Strategic Response Priorities

1. Provide and improve safe and dignified access to essential goods and critical services in synergy with sustainable development assistance.
2. Strengthen the prevention, mitigation and response to protection risks, access to rights, in particular of those with specific needs.
3. Increase resilience and integration opportunities.

This will be achieved through advocacy, capacity building, provision of direct assistance and community-based interventions. Programmes will encompass several sectors incl. Shelter, Non-food items, Nutrition, Food Security, WASH, Health, Education, Protection and Integration.

Situation

Five countries in the sub-region have been hosting a significant number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela: Aruba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Trinidad & Tobago. While Caribbean countries have granted regular status through stay and work permits, some have introduced restrictions for Venezuelans to access the respective territories, resulting in limited options for Venezuelans to benefit from a regular status. As a result, many Venezuelans enter irregularly in the Caribbean countries, often risking their lives through dangerous boat journeys and being exposed to risks of human trafficking and/or smuggling. Access to asylum also remains limited and instances of detention, deportation or non-admission, without access to an asylum procedure, were reported across the sub-region.

Those in irregular migratory situations face greater protection threats and risks and are at heightened risk of exploitation and abuse. As vulnerabilities grow, they also become susceptible to resorting to negative coping mechanisms, incl. survival sex. Considering their small size/limited absorption capacity, the increasing number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela has had an impact on host communities and strained public services.

Faced with these challenges, Governments in the sub-region have increasingly worked toward identifying solutions and responding to the needs of vulnerable refugees, migrants and host communities affected by the situation in Venezuela. Two countries in the region have undertaken or set up systems for the registration and documentation of Venezuelans. Strengthening access to services, in particular education and health, is a priority.