | Japan | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Private Donors | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

PLATFORM PARTNERS

FAO | ILO | IOM | PAHO | Save the Children | UNAIDS | UNESCO | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | UNODC | UNWOMEN | WFP

For more information, please contact:

Robert Natiello, Regional Coordination Officer for the Caribbean and Chief of Mission, Guyana, IOM, rnatiello@iom.int.

Miriam Aertker, Senior Field Coordinator, UNHCR, aertker@unhcr.org.