

Good afternoon and thank you all for participating with us today. Just like the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), the University of Miami is committed to developing effective strategies for preparedness and response to natural disasters.

I would like to begin by thanking President Bill Clinton and the Clinton Global Initiative. I, myself, am a proud recipient of the Clinton Global Citizen Award back in 2008. I have seen first-hand how the resources CGI provides and the networks it creates are vital for aiding post-disaster recovery and creating more resilient communities.

I would also like to welcome the many heads of state and leaders that are with us today. Thank you for visiting the University of Miami.

The University of Miami is a global University, and our location at the crossroads of the Americas gives us a distinct hemispheric advantage. This also means that we must be ready to lead when

disaster strikes, and we must be at the cutting edge for resiliency, preparedness, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Our community understands all too well how disruptive and damaging a natural disaster can be. Last year, Hurricane Irma arrived at our shores. Irma proved to be a vital test for South Florida: she tested our emergency planning strategies, our post-disaster response, our building regulations, our climate change preparedness, and above all, Irma tested our resolve.

But before reaching Florida, Irma wreaked havoc across the Caribbean, followed by the destructive Hurricane Maria.

The University of Miami has always had a close relationship with our Caribbean neighbors, and this situation was no exception. In the aftermath of the 2017 hurricane season, UM mobilized to help the affected areas.

The Miller School of Medicine organized a comprehensive response effort, sending medical supplies, setting up an

international communications network, and arranging transport for patients needing urgent care.

In addition to providing aid, the University of Miami opened its doors to professors and students from Puerto Rico and other parts of the Caribbean, so they could continue their work until their own institutions were up and running again.

However, we must not limit ourselves to simply being reactive. Our planet's climate is changing, there is no doubt about it. And South Florida and the Caribbean are ground zero for sea-level rise and the natural disasters made stronger and more frequent by a changing climate.

The University of Miami is committed to leading the way in the region. Our research aims to understand the economic and social impact of climate change, including the health risks and extreme weather events it generates. Such understanding generates evidence to inform strategies for urban resilience. Disaster knows

no borders, and we are actively pursuing partnerships across the hemisphere so we may work together to combat these issues.

To help communities be as responsive and resilient as possible, we need strong global partners. CGI is a leader in post-disaster aid and resiliency. The new action network will help the global community create commitments that will help in immediate recovery efforts and long-term planning.

President Bill Clinton understands that we all have a responsibility to act when there is suffering around the world. Through the Clinton Foundation, he has convened leaders to deal with some of society's most pressing issues. But the Clinton foundation does more than just convene: it holds leaders accountable to action-oriented commitments that can lead to real solutions.

Today, President Clinton has brought together leaders from government, business, and civil society to rebuild areas devastated by hurricanes so those regions may thrive and be more resilient

than ever. Please join me in welcoming President Bill Clinton to the stage.