**REGIONAL: COVID-19**

As of 30 August, PAHO/WHO reports 7,242,000 cases and 274,394 deaths in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as 5,433,263 recovered cases.

**KEY FIGURES**

**7.2M**
Confirmed COVID-19 cases in Latin America & The Caribbean as of 30 August

**70%**
Of reported COVID-19 deaths in the Americas in people over 60 years old

**REGIONAL UPDATE**

According to PAHO/WHO, the vast majority of COVID-19 cases reported are among people between 20 and 59 years of age, while almost 70 per cent of deaths are occurring in people over 60 years old, indicating that the younger demographics are driving the spread in the region.

PAHO/WHO is concerned for the recent spike in cases in the Caribbean, which had originally avoided major outbreaks prior to resuming non-essential air travel to restart the economy; The Bahamas observed a 60 per cent increase compared to the previous week, while Sint Maarten, Trinidad and Tobago and the US Virgin Islands all reported 25 per cent increases following resumed air travel.

Despite these increases in the Caribbean, PAHO/WHO note that there are encouraging signs and proof that countries have the tools to cut down on the spread of COVID-19. These efforts include contact tracing in Argentina, The Bahamas, Guatemala, Dominica and Suriname, as well as data-driven localized approaches in Chile and Costa Rica that are leading to fewer daily cases.

**SOUTH AMERICA: COVID-19**

**PERU**

Peru now has the world’s highest rate of COVID-19 deaths per every 1 million inhabitants with 871, ahead of Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy, Chile and the United States. Although Peru reports more than 28,000 deaths, the National Death Information System (SINADEF) is reporting that Peru likely has more than 70,000 deaths linked to COVID-19, saying that there are thousands of deaths suspected to be due to COVID-19 that have not yet been included in Government reports.

SINADEF’s COVID-19 death count since March 2020 already exceeds the number of deaths recorded during Peru’s internal armed conflict between 1980 and 1990, which had been the deadliest period in Peru’s history.

**ECUADOR**

With transmission rates declining in 22 of its 24 provinces, Ecuador will not declare any additional state of exception after 12 September. The expiration means that the National Emergency Operations Committee (COEN) will no longer have any legal basis for imposing restrictions as response measures, such as curfews or bans on public gatherings. COEN and the Government are already urging people to take personal responsibility via a public health awareness campaign.
EL SALVADOR

El Salvador has reported declining daily cases for more than 20 days, going from a record high 449 new cases on 9 August to below 100. Local media indicates that the number of recovered patients has been higher than the number of new cases.

The downward trend comes as the country resumes activities in an economy that lost more than 80,000 private sector during confinement. End-of-year projections from a private enterprise association say that this number could reach 140,000. Rising remittances may help offset this potential impact; according to the Central Reserve Bank, July remittances totalled US$533 million, up from the $287 million received in April, indicating that Salvadorans abroad are also resuming normal work activities.

MEXICO

With more than 30 million students starting the school year through virtual classes, remote learning remains inviable for indigenous communities in the southern states of Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca.

Officials in Chiapas say the Government’s virtual education model poses a challenge for the state’s 1.5 million students, as many do not have access to the required signal. Oaxaca statistics show that one in four homes do not own a television. About 65 per cent of Guerrero’s population lacks internet access, a number that rises as high as 90 per cent in rural areas, home to more than 600 mostly indigenous communities.

CARIBBEAN: COVID-19

REGIONAL

According to ILO, almost half a million Caribbean tourism workers will face hardships due to job losses and reduced working hours and salaries, all while working in increasingly precarious conditions amid the COVID-19 pandemic. On average, tourism contributes up to 33 per cent of the region’s GDP, with the industry providing direct employment to some 413,000 workers in the Caribbean.

GUYANA

Guyana continues to see a worrying increase in COVID-19 cases, with authorities attributing the recent case surge to increased testing distribution across the country, especially in Regions One, Four, Seven and Nine. These regions are witnessing higher rates of infection, especially in the hinterland One and Nine regions, where indigenous communities account for 62 per cent and 89 per cent of the population, respectively. These highly impoverished communities have limited access to healthcare, water and sanitation.

Despite the increased distribution resulting in increased testing outside the capital of Georgetown and its home region of Region Four, test processing will remain centralised at the National Reference Laboratory, as other regions’ facilities lack the capacity and technical skills.