NATIONAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Anguilla is a small British Dependent. Territory located 63.5 degrees West and 18.10 North. The island is 16 miles long and 1 3/4 miles wide with a total area of 35sq miles. It is very flat, the highest hill, Crocus Hill, being 213 feet above sea level. The 1992 census showed that the population stood at 9,000.

The main economic activities in Anguilla are tourism, fishing, construction and offshore finance. Tourism is primarily "upscale" with luxury hotels and a few small inns and villas. Anguilla boasts that it has some of the best beaches in the Caribbean and depends heavily on tourism. Given that tourism is the main stay of the economy, it is important that the island provides proper health care. Therefore, any damage to the beaches by hurricane activity impacts heavily on the economy of the island.

Being one of the most northerly of the islands in the Leeward Islands chain, Anguilla finds itself in the path of hurricanes and has to be on the look out every year . Disaster Preparedness is the responsibility of the National Disaster Preparedness Committee which is chaired by His Excellency, The Governor. Activities are coordinated by a Disaster Preparedness Coordinator who is also the Permanent Secretary, Social Services.

NATURAL DISASTERS AFFECTING ANGUILLA

The main natural disasters that affect Anguilla are hurricanes and earthquakes. While there has never been a serious earthquake, there have been tremors to warrant concern. Hurricanes on the other hand, pose a threat every year. As a result, the Disaster Preparedness Committee takes steps to ensure that the island is prepared for hurricanes by carrying out hurricane awareness campaigns and practising drills.

HURRICANE LUIS

The last hurricane to strike Anguilla was Hurricane Luis. Regarded as a category four hurricane on the Saffir Simpson Scale, Luis struck the island on September 5, 1995 thirty-five years and one day after the passing of Hurricane Donna which flattened the island on September 4, 1960. Hurricane Luis pounded the island for more than twenty hours causing widespread damage in its trail. Electricity was knocked out, roads blocked and communications severed making contact with the outside world virtually impossible for two days. In addition the radio station was off the air for more than a week.

Although there were no deaths and no major injuries, health facilities received some damage. The fact that there were no deaths and no major injuries was in part due to the strong homes as a result of the lessons learned from Hurricane Donna.

The Princess Alexandra Hospital which was opened in 1993, received superficial damage estimated at EC$142,000.00. Most of the damage was done to the solar panels, roofing, tiles and fencing. This damage did not in anyway interrupt the functioning of the hospital.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HURRICANE LUIS

In addition to the hospital, all five district clinics received damage putting them out of action for several weeks, with one still to be reopened. The clinic in Island Harbour was built in a flood prone area and a decision has to be made to relocate it. The closing of this clinic has caused much inconvenience to the people of that area. With the emphasis on the delivery of good primary health care, clinics play an important role in our health care system in that they relieve the congestion at the hospital. Minor cases are attended to at the clinics thus leaving the hospital free for emergencies. Thus any closure of a clinic interrupts the delivery of primary health care when doctors have to be bogged down with minor cases at the hospital.

Apart from the damage to the clinics, the hurricane also destroyed a mobile dental van which provided dental services for the six primary schools. Until there is a replacement, this service will remain interrupted. The social and economic impact of the hurricane on the island's health facilities can be considered as moderate.

Shortly after the hurricane, the Chief Minister requested The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to carry out an assessment of the economic effects of the damage. The report made the following observation about the health sector,

> "The direct damage to infrastructure, equipment and supplies of the health sector have been estimated at US$218,000.00. Damages to infrastructure were insured so that net direct losses will be lower. Indirect losses that included the relocation of a clinic and the mosquito control campaign amount to an estimated US$90,000.00. Total damages in the health sector reached US$308,000.00."

Given that replacements for damages to the health sector had to be met from Local Capital Funds, it meant that there was less money to be spent on repairing schools and other buildings.

Repair work began immediately with assistance from the crew of the British Frigate, H.M.S. Southamptom. While it took the electricity and telephone services two months to be restored island wide, clinics took about two weeks to become functional. However, the water heaters and the fencing at the hospital have yet to be replaced. Negotiations are still going on with the Insurance Company in relation to the compensation.

The total amount spent on the restoration of the health facilities amounted to $270,000.00. This came from local capital funds. It is expected that funding for the replacement of the Island Harbour

Clinic will be supplied by the British Development Division in the Caribbean. While some assistance came from The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Ageny (CDERA) and other agencies there was nothing specifically for the repair of the health facilities.

MITIGATION MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED

As a result of the lessons learned from the hurricane, retrofitting of the health facilities will be carried out every year to ensure that they are in good shape and can withstand a hurricane. As far as the hospital is concerned, a policy of preventative maintenance will be carried out. In particular, consideration is being given to the relocation of the clinic that is in a flood prone area. In addition, the solar panels when replaced will have to be properly bolted down to ensure that they do not blow off the roof thus causing plumbing problems. The Health Sector Disaster Management plan will also be strengthened to ensure that the health services can function after a hurricane.

When the Princess Alexandra Hospital was being built, the Ministry of Social Services realized the threat that hurricanes posed to the island and insisted that mitigation measures should be taken into consideration. As a result, the hospital was built to withstand hurricanes and earthquakes. The standards used in constructing this facility were in keeping with the Anguilla Building Code and British Building Standards.

While there are no specific regulations for hospitals, all buildings must conform with the Anguilla Building Code. In the case of public buildings the Planning Division is responsible for approving the design while the Ministry of Finance sees about financial approval. Supervision of construction is carried out by Public Works Department, but each Department is responsible for its own maintenance.

In 1992 Tony Gibbs of Consulting Engineers Partnership visited the island to hand over the Building Code under a project funded by The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). At that time, he had a look at the newly completed hospital and made some suggestions for retrofitting the building. These were readily acted on. Apart from this visit, there has been no formal structural or non structural vulnerability analysis carried out on the health facilities.

Not having a hurricane for a long time, most people tended not to take the hurricane warnings seriously. Given the experience of Hurricane Luis people will not want to take chances. When the next hurricane season approaches, it is expected that the hospital and clinics will be in a better state of preparedness. We recognize that we cannot prevent hurricanes but that we can mitigate the effects that they have on the health services by putting measures into place to ensure that they are safe and functional if a hurricane strikes again.