



MONTSERRAT

Disaster Mitigation, Institutional Strengthening and Capacity-Building

Disaster Context

Montserrat, located in the Eastern Caribbean, was devastated in 1989 by a direct hit from Hurricane Hugo. Following volcanic eruptions during the mid-1990s, Montserrat was designated a country in Special Development Circumstances.

Much had been rebuilt by 1994, when the Soufriere Volcano became active after laying dormant for 500 years. This led to the evacuation of the capital, Plymouth, and the definition of the southern half of the island as an exclusion zone. A majority of the population was forced to relocate to the northern half of the island, to other Eastern Caribbean nations or to take resettlement packages to the United Kingdom. The mass emigration resulted in critical human resource capacity shortages. Both the threat of natural disasters and critical human resource capacity issues required a coordinated response, especially as volcanic activity has continued into 2003.

Project Title

Disaster Mitigation, Capacity-Building and Institutional Strengthening in Support of Montserrat's Post-Emergency Resettlement Programme

Sectors

- Disaster preparedness and mitigation through vulnerability assessment
- Institutional strengthening and capacity-building in the following sectors: health (psychology, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), civil engineering, architecture, GIS and land-use planning and computer software engineering

Funding

UNDP contributed \$90,000 from TRAC 1.1.3 funds. Cost-Sharing: UK Department for International

Development (DFID), \$690,000; Government of Montserrat, \$40,000; and Government of Japan, \$160,000

Partners

- DFID and the Government of Japan
- Government of Montserrat: Development Unit; National Emergency Department; Ministry of Community Services, Education and Health; Public Works Department; and the Volcano Observatory

Programme Activities

- Integrated vulnerability assessment of the situation in Montserrat to provide guidance on disaster vulnerability to development planners and private-sector initiatives
- Establishment of occupational therapy services in the island through United Nations Volunteers (UNV)
- Support to the psychological services of the island, specifically focusing on post-traumatic stress disorder through UNV placement
- Support to infrastructure development in Montserrat, including key civil road works projects, assisted living quarters, health clinics and police headquarters
- Support to the Geographic Information System/LIS project through UNV, specifically focusing on the computerization of Montserrat's Cadastre and Land Registry Systems
- UNV support of software engineering to the Montserrat Volcano Observatory, a statutory government body responsible for real-time monitoring of the Soufriere Hills Volcano in order escalating volcanic activity; the monitoring programme also provides information for hazard and risk assessment used by the authorities for decision making and development planning