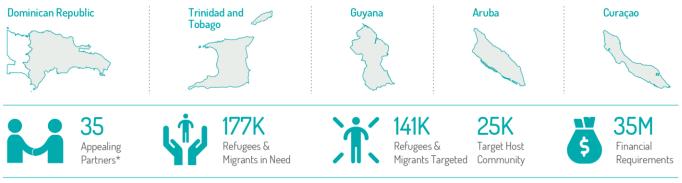
CARIBBEAN Situation Report - April & May 2019



Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela

Caribbean Sub-Region Refugees & Migrants Response Plan: Summary Figures



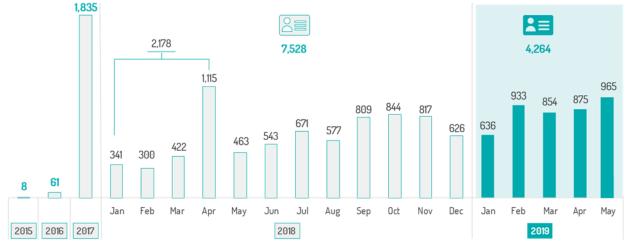
* FAO | ILO | IOM | PAHO | Save the Children | UNAIDS | UNESCO | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | UNODC | UNWOMEN | WFP

In recent years, **five** countries in the Caribbean 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 **146,900** have arrived by air, land and sea to date, including some returnees in Guyana. 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. Through the 2019 **Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan** (RMRP), partners have identified the priority needs for refugees, migrants and host communities. These are: protection, addressing gender-based violence (GBV), shelter, access to food, adequate nutrition and health care, including psychological support, as well as the provision of livelihoods and self-reliance opportunities.

KEY FIGURES (as of May 2019)

Over 146,900 Venezuelans arrived in the Caribbean subregion since 2015¹ **13,708** Registered Venezuelan asylum-seekers in the Caribbean sub-region since 2015²

No. of Registered Venezuelans asylum-seekers (2015-May 2019)



¹Caribbean 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 the Caribbean sub-region from 2015 to 31 May 2019. Figures by month are not cumulative.

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

The border crossing by sea to Aruba, Curaçao and Trinidad and Tobago is mainly carried out through irregular exits/entries. Regular ferries between Venezuela and Trinidad have not been running since May 2019. While on 10 May, Venezuela's Minister of Industry announced that Venezuela will <u>reopen its border</u> to Aruba for travel and commerce, the Prime Minister of Aruba announced that the **border closure** will remain in place from their side.

So far in 2019, at least three **incidents of shipwrecks** were reported, claiming the lives of over 80 people. On 24 April 2019, 21 persons went missing after their boat sank en route from Venezuela to **Trinidad and Tobago**, followed by the disappearance of another boat on 16 May 2019 with about 30 people on board. In June 2019, another boat went missing on its way to **Curaçao** with up to 30 people on board whose arrival was never accounted for, while the body of a Venezuelan man was found on the shores of Curaçao. These tragic incidents are a stark reminder of the vulnerability of Venezuelans who fall prey to human trafficking networks and resort to dangerous journeys in the hopes of reaching safe territory.



Honourable Minister, Winston Felix, Ministry of Citizenship, Guyana and JSR

In the **Dominican Republic**, no sea incidents have been reported, as all arrivals are reportedly by air. Nevertheless, there have been concerns relating to non-admission upon re-entry in Dominican territory.

From 29 April to 2 May, the Joint UNHCR-IOM Special Representative for refugees and migrants from Venezuela (JSR), Mr. Eduardo Stein, visited Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. The role of the JSR is to support regional efforts to promote coherent protection mechanisms and solutions for refugees and migrants from Venezuela, in the spirit of humanity and regional solidarity. The country visits included meetings with key governmental counterparts and other UN and NGO actors engaged in the response to the Venezuela situation to strengthen the humanitarian response and to advocate for maintaining safe and regular access to territory as well as the socioeconomic inclusion of Venezuelans.

On 31 May 2019, the **Government of Trinidad and Tobago** commenced a two-week exercise **to register all Venezuelans** present in the country, including those who entered irregularly or overstayed. Those registered will be granted **permission to work for up to one year**. According to

<u>preliminary figures</u>, over 16,000 individuals were registered by the end of the exercise on 14 June. Following the conclusion of the registration, the Government announced the introduction of a <u>visa scheme for</u> <u>Venezuelans</u>. Previously, Venezuelans were <u>free to travel</u> to T&T on holiday and business without the requirement of visas for up to 90 days.

The **Government of Guyana** continued to register Venezuelans, granting renewable 3-month stay permits upon registration. To date, 7,158 Venezuelans have been registered. With the support of partners, the Government of Guyana is also preparing a new digitalised data management system to enhance data collection, registration and documentation of Venezuelans. Internal movements of Venezuelans from border areas to the capital city of Georgetown continued to be limited to those who have verified family members there.

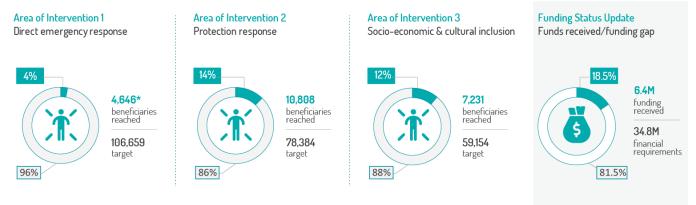
In Aruba, in May 2019, the Minister of Justice announced that according to **newly modified asylum procedures** asylum applications from Venezuelans who arrive in Aruba from a third country will no longer be accepted and that asylum-seekers will be returned to that country.

The Office of the Public Prosecutor in Curaçao <u>announced</u> the establishment of **a new directive concerning human trafficking and human smuggling**. <u>This directive</u> is **valid as of 1 May 2019** and elaborates on the core concepts and punishments for these acts. The legal basis of this directive lies within Curaçao, Sint Maarten and BES Islands' (Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba) Criminal Law. Among others, the policy's provisions intend to penalize those who provide shelter to undocumented persons in Curaçao.

In May 2019, the **Dutch Government** announced that it will provide EUR 23.8 million of assistance to **Aruba** and **Curaçao** in order to manage the impact of the Venezuela crisis. Until now, the Dutch Government's assistance has been focusing on the provision of technical assistance to both Aruba and Curaçao, including training of Aruban personnel in the processing of asylum applications, and financial assistance to Curaçao for the reconstruction of the immigration detention centre for foreigners.

RESPONSE OVERVIEW AND FUNDING UPDATE (JAN- MAY)

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.



*Including 27 beneficiaries assisted in Guyana under Education, outside RMRP. Source: RMRP Caribbean Sub-Region Appealing and Implementing Partners (as of 30 May 2019).

AREA OF INTERVENTION 1: DIRECT EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

R4V partners continued to provide direct emergency assistance in Aruba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago to Venezuelans already present in these countries and to new arrivals. The type of direct emergency assistance provided to those in vulnerable conditions includes shelter, food and non-food items (NFIs), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), emergency medical assistance and cash-based interventions.

Source: FTS (as of 17 June 2019)

In **Aruba**, partners supported both host communities and the Venezuelan population on the island. In April and May 2019, 394 Venezuelans benefited from essential food items along with 229 Arubans, and an additional 21 vulnerable Venezuelans received assistance to cover emergency accommodation and medical care through cash-based-interventions.

In neighbouring **Curaçao**, partners assisted 62 vulnerable Venezuelans by providing short-term rented accommodations. An additional 426 individuals benefited from NFIs, which included personal hygiene kits, cleaning products and baby products. Partners are also supporting a local grass-root initiative to encourage access to healthcare for Venezuelans through the establishment of a health clinic for undocumented persons. The clinic will open in July 2019 and will provide general and reproductive health care to persons without national health insurance in Curaçao.

In the Dominican Republic, partners continued to respond to the inflow of Venezuelans through various forms of emergency assistance. During the month of April and May 2019, 193 Venezuelans were counselled on access to the national asylum system. The most vulnerable were provided with several forms of emergency assistance, primarily through cash-based interventions, to meet a variety of needs such as food, shelter (i.e. temporary rented accommodations) and health care, together with the distribution of health kits to 40 Venezuelans. Similarly to other Caribbean countries, health assistance is one of the most pressing needs expressed by Venezuelans in the Dominican Republic, mainly due to lack of documentation and resources to access health insurance. Partners jointly worked to address some of these needs through community mobilization. In April 2019, a Venezuelan association, supported by partners, facilitated a Medical Fair in the city of San Cristobal, gathering volunteer doctors and health professionals to provide free medical assistance for Venezuelans and host communities to the benefit of 395 persons. Similarly, in May 2019, a further 587 individuals, including 25 from the host community, received individual medical consultations during a Medical Health Day held in the capital city of Santo Domingo.

community) reached Jan- May - by country TRINIDAD 1205 & TOB. GUYANA* 1310 DOM, REP. 1082 ARUBA 426 4646 beneficiaries CURACAO 623 reached *Including 27 beneficiaries assisted under Education, outside the RMRP. \$10.1 million financial requirements ARUBA \$ 0.8M CURACAO \$ 0.5M \$ 2.0M DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 3.3M GUYANA \$ \$ 3.5M TRINIDAD & TOBAGO Requirements Paid contributions Commitment 26% 0.6M 10.1M Source: FTS (13 June 2019).

Aol1 : No. of beneficiaries (Venezuelans & host

Guyana continued to witness new arrivals, although the weekly number arriving to the Guyanese port of entry of Charity, in Region 2, slightly reduced in May 2019 compared to previous months. During the reporting period, 29 boats transporting 533 individuals from Venezuela arrived in Charity. To respond to the needs of both new arrivals and Venezuelans already present in the country, partners distributed food and water along with NFIs, including personal hygiene kits and habitat kits, to over 300 Venezuelans and returning Guyanese and provided emergency shelter to 25 extremely vulnerable individuals in the capital Georgetown. Some 790 persons from Venezuela arriving in Guyana were immunized and vaccinated against measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), yellow fever, diphtheria and tetanus (DT) and information on sexual abuse, gender-based violence and domestic violence was also provided to 267 individuals.

To increase the capacity of local schools to receive Venezuelan children and promote a child-friendly environment, partners engaged a local university to assess the rehabilitation of five schools currently enrolling 1,721 children, including 97 Venezuelans, and supported local education authorities in Region 1 through the provision of equipment. This included 55 sets of classroom furniture, which will allow an additional 110 children to attend school, and learning resource materials in English and Spanish for nursery, primary and secondary grades.

Recognizing that socio-economically disadvantaged children often face great challenges in their physical, socio, emotional, cognitive and motor development in the early years of life, activities to improve access to Early Childhood Development (ECD) services in homes, communities and health clinics also continued throughout April and May 2019. In Region 9, partners conducted two trainings on ECD for 49 locally-based education, public health and social protection professionals, including community health workers, traditional birth attendants and beneficiaries of men's health clubs and youth friendly clinics. As follow up to the trainings, partners delivered five ECD kits to health posts and other community points in the town of Lethem and in five surrounding villages. Each kit contains materials for 50 children. Similar activities will be replicated in other areas with high concentration of Venezuelans in Region 1, 2 and 7, following ECD assessments that were conducted in April 2019.

R4V partners in the Caribbean continued to provide support to Venezuelans in order to meet their basic needs. Emergency assistance was provided by partners in **Trinidad and Tobago** through the delivery of dignity kits and cash-based interventions. Cash assistance from partners in the form of prepaid cards was received by 205 Venezuelan households (430 individuals) and 240 Venezuelan households (424 individuals), in April and May 2019 respectively. The most common concern reported by beneficiaries remained access to food and the resulting negative coping mechanisms including reduction in the quantity and quality of food consumption. Some report spending entire days without eating and parents reducing their food intake to ensure that they can provide their children with food. Partners also distributed 13 dignity kits to 13 Venezuelan women, and 97 Venezuelans (75 women, 1 girl and 21 men) accessed sexual and reproductive health services.

During the reporting period, the families of approximately 27 young children living in Trinidad and Tobago have been provided with counselling regarding child care practices on child development, nutrition, breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding. Partners have also continued to support existing temporary learning spaces managed by local organisations, while a more sustainable long-term solution is put in place, offering learning opportunities to 237 children and adolescents.

AREA OF INTERVENTION 2: PROTECTION

The Caribbean sub-regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform organized a seminar on the Protection of Asylum-Seekers and Refugees under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which brought together 18 lawyers, academics, and NGO representatives from **Aruba** and **Curaçao**. Although the legislation of the European Union and many other legal instruments of the Council of Europe do not apply to Aruba and Curaçao, both constituent countries of the Netherlands are bound by the ECHR, which includes provisions on protection against non-refoulement (Article 3) and protection against unlawful detention (Article 5).

In the **Dominican Republic**, partners provided legal aid to 390 individuals on various matters, including documentation, access to asylum and legal residency. Most of this assistance was delivered during a community event organized by a Venezuelan association which gathered volunteer doctors, lawyers and social workers to provide free health, legal, and psychosocial assistance to the Venezuelan population and was attended by 600 individuals from multiple provinces.

With a view to better engage the community, improve accountability of the assistance provided, and enhance safe identification and referral of vulnerable cases, community outreach volunteers across five provinces continued to receive monthly trainings on topics such as prevention of fraud, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and complaint mechanisms. By the end of May 2019, 31 individuals received psychosocial support and 11 persons with specific needs were referred to relevant service providers. Partners also continued to undertake protection monitoring activities in five provinces to better understand the evolution of the protection situation of refugees and migrants from Venezuela. These activities reached 132 individuals in April and May 2019 and the information collected will help inform the response of partners.

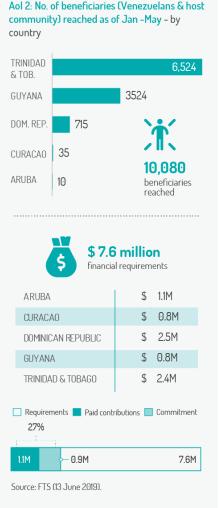
In **Guyana**, partners continued to involve Venezuelan students and local teachers in a community-based needs assessment on establishing courses on English as Second Language (ESL) in the border district of Region 1. Twelve focus group discussions with 226 students and teachers were organized to identify education gaps in this area, and this initiative will inform the design of an ESL project in Guyana. Counselling on legal matters, including access to residency permits, was provided to 2,040 individuals in four different Regions.

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, partners continued to work together to improve access to education, psychosocial support and protection of children. Some 90 Venezuelans and a member of the host community attended ESL classes (35% men, 40% women, 15% boys and 10% girls) and a new child-friendly space was established in Maraval, providing

Venezuelan children with a safe space for psychosocial support and access to learning, socialization and play. During the reporting months, 80 persons, including survivors of gender-based violence, received psychosocial support, and 43 unaccompanied or separated girls and boys were provided with family or community-based care and appropriate specialized services. To complement this, partners also trained 14 persons, including

> three Venezuelan refugees, to become part of an existing helpline for victims of domestic violence and provide counselling in Spanish. Additionally, over 1,000 persons from the Venezuelan and host populations were reached in April through animations in Spanish and English that were created by partners to raise awareness on child protection, health and hygiene.

Child friendly space in Arima, Trinidad and Tobago. © Shari John/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 **Aruba** and **Curaçao**, partners continued to advocate with the two governments for alternative legal pathways for entry and stay of Venezuelans, and access to rights.

In the **Dominican Republic**, on 24-25 April 2019, partners organised a workshop on livelihoods and economic inclusion of refugees with representatives from the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Economy and Planning, the National Institute on Migration, as well as civil society and UN agencies. This event served as a first encounter on the issue of livelihoods and economic inclusion and was well-received by participants. In particular, the Ministry of Labour expressed the willingness to facilitate community information sessions on labour rights and obligations. Through livelihood projects, partners also helped seven Venezuelans to start their own businesses, including a mechanic workshop, a Venezuelan fast food restaurant and a textile shop.

In **Guyana**, partners are collaborating with local stakeholders in the hinterland regions, including community leaders, teachers and health providers, to support the integration of Venezuelan children and youths into host communities through Sports for Development (S4D) programmes, which will benefit approximately 150 children under 12 and 50 youths between 13 and 18. S4D is a way to use sports as a platform for fostering solidarity and a culture of peace and dialogue, by promoting

core values in sports such as respect, tolerance, fair-play and team work. Partners also facilitated the access of 887 Venezuelans to existing public services, including hospitals, vaccination centres, immigration and the police.

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, partners continued to accommodate 125 Venezuelan boys and girls (73 and 52 respectively) in temporary learning spaces while more sustainable long-term solutions are found. Partners also continued in their efforts to increase public awareness on the plight of Venezuelan refugees and migrants as part of a strategy to show the human face of the Venezuelan situation and counter xenophobia. The short film "Lifted", which highlights the experiences of a Venezuelan refugee family in Trinidad and Tobago, was further screened on Canal + in the French Antilles, after having been promoted at the Caribbean film festivals in Guadeloupe and New York City in March 2019. A blog on community child-friendly spaces was disseminated on social media, reaching over 20,000 individuals and 129 persons from media houses, community newspapers and the digital media participated in a workshop on how to address harmful messaging and design anti-xenophobia campaigns.



AREA OF INTERVENTION 4: STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF HOST GOVERNMENT

Under Area of Intervention 4 of the RMRP, 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. In the **Dominican Republic**, partners continued to support the capacity-building of authorities and trained 55 participants from border, migration and asylum authorities, civil society, academia and the judiciary. From March-June 20019, two diploma degrees on refugee law were completed in close cooperation with the National School for Migration and the National School for the Judiciary.



Training of Immigration Officials on biometric and digital registration, April 2019, Guyana

In **Guyana**, partners engaged with the Government to support the expansion of birth registration to the remote and border areas of Region 9, including where there is a high concentration of persons from Venezuela. With the support of partners, the Department of Citizenship registered the birth of 376 children, nine from Venezuela and the rest from the host community. Partners also trained 20 immigrations officials on biometric and digital registration as part of the ongoing cooperation with the Government to establish a digitalized registration system for Venezuelans, which will facilitate their access to documentation and residency permits.

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, capacity building activities on international refugee protection were conducted for 159 police officers from Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, through the use of an online learning platform (Caribbean Basin Initiative). During one of the

workshops, a Venezuelan refugee woman spoke to officers about her reasons for leaving Venezuela, her life in Trinidad and Tobago and how she is contributing to the community that is hosting her. Partners also convened the first of a series of meetings on "Child Protection for Children on the Move", which brought together UN agencies and the national child protection authority to identify solutions to protection concerns of refugee and migrant children. The meeting yielded a roadmap for addressing joint priority areas of improvement, namely capacity development, additional alternative care options, information sharing, and the need to better integrate existing referral pathways. Additionally, two events were organised in May 2019 to increase the capacity of relevant stakeholders and frontline workers to prevent and respond to incidents of gender-



Participants at the Workshop on Safe Identification and Referral held on the 15-17 May 2019, Office of the Attorney General, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

based violence (GBV). A workshop on the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for the delivery of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services in emergencies brought together 30 participants from both government and civil society and resulted in a set of recommendations on how to improve preparedness and response in this area. A second meeting will be organised in July 2019 to follow up on some of the

recommendations stemming from the workshop. This was complemented by a capacity building session on safe identification and referral pathways during natural or man-made emergencies, which resulted in the certification of 21 national stakeholders from the government and civil society in the safe identification and referral of survivors of GBV.

COORDINATION

The **Caribbean Sub-regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform** covers 35 appealing partners, including 13 UN agencies, in five Caribbean countries: Aruba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. The Sub-regional Platform is organized in three **National Platforms/ Refugee and Migrant Working Groups (RMWGs)** in Guyana, the Dominican Republic and Lesser Antilles (covering Aruba, Curaçao and Trinidad and Tobago). The RMWG is a coordination mechanism that brings together UN agencies and various governmental and non-governmental organizations to facilitate strategic planning and promote coordination of the response to the Venezuela situation in complementarity and reinforcing the government's response.



National Platform/RMWG meeting, Dominican Republic, April 2019

In April and May 2019, four National Platform/RMWG meetings were convened in the **Dominican Republic**, **Guyana** and **Trinidad and Tobago/Lesser Antilles**, which also covers **Aruba** and **Curaçao**. Partners discussed the current status of the response and how to better work together to address existing operational challenges, funding shortages, as well as opportunities and ways forward.

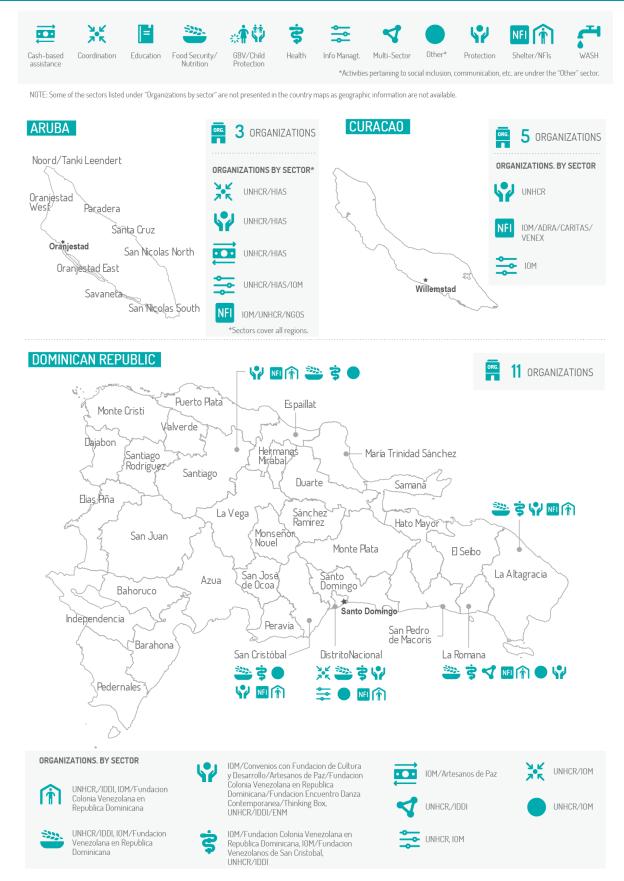
In **Trinidad and Tobago**, a Protection Coordination Working Group, bringing together UN agencies and civil society actors, was set up as part of the National Platform to establish safe referral pathways and improve case management in four thematic areas: child protection, GBV, persons with specific needs (PSN) and victims of trafficking (VoT). Its first task is to elaborate a national

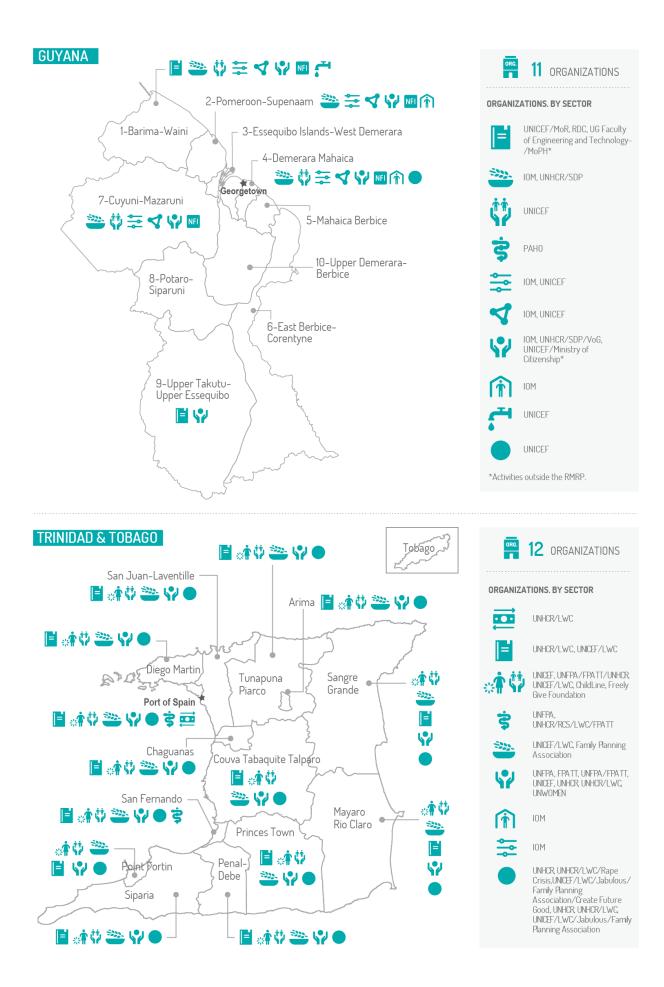
mapping of services available to Venezuelans on the islands. In May 2019, partners of the Protection Coordination Working Group conducted two joint field missions to assess and respond to the needs of particularly vulnerable communities living in remote areas. These activities resulted in the coordinated delivery of emergency shelter, as well as medical, psychological and legal support to approximately 70 persons in close coordination with relevant local authorities.

In Aruba, with the support of RMRP partners, NGOs have begun regular bi-weekly coordination meetings, during which they have agreed to jointly map education and health services that are accessible to Venezuelans.

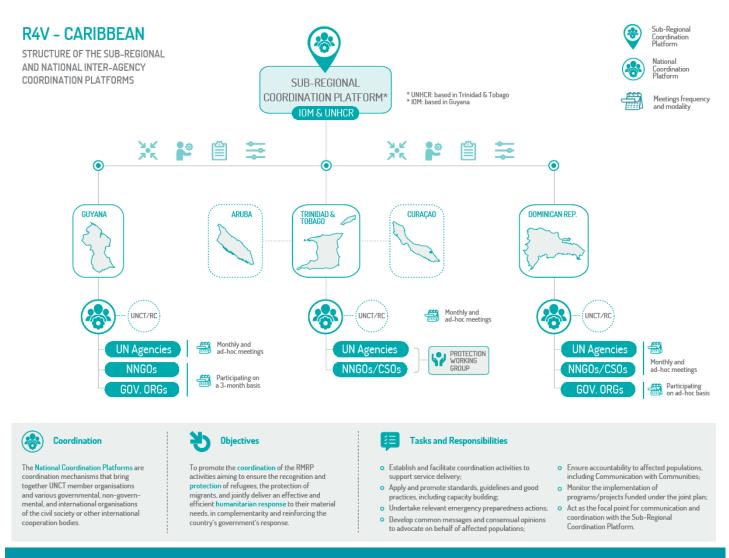
In Guyana, the National Platform/Working Group closely coordinates with the government-led multi-agency national committee for the Venezuela response, which brings together several public institutions, Ministries and UN agencies to coordinate the response to the Venezuela Situation.

OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW: WHO DOES WHAT AND WHERE (3WS)





Caribbean Sub-Regional Platform – Situation Report – April & May 2019



CONTRIBUTIONS

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

European Commissions' Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department |Government of Sweden| United Nations Children's Fund| United States of America

PLATFORM PARTNERS

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

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