



The Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Region faces complex and multifaceted health emergency and humanitarian challenges in a context of acute inequity within and across countries. The Region is extremely vulnerable to hazards of natural origin, predominantly climate-driven disasters, including hurricanes, floods, and droughts, which have immediate and long-term health consequences. Over the last 5 years, the Region faced 474 adverse events of natural origin, resulting in over 47.7 million affected individuals, more than 10,000 deaths, and total damages surpassing US\$28.8 billion, with 80% of events occurring between 2020 and 2023. These events pose significant challenges to health facilities in the Region, including infrastructure damage, water supplies contamination, and healthcare services disruption, leading to increased vulnerability to diseases and other health emergencies.

The Americas is also characterized by a diverse epidemiological and disease profile and is increasingly confronted with outbreaks of infectious diseases and emerging highly infectious pathogens; a situation amplified by factors such as climate change and environmental drivers as well as reduced vaccination coverage. Vulnerable populations, such as those living in informal settlements or coastal areas as well as migrants and refugees, are particularly at risk, as they often lack access to adequate healthcare, clean water, and sanitation facilities.

Overall, the Region's high exposure to devastating disasters, epidemic-prone diseases and complex humanitarian crisis and its dependence on international assistance and imported emergency goods during emergencies, heighten the profound vulnerabilities of its communities and underscores the gaps in preparedness and response of its national health systems. In this context, the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted paradigms when it comes to global health security, redefining the global health architecture and forcing countries and societies to reassess what it means to be prepared to face health emergencies.

About the Partners' Forum:

The PAHO Health Emergencies Partners' Forum 2024 provides a unique opportunity to gather key strategic stakeholders and leading voices in the field of public health emergencies to discuss current and future health emergency challenges in the Region and strengthen strategic partnerships for continued collaboration throughout the Americas. A diverse group of technical experts, decision makers, funders, health officials and partner humanitarian organizations will gather to enhance our joint efforts to improve emergency preparedness and response capacities of LAC countries with the aim of saving lives, protecting communities and building resilient societies.

Over the course of three days, we will address a variety of topics including:

Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness in a post-COVID-19 world

Climate Drivers and Health Emergencies

International Health Regulations (IHR)

Genomic Surveillance

Building Climate Resilience in Critical Facilities

Early Warning and Surveillance

Health and Complex "Polycrises"

Response Resource Management and Deployment

Risk Communication and Community Engagement

Emergency Medical Teams



This timely Forum will occur during two critical moments for PAHO and the Region. First, PAHO will start developing its next strategic plan for 2026-2031 beginning this fall. The new strategic plan will include priorities for future technical cooperation in the areas of health emergency prevention, preparedness, risk reduction, readiness, and response and must address the new and evolving realities of our countries and communities.

Second, the Forum will be PAHO's first post Covid-19 pandemic meeting of public health emergency partners in the Region. The event is a critical opportunity to jointly identify new priorities for strengthening global health security based on the lessons of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic which disproportionately affected the Americas. Following the May 2023 conclusion of the global public health emergency for COVID-19, this gathering falls at a critical time for examining successes and opportunities to enhance our cooperative efforts in preparing for the next pandemic.

The ultimate objective of this Forum is to strengthen partnerships and coordination so countries throughout the Americas have the necessary resources and technical support to be resilient and respond effectively in the face of public health emergencies.

Methodology:

The Partners' Forum will include expert discussion panels, opportunities for small group conversation and engagement, while offering interactive exhibit space for participants to converse and experience hands-on innovative and technical tools used in the Region.

About PAHO/WHO:

PAHO's unique mandate as the specialized health agency of the Inter American System and WHO's Regional Office for the Americas is underpinned by country level expertise, presence and networks. PAHO assists Member States in strengthening their health sector capacities for prevention, risk reduction, preparedness, surveillance, response and early recovery from health emergencies and disasters resulting from any hazard. It also leads and coordinates the international health response when national capacities are overwhelmed.

For additional information, please contact Ms. Julie Mauvernay and/or Ms. Jill Ceitlin at eventspe@paho.org

VIEW AGENDA





WEDNESDAY - MAY 1

Opening session

Setting the Scene: Status of Public Health Emergencies in The Americas

Advancements and Challenges in Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness and Response

Coffee Break + Interactive Exhibits

Building Climate-Resilient Hospitals: Strategies for Effective Emergency and Disaster Response

Lunch

Rotating Small Group Sessions:

1. Deep Dive in the successful Smart Hospitals Initiative in the Caribbean
2. IHR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework: Tools for Critical Decision Making
3. PAHOGen: Strengthening Regional Genomic Surveillance Networks

Coffee Break + Interactive Exhibits

Partners' Perspectives - Strategic Priorities for Health and Emergencies

Wrap up Day 1

COCKTAIL RECEPTION

THURSDAY - MAY 2

Welcome to Day 2

Addressing Health Emergency Needs in Fragile, Conflict and Vulnerable Countries

Early Warning Saves Lives! Countries' Approach to Epidemiological Intelligence

Coffee Break + Interactive Exhibits

Getting fit-for-purpose: Enhancing National and Regional Mechanisms for Efficient Health Emergency Response

Lunch

Rotating Small Group Sessions:

1. Emergency Medical Teams Initiative in the Americas: 10 years of success, what's next?
2. Communicating Risks Effectively in Uncertain Environments
3. Protecting Health in the Context of Mass Migration

Coffee Break + Interactive Exhibits

Interactive Dialogue - Charting the Way Forward towards a more Resilient Health Sector in the Americas

Conclusions and Next steps

Closing Remarks

FRIDAY - MAY 3

Site Visit in Host Country (optional):

During our third day together, participants will have the opportunity to visit a location in the Dominican Republic that demonstrates critical elements of public health emergency preparedness and response.

Location: National Health Emergency Operation Centers (EOC) - TBC

End of Forum

AGENDA
AT A GLANCE

DAY 1: Wednesday, May 1
Strengthening Health Emergency Preparedness and Resilience

DAY 2: Thursday, May 2
Scaling up Humanitarian Assistance and Response Mechanisms

DAY 3: Friday, May 3
From Theory to Practice

Overall Objective

To bring together partners in health emergencies to discuss current and future challenges and strengthen strategic collaboration in order to protect communities and save lives throughout the Region.

