

Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin American and Caribbean countries are exposed to extreme natural events that can unleash disasters, depending on the vulnerabilities of each. The sectors most at risk are those with high social vulnerability.

Damage quantification



The first step towards reconstruction is the quantification of damage, losses and additional costs generated by the disaster.

» ECLAC has participated in over 90 estimates of the effects of disasters in 28 of the region's countries since 1972. In 2014, ECLAC launched the third edition of the Handbook for Disaster Assessment.



A disaster changes the lives of communities, and affects the economic activity of countries. It is critical that these have policies for disaster prevention as part of their public policies for sustainable development.

ECLAC methodology has been used to assess disasters caused by the following natural dangers:

1 Dynamic processes within the earth

- » Earthquakes
- » Tsunamis
- » Volcanic eruptions

The most affected area is the Pacific coast (in the "Ring of Fire").

2 Dynamic processes on the earth's surface

- » Landslides
- » Rockslides
- » Avalanches
- » Mudslides after flash flooding

The worst affected area is South America.

3 Meteorological and hydrological phenomena

- » Flooding
- » Storms
- » Drought
- » Hailstorms
- » Tornadoes and hurricanes
- » Ice and snow

Flooding is the main cause of disasters in Central and South America, while hurricanes affect mostly Mexico and the Caribbean.

4 Biological

- » Pests
- » Epidemics

Those countries most affected are in Central America and South America.