

**Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management Declaration on Behalf of the  
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for  
Disaster Risk Reduction – Geneva, Switzerland, May 19 to 23, 2013**

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) was established in 2005 to replace the former National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) as a Division of the Ministry of National Security with responsibility for disaster response and risk management at the national level.

**Major Achievements in DRR**

Significant achievements in Planning include the development of a National Comprehensive Disaster Management Plan, which guides the implementation of the National CDM Policy to align DRR related activities across agencies, and is currently under review at the Stakeholder level.

The Ministry of Public Administration is embarking upon a National Business Continuity Management (BCM) Initiative, which will build institutional capacity for BCM and Planning across Trinidad and Tobago.

Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) initiatives have been initiated through the assessment of future and probable risk by several stakeholder agencies, including the Institute of Marine Affairs through the Coastal Conservation Programme, and the University of the West Indies Geomatics Department through several projects in collaboration with the Life Sciences Department to measure climate change impacts.

The National Disaster Office has sought involvement at all levels of intervention, and has received broad support across all sectors of government through agency participation on the National Disaster Risk Reduction Committee. The UNDP Institutional Capacity Building Project has been initiated to enhance DRM capacities at the National Level and mainstream gender considerations across DRR policies and plans. At the Regional Level, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Corporations have engaged in the ODPM's Readiness Project, and the ODPM is working to improve community readiness through the development of CERT Teams as part of an ongoing IDB-Funded Project: "Improving the Delivery of Comprehensive Disaster Management".

Interventions at the National Level include the implementation of a Daily Operational Brief for understanding the daily DRR Priorities and Readiness Levels of all Stakeholders in the National DRR System; establishment of a National Public Education Campaign; completion of a baseline National Preparedness Survey; implementation of the National Volunteer Programme; and Phase 3 of the Communities Organized and Ready for Emergencies (CORE) Programme: "Let's Get Ready!"

**Major Obstacles**

There is an urgent need to integrate all existing Disaster Management related legislation

and fill critical gaps in regulatory frameworks, including lifting existing building codes to a compulsory standard. The current legislative framework does not provide an effective platform for the coordination of disaster management functions – particularly the organization’s monitoring and regulatory roles - and must be augmented to meet these needs.

To address these gaps, the ODPM has submitted its Proposal for *Development of Comprehensive Disaster Management in Trinidad and Tobago* to Cabinet. When approved, the proposal will guide the implementation of critical measures, including the National Disaster Management Act, National Disaster Management Policy, Critical Facilities Protection Policy; the establishment of a National Disaster Management Committee, and the expansion and strengthening of the National Disaster Management Office.

While significant work has been done to engage stakeholders on the National Disaster Risk Reduction Committee (national platform for mainstreaming DRR across development plans, policies and programmes), there is a need to improve levels of institutional commitment to DRR initiatives by incorporating DRR practices and concepts across national mechanisms for development planning.

The ODPM continues to engage stakeholders in Disaster Readiness and Risk Management initiatives to increase their capacity to assume their roles in national disaster management through focused activities such as BCM, Egress and Evacuation Planning, CERT Evaluation Certification for Disaster Management Units & Emergency Services Functions, and further community resilience building initiatives across the country.

### **Trinidad and Tobago’s Vision for a Post-HFA 2015 Instrument**

Trinidad and Tobago’s vision for a post-HFA 2015 instrument includes the closer integration of International and Regional bodies for Disaster Risk Reduction. A defined process and interface for continuous regional sharing of implementation progress - successes, challenges and lessons learned - across Member States will enhance the implementation experience at the organizational level by providing more frequent opportunities for collaboration and information sharing, and drive the closer harmonization of DRR interventions across regions to promote interoperability and strategic alignment.