SECURING OUR COMMUNITY WITHIN THE ERA OF COVID-19 AND BEYOND

VIRTUAL SECURITY CONFERENCE 2020

Monday, 27th July – Friday, 31st July

CONFERENCE TOPIC DESCRIPTIONS

caricomimpacs.org/conf2020
SESSION 1

PEACE-SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT – A ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE

The COVID-19 Pandemic is not just a health issue; the implications are far reaching into the socio-economic, governance, security and development spheres – with the potential to undermine CARICOM Member States’ ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Regional organisations, along with their partners have led interventions to contain the spread of COVID-19 in CARICOM, including assisting with managing borders, performing critical testing for COVID-19, procuring vital personal protection equipment (PPE) and providing critical technical expertise.

The Pandemic has heightened the awareness of the absolute need for more collaborative ways of working and partnerships. This session will provide an opportunity to hear from regional security leaders and key supporting partners on the role their organisations are playing in the fight against COVID-19, as well as the challenges that confront them. The session will also analyse the impact of the pandemic on existing peace, security and development in CARICOM. Panellists will consider various dimensions of the challenges posed to governments, regional organizations and international partners.
SESSION 2

POLICING IN THE TIME OF A PANDEMIC – LESSONS LEARNT

Police officers in Member States of CARICOM are serving on the frontline in the fight against COVID-19 and their duties can bring them in close and frequent contact with suspected and/or confirmed infected persons. The pandemic has inevitably caused a rethinking of how to police a community and maintain the security of their jurisdictions, as well as how to ensure the safety of police officers by preventing them from getting infected with the Covid-19 virus.

Police play an essential role in both supporting the implementation of public health measures to contain the pandemic and in preventing and responding to specific criminal activities arising from this context. They are required to maintain public order, including managing gatherings of people, supporting the conduct of contact tracing, responding to jailbreaks and population unrest/riots; ensuring effective border control in some cases; supporting operational duties, securing critical infrastructures such as hospitals, providing secure transport of relief and other critical supplies and assisting with the transfer of COVID-19 patients.

In this session, senior Law Enforcement leaders will discuss how the Pandemic has changed the demands on, and expectations of policing at a time when resources are already stretched. The panellist will also discuss how COVID-19 has impacted the effectiveness of policing, including working with increasing new rules, regulations and dealing with new crimes; the managing of operational duties while protecting themselves against infection; and analyse the extent to which police services are and/or must adapt rapidly to a more digital way of working.
SESSION 3

A CONVERSATION WITH CARICOM LEADERS ON COVID-19 RESPONSE AND THE WAY FORWARD

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have created immense challenges for advanced States. These challenges are even more daunting for the Small Island and Low-Lying Coastal Developing States (SIDS) of CARICOM due to our inherent vulnerabilities. The Pandemic will result in the Region’s worst economic and social crisis in decades, with damaging effects on employment, the fight against poverty and the reduction of inequality.

‘A conversation with CARICOM Leaders’ will take a close look at the complexity and implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the CARICOM States. The leaders will provide insights into a myriad of challenges which confront the Region, and the implication for development and security - issues such as climate change, security, food security, health care, blacklisting of Member States and concessional funding and debt relief. How are they managing the crisis? How will the current global order change as a consequence of the Pandemic? What are the security implications? What is their vision for the Region post crisis?
SESSION 4

CRIMINALITY AND ORGANIZED CRIME DURING COVID-19: PRESENT AND FUTURE TRENDS (CLOSED SESSION- BY INVITATION ONLY)

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to (re)shape the Criminality and Organized Crime landscape and affects the collection and sharing of Intelligence among stakeholders. Opportunistic Threat Networks continue to discover and utilize novel as well as traditional opportunities to operate and profit, causing already limited National Security resources to be stretched further. This exacerbates the challenges already being experienced with dissemination of information which will reveal the plans, intentions, and capabilities of criminal entities for decision and action by Law Enforcement.

A distinguished and diverse panel of Intelligence and Security professionals will elucidate the impact(s) of the pandemic on different facets of Criminality and Law Enforcement: highlighting challenges, achievements, current and future crime trends, lessons learnt, and opportunities to foster better working relationships for increased information and intelligence sharing to produce timely analyses that provide insight, warning and cross border intelligence support to address concerns as it relates to Transnational Organised Crime.
SESSION 5

ENHANCING CYBER RESILIENCE IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

The global cyber-threat landscape has changed because of the Covid-19 Pandemic. There has been a sharp increase in the use of digital services, from online education and teleworking, to essential services like food and banking, as well as the adoption of new technologies and processes. With many employees working remotely and more businesses increasingly relying on digital solutions, cyber threats have increased in number and sophistication. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need to ensure the protection and resilience of the digital ecosystem.

The purpose of this segment is to discuss the trends observed in the Caribbean Region since the advent of this pandemic and to discuss potential strategies with enhanced public-private partnerships to further develop regional cyber-resilience, this given the increased reliance on internet based technologies.

Specifically, discussions will explore:

- Cyber security challenges caused/exacerbated by COVID-19
- Key concerns of the private and public sector relating to cyber security
- Understand how organisations have adapted to the increase use of digital solutions and strengthen their cyber resilience
- Data protection and cyber security risks organisations face
COVID-19 AND THE FUTURE OF BORDERS IN CARICOM

COVID-19 immobilized the world due to travel controls and halts to border crossings, wrecking many CARICOM Member States’ economies. The travel and tourism sector and hospitality industry were particularly affected. Given that there is no vaccine for COVID-19, border and travel controls are likely to continue to be utilised as a means of controlling the rate of the spread of the virus from countries with high rates of infection to those with low infection rates. The pandemic has highlighted the fact that border management now, and in the future require more interaction with Health Authorities to better undertake effective risk assessments to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and future pandemics, as well as ensure the safety and health of both border officials and travellers.

After weeks of border closures, some countries have gradually reopened their borders for travel, while other countries have instituted restricted travel arrangements. The unprecedented challenges faced by the travel and tourism sector during the pandemic, will likely continue until travellers feel safe and confident that their health and security are not threatened. In this regard, 'touchless travel', digital identity and biometrics technology will increasingly play an important role to ensure a social distancing passenger experience. However, at the heart of these technical solutions is the issue of privacy, consent, and transparent data governance.

The panel will explore the above mentioned issues as well as the collaboration between governments and international and regional agencies such as International Civil Aviation Organization ICAO, World Health Organisation (WHO) and International Air Transport Association (IATA) which is key to operating in this “New Normal”, where the introduction of touchless technology is critical to redefine travel and build a more sustainable, responsive and resilient travel and tourism industry. The panellists will also show how these collaborative measures will align health security, aviation and border priorities, guidelines and policies to contribute to the “New Normal of Travel.”
SESSION 7

MIGRATION AND MOBILITY IN TIME OF CRISIS

Well intended measures to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19, such as border closures, restrictions of internal movement of people, lockdowns, travel bans, and social distancing have posed challenges to the normal patterns of migration and mobility in CARICOM Member States. Temporally, we face a moment of reduced migration and mobility globally and in the Region due to the Pandemic. While migration flows have fallen significantly, the UNHCR notes that migrants may be particularly vulnerable to stigma and discrimination and may be excluded from access to public health and national responses to the COVID-19 (UNHCR, 2020). The illegal entrance of citizens through unofficial channels is also a major concern and particularly, a health threat insofar as transmission of the COVID-19 virus from neighboring countries. But some countries are also granting extensions to migrants and implemented arrangements where the involuntary return of migrants was suspended.

The COVID-19 Pandemic may challenge the way we think about mobility and migration and may have long term implications for migration and human mobility policy. COVID-19 has also brought attention to regional free movement regimes such as the free movement of CARICOM and OECS Nationals.

This mixed panel of practitioners will examine critical questions on migration and mobility, including:

- How have CARICOM Member States responded to issues of migration and mobility?
- How migration and mobility will be impacted in the long-term due to COVID-19 related economic downturn?
- What are the implications for Migration policy and free movement regimes?
SESSION 8

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY IN THE ERA OF CORONAVIRUS

The Small Island and Low-Lying Coastal Developing States (SIDS) of CARICOM are facing compounding shocks of the devastation of climate change and the COVID-19 Pandemic. Many experts argue that the costs of the crisis of climate change and COVID-19 will vastly exceed the costs for prevention. It is therefore critical to address these issues to limit the effects on the Member Countries.

According to experts, we are living through an unrivalled drop in carbon output, the biggest carbon crash ever recorded. Notably, soon after countries implemented COVID-19 measures, global climate emissions fell as people drove less and industries ground to a halt. In another realm, COVID-19 also brought to the fore questions related to Climate Change and Security and Climate Change, Health and Food Insecurity. Additionally, given the effects of Climate Change over the years, Member States now must consider heightened activity during the Hurricane Season and during a Pandemic.

But what can COVID-19 teach us about addressing Climate Change, security and food security?

A distinguished panel will explore connections between the COVID-19 and Climate Change. Key questions which will be answered are:

- What have we learned from COVID-19 that should inform our response to Climate Change?
- Preparations for heightened hurricane season in the midst of a Pandemic
- Should recovering from COVID-19 and investing in Climate resilience be viewed independently?
- What linkages exist between Climate Change and Food Security and how has the Covid-19 Pandemic affected policies in these areas?
- How can regional governments align the priorities of climate action, the principles of the Paris Agreement and COVID-19 recovery?
SESSION 9

CRISIS AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Lockdowns and stay-at-home orders during the COVID-19 pandemic have led to an increase in reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and intimate partner violence in several CARICOM Member States. Quarantine, isolation, restricted movement, financial anxiety, the psychological impact of unemployment and other stresses brought about by COVID-19 can serve to aggravate and catalyse SGBV, specifically against women and girls.

In this webinar we will discuss the issue of SGBV with government officials, academic experts, practitioners and civil society representatives. Experts will answer the following:

- What do we know about sexual and gender-based violence in a crisis and pandemic setting?
- How has the COVID-19 Pandemic affected the exposure of females to violence?
- How existing response programs may be adapted to protect victims amid restrictions during the pandemic?
- What are possible solutions and policies to protect victims and prevent and/or reduce violence in the long-term.
- What are the resources available for the abuser to end the abuse?
- What are the lessons learnt and what needs to be put in place for the future?

Particular attention will be placed on inclusiveness and the need to implement a gender-sensitive approach in the responses to the pandemic and in the recovery phase.
SESSION 10
IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19 ON PRISONS AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Prisons and Correctional Services are generally considered to be amplifiers in the spread of infectious diseases and are an integral part of the public health response to COVID-19. The World Health Organisation (WHO) identifies people in prisons as more vulnerable to COVID-19 than the general population because of the confined conditions in which they live, and proximity with one another – conditions that facilitate transmission of diseases. The COVID-19 pandemic compounds an already precarious situation of this vulnerable population group. In Member States of CARICOM there have been protests among prisoners and prison breaks because of prisoners’ anger over their risk of contracting the illness in prison conditions, as well as outbreaks of COVID-19, specifically in Haiti prisons.

This distinguished and diverse panel will examine the impact and implications of COVID-19 on prisons; offer first-hand accounts of how COVID-19 affected and/or continues to affect incarcerated people; discuss steps prisons’ authorities are taking to minimize and/or prevent infections; analyse the challenges and opportunities the Pandemic provides for sustainable reform; propose policy solutions for keeping prisoners, visitors, correctional staff, and their families safe and healthy; and address the far-reaching effects of COVID-19 on the administration of justice, taking into consideration human rights and adherence to the “Nelson Mandela Rules” and “Bangkok Rules”.
SESSION 11

MARITIME SECURITY AND THE BLUE ECONOMY

This session will focus on national and regional maritime security within the Caribbean Basin. Panellists will present on current maritime threats to their countries and how their States are addressing maritime security currently as opposed to pre-COVID-19. Additionally, the country representatives would present on national initiatives as well as how CARICOM Members see the Region moving forward to support national initiatives in strengthening maritime security. Within this context, issues including maritime threats such as illicit trafficking, the importance of securing the blue economy and humanitarian and disaster relief should be addressed.
SESSION 12

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT MARITIME SECURITY

This Session is a complement to Session 11 with a focus on what the International Community is currently doing to support national and regional initiatives in the Region. In this context, there should be discussions on the need for national and regional maritime strategies, consideration of the work being undertaken within the Regional Security System (RSS) and work being undertaken by United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and CARICOM IMPACS. A major part of this session will also address the importance of international instruments such as the San Jose Treaty, which allows for regional and international cooperation in combatting narco-trafficking as well as such treaties having the potential to assist Member States in Humanitarian and Disaster Relief situations.