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Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems in the Caribbean: Achievements and Strategic Path Forward

Friday, February 1, 2019

**STRENGTHEN INTEGRATED EARLY
WARNING SYSTEMS (EWS)
IN THE CARIBBEAN**

MORE EFFECTIVE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND
TOOL TRANSFER

- HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK
- MONITORING AND WARNING SYSTEMS
- OPERATIONAL AND COMMUNICATION
- RESILIENCE CAPACITY

By: UNDP-DR

By: UNDP-Haiti

Concept Note and Agenda

February 1, 2019

8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Bougainvillea Conference Centre

Bay Gardens Hotel

Saint Lucia



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Background

Caribbean countries experience small to large-scale hazard impacts that result in disasters at the local to national levels and in some cases, across multiple countries. There is evidence that lives, livelihoods and entire economies are devastated beyond the social and economic implications that may be observed immediately after an impact. The statistics indicate that many lives have been lost and significant damages and losses have been experienced due to cyclones in Caribbean countries. The Low-Level Trough System in 2013, better known as the Christmas Rains severely impacted Saint Lucia with six confirmed deaths and a notable 19,982 persons were affected. In 2015, Tropical Storm Erika claimed the lives of 13 persons, left 17 persons missing and 574 persons homeless in Dominica. The impacts on infrastructure, productive and social sectors have also been devastating in the case of Antigua and Barbuda for example. The impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 resulted in an estimated total damage of US \$136.15 million, while losses were estimated at US \$18.9 million according to the Hurricane Irma Recovery Needs Assessment. The potential for catastrophic impacts also exists as it relates to the threats of earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions as well as major incidents such as the quarry explosion in Saint Lucia in 2017 that resulted in 3 deaths and four critical cases. Noting the physical and anthropogenic threats faced by the Caribbean, it is critical that mechanisms be put in place to warn the populace of impending danger as part of a broader preparedness and disaster risk reduction agenda.



Damage from Severe Flooding in
Dominica from TS. Erika in 2015

The approach of a multi-hazard early warning system (MHEWS) provides an integrated framework to allow governments to fulfil their responsibility under the regional and global disaster risk reduction frameworks. Such an integrated framework is considered however to be in its ‘embryonic state’ in the Region as early warning for the hazards with slower on-set such as cyclones and drought are more advanced. Early warning for rapid on-set hazards such as the intense rainfall not associated with cyclones and landslides need to be improved. Beyond the hazard-specific elements of the MHEWS is a need to address matters such as strengthening governance arrangements, establishing a strategic vision and developing EWS policy according to a study by Collymore (2016).



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Introduction

The Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems in the Caribbean: Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems: Achievements and Strategic Path Forward is a high-level meeting conceptualized to highlight the advances made by six beneficiary countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) under the Project entitled ‘Strengthen integrated early warning systems for more effective disaster risk reduction in the Caribbean through knowledge and tool transfer’ both as Project achievements and progress towards achieving the outcomes of the regional and global frameworks for disaster risk reduction.

In May 2018, the CDEMA Council of Ministers endorsed the Multi-hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWS) Checklist as a tool to be used by the CDEMA System to capture EWS achievements and gaps. They also endorsed the process of utilizing this information to develop a national MHEWS roadmap to provide direction. The process utilized through the validation workshop was inclusive, ensuring that all MHEWS stakeholders at the national and local levels were involved. Sustainability dialogues were convened at the national level to engage decision-makers in a discussion on institutionalizing the approach taken to implement the closely linked project actions and the resulting outputs and to consider the required institutional arrangements, human and financial resources and capacities for improving national MHEWS. During the sustainability dialogues, the improved EWS Toolkit was recommended to countries to aid in their programming of MHEWS into their agencies’ work. The national handover process has therefore been a building block for this high-level hand over event as a progressive move to have MHEWS on the agenda of decision-makers. The process was utilized within the six beneficiary states and it is anticipated that the process can be up-scaled to the broader Caribbean Region, in particular the other CDEMA Participating States. The advances captured and built on during the Project are aligned to the four components of EWS as defined by the UNISDR (list) and delivered through the following four result areas of the project:

- Increased access to tools and knowledge of EWS at a national and regional level
- Integrated EWS solutions in five target countries through knowledge sharing provided
- Increased EWS effectiveness in five target countries through concrete priority actions
- EWS knowledge transfer, documentation and communication ensured

The key results of the Project are detailed in Box 1.

The sustainability dialogue series convened in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in October – November 2018 have pointed to the need for appropriate multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms for EWS and to strategically engage the political directorate if the requisite policy changes for sustainability are to be achieved and maintained. In order to sustain efforts made through the Project, it is important to continually engage the political directorate, technical directors, private sector and civil society in ‘stock-taking’ exercises. It is also critical to demonstrate how their support is linked directly to saving lives and reducing losses, which is a serious responsibility of governments. The responsibility is reflected in the obligation for countries to report on the progress made towards achieving the goals and targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) and the Regional Outcomes of the Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy and Framework (Box 2).



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It is for this reason that this high-level handover has been planned to highlight the achievements in the packages to be presented to Ministers and the opportunities requiring their commitment of time and resources for sustainable solutions. These commitments are reflected in the Commitment Statement to be signed by country representatives.

Adapted MHEWS Checklist for application in the Caribbean

Comprehensive assessments of the early warning systems in 6 countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines);

The identification and validation of MHEWS gaps;

The development and validation of national MHEWS roadmaps;

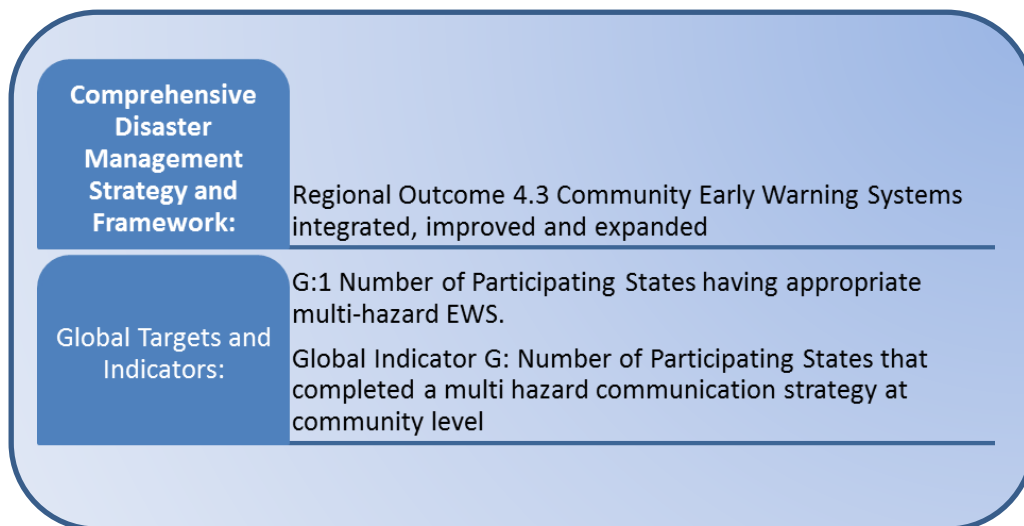
The identification of priority actions to address gaps and implementation of key priority actions through south-south cooperation with experts from Cuba and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC);

Deepened south-south cooperation between Cuba and Caribbean countries particularly on hazard, risk and vulnerability methodologies and associated tools;

Sustainability dialogues that captured concerns and commitments of decision-makers and technical directors for improved integration and sustainability of MHEWS.

An improved EWS Toolkit with increased offering of tools

Box 1. Key results achieved under the Project



Box 2. Regional and Global Targets



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Aim, objectives and results

The aim of this event is to provide the opportunity to highlight advances made towards achieving CDM/Sendai Framework goals and targets through the Project and to raise awareness among the political directorate on the required support for achieving integrated, fully functional MHEWS. The meeting will also allow for the identification of key regional strategic, planning and programming actions that require regional coordination for replication and leadership in MHEWS.

The specific objectives of the meeting are:

1. To handover key project results
2. To identify the EWS policy implications based on the project results
3. To identify key strategic, planning and programming actions that require regional coordination.
4. To identify opportunities for collaboration and coordination between the ECHO HIP funded projects 2018-2019

The expected results in line with the objectives identified are:

1. Handover packages marking the strategic process and way forward received by High-level officials of beneficiary countries
2. EWS policy implications identified based on project results
3. Key strategic, planning and programming actions identified for regional coordination by the Regional EWS Consortium
4. Opportunities for cooperation and collaboration identified for enhanced implementation of projects under the 2019 ECHO HIP

Description of Participants

Participants are expected to be high-level national officials from the six project beneficiary countries. Invitees to the meeting will therefore include the Minister for disaster management and the National Disaster Coordinator for each of the six countries; implementing partners; members of the Regional EWS Consortium; DIPECHO partners; community level representatives and the donor community.

Methodology

The event will be a celebration of the progress made under the Project taking stock of the contributions to the regional and global DRR frameworks and charting a path for regional coordination on MHEWS. There will be an official high-level opening ceremony, including a high-level panel discussion on policy implications emerging from the national gap analyses and roadmaps. Outcomes of the EWS Consortium meeting of the Project. The event will include two panels related to technical advancement of EWS and cooperation among Project partners of the 2019 ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plan; one working group session and plenary discussions. A draft agenda can be found at Annex 1.



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Annex 1: Agenda: Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems: Achievements and Strategic Path Forward

Time	Item
08:30 – 09:00	Registration
SESSION I: OPENING CEREMONY AND OFFICIAL HANDOVER OF PROJECT PACKAGE	
09:00 – 09:30	Opening Remarks
09:30 – 09:45	Keynote Address: Emerging Policy Considerations for Multi-hazard Early Warning Systems in the Caribbean
09:45 – 10:35	High-Level Panel Discussion: Addressing Emerging Policy Considerations
10:35 – 10:55	Official Handover of Project Package to Ministers by National Disaster Coordinators and Signing of Commitment Statement
10:40 – 10:50	Closing Remarks
10:50 – 11:30	BREAK; OFFICIAL PHOTO & MEDIA INTERVIEWS
SESSION II: TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS & COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION 2019	
11:30 – 11:40	Project Results and Beyond
11:40 – 12:25	Improving the 4 Pillars of EWS – Technical Panel Discussion
12:25 – 13:00	Cooperation and Collaboration Opportunities – ECHO HIP Projects – Introduction to Panel by ECHO
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH
SESSION III: REGIONAL COORDINATION THROUGH THE EWS CONSORTIUM	
14:00 – 14:25	Presentation on the Early Warning Systems Consortium: A Regional Vision and Charting the Way Forward in the Caribbean
14:25 – 15:15	Working group on the Identification of Actions Required for Regional Harmonization for Advancing EWS
15:15 – 16:00	Plenary Discussion
16:00 – 16:15	Closing Remarks
16:15 – 16:45	Networking
17:00	Return to Hotel