

***The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency Statement to the
Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction for the Americas
Investing for resilience
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SALUTATIONS.

In late October of this year, Hurricane Sandy cut a path of destruction through Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba and the Bahamas in the Northern Caribbean and then went on to cause extensive damage along the East Coast of the United States. This storm has highlighted the vulnerability of both developing and developed countries to the effects of catastrophic events. This is particularly true of events of a hydro-meteorological nature in light of the current challenges being faced globally from the effects of climate change.

It is a commonly known fact that the islands and low lying coastal states of the Caribbean are among the most hazard prone in the world. This recognition of our vulnerability informed the region's search, starting around 2001, for shared goals and priorities on disaster reduction. These goals and priorities have now been articulated in our Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy and Framework, initially developed in 2001, and further enhanced in 2006.

The Enhanced CDM Strategy and Framework 2007 to 2012 is a blueprint for planning of disaster management risk reduction interventions within the 18 Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) Participating States and responds to several regional and international mandates including the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005 -2015. The goal of the Strategy and Framework is the achievement of regional sustainable development through CDM. As the period of coverage for the CDM Strategy and Framework 2007-2012 comes to a close; CDEMA has begun the process of developing the CDM Strategy beyond 2012.

A number of key achievements have been realized in the region as a result of our emphasis on CDM. Key among these is that the CDM programme has been embraced by a number of CDEMA's development partners, who have integrated CDM into their programming for the region, thereby providing direction for their investment in disaster management for the Caribbean. This has also proven important for facilitating collaboration amongst the various development partners so as to minimize duplication; optimize resource allocation and increase the likelihood of meaningful change.

Further, CDM implementation has enabled multi- million dollar and multi-year provision of disaster management funding for the Region. These resources have been utilized to drive regional and national actions in the priority areas identified Institutional

Strengthening for DRR, Knowledge Management, DRR Mainstreaming in key sectors of national economies and building community resilience.

Among CDEMA's notable achievements is the recognition of CDM goals at the national level, particularly with respect to the strengthening of institutional capacity for CDM implementation. CDEMA has facilitated this through promotion and support of national programming consultation mechanisms. Countries have begun to develop multi-year CDM national work programmes that are aligned to the CDM Strategy and Framework. These work programmes are results based designed having benefitted from the inputs of the cadre of national stakeholders who have received training in the development of Results Based Management for application to CDM.

Steps to address national level capacity and resource deficits to accelerate CDM implementation are facilitated through a number of mechanisms. A major achievement in this regard has been the establishment of the Country Directed Fund. All 18 of the CDEMA Participating States have access to the fund which allows them to utilize the resources for the advancement of CDM.

Recognizing that competency and proficiency delineation is central for the disaster manager going forward, a leadership development and training programme has also been initiated for existing and targeted DRR leaders in the region. With the support of our partners, there is to date, cadre of 110 DRR leaders across the region.

Creating of model products and standards, a central element of the DRM programme has been actively pursued. Over 20 Products and tools have been developed, including a suite of products for transforming NDOs from response centered to holist DRM. Essentially, many of these are tools and standards for the development and operations for NEOCs, ICT capability, DRR assessment audits, organisation structure and model policy and guidelines for integrating DRR and CCA at the community level.

The international Climate Change dialogue has directed more attention to the integration of DRR and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). At the level of CARICOM, the region has acknowledged the seriousness of the potential impacts of this phenomenon on the move towards sustainable development in the member states. CDEMA has been working to raise the level of awareness of its Participating States of the implications of climate change to our disaster experiences. A Regional Programme and Plan of Action for integrating climate change considerations in DRR has been developed through an intervention supported our partners.

In view of the increasing likelihood of catastrophic events being experienced in the region due to climate change, CDEMA has also sought to enhance the national and regional response capacity. At the national level, through an intervention supported by the ACP-EU 9th Natural Disaster Facility, significant work has been done to review and enhance national disaster plans. At the community level, that same intervention has been successful in working with select communities to develop vulnerability risk profiles

which can support response planning. Communities have also benefitted from training of Community leaders/instructors for management of emergency response.

At the regional level, CDEMA has focused on strengthening its Regional Response Mechanism through the enhancement of Standard Operating Procedures for its sub-regional response operating units.

These successes have been underpinned by a multi-sectoral governance mechanism established for CDM, known as the CDM Coordination and Harmonisation Council. The CDM CHC was established on 10 December, 2007 to provide policy and technical advice for mainstreaming CDM implementation in key sectors at the national and regional.

In this regard, the CDM CHC has resulted in the realization of significant gains at the sectoral level, particularly in relation to collaboration and sharing of technical expertise for training, raising awareness, development of model tools and products and provision of equipment in some critical areas.

Monitoring the gains of CDM is critical on a number of fronts, including providing accountability on the use of resources facilitated by development partners; indicating to national governments the value of their membership in the Agency; and to facilitate the design of future programming of the Agency aligned to country needs. In this regard, CDEMA has developed a Monitoring, evaluation and Reporting tool for the CDM Strategy that has also included a number of indicators that will allow for the measuring of progress on implementation of the HFA at the national and regional levels

In terms of challenges still to be addressed as the region moves forward, the following are key.

Economic realities constrain the ability of states to move forward with their commitments to DRR, even though they fully acknowledge the importance of doing so. There is also the concomitant evolving complexity for resource mobilization from traditional sources. These points to the need for CDEMA to sharpen our tools for engagement, as well as for revisiting our modes of communication to our publics.

Another important challenge is that severe and extreme events may drive unrealistic expectations within the states for short term results to be achieved through the facilitation of CDEMA. The opportunity is therefore provided for CDEMA to strengthen our messaging on disaster reduction and what can be realistically achieved.