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**BELIZE'S DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

Belize's disaster risk management is coordinated by the National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO). The NEMO is structured around 13 functional committees each chaired by a line Ministry or (as in the case of the Environment committee) a government department. Disaster response is further facilitated through the City Emergency Management Organisations (CEMO) managed by City Councils and also District Emergency Management Organisations.

The emergence of an enhanced and structured approach to disaster risk management in Belize coincided with a period of increased frequency in tropical cyclone threats, earthquakes and flood events affecting the country. More recently too, the potential role of climate change in the increased frequency of these events and in the noted increases in intensity levels has been recognized. Additionally, the need to emphasize ex-ante approaches for effective management of these events that would reduce the catastrophic losses seen as a critical one.

To this end, measures are to be taken over the medium term for improved disaster risk management along the following lines”

- Together with our sister Caribbean countries adopting a regional building standards for construction of buildings in Belize.
- Establishing regulatory bodies for the control and monitoring of building construction in Belize i.e Central Building Authority, APEB, APAB and now the introduction of a Contractor's Association Bill
- Shelter/Shelter Management: Ensure adequate and safe shelters manned by competent personnel through training and frequent review of staffing in conjunction with annual inspection of Shelters.

Capacity Building and Support: This involved the equipping DEMO /CEMO personnel with results based management and

strategic planning tools and addressing some critical human resource concerns i.e employing and training district coordinators.

- Strengthen District Offices (DO): Strengthen capacity at district and village level. This strengthening includes utilizing the expertise and resourcefulness of volunteers to improve response mechanism.
- Involvement in CAPRA – Central America Probabilistic Risk Assessment which has its main objective of having an integrated Disaster Risk Management Plan in Central America. It is a tool /technique to assist with risk identification and mitigation. Under CAPRA GOB will also review the NEMO ACT Chap 145 to move away from Disaster Preparedness and Response to embrace and institutionalize risk identification, prevention and mitigation.
- Emergency Plans Tested and Updated: Effective mechanism for management and implementation; Several scenarios were effected to test the management and response mechanisms based on the Disaster Preparedness and Response Act and weaknesses highlighted were reviewed to improve the effectiveness of the Act;
- Improve Communication and Alert Systems: Install proper signage and conducting public awareness programs on evacuation routes to reduce the impact from potential hazards such as Dam Failure and Flood event.
- Improve Mitigation and response Capabilities: Reviewing legislation to incorporate and institutionalize Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) principles across all sectors.
- Produce NEMO Annual Report

#### ***ACTIVITIES WHICH DEMONSTRATES GOB'S COMMITMENT TO DRR.***

- Conducting a study to develop a Land Use Policy Document to guide and assist Government of Belize in optimizing the use of its land resources
- Developing Baseline Data by establishing networking between private and public sectors in conjunction with CAPRA (Technical Data)
- Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building of NEMO. Training sessions are carried out more frequently for NGO's, CBO's, Private Sector Entities and Public Sector ( DEMO/ CEMO) Village Councils and district volunteers.

### **Infrastructural Improvements to make Belize more Resilient to disasters.**

- Building of a sea wall near Mile 7-9 Northern Highway to protect the main highway from undermining by actions of the Belize River.
- Replacement and installation of 20 Culverts on Western Highway between Miles 3 – 28.
- Installation of 200 units of culverts in Belize City to reduce the incidence of flooding;
- Installation of 186 units of culverts in Trial Farm Village, Orange Walk District to reduce the incidence of flooding;
- Installation of 212 units of culverts in Stann Creek District to reduce the incidence of flooding;
- Dredging and concrete lining of existing canals to mitigate the incidence of flooding in Belize City (Southside Poverty Alleviation Project Phase 1 & 2).

Whilst Belize may not have completed amendments to its legislation to formally adopt and institutionalize Disaster Risk Reduction strategy across all sectors, the National Emergency Management Organisation has been proactive in having development issues especially infrastructural project focus more in designs that allows for mitigation and making communities more resilient to disasters. This have been the main focus in Belize's Medium Term Development Strategy 2010 - 2013.

I am therefore pleased to inform that given where Belize was a decade ago there has been major advances in embracing Disaster Risk Reduction across all sectors of our development agenda.

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