

CARIBBEAN DISASTE EMERGENCY RESPONSE AGENCY (CDERA)

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SUMMARY OF REGIONAL IDNDR RELATED ACTIVITIES IN THE CDERA PARTICIPATING STATES

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) accepted the recommendation of the Caribbean Regional IDNDR meeting, held in Jamaica, May 1992, that it becomes the Decade information focal point for its fourteen (14) Participating States.

CDERA has taken this mandate seriously and accelerated its commitment to public awareness and education within its existing constraints of financial and human resources. A summary of the activities facilitated or accommodated since then are presented below.

2.0 INFORMATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMME

2.1 *Regional Radio Programmes*

Three radio programmes have been organized annually on IDNDR day since 1992 dealing with the themes of the Decade.

These have involve panelists drawn from the private and public sector, NGOs, bi-lateral and multi-lateral organizations and are broadcast live on more than twenty (20) radio stations across the region.

2.2 *Regional Television*

The regional television programme CARIBSCOPE, which is aired across the region, has been used to highlight issues concerned with vulnerability reduction.

2.3 *News Releases*

CDERA has a contact list of over thirty (30) television and radio stations and newspapers through which it makes press releases on all aspects of disaster management.

All effort is made to use incidents or opportunities arising from regional meetings to raise the level of public education and awareness on disaster management.

2.4 *Newsletter*

The Caribbean Disaster News, the Agency's newsletter carries a special focus on IDNDR related activities in its third quarter issue.

The newsletter is circulated in all of the major geographic regions of the world and has a readership of more than 5,000.

3.0 **EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

CDERA is collaborating with a diversity of interests in promoting the better design and use of Early Warning systems and emergency communications capability. The following have been undertaken thus far:

- i. Cooperation with the CMO and WMO on improving warnings for severe weather systems in the Caribbean;
- ii. Cooperation with USAID/OAS/CDMP in storm risk assessment in the sub-region;
- iii. A regional consultation on the needs for improving emergency communications in the Caribbean. Executed with support from UNESCO and in collaboration with CARIMAC, CANA and CBU.
- iv. A study to assess the use of the State-of-the-Art technology in Disaster Preparedness has been completed and results disseminated. The study was executed in collaborating with OECS-Aeradio.
- v. Guidelines for the establishment of:
 - Emergency Telecommunications systems
 - Emergency Telecommunications Plans
 - National Emergency Operation Centers

have been developed and circulated to relevant parties with the support of CIDA, ITU and RSS are being used in the CDERA Participating States within the sub-region.

- vi. An action plan for emergency telecommunications has been prepared with the support of the affected interests.

4.0 TRAINING OF MEDIA PERSONNEL

- i. A regional workshop on Disaster management was organized with the support of UNESCO, PAHO and ITU and in collaboration with CANA, CBU and CARIMAC.

Twenty (20) journalists from public and private media houses participated in the training and orientation workshop.

- ii. An information kit for the Media is being prepared with the support of UNESCO and PAHO. Upon completion, it will be distributed to all media houses in CDERA Participating States.

5.0 LOOKING AHEAD

The activities above are considered by CDERA to be embryonic only . The intent is to use public awareness and education as a medium for building the constituency necessary to ensure that disaster management gets priority consideration in the decision making process in our territories.

The Public Awareness and Education programme promoted by the Agency is centered around the following:

- i. Engaging the private sector, especially the finance and insurance sectors, in supporting public awareness and education activities. Some success has already been achieved here.
- ii. Using case studies to demonstrate how informed communities have managed disaster events relative to those that have been less informed.
- iii. The full activation and staffing of a Regional Disaster Documentation Center.
- iv. Promotion of a Regional Hazards Conference.
- v. Production of special bulletins and publications on various elements of the disaster experience in the region.

6.0 COMMUNITY DISASTER PLANNING

In keeping with the plan of Action of the World Conference on Hazard Reduction, held in Yokohama, Japan, CDERA has been collaborating with the CCC and CARITAS in developing and implementing a training programme that empowers communities to identify local risks and plan for their mitigation. This activity is well advanced.

7.0 INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Considerable effort is being directed at enabling Participating States to better plan for and mitigate anticipated hazard impacts. The following are central to this process.

- i. Development and promotion of model disaster legislation that accommodates a wider perspective on disaster management at the national level.
- ii. Regional guidelines on Incorporating Disaster Planning in the Public Sector have been prepared and circulated. These were reviewed by both technical and policy officials in CDERA Participating States before dissemination.
- iii. Identification and selection of national programmes as "CDERA Endorsed Model Programmes" as a medium through which more horizontal cooperation among our Participating States can be accommodated.

8.0 FACILITATING THE CARIBBEAN IDNDR AGENDA

- i. More regular and timely information for the IDNDR Secretariat is necessary
- ii. Resources for the full activation of the Regional Disaster Documentation Center
- iii. Contributions for preparation and dissemination of disaster information and education materials.
- iv. Support for disaster related research undertaken by university students in the region

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