

Jamaica

Interim national progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action

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Strategic goals 1

Area 1

The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.

Strategic Goal Statement:

In order to effectively achieve the mandate Comprehensive Disaster Management the following National Goal was adopted:

Sustainable development in Jamaica enhanced through Comprehensive Disaster Management. This included the following impact areas:

- Strengthening the National Risk Management Framework
- Reducing loss of life and property
- Minimizing suffering and disruption caused by disasters
- Establishing a focal point for disaster management information

Disaster and environmental risk management policies integrated into development planning at all levels.

The application of hazard and vulnerability assessments in the development planning process will be the foundation for the reduction of the risk to hazards and a catalyst towards achieving sustainable development.

A methodology for assessing vulnerability impacts on development will be applied. The assessment will include a wide range of data collection techniques and a simplified vulnerability assessment framework to guide analysis and interpretation. The findings will provide recommendations to ODPEM on how to enhance impacts and participation among key target groups. The strengths, weaknesses, of vulnerability assessments and future research needs will also assist us in identifying strategies and actions plans that can be incorporated in the process to broaden the use of vulnerability information. Baseline data for all sectors will be established.

Area 2

The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.

Strategic Goal Statement:

Risk management addressed from national, parish, regional and community levels and takes into account training of agencies and communities, early warning systems, public education, planning and mitigation, monitoring and implementation of DRR in different sectors critical to national development.

Area 3

The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.

Strategic Goal Statement:

Preparedness capacity strengthened at the National, Regional, Parish and community levels through an

ongoing and structured comprehensive risk management programme. National Hazard Mitigation Policy implemented. All post disaster rebuilding programmes informed by sound technical and vulnerability assessments and hazard impact assessment.

Priority for action 1

Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.

Core indicator 1

National policy and legal framework for disaster risk reduction exists with decentralised responsibilities and capacities at all levels.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

The promulgation of the hazard mitigation policy represents a significant achievement for the country as it has long been recognized as a tool for promoting DRR. The limitation however is that there has been no wide scale dissemination and public sensitization about the policy. This will limit implementation. Facilitating awareness building about the policy will ensure its incorporation in other plans and policies and so will drive DRR. A strategy and an Action Plan to facilitate the implementation of the policy and identify responsibilities for achieving policy objectives is to be developed.

The Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management Act was passed in 1993. While it has provided the legal framework for disaster management in the country, it is generally felt that the provisions are not sufficient to deal with the shift in focus from disaster management to disaster risk management. Efforts at drafting a new Act have started, and if passed, will repeal the existing act and provide a strengthened framework for DRR in the country. Shifts in government priority, changes in the parent ministry of the national disaster office caused a temporary lag in the review of the Bill. The organisation will be renewing its efforts in this regard in its current strategic plan 2008-2011. The revised legislation along with the current thrust to achieve Local Government Reform should result in a further strengthening of the Local Authorities to effectively provide more effective management of Disaster Risk at the local level.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- The National Hazard Risk Reduction policy has not been disseminated on a wide scale and currently there is no implementation or action plan in place. The strategy and the action plan to be developed.
- The current Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management Act needs revision to make it more applicable to changing disaster management practices. It currently does not recognize some of the elements of risk management and does not address critical issues such as evacuation, no build zones and sanctions for breaches of the Act.

Recommendations

- Fast Track the review and enactment of the new Act and repealing the old Act of 1993.
- The Hazard Risk Reduction policy will be getting attention in the financial year 2008/09 to the extent that it is expected to address the challenges previously outlined.
- Advocating the implementation of a National Hazard and Risk Mapping Programme

Core indicator 2

Dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement disaster risk reduction plans and activities at all administrative levels

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

The organization has always recognized the need for plan development and has always incorporated risk reduction plans and activities in its strategic plan. However, attaining the necessary resources to effectively deliver has been a challenge.

Until December 2005, when the Hazard Risk Reduction Policy was passed by Cabinet, the only overarching framework guiding the process was the National Disaster Plan and this explains the absence of a national or regional plan to address disaster risk reduction. Notwithstanding several efforts have been made at mitigation in several sectors albeit a disjointed approach.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- Absence of national, parish and community plans to implement disaster risk reduction activities.
- Absence of dedicated budgetary allocation at the local level to expedite risk reduction programme.
- Absence of substantial annual allocations to the National Disaster Fund.
- Absence of a Risk Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan

Recommendations

- The implementation Plan for the Hazard Risk Reduction Policy is already receiving attention and support from key government agencies. It is hoped that at the end of the exercise Disaster Risk reduction plans will be complete and ready for implementation.
- Central government to provide the requisite allocation to the local authorities to effect risk management programme. NGO's
- Disaster Risk Reduction Mainstreaming Process to be continued.

Core indicator 3

Community Participation and decentralisation is ensured through the delegation of authority and resources to local levels

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

The national disaster management structure includes at the third tier a community disaster management framework which is intended to ultimately support the efforts at the national level. They have been functioning well and have been the recipients of several disaster related training and Capacity Building. Notwithstanding there are a pockets of communities islandwide which have not been fully trained.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- The Parish structure needs strengthening so that community involvement is driven to a large extent at

that level rather than at the national level.

- Resource constraints exist which sometimes affects resources deployed at the community level.
- There is still scope for greater involvement of the communities in Disaster risk management.
- Lack of incentives to promote the programme in an effort to receive wide scale acceptance.
- Socio-economic conditions of some communities act as a barrier to acceptance of DRR.

Recommendations

- In accordance with the hazard risk reduction plan, extensive focus will be directed at community participation in DRM in the organization strategic plan through expanded trainings in several areas and ensuring a framework exists to utilize skill developed.
- A new approach to expanding community involvement has been taken where existing Community Based Organisation (CBO's) will be incorporated in the process rather than establishing a community level organisation solely for the purpose of DRM.
- Project to improve capacity has been incorporated into strategic focus for 2009-2011. Recommendation that incentives be provided as part of programme.
- Involvement of other social agencies in the dissemination of DRR at the community level

Core indicator 4

A national multi sectoral platform for disaster risk reduction is functioning.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

The National Disaster Committee is the key decision making entity within the disaster framework. This is chaired by the Prime Minister and facilitates the interaction of key development players towards progress of the risk reduction agenda.

The national disaster plan sets out a comprehensive framework for participation of several government agencies, private sector and NGO's. Interaction among partners is established in all critical aspects of disaster management including Risk Reduction.

At least one of the six national sub-committees has responsibility for the area of risk reduction. This sub-committee consists of a very wide cross section of all critical sectors.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- Participation by some agencies has not been mainstreamed and is more aligned with a person rather than a post. This affects the quality and continuity of participation.
- Staff attrition also affects the process as roles have to be reassigned and the requisite training to re-introduce core principles have to be executed.
- Resources of some agencies are limited and affect their level of participation.
- Capacity Assessment of the national and parish mechanism and reporting to the National Disaster Committee is necessary.

Recommendations

- Re-educating agencies on their roles in the national disaster plans
- Conducting table top simulation exercises will assist in highlighting roles and responsibilities.
- Provision of technical assistance to help national and parish agencies to develop disaster management capabilities is recommended.

- The revamping of the National Telecommunications System
- Legislating the roles of Civil Servants and Government Agencies in Disaster Management

Priority for action 2

Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

Core indicator 1

National and local risk assessments based on hazard data and vulnerability information are available and include risk assessments for key sectors.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

There is a deliberate effort at collecting and making hazard and vulnerability data available. This is usually through damage assessment reports, a national disaster catalogue and annual incident reports and hazard maps prepared by the respective technical agencies. These reports are available to the general public to inform their projects. This information has also guided our intervention in communities and has been used in the preparation of hazard inventory maps and hazard maps. Hazard data has also been used in the development of a methodology to rank vulnerable communities. Academia has also been instrumental in researching some of this data.

So far, no risk assessments have been undertaken for key sectors but efforts are currently underway to achieve this in the agriculture and tourism sectors. The housing sector will be focused on towards the end of the 2008-2011 Planning Cycle.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- Resources to undertake sectoral risk assessments are limited
- Priorities for the national disaster office and sectors sometimes differ and so getting the support and buy-in at the time of implementation is sometimes difficult
- Little ownership of Disaster Management Responsibility at the sector levels.

Recommendations

- The current strategic plan will focus on the agriculture and tourism sectors. Work in those areas have already commenced and are at the initial stages. The entire project is expected to include risk assessments and mitigation plans. The housing sector will be focused on later in the planning period.
- For the tourism sector, project funding is being recommended to overcome the funding challenge
- Line Ministries to make provisions for Disaster in Annual Budget and Strategic Plan

Core indicator 2

Systems are in place to monitor, archive and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

Data is collected at the national disaster office by way of damage assessment reports in post disaster events and incident logs. The damage assessment data includes data from other sectors and specialized agencies that monitor flood gauges, flood data and landslide data and inventories.

Pre impact data is also available through hazard maps prepared by water resources authority, Mines and geology, and the earthquake unit. Some of this work has been achieved through project funding.

GIS is being used more extensively for the before, during and after impact to generate pre-impact scenarios, archive and monitor data on impacts from hazards. Hazard data is also shared with other agencies using GIS.

Data on hazards and vulnerability are also disseminated from a documentation centre operated from a national level coupled with communication strategies, which are used to disseminate information on hazard vulnerability in an effort to place risk reduction issues on the national agenda.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- The GIS is used to store several pieces of information. However, data is not stored in a database format which allows for easier access and analysis.
- The reports are sometimes not as comprehensive as they ought to be because of the failure of some entities to submit detailed damage assessment information.
- The documentation centre needs to function as a complete repository of hazard vulnerability data but is affected by space constraints and financial incapacity to improve current technologies.
- Limited pre-impact baseline data exists

Recommendations

- Greater focus on improving technology and digitizing data as part of enhancing the capacity of the documentation centre.
- Expansion of database capability of GIS to allow for easier access and analysis as well as greater sharing of data and GIS expertise among agencies.
- Lobbying for the necessary resources from central government to build capacity at the National Disaster Office
- Undertake the development of pre-impact databases by sector.

Core indicator 3

Early warning systems are in place for all major hazards, with outreach to communities.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

Extensive work has been accomplished in the establishment of Flood Early Warning Systems. Agency identified with dedicated responsibility in terms of data collection through rain, river and stream gauges complemented by community –based flood early warning systems. Community -based Flood Early warning teams have been established along major river basins and waterways and have been given the capacity to communicate within a network to relay information both at the local and national level.

Strides have been made in terms of Early Warning Systems in place for Hurricanes & Floods. Doppler Radar Technology is utilized and complimented by satellite imagery. Telemetric Flood Warning Systems

and Community Flood Gauges are also in place to enhance the early warning capabilities for floods. Three communities were also trained to interpret radar data via internet as a means of enhance early warning.

For Earthquakes, a National Seismograph Network is in place to generate data following an earthquake to quickly inform decision makers in taking the necessary steps to curtail infrastructural damage to affected communities and provide the necessary alerting mechanism for the probability of aftershocks. The country is now a signatory to a Regional Tsunami Warning System established with mechanisms established to expedite functions under this responsibility.

Data available in terms of earthquake and landslide susceptibility maps and research is continually being undertaken in tandem with universities, local continuing through country - based academia with partnerships with local and external universities and government agencies.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- Earthquake susceptibility maps available for one geographic region. Greater progress made with landslide susceptibility maps which are also available at the local level. However these projects are largely implemented with international donor funding. As such there is the absence of an overarching programme with progress achieved annually.
- Several manual gauges need to be upgraded to telemetric and more data gathering sensors need to be implemented.
- The national documentation centre needs to function as a complete repository of hazard vulnerability data but is affected by space constraints and financial incapacity to improve current technologies.

Recommendations

- Expansion of community-based early warning systems utilizing current technologies such as sirens and alarm systems to complement manual use of flood gauges.
- Earthquake susceptibility maps need more comprehensive focus rather than concentration on an urban centre.
- Improvement of the telemetric system that is in place for major river basins and monitoring and surveillance network established with trigger mechanisms in place.
- Lobbying for resources to increase the level and accuracy of output of the Earthquake Unit

Core indicator 4

National and local risk assessments take account of regional / trans boundary risks, with a view to regional cooperation on risk reduction.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

Jamaica is one of sixteen participating states that form the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) which was established by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) initiative. Regional cooperation has been achieved through CDERA initiatives such as the Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy. Jamaica's function as a regional focal point for neighbouring states has also led to the sharing of data with a view to measuring transboundary risks especially for the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Bahamas and Belize.

Regional Tsunami Warning system established with Jamaica as a signatory.

The country is also part of the UN System led regional focal grouping to expedite more effective emergency response for the northern section of the Caribbean. This had led to further information sharing and has led to greater regional cooperation in responding to emergencies.

The National Disaster Office has forged a relationship with the General Council of Martinique where mutual areas of good practice have been identified and strategies and approaches identified for the transfer of the skills and knowledge.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- Absence of Caribbean economic integration which would serve as a catalyst for greater work in Disaster Risk Reduction at the regional level.
- Lack of commitment by nation leaders to finalize issues such as the revamping of a uniform building code that can be made applicable across the Caribbean.
- Improvements in mechanisms to enable Caribbean countries to communicate speedily and share data effectively.

Recommendations

- Sharing best practices among the region and entering into the dialogue placing DRR on the agenda as a pre-cursor for integration.
- Making CDERA more relevant and adaptable to the changes taking place in DRR internationally.
- Improvement to the system and concepts of governance which is critical to mainstreaming DRR in the region.

Priority for action 3

Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

Core indicator 1

Relevant information on disasters is available and accessible at all levels, to all stakeholders (through networks, development of information sharing systems etc)

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

The ODPEM continues to use all available media to disseminate information at various levels to the wider population. The Organization's website and sub-site serve as a source point of information gathering for individuals and institutions. The use of the local media is an avenue that is frequently utilized to get the message of Disaster Preparedness out with maximum reach.

Cognizant of the fact that there are individuals with varying disabilities, initiatives have been undertaken to make information available in various formats. The use of the internet and text messaging services, print and electronic media has also aided the organisation to reach numerous persons.

The ODPEM has in the past and currently embarked on partnership with private sector interests with the unified aim of disseminating information through various medium (print/ electronic media). The last two

(2) years a number of independent initiatives were undertaken by the private Sector to independently communicate preparedness and awareness building information.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- Financial limitations remain the greatest challenge to tap into as many markets as possible. Ongoing dialogue is maintained with media houses, special interest groups and donor agencies for partnerships to make the goal more achievable.

Recommendations

- The organization is making recommendations for some of these services to be available free of cost or sponsored largely by the corporate entities. The ODPEM envisions being able to carry information to the visually impaired, the hearing impaired and other special populations without being restricted by budgetary constraints through the development of cooperative partnerships with other private and public sector entities.

Core indicator 2

School curricula , education material and relevant trainings include disaster risk reduction and recovery concepts and practices.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

Substantial achievement has been attained in the area of dissemination of Disaster Preparedness information to a wide cross section of the Jamaican population. Numerous programmes have either been undertaken or are currently on stream to sensitize the nation to disaster preparedness. The School's curricula at the Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary levels have embraced the concept of Disaster Preparedness as an important topic area. There has been a significant increase in the number of learning institutions that are provided with training in Disaster Preparedness annually. A number of tertiary and secondary and primary school institutions have begun to include the disaster management information into the annual school programs. Official inclusion into the school curriculum has been advanced and is being contemplated by the Ministry of Education.

Major stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education and school administration have been actively involved in promulgating the message thus increasing awareness. A recently concluded UNICEF project has seen more than three hundred principals(300), Teachers and caregivers from approximately one hundred (100) schools and child care Institutions trained in building schools' resilience to disasters. Arising from this, disaster plans have been developed by these participating institutions and a channel of communication established between the National Disaster Organisation, the local authority and the respective schools.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- A major challenge that Jamaica as a nation and the ODPEM as an organization face with regards to maximum reach of the message of Disaster Preparedness is a lack of financial resources. Considerably more could be realized if funds were available. Several of our educational facilities do not have the capacity to effect the necessary activities to make their institutions more resistant to the likely impact of disasters.

- Mainstreaming is slow in many instances simply because it is dependent on personalities and not legislation.

Recommendations

- Greater emphasis and budgetary allocation at the local level as well as greater partnership with donor agencies would significantly improve the spread of information and would subsequently raise the level of preparedness.
- Special population forms a part of the organization's clientele. Provision of adequate resource and greater involvement of these special interest groups would aid the process.
- Continued Partnership Building especially with the private sector
- Push for the inclusion of Disaster Risk Reduction within the School Curriculum at all levels.

Core indicator 3

Research methods and tools for multi-risk assessments and cost benefit analysis are developed and strengthened.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

Agencies with authority have been identified at the national level with the necessary expertise to carry out multi-risk assessments. Accepted scientific methodologies have been used to carry out these assessments with the aid of GIS technology. GIS also facilitates project assessments. At present data is shared between key agencies such as the Meteorological Service, Earthquake Unit, Mines and Geology, Water Resources Authority and the National Disaster Organisation, ODPEM.

ECLAC and USAID/OFDA methodologies have been used to assess the impact of hazards. Vulnerability assessment methodologies have also been established and models developed for hazard impact analysis. CDERA, as the regional response agency has developed reporting strategies and bench-marking tools for participating states. These tools are used for evaluation and monitoring at the regional level.

Cost benefit analysis, though used in some project analysis, has not been used on a wide-scale.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- There is a need for strengthening the capacity of human resources at the National Disaster Organisation to do meaningful work in this area. The additional human resources on implementation would also act as a national coordinator for harnessing the necessary information from the agencies who have done research to bring a more holistic approach to research conducted.
- No effort made to integrate Cost Benefit Analysis as compared to Latin American counterparts.
- Absence of the data formulated at the national level translated to the community based level to effect action.

Recommendations

- Advocate for a comprehensive Hazard Mapping Programme.
- Greater human resource capacity required in conducting hazard and vulnerability assessments at a larger scale nationally.
- Hazard Management Plans developed for high risk communities
- Integrate cost benefit analysis in the hazard mitigation decision making process.

Core indicator 4

Countrywide public awareness strategy exists to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience, with outreach to urban and rural communities.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

Through the National Disaster Management Structure, state agencies, Non Government Organization's and Community Based Organization the National Disaster Office has been able to effectively reach urban and rural communities. Information and knowledge is shared and capacity built. Vulnerable communities and institutions are identified regularly and training sessions scheduled to equip persons with the requisite knowledge and skills to build community resilience.

Community -based programmes are encouraged and promoted at the local level as a means of gaining participation of grass-roots populations. The concept of participatory action and monitoring is also adopted. Joint programmes are conducted with the assistance of major partner agencies such as the Jamaica Fire Brigade and First Aid Service providers with a view to improving skills sets for community-based response until external assistance can be provided.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- A general lack of resources to address capacity building in all vulnerable communities that exists.
- Sustaining Community Disaster Management groups.
- Establishing ownership of community disaster management programs at the municipal authorities so as to enhance the government and democratic process in relation to Disaster Risk Reduction.

Recommendations

- Strengthening of the resource allocation to the National Disaster Office, to bolster its outreach programmes.
- Build additional partnerships with Community Based Organizations and Private Sector Organizations in support of awareness building programs.
- Design and develop new information portals and enhance existing ones.

Priority for action 4

Reduce the underlying risk factors

Core indicator 1

Disaster risk reduction is an integral objective of environment related policies and plans, including for land use natural resource management and adaptation to climate change.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

Jamaica has made significant strides in Environmental Management with the establishment of the National Resource Conservation Act (1991) and the formulation of a single agency (national Environment and Planning Agency) in 2001 with sole responsibility for addressing environmental issues. Projects such as the “Ridge to Reef” looks specifically at land use and natural resource management of targeted watershed areas and its effects on marine environment.

The country has also examined the whole conceptual framework for the Adaptation to Climate change which was initially addressed under the preparation of the first National Communication and is being updated under the preparation of the second national communication which is scheduled for completion in December 2008.

Jamaica is Party to the United Nations framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. The Meteorological Service is the National focal point to the UNFCCC.

The mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management into development planning has been an integral component of the work programme of the National Disaster Office. Notwithstanding greater buy in is necessary by the various sectors, in working towards this effort.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- While the link has been made in terms of Disasters and Environmental Protection there needs to be greater collaboration among agencies especially as it relates to monitoring and enforcement, sharing of data and public education strategies.

Recommendations

- Strengthen linkages among agencies and increase enforcement capabilities.

Core indicator 2

Social development policies and plans are being implemented to reduce the vulnerability of populations most at risk.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

A framework has been developed to minimize risk to vulnerable populations directly and indirectly those impacted by disasters. This forms part of the national development plan for which implementation has commenced. A lead agency, the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) is spearheading the process.

The Government of Jamaica through the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) has implemented several programs to address the needs of vulnerable populations who are affected by disasters. Among these social development programs are the Programme for Advancement through Health and Education (PATH); Rehabilitation Programs which includes compassionate grants and rehabilitation grants. There are other programs that are operated by NGO’s such as the Red Cross, Food for the Poor, Salvation Army and ADRA that provide assistance to vulnerable persons (housing, skills training, healthcare, food assistance and clothing).

The passage of Hurricane Dean in 2007 saw the distribution of rehabilitation grants with the MLSS taking a lead approach. Of important note was that rehabilitation grants to assist with rebuilding were not issued to families living in very high risk areas such as coastal habitats until they could provide evidence of the ability to relocate to safer locations. This was supported by No Build Orders by the local authority and Public Education drives spearheaded through community-based organisations.

There is also the existence of a National Shelter and Welfare Action Plan developed by the National Disaster Office in conjunction with the National Shelter and Welfare Committee, which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of the welfare agencies in responding to emergencies along a three tiered level response approach.

A squatter management unit has also been implemented with the mandate of coordinating the national response to existing informal settlements as well as those which are emerging.

A draft Homeless Policy (conceptual framework to become Green Paper) has also been developed.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- Absence of dedicated budget for the lead agency/ministry to reduce the vulnerability of populations most at risk. Budgetary allocations lean more towards addressing poverty alleviation strategies through the Government's Public assistance programme rather than adopting a socio-cultural approach to reducing risk.
- At present there is a Relief Policy, Emergency Relief Clearance Policy and a Shelter and Welfare Action Plan that needs to be revised to reflect the current realities.

Recommendations

- Urgent review of the National Plan for Shelter and Welfare and Emergency Relief Clearance.
- Development of a National Resettlement Policy to also address situations resulting from averse events
- Budgetary allocation to the National Disaster Office and other agencies with lead responsibility in risk mitigation to effectively and systematically address vulnerability of communities.

Core indicator 3

Economic and productive sectorial policies and plans have been implemented to reduce the vulnerability of economic activities

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

Plans underway for the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction within two critical sectors Agricultural and Tourism Sectors.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

Little or no mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction principles into the National Macro-Economic Planning Policy.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DRR be mainstreamed into all sectors of the national economy, resulting in greater resilience to economic shocks from natural hazards.

Core indicator 4

Planning and management of human settlements incorporate disaster risk reduction elements, including enforcement of building codes.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

The achievements to date have been in the form of policy and legislation mainly as listed below. However there are limitations towards comprehensive management of human settlements due to the outmoded nature of numerous development orders and the deficiency in the institutional capacity of monitoring agencies to enforce existing legislations.

Building codes

Town & Country Planning Act

Local improvements Act

Parish Council's Act

NRCA Act

Development Approval process

The country's frequent experience with hazards prompted the decision for Environmental Impact Assessment to be a requirement for medium to large scale projects or those that are undertaken in environmentally sensitive areas. The National Disaster Office is also required to conduct vulnerability assessments for some types of developments.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- Limited human resource capacity to adequately enforce legislation related to the development process.
- Capacity of Local Planning Authorities limited as it relates to conducting Vulnerability/ Risk Assessments.
- Further dissemination of the Building Code

Recommendations

- Continued building of capacity of Local authorities in DRR
- Bolstering of technical/ human resource capacity of the National Disaster Office to deal effectively with DRR.
- Strengthening of legislation related to DRR/ development penalties as well as associated sanctions.

Core indicator 5

Disaster risk reduction measures are integrated into post disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

The Post Disaster Recovery process is informed by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (the government economic planning arm) and the National Disaster Office.

While the concept of “building back better” is widely accepted by most agencies that function in the recovery phase, greater work is needed in this area. There is the absence of a Comprehensive Recovery Plan and a Policy for post disaster replacement housing.

No Build Orders in affected communities have in instances been carried out by some Local Authority to ensure that areas such as wetlands which serve as a buffer zone for storm surges remain uninhabited.

Relocation of vulnerable populations was achieved post- Hurricane Ivan in 2004 where most of the over 350 families have been relocated. The process is still ongoing.

Since Hurricane Dean in 2007, five coastal communities have been identified where their most vulnerable populations will be relocated in an effort to ensure that persons do not return to reside in the affected areas.

Some NGO's and the National Disaster Office have included basic risk reduction measure in the re-building of homes and have trained community level personnel in safer building practices. There is inconsistency in the incorporation of risk reduction measures in infrastructure works.

Context & Constraints:

Challenge

- No comprehensive recovery programme is in existence
- Too many formal settlements exist in vulnerable areas

Recommendations

- Drafting and adoption of post disaster rebuilding policy
- Greater focus on DRR in development planning which will ultimately serve to reduce the number of rebuilding projects necessary

Core indicator 6

Procedures are in place to assess the disaster risk impacts of major development projects, especially infrastructure.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

The permit and license regulations under the NRCA act requires that such categories of development be submitted to the National Environment and Planning Agency for review.

Hazard and vulnerability assessments are conducted for these applications and recommendations made for mitigating hazards.

All large scale projects are required to submit Environmental Impact Assessments for review, these include infrastructure development projects.

The organization is also pushing to have Hazard Impact Assessments conducted for large projects as a policy.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

- There are challenges with the timeframe of the approval process (90 days).
- Assessing development applications is not a core function of the organization, the human resources are not always available to adequately undertake such assessments although the skills exist.
- The volume of applications to be assessed nationally is quite large and beyond the capacity of the organization.

Recommendations

- Training has been taking place and will continue to take place with Local Planning Authorities to equip them with the tools and techniques required to undertake hazard and vulnerability assessments.
- A document has been created which provides guidelines for developments in high risk areas which can be used in the project design stages of a development.

Priority for action 5

Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

Core indicator 1

Strong policy, technical and institutional capacities and mechanisms for disaster risk management, with a disaster risk reduction perspective are in place.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

A National Disaster Plan exists and is functioning, this plan is comprised of various sub-plans:

- National Earthquake Response Plan
- National Fire management Plan
- National Oil Spill Plan
- National Media Plan
- National Transport Plan

In addition to the aforementioned, parish plans are in place which are activated by parish disaster committees. There exists an institutional three-tier matrix comprising the national, local and community levels.

After-Action Reports are conducted for major incidents

Damage Assessment Reports are prepared for each major incident (Initial Reports and Detailed ECLAC Reports).

The National Disaster Office employs Regional Coordinators who provide technical expertise to four regions, inclusive of the review of plans, conducting simulation exercises to test response capabilities of aspects of parish and municipal plans. Additionally individual Local Planning Authorities also employ Parish Disaster Coordinators to carry out the Disaster Management Mandate of the Parish Councils.

Plans exist to evacuate persons from vulnerable communities – Portmore (largest dormitory community

in the Caribbean) Evacuation Plan and a National Transport Plan.

Reporting mechanisms are established through the National Disaster Committee (NDC). Reporting mechanisms in an emergency are transmitted through the NEOC and PEOC and community-based EOCs.

National capacity exists for the assessment of national readiness to face adverse events.

Context & Constraints:

Parish Disaster Coordinators are employed to Parish Councils and as such are not obligated in any way to report to the National Disaster Office.

The Local Authorities lack the adequate capacity to administer its Disaster Management Responsibility.

Core indicator 2

Disaster preparedness plans and contingency plans are in place at all administrative levels, and regular training drills and rehearsals are held to test and develop disaster response programmes.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

National plans and sub plans are in place which guides management, response and coordination of hazards. Contingency plans are a component of the approval process for large scale developments. Agencies, institutions private sector area are all encouraged to develop contingency plans. Training and drills are also carried out within these institutions. The National Disaster Office provides guidance in the preparation of Emergency Response Plans for businesses and institutions.

Context & Constraints:

Challenges

Not enough drills and simulation exercises are conducted across all administrative levels.

Recommendations

Institute at least one national simulation exercise annually.

Institutionalise framework for monitoring and compliance of disaster management plans.

Core indicator 3

Financial reserves and contingency mechanisms are in place to support effective response and recovery when required.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

There is a National Disaster Fund, but extremely limited in its capacity to mount a credible response to events of a significant nature. Budgetary diversions and the sourcing of loans grants are sometimes used to respond to large scale events. Notwithstanding Jamaica is a subscriber to the Caribbean Catastrophic Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), which provides emergency cover in the event of a

catastrophic event. The Government has been unable to access the CCRIF despite experiencing over US \$ 1.5 Billion in losses over the last four years due mainly to precipitation.

Contingency mechanisms also exist with regional and international partners

Context & Constraints:

Constraints

- Economic constraints serve as a hindrance to keep the National Disaster Fund adequately resourced.
- The CCRIF is accessible only following catastrophic wind driven or earthquake events and is not triggered by all parameters.
- No Sub National Risk Transfer Fund in place outside of the anaemic National Disaster Fund

Recommendation

- Adequately capitalise National Disaster Fund, in order that development lag.
- Promote culture of Risk Transfer(Insurance) to individuals and companies, as part of the overall Risk Reduction Strategy

Core indicator 4

Procedures are in place to exchange relevant information during hazard events and disasters, and to undertake post-event reviews

Level of Progress achieved:

5: Comprehensive achievement with sustained commitment and capacities at all levels

Description:

A comprehensive response mechanism is in place and is used at every disaster event. This includes standard operation procedures for every hazard and the execution of components of the disaster programme through the synergies and work of the national sub committees and the sector committees (tourism and agriculture). Information and lessons learnt are shared through national After Event. The information produced is communicated through reports from all sectors after a disaster event. The ECLAC methodology is also a tool used in reporting losses.

Context & Constraints:

Recommendations

Improve coordination among agencies on collection of data in post disaster situations at national and parish levels.

Establish baseline information for all sectors

Drivers of Progress

a) Multi-hazard integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and development

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Do studies/ reports/ atlases on multi-hazard analyses exist in the country/ for the sub region?:

Yes

If yes, are these being applied to development planning/ informing policy?:

Yes

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

The hazard mitigation policy is in place to address multihazard approach and a multihazard approach is also taken in the approval process. Hazard maps are prepared for some of the major rivers in Jamaica. However, comprehensive coastal mapping programme will be embarked on to map coastal town vulnerable to storm surge hazards.

b) Gender perspectives on risk reduction and recovery adopted and institutionalized

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

Some issues relating to gender have been documented from projects carried out. Some of these result in skills training to target resilience. However, vulnerability assessment methodology needs to take into account gender perspectives in future.

c) Capacities for risk reduction and recovery identified and strengthened

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

A review of the national disaster office and the disaster management framework is to be conducted. However, some hazard mapping has been conducted for all hazards. There is a multi sector approach to disaster management. Early warning systems have been implemented in vulnerable communities. And there has been a general improvement in collection of technical data and improvement in data collection and dissemination.

d) Human security and social equity approaches integrated into disaster risk reduction and recovery activities

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

Vulnerable communities are a major focus within the context of the national programme. Several projects have been aimed and geared to reducing their vulnerability. This includes training programmes for all for all population types. A special focus has been placed on the disabled and children. The general casualties resulting from disaster has been reduced.

e) Engagement and partnerships with non-governmental actors; civil society, private sector, amongst others, have been fostered at all levels

Levels of Reliance:

Significant and ongoing reliance: significant ongoing efforts to actualize commitments with coherent strategy in place; identified and engaged stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

The national disaster programme has made significant strides in linkages and networks developed to support the national programme at all levels from the major NGO's such as the red cross, salvation army, ADRA, other faith based organisations among others private sector and civil society in general. Investment in the National Programme by private sector has increased tremendously over the last three (3) years.

f) Contextual Drivers of Progress**Levels of Reliance:**

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

Focus

Communities

Sectors

Land and environmental management

Water, Sanitation and pollution control

Health and environment

Food security

Managing Emerging and Complex hazards

Future outlook

Area 1

The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.

Overall Challenges:

Although disaster management in Jamaica is over 28 years in existence government policy on economic and spatial development still do not reflect strongly full understanding of the issues nor does it reflect a clear connection between economic development and disaster risk reduction. There is a need for clear guidelines for the integration of DRR in sustainable development, policies and plans especially in key economic sectors. Integration of DRR into Project development is also an area of focus as it relates to national development.

Future Outlook Statement:

Over the next 3 – 5 years there should be policies, plans and guidelines developed to facilitate the integration of DRR into sustainable development. This will be supported by ongoing awareness and advocacy among institutions and the wider public.

Area 2

The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.

Overall Challenges:

At the institutional level capacity remains the broad area of challenge.

However some other areas of challenge include proper identification of hazards and elements at risk. With this accomplished a more comprehensive approach can be administered to address mitigation (both structural and non structural) and risk transfer. This will also support the strengthening of national and local preparedness programmes and early warning systems.

Future Outlook Statement:

Identify critical priorities for capacity building through some critical areas such as legislation, hazard identification, areas not mapped. It is also envisaged that there will be a sustained capacity building programme in the area of DRR for all local planning authorities, institutions and communities.

Area 3

The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.

Overall Challenges:

The capacity of Local Governance systems to support and sustain the existing efforts in this area.

To institutionalize the inclusion of the use Hazard Information into the planning process and improving the disaster or emergency event registry.

Future Outlook Statement:

Over the next 3 – 5 years mechanisms for harnessing skills at all levels more importantly at the community level will be improved. A comprehensive response and recovery policy is to be drafted for adoption mandating all response and recovery operations to incorporate DRR strategies.

The National Disaster office will also be building on its programme of building community resilience forming community Disaster Response teams.