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Caribbean Among Most Vulnerable Regions to Climate Change

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Rising sea levels, coastal erosion and the spread of tropical diseases are among the signs of climate change, the experts said during a telephone news conference organized by El Puente Latino Climate Action Network.

“Atlantic Ocean temperatures have been increasing in recent years and the water’s pH imbalance has been harming marine species,” Ernesto Diaz, director of the Coastal Zone Management Program at the Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources, said.

“We are losing our beaches and that not only affects tourism, but also our people,” he said.

Predicting more intense hurricanes, Diaz urged Caribbean governments to maximize the protection of ecosystems and inhabitants.

He said it is understandable that the Caribbean calls for more international cooperation on the issue and that he expects the region’s representatives to call for action once again at next week’s UN Climate Summit in New York.

“We are the first ones to experience climate change,” Diaz said, after noting that populations of coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to rising sea level and hurricanes.

Cecilio Ortiz, associate professor in Public Administration from the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, said governments must learn about the issue in order to prevent or lessen the impact of climate change on their territories.

