



Proyecto de Mitigación de Desastres en el Caribe (PMDC)

Auspicado por USAID & OAS



Ejecutado en la República Dominicana por:

El Comité Dominicano de Mitigación de Desastres
(DDMC)

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The Dominican Disaster Mitigation Committee (DDMC) office is now located in the Organization of the American States (OAS) building in Santo Domingo and the new telephone numbers are: (809) 508-2596, and fax (809) 508-2595. The present Bulletin is a review of 1997's activities in the Dominican Republic:

I Coordination y Communication: This year the DDMC maintained an active agenda of meetings nationwide with free zone enterprises, hotels, industries, NGO's, private and public schools, communities and professional associations.

II Information: During 1997, the DDMC has given 147 presentations to 8,841 people nationwide to raise awareness regarding the D.R.'s natural hazards and the most effective actions to take to minimize loss and damage. This also includes an orientational campaign waged in private and public schools in over 20 cities nationwide. The Compañía Nacional de Seguros sponsored colorful brochures and coloring books on hurricanes, earthquakes and flooding, accompanied by colored pencils, buttons, stickers and candy for the children. The presentations include an earthquake video and simulation to stress the importance of preparedness for this very dangerous yet relatively unknown Caribbean hazard. El DDMC gives these presentations gratuitously to businesses, communities, schools, professional associations, religious and other groups willing to coordinate the activity. Due to the country's constant blackouts and the insignificant impact of printed matter,

personal contact with communities is the most effective way to objectively show them the scientific and historical material proving natural hazards and to motivate each person, community and business to create and implement an emergency preparedness plan. The DDMC promotes many simple and cost-effective damage and loss reduction measures to show that preparedness does not have to be time consuming or expensive.

The DDMC's activities and recommendations for hurricane, earthquake and flood preparedness have been published in the following Dominican newspapers: Listín Diario, El Siglo, El Nacional, El Hoy, El Caribe, and the ARQUITEXTO magazine. The newspaper La Nación just printed our November 30th Informational Bulletin in its entirety, showing that the Bulletin itself is an effective and solid source of information for the media, businesses, and communities. The DDMC is especially grateful to Mr. Danilo Rodríguez and his colleagues for their efforts to maintain natural disasters and preparedness in the news.

In addition, several NGO's and community organizations have promoted the DDMC's assistance to threatened communities in their institutional publications. In 1997, the media generously donated more than 150 minutes of television time (Programa Para Todos and Programa Entrevista Exclusiva, among others) and more than 305 minutes of radio time were donated by the following stations: Radio WAO, Hits 92, Viva FM 94.1, Amanecer 98 and Radio Dial (San

.Pedro de Macoris). Our warmest thanks to all!

In March and April of 1997, the DDMC assisted an investigation of the Septentrional Fault Zone by experts from the U.S. Geological Service and the Universities of Texas, California and Maryland. Although the results of the radiocarbonization of the soil samples are inconclusive, the experts advise that a massive awareness campaign be waged to warn the Dominican population of its seismic risk given that this active fault has at least 800 years of energy accumulated along its length; is capable of generating an earthquake of 8.0 on the Richter scale at any point in the Cibao valley, which crosses the entire country, with severe damage extending up to 100 to 200 kilometers from the origin; and it represents the border of the Caribbean Plate with the North American Plate - whose recent activity in Venezuela and Montserrat underline its dangerous potential. The DDMC is seeking support to publish, by early 1998: The Next Big Earthquake in the Dominican Republic Will Probably Occur Much Sooner Than You Think: Are You Prepared? This document was prepared by the USGS team of experts and is being edited for the general Dominican population.

III Community Education: During 1997, the DDMC financed 281 Community Disaster Preparedness Workshops for high risk communities nationwide, which were implemented by more than 30 NGO's throughout the D.R. More than 8,430 community leaders learned what a disaster is, how to identify vulnerability as well as community strengths and resources, and to prepare a Community Emergency Preparedness Plan. The results of this program, originally designed by the International Federation of Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, are quite visible. Many communities have reactivated or established Red Cross and Civil Defense committees and/or implemented small projects such as improving drainage systems, building containment walls or embanking unstable slopes prone to water damage or landslides, among others - all done entirely with the communities' resources and labor. Since the DDMC began the community preparedness program in October of 1995, at least 403 communities have received the workshop,

amounting to at least 12,090 community leaders that are now able to make a difference in their high risk communities.

IV Community Initiatives: The DDMC has supported eleven Community Initiatives during 1997 all across the D.R. Seven of the projects are drainage embankments (a total of 2,563 meters!); two are containment walls to prevent landslides; one is a containment dike for the Cabón river; and one is the construction of four drainage chambers which also permit escape from highly floodprone areas of the community.

A total of 3,504 families benefit directly and 5,909 families benefit indirectly from the DDMC's community projects, representing a total of 51,773 beneficiaries. The total cost of the projects amounts to US\$194,776 of which the communities contribute US\$101,818, equivalent to 52.27%; other entities (NGO's, Local Governments, and others) contribute US\$25,976 or 13.34%; and the DDMC contributes US\$66,980 or 34.39%. Our congratulations to the communities for their outstanding efforts to reduce vulnerability!

V Training: The DDMC held several courses in 1997 and waged an aggressive awareness campaign nationwide. The Sixth National Training For Instructor's course was held March 19-22. From July 12-13, the DDMC coordinated the International Fed. of Red Cross' Safe Home and First Aid workshop. In August, the 18-20 and 29-31, two training seminars were held to prepare 70 additional facilitators to expand the Community Disaster Preparedness program through an additional 20 NGO's nationwide.

Announcements: The Dominican Disaster Mitigation Committee will hold a training course each month for businesses in 1998. The topics include Risk Assessment vs. Strategic Planning; Contingency Plans for Catastrophic Events; Resource Management for Hurricane Season; Emergency Preparedness; Contingency Procedures for Hurricanes; The D.R.'s Seismic Risk and Institutional Preparations and Procedures; Hazardous Substance Management; Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis; and Catastrophic

.Insurance: Limitations and Coverage.