



**Secretariat of the United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP)  
UN Disaster Risk Reduction Workshop, Caribbean Regional Cluster  
14-16 June 2005,  
Runaway Bay, Jamaica**

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## **I Background:**

The 2004 hurricane season proved to be one of the worst in recent Caribbean history. The effects of these disasters, particularly in small island developing countries, are of increasing concern. In November 2004 UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC) with support from the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) organized a Regional Cluster Meeting in the Dominican Republic to review the 2004 UN's response and recovery efforts and lessons learned throughout the region in the affected countries. The meeting resulted in an action plan that called for a follow-up cluster meeting in Barbados, February 05, to review progress on the action plan. Prior to the Barbados meeting BCPR committed to supporting the strengthening of the UN Resident Coordinators capacity to effectively address the 2005 hurricane season through the hosting of a Disaster Risk Reduction Workshop to be facilitated by the UN Disaster Management Training Program (DMTP) and the BCPR/ Disaster Reduction Unit. At the Caribbean Cluster meeting in Barbados in February 2005, which DMTP attended, the RCs all agreed that this is an excellent idea and responded to a needs assessment questionnaire which was intended to guide the workshop design process. This workshop was organized by the UN Disaster Management Training Programme (UN DMTP) in collaboration with UNDP/RBLAC, BCPR and the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA).

## **II Workshop Purpose**

To strengthen the UN system's capacity in the Caribbean to manage and reduce disaster risk as a result of effective preparedness, response, and post-disaster recovery, including linking disaster reduction to ongoing development.

## **III Workshop Objectives and Expected Outcome**

- Enhance the understanding of the disaster risk reduction and recovery concepts.
- Identify and share measures to build upon the strategic role of UNDP for disaster risk reduction.
- Strengthen the commitment to integrate disaster risk reduction into UNDP programmatic elements and help catalyze action.
- Outline key actions for 2005 to be undertaken in support of disaster risk reduction, following the workshop and specifically for the 2005 hurricane season, as well as long-term measures to reduce disaster risk through development programming and assistance.

## **III Workshop Highlights**

### **i) Workshop Concept and Design**

Three thematic elements guided the workshop design. The first input was the lessons learned and declarations from the various meetings from the 2004 hurricane season. Specific emphasis was given to building on and incorporating the lessons learned from three key meetings: the Caribbean Sub-

regional Cluster Meeting: Reducing Disaster Risk: Are we doing enough? Santo Domingo, 25-27 November 2004; The Barbados Cluster Meeting : February 2005, Regional Review Meeting: “Beyond 2004 Events, Lessons for the Caribbean Region”, Jamaica, 26-28 April 2005; and the Havana Consensus from the “Seminar Workshop for National Authorities: Risk Management Policies, Systems and Experiences in the Caribbean Plan of Action from the Disaster Risk Reduction Meeting, Members of the Association of Caribbean States and the United Nations System, Red Cross and the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), 1-3 June, Cuba. Specifically, the workshop designed aimed to examine how to go forward, particularly in regard to addressing the actions in the declarations and the recurrent and priority challenges that had been identified, at both the government and UNCT level in the respective countries, and for the UN system at large.

A second core theme in the workshop design related to modalities for enhancing and build upon the UN’s strategic role in disaster risk reduction within the region. Four key aspects of the UN’s role were emphasized: leadership in respect to steering the course of the UN system in support of country and regional response capacity; the need to continue to adopt a holistic and systematic approach for the UN’s disaster related work; reinforcing the linkage between disasters and development, and addressing the resource mobilization needs for disaster risk reduction before, during and after an event.

The third theme underlying the workshop design related to the need for the UN to have a holistic and systematic approach for its disaster related work that encompasses tasks and processes to be undertaken before, during and after a disaster, and to be aware of the resource mechanisms that are available for those purposes. The importance of and need for response preparedness remains essential, but needs to be complemented by comparable systems and capacity for the effective transition into recovery –towards rebuilding infrastructure, livelihoods and systems so they are more disaster resistant and towards integrating disaster risk information and issues into ongoing development planning and programming.

Lastly, the workshop was conceived as a pilot activity that could be further refined and adapted, and available to be offered on a regular basis for the UN system in the region.

## **ii) Resource Persons / Participants**

Participation consisted of UN Resident Coordinators / UNDP Resident Representatives, Deputy Resident Representatives, Heads of UN agencies as well as disaster management focal points. Participants represented the following UN agencies, UNDP, OCHA, WFP, UNAIDS, UNICEF, PAHO, UNFPA, FAO and UNEP. Most of these UN agencies have a regional focus. The following countries were represented at the workshop: Cuba, Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Haiti. Representatives from the UNDP SURF in Trinidad, UN Regional Service Centre, Panama, and RBLAC in New York were also present at the workshop.

Facilitation was provided by: Ms. Eleanor Jones, Consultant, Ms. Tonna Marie Sturgeon-Rodgers, Consultant, Ms. Jennifer Worrell, UNDP/BCPR Geneva, Ms. Joanne Burke, DMTP Secretariat/Geneva, Ms. Angeles Arenas, UNDP/BCPR Panama, Mr. Gerard Gomez, OCHA, Panama, and Mr. Dusan Zupka, OCHA, Geneva. Special thanks to Mr. Manuel Bazzani who produced the workshop materials and to Petra Demarin for her documentation support.

## **iii) Daily Proceedings:**

The workshop was officially inaugurated with welcoming remarks made by the UN Resident Coordinator / UNDP Resident Representative of Jamaica, Mr. Juan Carlos Espinola followed by an overview of the workshop methodology and objectives.

The first session, *The Natural Hazard Context*, provided an overview on the disaster risk context of the Caribbean region, highlighting the broader social and economic impact of recent disaster events as well as emerging global trends and patterns which are affecting sustainable development of small island countries. The session presented the historical evolution of natural hazard impacts in the region, spanning from 1980-2004. Although trends illustrate that the mortality rate due to natural disasters has greatly decreased over the past two decades, economic, social and environmental losses have increased substantially thereby undermining sustainable development. An understanding of the natural hazard context in which development takes place, including the trends of hazard occurrences and links with climate change, is vital in order to reduce disaster risk and thereby prevent losses. The session concluded with a review of the specific hazards in the region, including predictions for the 2005 hurricane season and their implications.

The second session, *Principles and Actions of Disaster Risk Reduction*, served to introduce key concepts and terminology to establish a common understanding of what disaster risk reduction encompasses, its relevance to development in general, and more specifically to UNDP development programming activities. The inter-relationship of the disaster continuum as encompassing the “before, during and after” was noted, along with how disasters can serve as opportunities to implement disaster risk reduction activities.

Part two of the session focused on the need for and processes for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development, as part of ongoing programming and not as a separate intervention. This directly links to the need to integrate disaster risk analysis and issues into the CCA and UNDAF process, and to link to the International Strategy’s for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005, which the Caribbean region is adopting. Several examples of entry points and partnerships for mainstreaming initiatives were presented, along with existing mechanisms to integrate disaster risk reduction into ongoing UNDP and UN agency development programming. This generated considerable discussion in regard to how mainstreaming has been successfully undertaken in other cross cutting thematic areas, such as gender and human rights and lessons to be learned from that experience. The session concluded with an overview of how UNDP TRAC 1.1.3 funds can be used in support of mainstreaming.

Session three focused on the *UN System Roles and Responsibilities* within the context of the UN’s mandate for disaster risk reduction as stated in GA Resolution 46/182, which assigns OCHA the lead role for preparedness and response, and UNDP for mitigation, including recovery and reduction. The membership, organisational arrangements, roles and functions of the UN Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) before, during and after a disaster were presented and discussed. Additionally, the role of the respective UN agencies in the UNDMT was reviewed, including their response preparedness measures and actions. The Eastern Caribbean Disaster Donor Group based in Barbados was cited as a particularly well-functioning example of a UNDMT which includes a wide range of UN and non-UN actors and which holds regular meetings throughout the year. UNDP Jamaica is providing support to assess the potential to launch a similar initiative for the Western Caribbean region.

UN tools and mechanisms for response coordination were presented generating a lively discussion regarding the differences between a Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and a Flash Appeal, and the effectiveness of the Flash Appeal for addressing immediate humanitarian needs. The Flash Appeal process is viewed as very cumbersome and most of the funds generated from the appeal are used for medium-term recovery rather than immediate response. Many UN humanitarian agencies, such as UNICEF and WFP, therefore launch their own appeals, which generate less money but are much quicker and therefore more affective at funding immediate response activities. Discussion also focused on the fact that many of the international tools and mechanisms available through the UN system are contingent upon the launch of an International Appeal. This can be problematic in the Caribbean region where tourism is a major industry that can potentially be undermined by an International Appeal. National sovereignty issues have also shown governments to be reluctant to support the launching of an International Appeal. It was suggested that countries would be much more

likely to accept assistance from the international community if agencies, including the UN, did not need to publicize themselves and their work.

The final session of the day *Applying Lessons Learnt* focused on how the UN system in the region can continue to apply lessons learnt with respect to their own leadership, strategic use of resources and coordination. A synthesis presentation on key lessons learnt in the region was followed by task groups to analyse what worked well and to highlight the most critical challenges and needs to be addressed. (For a detailed report please see Annex 1),

The second day of the workshop was comprised of two sessions, *Preparedness and Response, and Recovery*. OCHA representatives presented principles, tools and resources applicable for preparedness and response. Included in this presentation was a detailed description of how to request an UNDAC team, and the UNDAC terms of reference, including what a UNDAC team can and can not do, and lessons learnt from the 2004 hurricane season. Last year was the first year that an UNDAC team was pre-positioned in a country before the hurricane, which proved to be very effective in Jamaica. Outstanding issues to be addressed regarding UNDAC teams include the development of guidelines to preposition or deploy an UNDAC team in multiple countries or countries where the UN does not have a presence, such as Grenada. The session concluded with a panel comprised of representatives from Guyana, Haiti, Cuba, Barbados, and Panama representing UNDP, PAHO, WFP and UNICEF. Panel members summarized their preparedness actions and response lessons learnt from the 2004 hurricane season. (For a detailed report on the panel's presentations please see Annex 2.)

The session on *Recovery* was the final workshop session. It emphasized the recovery roles of the government and UNDP, providing an overview of UNDP's recovery principles, tools and resources including the International Recovery Platform (IRP) and the Recovery Guidelines. Disasters provide a unique if transitory window of opportunity to "reshape reality" by not reconstructing risk. It is therefore imperative to factor recovery considerations in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and to understand the flow from emergency response to recovery, which needs to be part of national and UN plans. The UN needs to advocate for the importance of utilizing and building the capacity of existing structures to handle recovery rather than creating parallel or new structures to handle this function. The importance of the ECLAC mechanism was highlighted as the basis for objective recovery planning and financing, decision making. The presentation was followed by a panel comprised of representatives from Jamaica, Grenada, Cayman, and Barbados who shared their in-country experiences on post-disaster recovery and lessons learned for restoration of livelihoods, using population data for recovery planning, the link of recovery and policy reform. (For a detailed report on the panel's presentations please see Annex 3.)

The last portion of the day introduced the task for country groups to develop *2005 Action Plans*. Four country groupings were formed and asked to formulate key short-term actions in preparation of the 2005 hurricane season. Recommended actions should take into consideration collaboration with national authorities, mobilization of resources, preparation/updating of contingency plans, application of lessons learnt, etc. A number of tools and resources were provided to participants to assist with this exercise including a checklist of preparedness activities, the strategic outline for the Hyogo Framework for Action, a letter to UNDP Resident Representatives from the RBLAC Director, and the summary of the recommendations from the workshop session on *Applying Lessons Learnt*. The respective action plans were presented on day three. (For a detailed report on the 2005 Action Plans please see Annex 4.)

#### **IV Conclusions & Next Steps:**

- UNDP/BCPR and OCHA pledged to support the implementation of the 2005 Action Plans.
- UNDP/BCPR agreed to support the following activities:
  - Support the development of a regional mechanism for more effective use of expertise in the region under the CRMI umbrella through technical BCPR assistance.

- Within the context of the Global Mainstreaming Project, finalize the guidelines for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development programming.
  - Invite Jamaica and Barbados to participate in an up-coming global workshop on mainstreaming to be held 22-23 September.
  - Finalise the UNDP Recovery Guidelines
  - Recovery Surge Capacity training to take place in the region by September 2005.
  - Work with the University of the West Indies to bring current country office assistance, in the form of a Disaster Management Centre, under the CRMI umbrella.
  - Carry out a joint UNDP/OCHA Contingency Planning and mainstreaming workshop in Guyana.
  - Provide technical assistance to Guyana in supporting the development of a national disaster risk reduction capacity building project.
  - Provide technical assistance for the development of a national disaster risk reduction system, which is currently underway in Trinidad and Tobago.
  - Help to establish an early warning system at the local level in Haiti using expertise from Cuba through the CRMI network.
  - Support the development of civil protection capacity at the departmental level.
  - Help review the finalisation of the operations order in Barbados and provide sample of early recovery projects elsewhere.
- Copies of the workshop presentations will disseminated together with this report, as well as a list of participants.
  - DMTP will further refine and adapt the workshop design and materials for future use. In particular, additional information regarding other UN agencies' support mechanisms and tools will be included in the materials.