

Global Platform for Disaster Reduction
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Oral Statement
Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA)

Chairperson, Secretary-General, Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Assistant Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Director, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, the Media, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) is pleased to address (present this Statement to) the 2nd Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Reduction. CDERA is an inter-governmental body with responsibility for disaster management in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM recognizes the inextricable link between poverty and disasters and accepts that poverty alleviation and sustainable development cannot gain traction without a strengthened commitment to disaster reduction at the regional, national, community and individual levels in each member country.

It is also recognized that the Caribbean region is considered as the second most hazard prone in the world. Severe multi-country and multi-hazard impacts within the last decades and the increased frequency and intensity of meteorological and hydrological impacts associated with the global climate change phenomenon have brought into sharper focus the vulnerabilities of the small islands states, and low lying coastal communities of the Caribbean region – Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, The Virgin Islands (UK), Trinidad and Tobago and Turks and Caicos Islands.

In recognition of the vulnerabilities of the region and the effect of hazards impacts on the fragile and developing economies and the traditional response/relief approach, the CARICOM region is now fully engaged in a **Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM)** approach which specifically links disaster risk reduction (DRR) to sustainable development. The CDM Strategy provides a framework for the Caribbean to address its current realities with respect to disaster management, whilst building capacity to manage the projected increase in the magnitude and severity of climate-related hazards such as storms, floods and droughts due to climate variability and change.

To this end, the Enhanced Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy and Framework 2007-2012 is designed to support the advancement of several regional and international mandates: the global and regional disaster management agenda including the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and also the CARICOM Regional Programming Framework; the St. George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability; and the objectives of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. In addition, the framework gives due cognizance to and provides the mechanism for CDERA Participating States to support the regional and hemispheric initiatives of the Association of Caribbean States through its Saint Marc, Haiti Resolution and Plan of Action for Disaster Reduction and the Organization of American States Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation.

The Comprehensive Disaster Management Framework, which involves the management of all hazards through all phases of the disaster management cycle by public and private sector and civil society, was accepted as an appropriate facility for a regional mechanism of the Global Platform for Disaster Reduction, following the June 2007 Session here in Geneva.

Since 2007, there have been several initiatives in support of the implementation of CDM and its agenda of building resilience to reduce disaster loss in the Caribbean region and these revolve around the four priority areas of the strategy: Institutional Capacity Building, Knowledge Management, Sector Mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction and Building community resilience.

It is significant to note that a CDM Coordination and Harmonization Council (CHC) was formally established on, December 10, 2007 and a meeting in April 2008 addressed mechanisms for the advancement of mainstreaming of CDM into the sector level. Sector leads have also been identified for Agriculture, Health, Tourism, Education and Civil Society. These are the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC). This is key to incorporating disaster risk management into key Sectors. The CHC has led to development partners articulating support for disaster risk reduction interventions in the Caribbean around the four (4) Priority Outcomes of the CDM Strategy.

CDERA therefore recognizes the specific support of the Canadian International Development Agency and the United Kingdom Department for International Development in advancing the process towards harmonization. With their support CDERA has embarked on a five year programme aimed at enhancing institutional support and community resilience to mitigate and respond to and recover from the adverse affects of climate variability and change and disasters. The programme is unique as it promotes a multi-donor harmonized approach for the support of the enhanced Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy.

CDERA has also partnered with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) to initiate the mainstreaming of climate change into disaster risk management in the Caribbean that harnesses climate change interventions in the region and also focuses on promoting community resilience including livelihoods and gender. The Government of Austria is also assisting with earthquake capacity building. Early warning for floods and warning for tsunami through the support the Governments of Japan and the United States Agency for International Development respectively, is being advanced. Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in the tourism sector – the mainstay of most Caribbean economies – is being undertaken through partnership support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Moreover, mainstreaming disaster risk management in sectors is also a key step in strengthening operations through the CDERA Regional Response Mechanism (RRM), which brings together the collective technical, human resource and financial capability of the region in support of a disaster impacted member state. CDERA has sought to articulate the RRM along the pillars of humanitarian reform as a first step in engaging the international community. Disaster recovery planning is an indispensable, integrated element of the CDM programme that requires a pro-active focus to facilitate successful interventions and efforts have been initiated to encourage accelerated attention to recovery planning. In that context, it is expected that a dialogue for advancing humanitarian reform this will be convened at our annual CDM Conference, which is designed for yearly reporting and exchanges on the region's progress in achieving the results of the CDM Strategy.

The CDM Strategy has also facilitated some institutional changes for CDERA. The region will have in place by September 2009, a new body the Caribbean Disaster Management Agency (CDEMA) that will replace and advance the work started by CDERA. CDEMA will have an expanded mandate, a broader stakeholder base and an improved governance structure that will position it to more strategically take up its role in moving CDM forward in the Region.

At the national level, there has been increased effort to deepen capacity in Results Based Management, support Participating States in the development of multi-year CDM Based work programming, support

the development of a model approach to national CDM baselines and monitoring frameworks as well as their adaptation and institutional capacity assessments, strengthening and support for coordination mechanisms.

The Caribbean region takes this opportunity to affirm its commitment to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. We also firmly believe that we have much to share on how this agenda has been owned for sustainability in the region, through Comprehensive Disaster Management and about donor harmonisation for its implementation and advancement.