ICYMI: Biden-Harris Administration, Black Resilience Network Highlight Importance of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at Climate Resilience Roundtable

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WASHINGTON -- Last week, FEMA joined the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, the Black Resilience Network and others to discuss efforts to reinforce climate resilience.

The roundtable discussion brought together Black faith-based and community organizations and partners from private and philanthropic sectors, sharing tools and resources to strengthen a whole-of-community approach to climate resilience.

“FEMA cannot address the climate emergency alone. It requires a whole-of-government approach and whole-of-community involvement,” said DHS Center Director Marcus Coleman. “Preparing our communities for a changing world also requires a coalition-driven approach to building climate resilience across the nation, and it will take all of us to do so now.”

The roundtable event included a facilitated discussion led by the Black Resilience Network, a membership community that offers learning and networking experiences focused on racial justice, crisis leadership, and resilience.

“The Black Resilience Network is excited for future opportunities for collaboration that will come out of this convening,” Executive Director of Next Leadership Development Dr. Atyia Martin. “Our members showed great expertise and passion as they shared our priorities and extended several opportunities for collaboration on climate and disaster resilience with black towns, communities and organizations. We are grateful to be a part of such a historic moment.”

Attendees shared their stories of resilience and ways to increase collaboration to strengthen our nation's preparedness and resilience.

"I was awestruck by the breadth of work being done across the nation," said FEMA's Assistant Administrator of Grants Program Directorate Pam Williams. "The creative and impactful ways these remarkable community leaders have found to build resilience is to be applauded."

In addition to speakers from FEMA, presenters included representatives from nonprofit, philanthropy, private sector and federal agencies, including the Small Business Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Health and Human Services, Department of Agriculture and Department of Commerce Offices of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"Convenings such as the Climate Resilience Roundtable provide an opportunity for networking, learning and sharing across organizations and sectors," said President & CEO of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) April Wood. "At NVOAD, we recognize the importance of volunteerism and the 4C's: cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration, and this event was instrumental in connecting organizations and programs to promote a holistic approach to supporting climate resilience."

Attendees also learned about initiatives to increase climate resilience at a community level such as Community Disaster Resilience Zones, USDA Climate Hubs, participation in the Resilient Nation Partnership Network and other federal initiatives that advance the FEMA Strategic Goal to lead whole of community climate resilience and other climate-related priorities that promote proactive community engagement with historically underserved populations.

"It's encouraging to see the federal government engaging with community-based organizations and the private sector to provide resources, tools and technical assistance to vulnerable populations," said Executive Director of Build Strong Coalition Natalie Enclade. "Providing aid to these communities is a core part of the Build Strong Coalition's mission, and we're looking forward to continuing to work with our federal partners and the like-minded organizations that participated in this event to build a stronger and more resilient America."

The event inspired by the 2022 National Women Leaders In Public Health, Emergency Management & Environmental/Climate Justice, also supports FEMA's Strategic Plan and the DHS Secretary's priority to ready the nation to respond to and recover from disasters and adapt and respond to the climate crisis.



