



CARIBBEAN REGIONAL COMMUNICATION ON THE HYOGO FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION POST-2015 FRAMEWORK

The United Nations General Assembly endorsed the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005 to 2015 as a global 10-year plan to build the resilience of nations and communities to natural hazards. At the request of the UN General Assembly, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) is facilitating the process of developing a post-2015 framework for DRR at the request of the UN General Assembly. This process has been ongoing since 2012 and is a highly consultative one which has been soliciting the views of countries and organizations around the world. The outcome of the review process will be a draft available for consideration and feedback at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Sendai, Japan in 2015.

At the Caribbean region level, implementation of the HFA was facilitated through the enhanced Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy 2007 – 2012 which was agreed to and adopted by all member states within the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency's (CDEMA) grouping. The CDM Strategy also received the buy-in and support of a number of development partners. At the end of that implementation period, CDEMA undertook a review process to identify emerging gaps for input to the HFA review. This culminated in a workshop convened at the 7th Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management in December 2012 which provided the opportunity for a broad range of Caribbean stakeholders to participate in the post-HFA process, including representatives from National Disaster Offices, local governments and administrations; civil society; the scientific community; the private sector; and regional organizations.

The review process indicated that the CDEMA system realised progress in two (2) key areas:

1. There was overall progress in the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction at the sectoral level (targeted sectors which included health, education and agriculture).
2. The enabling environment for the implementation of CDM has been strengthened through the development of Model National CDM Policy, Legislation and Strategy. Work on legislation and policy has been advanced in some Participating States and remains a priority for action in others.

Based on the above, CDEMA proposes the following three messages to inform the post-2015 DRR Agenda.

Caribbean Leadership

The first message is to embrace the opportunity for Caribbean Leadership in the post 2015 Disaster Risk Reduction agenda, through established regional mechanisms such as the CDM Strategy. This was one of the key outcomes of the Regional Consultation.

The CDEMA System's Regional Strategy on Comprehensive Disaster Management 2001-2006 and the CARICOM Regional Framework 2005-2015 were fore runners to and provided critical input in the shaping of the HFA 2005-2015. In December 2013, CDEMA launched the CDM Strategy for the next 10-year period 2014-2024, and is in the process of developing the associated Implementation Plan and performance monitoring framework to roll out this Strategy.

In this regard, a priority area to inform the international discourse is the need for strengthened accountability to be achieved by enhanced results-based programming and monitoring through the elaboration of an Implementation Plan and an Online Monitoring and Evaluation System. As CDEMA develops the monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) system for the CDM Strategy 2014 to 2024, we will be seeking to develop shared indicators which will simplify the process for countries in the region to report on the HFA. This MER System will also be a means of ensuring accountability to CDM partners for the delivery of results under the CDM Strategy, and of measuring the impact of our investments and initiatives.

Integrated Disaster Risk Management Approach

The second message is to support joint pursuit of the Post 2015 HFA and Post 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda and to advocate for an integrated risk management approach, which brings together the elements of DRR, adaptation to climate change, disaster risk financing, and development planning within an overarching context of resilience.

The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for DRR in the document, 'Proposed Elements for Consideration in the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction,' captures this succinctly: "Sustainable development goals can not be achieved without managing disaster risk."

The UNISDR advocates for DRR as an instrument for sustainable development as natural hazards, such as earthquakes, cyclones/hurricanes, floods, landslides, drought and volcanoes, pose significant threats to achieving and sustaining development plans and goals.

CDEMA has long posited that disaster risk reduction is an integral part of social and economic development, and is essential if development of the states and territories of the Caribbean region is to be sustainable for the future. The Communiqué of the recently convened 8th Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management, which is hosted by CDEMA, recognized quoted the 2012 Annual Report of the Caribbean Development Bank which indicated that since 1988, natural hazards alone have resulted in direct damages valued at 18 billion US dollars in seventeen (17) Borrowing Member Countries (BMCs), including Haiti. The Communiqué urged Caribbean Governments to prioritise disaster risk management in their consideration of allocation of budgetary resources; and encouraged national development planning agencies to mainstream disaster risk management and climate change adaptation considerations into development planning.

We as a region are positioned to advance this position through our representation in the international arena via our permanent missions.

Small Island Development States (SIDS) Agenda

The third and final message is that the agenda of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) remains a relevant consideration in financing the Post 2015 DRR Agenda. The case for special and differentiated treatment for SIDS is as applicable today as it was when first tabled in 1994 and the impacts of hazard events have repeatedly proven this to be true.

It is not disputed that in the case of SIDS, single hazard events can erase decades of development. We witnessed this in Grenada with Hurricane Ivan in 2004; the Haiti earthquake in 2010, and Montserrat's ongoing volcanic emergency which commenced in 1995 and continues today. It therefore follows that Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) eligibility criteria, which is based on GDP, is in itself an insufficient mechanism by which decisions are made on whether a SIDS receives development inflows which treat with the building of resilience through reducing disaster risk.

Further, particular attention also needs to be given to SIDS with respect to accessing financing available for addressing risks associated with climate change. Increases in atmospheric concentrations of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) due to human activities over the past 100 years

will continue to alter the climate and related systems on Earth in the coming century, if not for longer. Although these countries are among the least responsible for climate change, they are likely to suffer most from its adverse effects, particularly those associated with their disaster risk profile.

Ninety per cent of the SIDS are in the tropics. Many experience seasonal tropical storms, cyclones and hurricanes. Their weather patterns also feature climate variability, droughts and flooding. Climate projections suggest that significant climate change and its resultant effects, including sea-level rise, and more extreme weather events, are expected in all regions during the twenty-first century. SIDS therefore face the prospect of increased challenges to their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

In conclusion, as we approach the end of the implementation of the HFA, it is important that we ensure that discussion on the way forward post-2015 adequately reflects the Achievements, experiences and concerns of the Caribbean region with respect to Disaster Risk Reduction. For us, the global approach to addressing disaster risk is not simply a matter of academic interest. The growth and development of our nations and communities and the security our future generations is dependent upon it.