



Remarks by Mr. Ronald Jackson, Executive Director, CDEMA at the Official Hand-Over Ceremony of the CDEMA Headquarters Training Facility, Warehouse & Regional Coordination Centre on Thursday, April 2nd, 2015 at Resilience Way, Lower Estate, St. Michael, Barbados

Good morning distinguished guests ladies and gentlemen

I would like to formally welcome you to the ribbon cutting ceremony officially opening this brand spanking new CDEMA Headquarters. Today sees the realization of one of the dreams that has been in the making for a period of over two decades, ever since the Heads of Government of CARICOM in 1991, agreed to establish CDERA as the regional agency with responsibility for disaster management. That dream was to have a home of our very own.

Let me start in the right vein by extending our gratitude to all of you in attendance today. Much of CDEMA's work has benefitted from the support of development partners, both regional and international, regional governments and indeed national partners. A special thank you to the Government of Barbados and the Government of the United States of America through the United States Southern Command (US SOUTHCOM) without all of whom this would not have been possible. It is our intention to appropriately represent this partnership in an indelible way in the very near future.

Ladies and gentlemen as demonstrated by the construction of this facility, forging and maintaining strategic partnerships are pivotal to our goal of achieving a safer, more resilient and sustainable region.

Since its inception, CDEMA has pursued a policy of collaboration with national, regional and international organisations towards the realization of a safe, more resilient region. Collaboration and partnership help to ensure more rational use of the limited resources available to the region as duplication is minimized. It also allows for partner resources to be targeted to areas of priority and greatest need.

“Don't wait for something big to occur. Start where you are, with what you have, and that will always lead you into something greater”.-**Mary Manin Morrissey**

This facility will not only house the Coordinating Unit but also the CDEMA Regional Training Centre (RTC). The Agreement Establishing CDEMA sets out responsibilities for developing



disaster management systems at the national and regional levels. Within the Agreement are clear mandates for ensuring that national and regional Disaster Risk Management (DRM) actors have the capabilities necessary for executing their roles. The Regional Training Centre will support the Participating States of CDEMA and other stakeholders in the CDEMA system in maintaining capabilities for Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM).

The establishment of a Regional Training Centre (RTC) will serve to address the existing and emerging capacity building needs of the CDEMA system in fulfilment of the mandate established in the Agreement.

Specifically the RTC will:

- i. Promote Comprehensive Disaster Management;
- ii. Set standards for CDM capabilities;
- iii. Identify gaps in CDM capabilities and training needs within the CDEMA system;
- iv. Develop and maintain the capabilities for CDM through the provision of a programme of standardised training;
- v. Maintain a repository of resources to support capacity building;
- vi. Maintain a record of existing capabilities, materials and resources;
- vii. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of capacity building initiatives within the system;
- viii. Promote innovation in CDM; and
- ix. Facilitate and promote national, regional and international partnerships for development and delivery of standardised training for CDM.

The CDEMA RTC will focus its efforts primarily on the delivery of standardised training, with emphasis on the niche areas that are within its remit and capacity.

The RTC will therefore provide training primarily in the following core areas.

- i. Emergency Operations
- ii. Contingency Planning
- iii. Disaster Risk Management (Introductory)
- iv. Programme Development and Management for CDM

The establishment of this facility significantly contributes to the achievement of Outcome One of the CDM Strategy 2014-2024. Outcome One speaks directly to strengthening the institutional arrangements for CDM in the region. Furthermore, the establishment of a fully functional and



adequately equipped Regional Coordination Centre within this facility will provide a considerable boost to CDEMA's operational readiness.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we sit here in the resplendent and picturesque surroundings of Lower Estate, framed by the hillsides of the nearby St. George community, I am thankful for the role of several key actors whose efforts bore the fruits we sit in front of today.

Please join me in commending the efforts of, Brigadier(Ret'd) Earl Arthurs, Ms. Andria Grosvenor and Mr. Jeremy Collymore who presented the idea of the facility and actively negotiated the resources to build it; The Government of Barbados in particular **the Honorable Adriel Brathwaite, Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs of Barbados** and his team; the Ministry of Transport and Works, National Conservation Commission (NCC), Ministry Housing and Ministry of Defense and Security; Mrs. Hilda Cruz of the United States Southern Command (US/SOUTHCOM) Humanitarian Assistance Program and Ike who worked with the CDEMA team to make the resources available.

Let this facility stand as a symbol of what the efforts of the collective and a unity of purpose can achieve and reaffirmation of our collective commitment to the goal of building of a safer, more resilient and sustainable region for the benefit of all of our people.

Ronald Jackson
ronald.jackson@cdema.org

