

Country: The Dominican Republic	Presenters: General José de los Santos, Director, Civil Defense; Mireya Veloz, Engineer		
1. Experiences and recent disasters			
Items	Information provided		
	Event	Affected population	Losses
1.1 Mayor disasters over the past five years Events mentioned: 5 Types of event: Floods: 1 Tropical storms: 2 Hurricanes: 2	Tropical Storm Gordon (1994)		In Tamayo, 30% of homes were destroyed, and 60% of agricultural production.
	Hurricane Hortense 81996)	24 dead 5,000 displaced or otherwise affected	RD\$90 million in agriculture and cattle-raising losses.
	Drought in Cibao (1997)		
	Hurricane Georges (1998)	341 dead 595 injured 40,240 displaced	Close to RD\$16 billion in losses.
	Torrential rains and landslides (1999)		
1.2 Impact of these disasters	Damage to hundreds of thousands of homes; serious losses in agriculture, agro-industry, road infrastructure and public buildings, power networks and water supply systems.		
1.3 Mitigation measures adopted	The National Emergency Plan guided the actions of all relevant institutions, as did specific contingency plans and the National Shelter Sanitation Plan. Sanitary recommendations and guidelines were issues. The power grid was restored thanks to the intervention of private sector firms.		
1.4 Preparedness and prevention activities the country needs to reinforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of community training programmes • Inter-institutional coordination • Institutional capacity building • Risk Assessment and Mapping • National Emergency Legislation 		
1.5 Impact of the IDNDR proclamation on disaster reduction in the country	The National Emergency Plan built on the IDNDR objectives.		

1.6 Successful measures or projects involving a preventive approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project to build national capacity for the prevention, mitigation and response to natural or technological disasters • Caribbean Disaster Mitigation Project, sponsored by the OAS • SISMIN seismic risk management project
2: Advances since the launch of the IDNDR	
2.1 National achievements	<p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>Still at the preliminary stage. Some hazard mapping has been carried out with community participation</p>
	<p>Structured Mitigation Plans:</p> <p>There is a National Emergency Plan, as well as operational plans for specific institutions linked to the National Emergency Commission.</p>
	<p>Access to Early Warning Systems:</p> <p>The National Meteorological Bureau has outstanding access to those systems linked to the Hurricane Operational Plan of Region IV, World Meteorological Organization.</p>
2.2. Obstacles faced by the country in meeting IDNDR goals, and recommendations to overcome them	<p><i>Obstacles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of organization, which makes it difficult to engage in systematic disaster reduction and response. • There is a lack of specialized staff, financial resources and equipment. • No effective prevention campaign is in place. • Vulnerability Assessments have not been conducted. <p><i>Recommendations:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update and strengthen the National Emergency Commission. • Create a special budget for emergencies and disasters. • Develop and implement an awareness-raising campaign involving all sectors of society. • Incorporate disaster reduction and prevention into national development plans and national curricula.
2.3 Information and education campaigns	Disaster reduction messages are regularly and systematically disseminated through print media, radio and television.
2.4 Links with policymakers, organizations and the media	Provincial governors, city hall officials and other authorities are kept abreast of the creation of Emergency Committees. Training is provided to these Committees and the national media.
2.5 Work with other sectors in incorporating disaster reduction activities into general planning	NGOs and civil society organizations take part in the various activities mentioned. There is a need to strengthen this aspect, however.
2.6 Contributions at the international level in meeting IDNDR goals	Participation in international events has been plentiful, and there is wide dissemination of IDNDR material.
3. National Organization and Structures	

3.1 Government authority entrusted with disaster reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Defense • National Emergency Commission
3.2 Government budget	There is no specific budget item aimed at disaster prevention and mitigation. Most of the funds come from international agencies or banks.
3.3 Legal framework	Civil Defense was established by the Congress, and the National Commission by presidential decree. There is no building code as such, although there are regulations concerning the safety of buildings. A national Reforestation Act has also been enacted.
3.4 Incorporation of disaster reduction into national curricula	Only formal education has been targeted. At the university level, there are efforts to incorporate disaster reduction into the curricula of several disciplines.
3.5 Sectors and institutions entrusted with knowledge and technology transfer in disaster reduction	A variety of professionals are members of the National Emergency Commission. These are the major partners, and their multidisciplinary approach is considered quite useful.
4. Future Requirments	
4.1 Requirments for the successful execution of disaster reduction activities in the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase participation in regional activities to improve international coordination. • Provide more budgetary resources. • Disseminate knowledge developed in industrialized nations. • Involve the media at all levels, and provide training aimed specifically at media workers. • Strengthen decentralization efforts. • Link all relevant activities to the sustainable development concept and poverty alleviation.
4.2 Desirable measures in the 21 st Century	<p>At the national level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote political will towards disaster reduction. • Pass an Emergency and Disaster Act that would establish a National Disaster Prevention and Response System. • Create a National Emergency Fund. • Provide qualified technicians with job stability. <p>At the international level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the participation of qualified staff in international events. • Strengthen regional organizations dedicated to disaster reduction. • Improve follow-up to IDNDR activities. • Improve coordination by National Emergency Commissions. • Improve coordination by all hemispheric agencies dedicated to risk reduction.