



Towards Consensus and Cooperation for Mainstreaming Disaster Reduction into Development : A Case Study from the Caribbean

In the English speaking Caribbean, UNDP supported a highly successful cost sharing initiative with the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), the UNDP Office for the Eastern Caribbean located in Barbados and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), to develop a **Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy (CDM)** for the Caribbean region and to strengthen the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) to spearhead the implementation and promotion of this strategy at the national level.

The Intervention

This joint initiative aimed at integrating the CDM into the Development Process of CDERA member states, within the overall goal of furthering "Sustainable Development in the Caribbean". The strategy was developed through interactive dialogue among key stakeholders in the public and private sectors, donor and multilateral organizations, civil society and multi-level financial institutions. It provided an important standard for stakeholder cooperation and a useful platform for pro-actively addressing disaster reduction issues within the context of development planning. The CDM strategy development process in itself was a significant step towards developing national agendas for disaster management in the region.

Since its adoption at a regional conference in June 2001, the CDM Strategy has been presented to at least nine national consultations for adoption at the national level. These consultations have been characterized by high-level participation of political leaders, including Heads of Government and in some cases with the participation of senior decision makers from public and private sectors. In the British Virgin Islands (BVI) the Government has already integrated the CDM process into its National Integrated Development Strategy and national legislation has been enhanced to support the intersectoral dialogue

and cooperation essential for CDM implementation.

The donor community working in the Caribbean has been very supportive of the CDM Strategy and has undertaken steps to support their bilateral and multi-lateral programmes for disaster risk reduction through the priorities indicated in the Results Framework. Already the governments of Japan and Canada, USA and others have provided more than US\$5 million to finance CDM related programmes. The European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) Disaster Preparedness Programme, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the USAID/OFDA are also providing resources to support the advancement of the CDM agenda.

Under this activity an institutional review of CDERA was conducted to determine its capacity to spearhead the implementation of CDM at the regional level and to provide support to its member States for national level implementation. Since the completion of this institutional review, USAID/OFDA has provided additional funds to support the strengthening of CDERA. UNDP will also provide additional resources to complement this and support institutional strengthening for national level implementation.

Positive Impacts

The CDM Strategy was successful in providing an avenue for involving critical actors in disaster risk reduction – including the adaptation to climate change community – in a mechanism, in which their participation before was at best marginal. The collaboration between CDERA, UNDP and ACCC (Adapting to Climate Change in the Caribbean project) on a programme for mainstreaming of climate change in disaster management in the region is testimony to the benefits of shared strategic objectives.

CDM stakeholders and partners are enthusiastic

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about having additional benefits for disaster reduction in the Caribbean. The importance of regular information sharing and programmed cooperation has been reinforced. The outcome of this has been the provision of information for the maintenance of a CDM matrix that will offer an inventory of ongoing programmers and projects under the result areas. The support for convening a regular CDM forum has been snowballing. Partners are already examining how the existing programmes can further support this through cooperative financing.

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