ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENTS

DURING THE DECADE

INFORMATION ON PROVIDER

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EXPERIENCE AND RECENT DISASTERS

1.1 Please provide a list of major disasters your country has experienced during the past five- (5) years.

We have not experienced any disasters in the past five years but we have been affected by hazards such as hurricanes, floods, oil spills and earthquakes.

1.2 What was the impact of the above listed disasters?

Hurricane Luis and Marilyn of 1995 caused approximately $8.0 million in damages, Hurricane Bertha of 1996 caused approximately $1.5-$2.0 million in damages and Hurricane Georges of 1998 caused $12,000,000.00 in damages. We have had no loss of lives or destruction to property from either hurricane of earthquakes. The largest oil spill, which we have experienced in the past 5 years, caused $85,000.00 worth of damages.

1.3 Which measures were taken to reduce the impact of disasters?

In November, 1997 we completed a hazard and risk assessment study which included studies on earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, slope stability, technological hazards, and hazard mitigation strategies. Recommendations were made and we are in the process of implementing these. We have improved our Public Information and Education Programme to increase the awareness of the effects that can be caused by the hazards likely to affect the Territory and we have developed a national disaster plan and ensured that all critical agencies have disaster plans in place. We have also conducted training activities in mitigation, response, recovery, public education and information and community preparedness.

1.4 Do you believe there can be improvements in preparing for natural hazards in your country and in preventing negative impacts of such hazards? What sort of improvements?

Yes, we hope to enforce the building codes and disaster legislation once approved, focus more on mitigation and improve on the damage assessment information being gathers after the effects of hazards such as hurricanes. We will achieve this by training Zonal committee representatives and departments responsible for colecting this information.

1.5 Do you believe the IDNDR helped your country to give greater attention to disaster reduction?

Yes, IDNDR assisted in creating a greater awareness of the hazards that can affect our Territory and in enforcing the need for preparedness in all sectors.

1.6 Please provide an example(s) of achievement(s) incorporating successful preventative approaches, which you consider a "success story".

We have developed disaster legislation, which is, now in its final stages for approval and we have begun implementing recommendations under our Hazard and Risk Assessment Project. We now have disaster preparedness incorporated in the school curriculum at both primary and secondary schools. The government has also provided a contingency fund to assist in recovery should we be affected by a disaster along with funds for stocking emergency relief items and We have been able to obtain greater support from the private sector in all activities carried by the ODP. We have also been able to develop disaster plans for oil spills, HazMat, hurricanes, earthquakes and for providing welfare services.

PROGRESS MADE, SINCE THE INCEPTION OF IDNDR, IN THE FIELD OF DISASTER REDUCTION AS A COMPONENT OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND RISK MANAGEMENT.

2.1 Please provide a brief statement of national accomplishment and/or describe current activities related to the achievement of the IDNDR Programme Targets:

a. **Comprehensive national assessment of risks. If an assessment exists, is it published or codified?**

We have developed a hazard and risk assessment study, which we have shared with many regional and international agencies. We have also developed a Post Hugo Study and numerous assessment reports on hazards that have affected our Territory. These documents are available on our web site or copies can be had from our office.

a. **Structured mitigation plans. Do documented comprehensive national disaster management plans exist?**

There is a National Disaster Plan along with a well-structured work programme, which is prepared with new activities each year. The work programme includes a mitigation programme, which is headed by a Senior Technical Planning Officer. Mitigation strategies have also been included as part of the Government's National Integrated Development Strategy.

a. **Ready access to global, regional, national and local warning systems. Can you provide examples of warning practices and demonstrated successes?**

At the local level we utilise the media, our National Emergency Broadcast System, hurricane warning flags and VHF communication which is available at all levels – government, private sector and at the community level. At the regional and international levels we are part of a HF network.

2.2 **What obstacles do you face which prevent the accomplishment of the Decade targets? What are recommendations to best overcome these obstacles?**

The main obstacle is limited manpower needed to cover all areas of disaster management. The Government has now provided additional staffing at the ODP to assist in solving this problem.

2.3 **To what extent have you established and implemented educational and informational programmes aimed at generating public awareness. What methods of information dissemination have been utilised?**

Disaster Preparedness is now a part of the school curriculum, we have been able to appoint liaison officers from government departments to assist in ensuring that departments are well prepared. We use the media to ensure that information is given to the public and we conduct presentations and prepare exhibitions for schools and the wider public. We have also developed a Disaster Auxiliary Corps of volunteers who assist in information dissemination at all levels and they work with our Zonal

committees to ensure that the receive the information needed to for preparedness at the community level to manage emergency/disasters that may impact our Territory.

2.4 Have you liaised with policy makers and major groups, such as local authorities, NGOs and the media, in order to ensure support for and effectiveness of disaster reduction programmes. Please describe your activities?

We have conducted training for the media, private and public sector and policy makers to ensure that they are aware of the hazards and how best to mitigate against them. We have built a strong relationship with the media and have included them as part of our Public Education and Information Sub-committee.

2.5 To what extent have you worked with other sectors in incorporating disaster reduction activities into their planning (i.e. insurance, banking, private sector and development agencies)?

We provide contingency planning sessions for these agencies, prepare a number publications targeting the business sector and we have included them in simulation exercises which we have conducted. Presentations are also made for these agencies to help them to prepare for disasters.

2.6 The Decade provides an international arena for information exchange as well as an extensive international network of partners, how have these inputs contributed to achieving the goals of the Decade?

International agencies such as PAHO and OFDA/USAID have provided tremendous support to the development of the disaster management programme in the BVI by support in training activities, planning and evaluating exercises and providing technical support in some areas. Other agencies such as the Puerto Rico Seismic Network and the Seismic Research Unit in Trinidad and Tobago have also provided technical assistance, training and information. Other regional and international bodies such as IMO, CDERA, REMPEITC, CRRT and USCG have provided training and information to assist in developing our programme. We have also developed MOU with the USVI Territorial Emergency Management Agency to provide training and to assist in recovery operation should we be affected by a disaster. Being a Dependent Territory of the UK we have also been given assistance in all areas of Disaster Management. IDNDR has given us a look at the global picture and lessons for us to learn in strengthening our disaster management programme.

STRUCTURES IN PLACE

3.1 Is there a designated government authority for disaster reduction activities? If yes, is this authority's commitment to prevention embodied in the government structure, priorities, budget and legislation.

There is a fully established Disaster Preparedness Office (ODP) with a budget, enforceable legislation and adequate staffing with a mission to providing disaster management services to the Territory of the BVI. The Office falls under the supervision of the Deputy Governor and His Excellency the Governor and is fully supported by the entire government body.

3.2 Have budget lines for disaster reduction and preventative activities been made available in your government's budget?

The government provides a budget yearly for the implementation of activities by the ODP. A contingency fund has also been provided that will assist in recovery operations should we be impacted by a disaster.

3.3 Have legislative authorities (national, state or local level) established legal framework for the implementation of disaster mitigation measures (i.e. land use planning, water and forest management, building codes)

There is in existence a building code, disaster legislation and a national development integrated strategy which includes areas such as land-use planning.

3.4 Have academic institutions and professional schools in disciplines such as engineering, agriculture, architecture, urban planning, business or public administration incorporated in their curriculum applicable disaster-reduction concepts and measures? Please provide examples.

The ODP provides disaster management training for all sectors. The Primary and Secondary Schools have incorporated disaster preparedness in their curriculum and we are in the process of developing courses in disaster management at the local community college.

3.5 Have networks been built in order to aid in the transfer and application of existing knowledge and technology, information dissemination and international collaboration. Please briefly describe.

We use channels such as the Internet for this purpose. We also develop annual report on the activities contained in our work programmes and these documents are circulated widely. We encourage the train the trainer effect and we rely heavily on our volunteers in the Disaster Auxiliary Corps and Zonal Committees to ensure that information is disseminated at the community level.

3.6 Who are your principal working partners? Do they represent an interdisciplinary approach to disaster reduction?

At the regional and international level we work with agencies such as PAHO, OFDA/USAID, DTRS, DFID, CDERA, FEMA, VITEMA, SRU in T&T, PRSN, Tropical Shipping, IMO, REMPEITC, USCG, CRRT and others. At the local level we work with all government departments, NGO's Volunteers and Zonal committees.

FUTURE REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Given your experience since the inception of the Decade and the new challenges of disasters in the 21st century, please provide comments as to what you believe are the necessary future requirements needed to successfully carry disaster reduction activities into the 21st century. Listed below are some of the criteria for your consideration.

- **international mechanism for coordination**
- **budgetary commitments**
- **policy commitments**
- **network building**
- **information dissemination**
- **communication tools**
- **local authorities**
- **links to economic and social development, environmental protection and sustainable development.**

There is need for further development of our Public Information Programme, training at all levels in mitigation and damage and needs assessment and greater support from Zonal Committees. There is also need for sustainability of the environment, continued support for the government and private and public sector and strengthening of bilateral agreements and MOUs.

4.2 What sort of national or international measures would you like to be put in place in the 21st century?

Greater assistance in development of mitigation programmes, more support in providing training in all areas of disaster management, and the development of standards to be followed when accessing assistance from international/donor agencies.

At the national level we need greater support in the enforcement of legislation.