



JAMAICA

National Programme for Disaster Prevention

Disaster Context

Jamaica is a densely populated Small Island Developing State with a population of approximately 2.6 million people. It is vulnerable to a number of natural hazards such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and flash floods. Between the last quarter of 2001 and November 2002, the island suffered from several floods and landslides associated with tropical storms and other types of severe weather. In late May 2002, a broad surface trough associated with a low-pressure system produced heavy thunderstorms. In some areas, recorded rainfall exceeded one metre in the nine days from 22-30 May.¹ Average rainfall during the period for the most affected areas was 500 millimetres. The storms caused flooding and landslides in communities throughout the island and were followed by a period of unseasonably frequent rain over the next four months.

Jamaica's most common natural disasters are floods. The institutional capacity to handle disasters is limited, and little forward planning is undertaken by national and local-level authorities. UNDP is assisting the country as it develops a comprehensive disaster management plan.

Project Titles

- Community Disaster Management Strengthening Project (2001)
- Support to Community-Based Disaster Management in the Parishes of St. James, St. Ann, Clarendon, Portland, and St. Mary (2002)
- Response to and Assessment of Damage Done by the Heavy Rains of May 2002

Sectors

- Disaster preparedness and mitigation
- Institutional strengthening

Funding

UNDP contributed \$120,000 from TRAC funds, \$50,000 of which was in-kind. The Community Disaster Management Strengthening Project is valued at \$170,000.

Partners

- Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM)
- Jamaica Defence Force Air Wing
- National Water Authority

Programme Activities

- Provide short-term technical assistance to the ODPEM
- Transport relief supplies to affected communities
- Implement search-and-rescue operations
- Identify the impacts of floods
- Relocate those affected by floodwaters
- Build community disaster management capacity in high-risk communities
- Develop community flood warning systems, including installation of flood-warning gauges
- Carry out risk analysis in the areas of recent floods
- Carry out hazard assessments and mapping
- Hold community training and awareness programmes on disaster preparedness
- Prioritize the recommendations of the impact reports for flood events in Portland from 1980
- Map potential landslide areas

¹ The 30-year mean for May is 486mm