

Latin America and the Caribbean has not regained pre-COVID level of human development

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By María Josefina Arce

Every year, since 1990, the UN publishes a report on human development in the world, which not only includes economic growth, but also incorporates health and education.

A new report by the international organization on the Human Development Index shows that progress has been uneven, slow and incomplete and that inequality between rich and poor nations has increased.

The text confirms that Latin America and the Caribbean have not been able to reach the levels prior to the global health emergency caused by the COVID 19 pandemic, whose end was decreed by the World Health Organization in May 2023.

According to UN experts, prior to COVID 19, the region had maintained a sustained improvement in the Human Development Index, which the disease caused by the new coronavirus brought to a halt.

Along with the irreparable loss of life, there was also damage to learning and access to education in the area. A report issued earlier this year by UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, warns of the educational gaps created during the pandemic and warns of the long-term consequences if comprehensive measures are not taken.

Currently, nearly 10 million children and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean remain out of school.

The complex situation created by the global health emergency is compounded by the historical debts of the education systems in the area, which still do not guarantee inclusive, equitable and quality education.

COVID 19 also highlighted the existing gaps in access to health and the weaknesses of health systems, which require more investment, better surveillance systems and greater resilience.

Inequality, poverty and unemployment also increased, causing the population's living conditions to deteriorate. Currently, more than 180 million people in the region do not have sufficient income to cover their basic needs.

The report is a wake-up call. It shows that Latin America and the Caribbean has not been able to achieve resilient human development to situations such as pandemics and climate change that bring associated meteorological events of greater intensity and duration, endangering the life and livelihood of humanity.

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