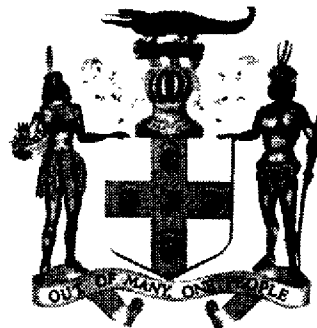


# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING HANDBOOK



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND  
FOREIGN TRADE OF JAMAICA

JANUARY 1994

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## **PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK**

The purpose of the *Disaster Preparedness and Contingency Planning Handbook* is primarily to acquaint all members of staff of Jamaica's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade with its response plan for dealing with all possible types of disasters or emergencies, natural and manmade, which are likely to affect the Ministry's operation, both at Headquarters and overseas; and to create in staff members a keen sense of awareness of the need to respond readily and appropriately during any such situation.

The Ministry's Response Plan is subdivided into three (3) sub-plans:

- 1) The Ministry's National Response Plan within the Government's National Disaster Programme
- 2) The Overseas Missions Response Plan
- 3) The Ministry's Headquarters Plant and Staff Protection and Response Plan

The first and second sub-plans define the role of the Ministry in the National Disaster Preparedness Programme and establish guidelines to be followed by Headquarters and the Missions overseas in co-ordinating offers of external assistance. The third sub-plan outlines the specific response actions to be taken by members of the Ministry's Disaster Preparedness Committee, as well as the policies, procedures

and more general response activities to be followed by all members of staff in the event of a disaster.

The effectiveness of the plans contained herein can only be realised if they are known and understood by all concerned. It is, therefore, necessary for all members of staff to read and familiarise themselves with the contents of this *Handbook* and diligently follow the instructions and guidelines with a view to mitigating the damages resulting from any type of disaster.

A copy of this *Handbook* should be made available for the information and guidance of all members of staff and should be used in orientation and training programmes.

***REMEMBER: PREPAREDNESS IS THE KEY TO SURVIVAL***

The information in the *Handbook*, though specifically written to fit the unique role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, has certain features which can be and should be applied if a disaster strikes while staff members are at home or in a public place.

## **Objectives of the Plan**

1. To keep members of staff fully informed and aware of the Ministry's contingency plans at all times;
2. To have members of staff react quickly and appropriately in cases of disaster;
3. To ensure the safety while at work, of all members of staff both at Headquarters and in Missions overseas;
4. To devise procedures for protecting the Ministry's documents, files, furniture, equipment, vehicles and other assets from damage;
5. To minimise damage to the Ministry's physical structure at Headquarters and that of its Chanceries and official Residencies overseas;
6. To minimise disruptions to normal Ministry operations and to reactivate these as early as possible following a disaster;
7. To establish guidelines for providing our Missions overseas and Foreign Missions in Jamaica with speedy and reliable information on the type of international assistance required.

# **1. MINISTRY'S DISASTER PREPAREDENESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

## **Composition of Membership**

This Committee will include the following categories of members and will report to the Permanent Secretary who represents the Ministry on the National Disaster Committee.

- |    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | <i>Coordinator</i>                                       | To be nominated by the Permanent Secretary   |
| 2. | <i>Two Assistant Coordinators</i>                        | To be selected by and from among members of the Committee                          |
| 3. | <i>Floor Wardens - (member of staff from each floor)</i> | To be nominated by the Divisional Director or Section Head on the respective floor |
| 4. | <i>Director, Information Division</i>                    |  |



5. *Foreign Service officer assigned to the Office of the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs* To represent the floor on which he/she is situated
6. *Administrative Assistant to the Permanent Secretary* To represent the floor on which he/she is situated
7. *Ex-officio members:* Director General (operations)  
Director, Inspectorate  
Director, Protocol  
Director, Administration and Services  
Director, Personnel and Training

### **Scope of the Committee's Role**

1. To act as an advisory body to the Permanent Secretary on matters relating to the Ministry's Disaster Preparedness Programme.
2. To formulate and implement preventive measures that will ensure the safety of the Ministry's staff, and the physical structure and contents of the Ministry in the event of a disaster.
3. To monitor and update the Disaster Response Plans.
4. To ensure that a copy of the *Handbook* is made accessible to all members of staff.
5. To analyse, review and evaluate the reasons for the success or failure of the Response Plans following a disaster and report to the Permanent Secretary.
6. To ensure the timely and reliable dissemination of relevant and reliable information to members of staff, both locally and overseas, the diplomatic community in Jamaica, and the general public, following a disaster.
7. To give whatever assistance is required within the capabilities available, before, during, and after a disaster.
8. To arrange training sessions to sensitise staff and create an awareness of the need to be disaster conscious.

9. To ensure internal compliance with directives and policies as set out in the *Handbook*.
10. To be the link between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and the Office of Disaster Preparedness.
11. To represent the Ministry on certain national disaster sub-committees at the request of the Office of Disaster Preparedness.
12. To visit or remain at the Office in the event of a disaster and to organise and supervise necessary mop-up operations.

## **Functions of the Coordinator**

The Coordinator will act as Chairman at meetings, except when the Permanent Secretary is present, and will perform the following functions:

1. Be responsible for the overall planning and implementation of the Ministry's disaster preparedness and contingency plan.
2. Convene meetings of the Committee.
3. Contact the appropriate authorities for assistance in the event of a disaster; for example, Fire Departments in the event of fire, Police Department, Bomb Specialists etc.
4. Initiate and supervise evacuation exercises or search procedures as the occasion requires.
5. Co-opt other personnel as may be required during emergencies.
6. Represent the Permanent Secretary at meetings of the National Disaster Committee.
7. Maintain liaison with the resident Engineer for the office building.
8. Maintain contact with the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), representatives of donor agencies and international organisations and members of the sub-Committee on damage and needs assessment.

### **Specific Functions of Floor Wardens**

1. To ensure that all staff members on respective floors are familiar with the contents of the *Handbook*.
2. To hold periodic meetings with members of staff from each floor to brief them and keep them informed of any emergency situations or new developments.
3. To acquaint the staff members with the location of emergency exits on the respective floors as well as throughout the building.
4. To keep a list of the names of all staff members on their respective floors and take special note of those with physical disabilities.
5. To be familiar with the location of the fire alarms and fire extinguishers on the respective floors and to ensure that they are always in good working condition.
6. To mobilise staff to evacuate the building when required.
7. To make sure that staff use the stairs and not the elevators when evacuating the building.
8. To ensure that all staff members from respective floors comply with the specific instructions pertaining to a particular disaster or emergency.
9. To check all rooms, offices, sickrooms, bathrooms and pantry to ensure that nobody is left in the building when evacuation is taking place.
10. To sensitise and instil in staff members an awareness of the need for compliance with the requirements of the plans in the *Handbook*.
11. To check off the names of all staff members from their respective floors when outside of the building after an evacuation to ensure that all persons are accounted for.

12. A floor warden may co-opt two assistants to help in emergency situations, preferably one male and one female. One of these assistants should attend the meeting in place of the floor warden.
13. To visit or remain at the Ministry before, during or after a disaster to monitor the situation and give any assistance required.
14. To assist in organising and supervising "mop-up" operations after a disaster.
15. To make arrangements to contact the family of a staff member if the situation so requires.
16. Having completed all of the evacuation procedures, wardens should conduct a thorough search of the building to ensure that all the procedures have been complied with and that no person is left inside the building.

## Meetings

The Committee shall meet normally once every three months to discuss any problems and to review and update the *Handbook* as deemed necessary.

In the event of an imminent disaster, the Committee will meet in emergency sessions as determined by the coordinator, both before and after the disaster.

Meetings will be held in the first floor conference room unless otherwise specified. The representative from the Information Division will act as Secretary to the Committee and will be responsible for reproducing and circulating the notes of the meetings to all Committee members.

A quorum will consist of two-thirds (2/3) of the membership and decisions will be taken by majority vote. Final decisions will, however, be the prerogative of the Permanent Secretary.

## **Awareness Programmes**

It is necessary to keep members of staff aware of the need for being prepared at all times and to be familiar with the various Response Plans. In keeping with this need, the following awareness programmes should be developed and implemented:

1. Incorporation of the material in the Handbook in the orientation of new employees in regular training programmes.
2. Periodic rehearsals of emergency response procedures.
3. Holding of fire and earthquake drills at reasonable intervals.
4. Development and distribution of easy to read reminders of the do's and don'ts of disaster preparedness.
5. Holding of biannual staff meetings and inviting guest speakers to address staff on different aspects of disaster preparedness.
6. Showing of relevant video tapes periodically.
7. Inclusion of an article on disaster preparedness in each copy of the Magazine of the Association of Jamaican Foreign Service Officers (AJAFSO).
8. Displaying material on disasters of various types on a notice board which is to be kept in a central place.
9. Line Managers exercising responsibility for educating the members of their unit on the importance of disaster preparedness.



## **2. MINISTRY'S NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL DISASTER PROGRAMME**

### **Role of the Ministry**

The major role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade in the National Disaster Plan is envisaged as that of official spokesman of the Government for the dissemination of information relating to requests for international assistance following a disaster, and the Co-ordinator of such assistance through its Mission overseas.

The type of international assistance required will first be communicated to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry or in his absence, the Disaster Co-ordinator, by the Executive Director of the Office of Disaster Preparedness or his nominee. The Ministry would then take immediate action to convey this information to the Diplomatic Community and other international agencies in Jamaica and to its Missions overseas for appropriate attention.

The Ministry will, in addition, perform the following roles:

1. Be the official channel for providing information to relatives and other interested parties, on the health and welfare of nationals, as well as visitors and other foreign nationals in Jamaica at the time of the disaster.

Information with respect to tourists will be acquired through liaison with the Ministry of Tourism. Any information received will be passed on to the related Missions or international organisations in Jamaica or to Jamaica's Missions overseas for dissemination to the appropriate sources.

2. Participate, in conjunction with the Office of Disaster Preparedness and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in formulating and updating policy guidelines on Response Procedures relating to requests for international assistance.
3. Ensure the preparation and dissemination of the Response Procedures to be followed by the International Community in Jamaica and Missions overseas.
4. Co-ordinate and co-chair with the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
5. Be the official channel of communication through the Missions overseas for co-ordinating the relief efforts of nationals as well as keeping them informed of events in Jamaica.
6. Prepare information kits for nationals overseas as a means of educating and sensitising them on the appropriateness of donations and the need to await specific requests before responding.

7. In the event of disasters in other countries, to be the official channel of communication for receiving and issuing responses to requests for assistance from the Government of the affected country.

If the Ministry is to succeed in obtaining suitable and timely international assistance for Jamaica following a disaster, it will have to be recognised and accepted as the only authorised official channel to carry out the various roles outlined above. This will reduce considerably the risk of conflicting reports reaching the international donor community as well as our nationals overseas and other interested persons.

### **Meetings of the National Disaster Sub-Committee on International Assistance**

Regular meetings of the Committee will be held in April prior to the start of the hurricane season to review and update the national needs list and to identify other sources of assistance. Subsequent meetings will be arranged during the hurricane season depending on the occurrence of an impending hurricane. Ad hoc meetings will also be called immediately after other disasters as the particular situation dictates.

Meetings will be held either at the Ministry's Headquarters at 85 Knutsford Boulevard, Kingston 5, or the UNDP Office at 1-3 Lady Musgrave Road, Kingston 5. Written or telephone notices of meetings will be issued by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

### **3. THE OVERSEAS MISSIONS RESPONSE PLAN**

#### **Role of Missions Overseas**

The major role of the Missions overseas in the aftermath of a disaster in Jamaica is to act as facilitator for the Ministry in coordinating requests and offers of assistance to Jamaica from host governments, international organisations, private voluntary organisations as well as from nationals. Missions will also be expected to provide information to the general public on conditions in Jamaica and details about the health and welfare of their relatives in Jamaica to nationals and foreigners making such enquiries.

All Missions will be contacted by Headquarters as soon as possible, before or after a disaster strikes, depending on the specific circumstance. Contact person would be either the Permanent Secretary, the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator or other designated officer, who will convey the special request of the Government for assistance and give an update of the situation in the country.

#### **Authenticity of Requests for Assistance**

Pressure will be put on Missions to respond and react immediately before adequate and authentic information is received from Headquarters. Staff should,

therefore, ignore such pressures as well as any information received from unofficial sources and wait for instructions from Headquarters.

There might be reasons why information from Headquarters is delayed. This might be due mainly to a breakdown in the international communications system, but Headquarters will endeavour to use any available source to contact all of the Missions. However, if there is a communication problem, the first Mission contacted will be requested to convey the required information to the other Missions until normal service is restored.

It must be emphasized that the only requests for assistance which should be acknowledged and acted upon are those emanating from the Ministry's contact person.

The assistance requested will be based on the report of the National Damage Assessment Disaster Sub-Committee, whose role it is to determine the nature of assistance required following a disaster. This report is passed on to the Executive Director of the Office of Disaster Preparedness who in turn advises the contact person in the Ministry of the type of assistance required. The information thus conveyed, as stated above, is to be regarded as the only authentic request for assistance on behalf of the Government.

### **Focal Point of Co-ordination Overseas**

It is anticipated that the most immediate response and the greatest volume of assistance will come from countries in North America, due both to their proximity to Jamaica as well as the large numbers of Jamaican nationals living in those countries. For ease of organisation and control and to avoid duplication of offers, the Embassy in Washington, D.C., will be designated as the focal point for coordinating the requests. One officer in the Mission will likewise be designated as the coordinator and contact person.

All other Missions will likewise be expected to designate a Coordinator who will liaise with the Coordinator in Washington, D.C., with regard to the type of assistance available in the respective host country. The Coordinator in Washington, D.C., will, based on the offers available, advise all Missions what types of assistance each should obtain. The method of sending the assistance to Jamaica will, however, be the responsibility of the sending Mission.

Each Head of Mission should inform Headquarters of the name of his Mission's Co-ordinator so that a master list can be prepared for circulation to Missions. Any change of Co-ordinator should be reported immediately so that the list can be updated.

### **Guidelines for Co-ordination**

1. Headquarters sends official request list to all Foreign Missions.
2. Each Mission determines items on list available in host territory.
3. Co-ordinator in each Mission advises Co-ordinator in Washington Mission of respective Mission's capabilities with details of logistics for transmission to Jamaica.
4. Co-ordinator in Washington, D.C., determines what each Mission should obtain based on the following criteria:
  - Urgency of the particular item
  - Quantity required
  - Proximity of Mission to Jamaica
  - Method of transportation
  - Cost of transportation
  - Documentation requirements

5. Co-ordinator in Washington, D.C., sends advance list to contact officer in Headquarters of assistance to be obtained by individual Mission including Washington.
6. Once advised that assistance be obtained, each Mission makes its own arrangements for transmission to Jamaica.
7. Each Mission advises Headquarters of:
  - Items being sent
  - Method of transmission, ship, plane, courier etc.
  - Expected time of arrival
  - Documentation being sent or required to clear items

### **Pre-Disaster Preparedness**

Missions should not wait until a disaster strikes before making contact with possible donor agencies. There should be an ongoing interaction between the Mission and all likely donors so that the task of accessing assistance will be made much easier when the occasion arises. Missions should, therefore:

- Identify and establish a working relationship with the appropriate specialised agency or focal point for external disaster within the host country — e.g. UNDP, UNDRO, WHO/PAHO, The Red Cross and other non-governmental organisations;
- Inform and discuss the mechanisms and procedures for co-ordinating an effective disaster response with leaders of the Jamaican community, other Caribbean Missions and other interested parties;
- Maintain contact with and sensitise airline and shipping executives as to the nature of assistance required from them after a disaster;
- Maintain a list of key personnel referred to above and keep in frequent contact with them;

- Sensitise nationals on the types of assistance that should or should not be given by issuing information kits periodically;
- Maintain and update list of items likely to be required by Jamaica.

## **Training of Overseas Staff and Nationals**

### **Training of staff**

- Missions should ensure that all members of staff are familiar with the contents of the *Disaster Handbook*.
- Training sessions should be arranged periodically by the Co-ordinator and members of staff should be exposed to external training courses in disaster management.

### **Training of nationals**

- Missions should endeavour to educate and sensitise nationals living outside of Jamaica about what they should or should not donate in times of disasters and the importance of awaiting specific instructions before responding. This information can be conveyed through and by:
  - News letters prepared by the Mission or the JIS Officer.
  - Discussions at meetings of organisations of Jamaican nationals.
  - Radio talk shows

The success of these various measures will minimise the necessity of having to refuse unsolicited assistance.

## **Staff Welfare**

Lists of addresses and telephone numbers of officers' next-of-kin in Jamaica should be maintained and updated and a copy sent to Headquarters so that relatives



can be contacted when necessary. Families should, however, be advised to contact the Ministry to convey or obtain information if unable to contact officer overseas directly. *Remember: staff overseas need reassurance about their families at home.*

## **Acceptance and Refusal of Assistance**

External assistance should complement rather than duplicate the available resources in a disaster stricken country, and it is, therefore, very important for Missions to know *when* and *how* to say *no* to offers of unwanted assistance.

### **Acceptance of assistance**

- Stick to the official list provided by Headquarters
- Keep accurate records of all accepted offers, viz:
  - a. description of donation;
  - b. name, address and phone number of donor;
  - c. whether donor is covering shipping costs;
  - d. whether donation was shipped by sea or air-freighted.
- Encourage cash donations in place of unsolicited offers.
- Open a fund in a bank of Missions' choice to receive cash donations. Name of fund to be same for all Missions, viz., Jamaica, (name of Disaster) Relief Fund, 199\_\_ (year).
  - a. The bank should be instructed that all funds in the account should be transferred periodically to the Bank of Jamaica for the Jamaica Disaster Relief Fund (Account No. will be made available by Headquarters).
  - b. Lists of donors should be sent to Jamaica regularly so that letters of thanks can be issued to them by the Government.

### **Refusal of assistance**

- Missions should be firm in not accepting unsolicited and unnecessary items, for example:
  - Used clothing, shoes, etc., should never be accepted; new clothing and shoes to be accepted only if requested
  - Food items
  - Household medicines or prescriptions
  - Blood and blood derivatives
  - Medical or paramedical personnel or teams.
- Missions should not accept packages to be sent to individuals, families or groups. All assistance is to be consigned to the Official Government Agency in Jamaica.
- Missions should not sanction fundraising activities by any individual, group or organisation on behalf of the Government.

### **Procedures for Transmission of Supplies to Jamaica**

1. All medical supplies should be consigned to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health. The "Standard Procedure for Labelling and Marking Relief Supplies" format, prepared by the Ministry of Health, at Appendix C, should be followed.
2. All other supplies should be consigned to the Government of Jamaica in care of the Office of Disaster Preparedness. Similar procedures to those referred to above should be adopted as applicable. (N.B.: Advance information about transmission of any supplies should be sent in order to facilitate clearance.)
3. Specifications on equipment should be checked before shipping to ensure compatibility with local systems — 60 cycles, 110 voltage.

4. Where supplies are being sent directly to non-governmental organisations, donors should be advised to ensure that the supplies will be classified as bona fide relief supplies and that the consignee is able to effect clearance.
5. Individuals who wish to send supplies directly to relatives or friends should be advised to use the normal postal or shipping channels.

### **Post-Disaster Debriefing**

- Each Mission should arrange debriefing sessions with donors and others who assisted in any way in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the responses and to make recommendations for improvement on future occasions.
- Thank-you letters should be written to all donors.
- Lists of donors and their supplies list capabilities should be updated.
- Government's supplies list should also be updated.
- Headquarters should be sent a report of the evaluations.