

## **Annex 2**

### **Summary of Key Lessons from 2004 - Preparedness and Response**

#### **Guyana**

- 5,000 people were displaced last year as a result of the floods in Guyana and the country was not prepared and therefore could not respond effectively.
- The first steps taken in the UNDP office were to send staff home and notify Headquarters.
- An UNDAC team was quickly deployed to Guyana and together with Security they took proactive roles.
- SITREPS were regularly sent to HQ with up-to-date information on the evolving situation on the ground however the Government was not receptive to receiving direct UN support, which they interpreted it as the international community “telling them what to do”. Instead UNDP framed their support in the context of external resource mobilisation and coordination of donors.
- NGO support was similarly not welcome by the government.
- Data was badly needed following the floods. ECLAC came in and undertook capacity and damage assessments however in general the assessments were not systematically undertaken.
- The time frame for the Flash Appeal was not followed because government approval was late in coming.
- UNDP Guyana received an emergency cash grant from BCPR.
- Balancing the need to react quickly while simultaneously coordinating with numerous other UN agencies proved to be challenging.
- Guyana is still very much a cash society and so buying supplies and logistics in general proved to be problematic. In addition, the UNDP new global finance system, ATLAS is not designed for quick release of funds, which made timely response to the disaster extremely difficult.
- The RR/RC did an excellent job of pulling in political will and that of the UN agencies. The UN system was successful in achieving a harmonious approach and coordinated well.
- The UN in Guyana now has a good relationship with the government.
- With the availability of BCPR funds, the CO is developing manuals for emergency planning as well as supporting ongoing recovery.

#### **Haiti**

- The presentation made by the representative from Haiti focused on Contingency Planning and how the UNCT adapted the contingency planning structure to Haiti and made it operational.
- Contingency Planning is a long-term process which takes time and interest. The UNCT in Haiti first started their contingency plan in 2002 and developed a first draft in 2003.
- Because a contingency plan is a living document it requires annual updating. In 2004 OCHA held a workshop in Haiti to update the plan however the process was interrupted due to major flooding. The UNCT used draft plan to respond to the disaster.
- After the floods the UNCT picked up the updating of the contingency plan, factoring in the lessons learnt from the floods.
- Since the plan was updated this year, two simulation exercises have been organized to test the plan.
- The plan contains: a short narrative, a context and risk analysis, a description of the capacity of the government, the institutional and legislative structure for DRR in the country, response capacity of NGOs/UN and a general vulnerability analysis of the environment.
- The contingency plan included three scenarios. The first is a large-scale disaster based on an Earthquake scenario. The second is a medium-scale disaster based on a hurricane / flooding scenario and the third is a small-scale disaster based on landslides and/or localised flooding.

For each scenario the probability, magnitude, and local response capacities are detailed as well as appropriate response actions.

- A Coordination framework has been established in Haiti as well as a technical committee which works on updating the plan. The UNSMIH has a lot of capacity for disaster response in Haiti and so it is imperative to include them in the Contingency Planning process although it can be quite challenging to coordinate with them. The technical committee is quite large and so coordination in general is still a challenge.
- The Contingency Plan was tested during a simulation exercise which took place at 3 different sites. Links were established between the national plan, the UN Inter Agency Contingency Plan and various Ministerial plans. All of these plans have been tested.
- The structure of these different Contingency Plans is therefore parallel. The alert system for the UN Contingency Plan is based on what the national plan and system is for Meteorological alerts.
- The UNCT is now looking to decentralize the plan at different ministerial levels.

### **World Food Programme (WFP)**

- The WFP presentation focused on what the organisation does and how.
- WFP is heavily involved in vulnerability assessments and mapping.
- Because all of the Caribbean islands are small countries with similar population compositions and the same hazards impact the same typology, WFP developed a tool “Vulnerability Monitoring and Mapping Tool” which is adapted to the Caribbean region and is included in their regional plan for the Caribbean.
- There are two main parts to this tool. The first involves stockpiles of food. The second is related to knowledge management.
- WFP has created a platform where different groups can plug in to share information, lessons learnt, baseline methodologies for assessments, capacity building opportunities and strategies for local authorities and organisations. The first of these Knowledge Management Centres has been established in Barbados and has been presented to IFRC in Central America and the Caribbean in order to establish a joint partnership.
- WFP cooperates closely with ECLAC.
- WFP has a very good vulnerability and mapping system that allows them to build scenarios which facilitates the preparation of flash appeals. This process was used in Grenada and helped WFP to assess immediate needs of the most vulnerable population.
- WFP response is divided into three levels. For most local level disasters national authorities have the capacity to respond. When national capacity is overwhelmed WFP responds from the sub-regional level and/or global level together with other UN agencies.
- WFP is trying to build partnerships with non-traditional donor countries in the region, such as Mexico and Chile, which often provide assistance but do not wish to be formally considered as donors.

### **United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)**

- UNICEF has the Core Corporate Commitment (CCC) as its principal framework for humanitarian response. This framework guides UNICEF’s emergency interventions.
- UNICEF has undertaken Country Emergency Profiles through the UNICEF offices in the region taking economic, political, social and geographical (including natural hazards) factors into consideration and ranking the countries in terms of their vulnerabilities as well as defining what UNICEF will do in the case of an emergency. These Emergency Profiles are updated quarterly.
- UNICEF COs are connected to an early warning system which is linked to regional office, HQ, and to the Emergency Unit and supplies.

- UNICEF can make \$100,000-\$50,000 immediately available for emergency response. UNICEF can also access other funds through a global lending system which allows them to borrow funds which are later repaid.
- During an emergency SITREPS are regularly generated and widely disseminated. Daily conference calls are held with regional office.
- The UNICEF regional office in Panama has a stockpile of emergency supplies. The RC as well as WFP have access to these supplies.
- The UNICEF Barbados office is the point of communication for the Caribbean region.
- UNICEF also has an emergency roster of people available for deployment.
- UNICEF has agreements with NGOs and suppliers for emergency response supplies.
- UNICEF is connected to their operations centre 24 hours a day.
- UNICEF had an Emergency Response Plan for Grenada prior to the last hurricane season but it was largely a textbook document and was not based on reality. This plan has since been updated and revised.
- UNICEF is prepared to step in order to fill any gaps which may exist in the response effort, particularly in sectors which affect children such as water, health and education. In Grenada for example UNICEF did not undertake a health intervention because PAHO did this. Instead UNICEF drafted a plan to ensure that schools would open in 6 weeks following the disasters. They also ran a psycho-social program for affected populations.

### **Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO)**

- PAHO's strategies for preparedness and response are based on close collaboration with Ministries of Health in the region, CDERA, donors, national governments and UN agencies.
- Their relationships have been built over years
- PAHO has health disaster coordinators in each country. These coordinators participate in the development/updating/revision of health disaster plans. They facilitate the testing of the plans through simulation exercises.
- Training is an ongoing activity in which PAHO is involved with the fire rescue services, policy and ambulance services. Training covers topics such as mass casualty management and information and crisis management.
- PAHO also facilitates training in SUMA and damage assessment for medical institutions.
- PAHO works closely with designers of new health facilities in order to ensure that risk reduction measures are appropriately applied, e.g. Grenada, Martinique.
- PAHO has a regional response team which can be deployed at short notice.
- PAHO also has access to emergency funds of \$50,000 which can be accessed immediately after a disaster.

### **Cuba**

- In Cuba the chain of command for disaster risk management is linear. Everything is coordinated and people know what they have to do and this works from the central to the lowest level.
- Over the past 4-5 years, Cuba has been hit by many hurricanes. It is difficult to discuss preparedness and response separately from disaster risk management. In Cuba the disaster phases are not sequenced, disaster risk reduction is an on-going continuous activity.
- The UN in Cuba focuses on creating capacity. The UNCT has a standing Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) which is classically organised.
- The UNDMT works as a development tool since the concept of disaster risk reduction is already deeply embedded in the culture and in the UNDMT.
- The UNCT has thematic groups which are comprised of heads of agencies. There are also three technical teams including the UNDMT, a thematic team on local development and one on Security.

- OCHA and BCPR are important HQ level partners for the UNDMT. They provide funds and expertise.
- Information management is another important instrument at the UN's disposal. The UN acts as a clearinghouse for information helping to build national capacity for data collection, dissemination, and project development.
- Although Disaster Risk Reduction is part of the vision of the country, it has not been included in legislation yet. BCPR will be instrumental in facilitating and advocating for disaster risk reduction legislation to be put in place.