

Strengthening Regional Scientific Cooperation for Climate Knowledge Sovereignty and Resilience in the Americas and the Caribbean

Tuesday, 2 June 2026

Thematic Session: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm UTC –5 (virtual event)

Experts and Speakers

CoP-34 – Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI)

The thematic session brings together experts from academia, international organizations, development banks, scientific networks, and regional cooperation initiatives to discuss climate knowledge sovereignty, digital climate intelligence, scientific cooperation, resilience, and the science–policy–finance nexus across the Americas and the Caribbean.

Opening Framing Segment (block 2)

Rodney Martínez

WMO Representative for North America; Central America and the Caribbean

Rodney Martinez is an oceanographer, and climate and resilience specialist with extensive experience in climate services, regional cooperation, and disaster risk management across Latin America and the Caribbean. At the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), he coordinates initiatives related to promote regional and international collaboration, coordination, and technical and scientific support to improve the timely provision of weather, climate and environmental services to the society. That included the political and institutional work to consolidate the science-policy interface to support informed decision-making and resilience planning.

Block 3 and 4: Digital Climate Intelligence: Leveraging AI, Data Platforms, and Early Warning Systems

Talk 1: Climate extremes, emerging system risks, and regional scientific cooperation in the Americas and the Caribbean

Moderator: Dr. David Smith, The University of the West Indies

Michael Taylor

Dean

Faculty of Science and Technology

University of the West Indies, Mona

Michael Taylor is Professor of Climate Science and Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology at the Mona campus of The University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona Campus. He is the co-director of the Climate Studies Group, Mona (CSGM) which is a research body exploring climate variability and change for the Caribbean region. He is well published and cited for his scientific work on the impact of climate change on the small islands of the Caribbean region. He was a Coordinating Lead Author on the Special Report on 1.5 Degrees of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). He is also a Silver Musgrave Awardee for Science from Jamaica (2013), the ANSA Caribbean Laureate for Excellence in Science (2019), and a fellow of both The Caribbean Academy of Sciences (CAS) and The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS).

Jhordanne Jones

Researcher – Climate Studies Group Mona (CSGM)

Department of Physics

The University of the West Indies

Jhordanne Jones is a climate scientist affiliated with the Climate Studies Group Mona at The University of the West Indies. Her work focuses on climate variability, climate modeling, hydroclimatic extremes, and climate impacts in the Caribbean. She has contributed to regional climate resilience initiatives and research aimed at improving understanding of climate risks and supporting evidence-based adaptation planning in Small Island Developing States.

Paola Arias

Professor and Researcher – Universidad de Antioquia (UdeA)

Coordinating Lead Author – IPCC Working Group I

Paola Arias is a Colombian climate scientist specializing in regional climate dynamics, climate variability, hydroclimatology, and climate extremes in South America. She has contributed extensively to research on climate processes affecting tropical regions and is a Coordinating Lead Author for Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Organizan:



Change (IPCC). Her work supports climate science, regional modeling, and evidence generation for climate policy and adaptation planning.

Talk 2: Digital Climate Intelligence: Leveraging AI, Data Platforms, and Early Warning Systems
Moderator: Julio León – IDEAM

Christopher Reckord

Chairman – National AI Task Force, Jamaica
Deputy Chairman – Caribbean AI Task Force

Christopher Reckord is a Jamaican technology entrepreneur and digital transformation specialist recognized for his leadership in artificial intelligence, digital innovation, and technology governance in the Caribbean. He chairs Jamaica’s National AI Task Force and serves as Deputy Chairman of the Caribbean AI Task Force, promoting regional dialogue on AI governance, innovation ecosystems, and the use of emerging technologies to support development and resilience across the region.

Jonathan Hodge, Executive Director, Centre for Earth & Space

Executive Director – Centre for Earth & Space
Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez

Jonathan Hodge is a science manager and environmental information specialist with expertise in Earth observation systems, cloud-based environmental data infrastructures, and digital innovation for environmental monitoring. His work focuses on scalable climate and environmental information systems, data visualization, sensor integration, and the application of digital technologies to support decision-making and environmental intelligence.

Block 5: Regional Perspectives and Priorities and Global Connections

Moderator: Elizabeth Patiño - IDEAM

Toshiyuki Yamasaki

Director – Secretariat
Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research

Toshiyuki Yamasaki serves as Director of the Secretariat of the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN), an intergovernmental network supporting regional scientific cooperation on global environmental change across Asia and the Pacific. His work focuses on strengthening regional research collaboration, science-policy engagement, climate resilience, capacity development, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms among countries and institutions in the Asia-Pacific region.

Organizan:



Rose-Ann Smith

IPCC AR7 Lead Author

Lecturer and Undergraduate Coordinator -Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Consultant, Department of Geography and Geology
The University of the West Indies

Dr. Rose-Ann Smith is an environmental researcher and lecturer at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus. Her research focuses on climate justice, disaster risk management, political ecology and sustainable livelihoods, exploring the socio-political dimensions of environmental challenges. With a robust background in project management and consulting, Dr. Smith has contributed to numerous high-impact projects, including climate adaptation strategies and disaster risk assessments. She has participated in specialized training programs on ecosystem-based adaptation and disaster risk financing and has a strong publication record in environmental studies and social sciences.

Catalina Jaime

Head of Secretariat - Risk-informed Early Action Partnership, IPCC AR7 Lead Author, Research Fellow University of Twente and MapAction Trustee

Catalina Jaime is a Colombian expert in climate adaptation, anticipatory action, and disaster risk reduction. She currently serves as Head of the Secretariat of the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP), hosted by the IFRC. She previously led climate and conflict initiatives at the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre and is a Lead Author for the IPCC Seventh Assessment Report (AR7). Her work focuses on early warning systems, humanitarian resilience, and anticipatory action in vulnerable and conflict-affected settings.

Block 6 and 7: Interactive Dialogue: Pathways for Regional Cooperation

Moderator: Rodney Martinez, WMO

Edgar Salinas

Senior Executive, Climate Action and Biodiversity Division
CAF (Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean)

Edgar Salinas is responsible for the technical assistance program supporting financial institutions and regulators in implementing sustainable taxonomies across various countries in the region, which also includes capacity-building for the issuance of green and social theme-based bonds. Before joining CAF, he worked at the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bonn, where he was responsible for designing standards for estimating carbon balances.

Organizan:



Julián Prieto

Researcher – University of Toronto

Representative – Colombian Scientific Diaspora Network

Julián Prieto is a researcher associated with the University of Toronto and an active member of the Colombian scientific diaspora network in Canada. His work explores data interoperability, climate information systems, and scientific collaboration, with particular interest in strengthening regional knowledge infrastructures and international scientific cooperation.

Miguel Fernández

Senior Socio-Environmental Management Specialist

FONPLATA

Miguel Fernández is a climate, biodiversity, and environmental safeguards specialist with extensive experience in multilateral development banking, international cooperation, and applied research. He currently serves as Senior Environmental and Social Specialist at FONPLATA Development Bank. He holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Systems from University of California and has held positions at iDiv, NatureServe, UNDP, and GEO BON. He is a Lead Author of multiple IPBES Assessment, including the Monitoring Assessment on Biodiversity Monitoring and Nature's Contributions.

Mirey Atallah

Head of Adaptation & Resilience Branch

United Nations Environment Programme

Mirey Atallah leads the Adaptation and Resilience Branch within UNEP's Climate Change Division. With more than two decades of experience across Africa and the Arab States, her work focuses on ecosystem-based adaptation, climate resilience, adaptation finance, national adaptation planning, and institutional capacity-building. She has extensive experience supporting governments and international cooperation initiatives aimed at translating climate science into practical resilience and implementation strategies.

Organizan:

