



ACS/2013/DRR.21/INF.001
Original Language: English
Last Update: 02nd September, 2013

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES

XXI MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, October 02, 2013

Directorate's Report

List of terms and acronyms	
ACS	Association of Caribbean States
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CEPREDENAC	Centre for the Coordination of Natural Disasters Prevention in Central America
CMO	Caribbean Meteorological Organisation
DIPECHO	(Disaster Preparedness) European Commission's Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection
DDRR	Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction
ESAP	Escuela Superior de Administración Pública
FMI	Finnish Meteorological Institute
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
QMS	Quality Management System
SHOCS	Strengthening Hydro meteorological Operations and Services in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation

Directorate's Report

Introduction

- 1) The XX Special Committee for Disaster Risk Reduction took place in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 22nd-23rd November, 2012. The meeting was attended by 18 Member States, 1 Associate Member, 1 Observer Country, 23 International Organisations and 2 Trinidad and Tobago bodies.
- 2) The Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction has undergone changes in its composition.
 - a) The tenure of former director, Mr. Eduardo José González Angulo, came to an end on the 31st May, 2013. He served as Director for Disaster Risk Reduction at the ACS for three years.
 - b) Mr. George Nicholson assumed directorship of the Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction on June 24th, 2013.
 - c) Ms. Nayaatha Taitt has joined the Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction in the capacity of Research Assistant.
- 3) The V Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of ACS took place in Pétiion Ville, Haiti, 23rd-26th April, 2013. During this summit, the following documents were adopted to guide the work of the ACS:
 - a) Declaration of Pétiion Ville, whose Articles 23-27 recognize the vulnerability of Member States to disasters due to natural phenomena, and their negative impact on efforts geared toward achieving sustainable development.
 - b) Plan of Action of Pétiion Ville whose points 4.1 to 4.6 indicate the actions that will be undertaken in order to foster international co-operation and capacity-building in the area of disaster risk reduction, enhance the provision of humanitarian assistance at all stages of a disaster and promote a culture of prevention and early warning systems.
 - c) Matrix of Activities which details the modalities for the implementation of the projects listed in the Plan of Action.

I. Progress made on projects as defined in the Plan of Action of Pétiion Ville

- 1) **Strengthening Hydrometeorological Operations and Services in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States Phase 2 (SHOCS II)** - upon completion of Phase 1 of the project SHOCS, SHOCS II was initiated through the signing of a MoU between ACS and FMI in Geneva on May 21st, 2013. The Project Board is composed of a representative from the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI), World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), Caribbean Meteorological Organisation (CMO), Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and Association of Caribbean States (ACS). CDEMA was elected Chair of the Project Board. The activities conducted thus far include:
 - a) 1st training workshop for Quality Management System (QMS) Auditors held in Bahamas, May 7-9. Thirteen (13) trainees from nine (9) Caribbean SIDS participated.
 - b) Circulation of the Semi-Annual Report of SHOCS II and the Annual Plan 2013
 - c) Circulation of questionnaires to disaster offices in Caribbean SIDS for concrete implementation of the Project plan; e.g. to estimate capacities required for Training workshops or to prepare for acquirement of hardware and tools needed in some of the Activities.
 - d) Preparation of tender for TV-presentation software and SmartMet hardware and software.

Status: SHOCS II is progressing successfully.

- 2) **Green Response to Disasters-** a Green Response Coordination Committee was formed, comprising representatives from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Trinidad and Tobago Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM), the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society (TTRCS) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS). Thus far, there have been four (4) committee meetings during which the working group composition and responsibilities have been articulated, in order to carry out feasibility study as mandated for Phase 1 of the project. Both the ACS and IFRC remain in search of a regional coordinator and USD\$70,000 from a donor to fund the same and begin implementation of the regional component.

Status: It now remains critical to secure funding (USD\$ 70,000).

- 3) **Online Diploma on the Management of Disaster Risk Reduction-** The Disaster Management Agency of Colombia (UNGRD) reported with the positive news that ESAP has confirmed its interest in the online diploma. To this end, a consulting firm has been hired to define the content of the diploma and in conjunction with UNGRD, establish the profile of potential candidates. The convocation process will take place through ACS and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of each Member country. The projected date of commencement is October, 2013.

Status: The Online Diploma is advancing successfully

- 4) **Broadcast of the Radio Soap Opera "the rough season"-** Given the onset of the hurricane season, efforts have been renewed to ensure the wide diffusion of "the rough season". Thus far,
- a) "the rough season" was uploaded to ACS website, Facebook and YouTube to facilitate access of the general public.
 - b) TalkCity 91.1FM (Trinidad) broadcasted "the rough season" at no cost from June 17 to 28.
 - c) Letters were sent out to radio stations throughout the English-speaking Caribbean requesting broadcast in their country.
 - d) Letters were sent out to schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago requesting diffusion, in order to raise awareness among the youth.
 - e) Letters were sent to disaster management agencies throughout the English-speaking Caribbean requesting support in diffusing "the rough season" in their country, given their specific role in disaster prevention.

Status: At the moment ACS is awaiting quotations for translation of the radio soap opera into French and Spanish, and also for changing the format of the soap opera to make it more social media friendly. Additional funding is required.

- 5) **Plan to reduce vulnerability to disasters-** Keeping in mind that the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), the principal instrument detailing the work necessary to reduce vulnerability to disasters, comes to an end in 2015, the Directorate has been actively involved in contributing to the development of a new plan for the post-2015 period. To this end,

- a) The Secretary General of ACS and former Director Eduardo Gonzalez attended UNISDR Global Platform in Geneva, May 22-26, 2013.
- b) The Secretary General of ACS held discussions with the Head of UNISDR Americas Office, Ricardo Mena.
- c) The Directorate virtually attended the First planning committee meeting for the DIPECHO action plan for the Caribbean 2013-2014.
- d) ACS and UNISDR agreed to host a joint meeting for the DIPECHO and the XXI Special Committee for Disaster Risk Reduction in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, September 30-October 02, 2013.

II. Progress made on projects as defined in the Work Plan 2012-2013

- 1) **Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Master Degree** – The project Regional Master Degree in Sustainable Development with a focus on Disaster Risk Reduction was approved during the XIX Special Committee for DRR, August 03, 2011. Subsequent to this, on May 1, 2013, Didier Raciné, Directeur du Mastère Spécialisé "Gestion des Risques sur les Territoires" de l'EISTI, presented to ACS, by email, a project to be linked to this DRR Regional Master Degree entitled, "Joint Risk Management Training project for the French West Indies, Guyana and Caribbean area". This degree course is intended to train management-level professionals working in disaster management agencies across the Caribbean on all issues relating to risk management. It is scheduled to take place over a two-year period (2013-2015). The formal request for ACS to participate as a partner in the project was sent through a letter on June 22, 2013 to ACS Secretary General, and on July 5, 2013, ACS confirmed its participation through a letter of commitment. Thus the role of the ACS is to provide contribution in kind in order to carry out the activities and achieve the results of the project. Other identified Caribbean partners include:
 - The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Office of Research Development and Knowledge Transfer (Dr. David Rampersad)
 - The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, International Office (Sharan Chandradath Singh)
 - The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Disaster Risk Reduction Centre (Barbara E. Carby)
 - The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Seismic Research Centre (Joan L. Latchman B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Phil., Ph.D)

Status: The ACS is currently engaging in discussions with the University of the West Indies (UWI) to facilitate this cooperation, building on the existing MoU between the two institutions. The projected launch of this diploma is October 2013.

- 2) **Establishment of the regional risk management training centre-** The establishment of risk management centre in the Dominican Republic is now underway following funding from Turkey and Qatar. The initiative is termed "HOPEFOR" and this centre of excellence will coordinate the receipt of donations and international humanitarian assistance, ranging from health care, food, medication, hygiene, clothing and relief in the event of natural disasters. Though at present national in scope, following successful initiation this centre, through ACS, will look toward the regional sharing of best practices.

Status: To be launched in September 2013 as a national project of the Dominican Republic.

3) **Safe Hospitals and Urban Risk**- DRRR offers support to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to further define these projects. These fall outside of the scope of items agreed during the V Summit and consequently defined in the Plan of Action of Pétiion Ville (to include projects that could be implemented within a two year timeframe). Notwithstanding their critical importance for the region in the area of disaster risk reduction, progress remains at a standstill due to the unavailability of funds.

Status: The decision needs to be taken whether these projects will be re-added to the Work Plan 2014-2015

4) **Agreement among the Member States and Associate Members of the Association of Caribbean States for Regional Co-operation in the Area of Natural Disasters**- Costa Rica remains the last State to have ratified this agreement in March 2011. To date there are sixteen (16) ratifications with fourteen (14) of those coming from Member States (see Annex 1). Where it is identified that two thirds of the States referred to in Article IV of the Convention Establishing the ACS are necessary for the entry into force, ratification from three (3) more Member States is needed for the agreement to enter into force.

Status: The Secretariat continues to urge those States that have not yet done so to adopt the necessary measures to facilitate ratification. Communication has been sent to the various permanent representatives with respect to this matter.

5) **Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance (IDRL) and the Model Act for the IDRL Guidelines implementation**- ACS continues to work jointly with IFRC on IDRL, as well as OCHA, on programmes regarding domestic facilitation and regulation of international operations in Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance. Thus far DRRR has circulated again to all ACS Member countries the Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance (IDRL) and the Model Act for the IDRL Guidelines implementation. Furthermore, a presentation by Trinidad at the XXI Special Committee for Disaster Risk Reduction is scheduled to serve as an example of implementation of this initiative and so contribute to the exchange of best practices among ACS members.

Status: It is necessary that Member States continue reviewing their legal frameworks so as to allow for the incorporation of IDRL guidelines. ACS and IFRC would continue to jointly organize training workshops on the subject.

6) **Participation in various Meetings, training courses and workshops**

Name of Meeting	Date
Strengthening legal preparedness for international disaster assistance in ACS countries	22 April, 2013
4 th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction	19 to 23 May, 2013
Signing of MoU between ACS and FMI for the project SHOCS II	23 May, 2013
1 st Meeting of the SHOCS II Project Board (virtual)	
First planning committee meeting for the DIPECHO action plan for the Caribbean 2013-2014 (virtual)	01 July, 2013

Meetings of the Green Response Coordination Committee	22 to 23 January, 2013 30 April, 2013 15 May, 2013 09 July, 2013
Meeting with Sr. IMO Consultant of RAC/REMPEITC- Caribe to strengthen cooperation in the area of man-made disasters that threaten the Caribbean Sea.	22 July, 2013
Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)	26-28 August, 2013
Visio-conference hosted by OCHA to discuss International Humanitarian Assistance Mechanisms (MIAH), of which ACS is part.	30 August, 2013
Meeting with Dr. Mark Kirton, senior lecturer at the University of the West Indies (UWI), to discuss cooperation with the ACS particularly in the area of scholarly research on DRR in the Greater Caribbean.	21 August, 2013
Meeting with Clement Sankat, Principal of the University of the West Indies (UWI), to discuss ways of strengthening cooperation between the both institutions.	02 September, 2013

III. Communications Strategy

The Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction, in striving to ensure visibility and awareness of the work being done, is pleased to inform that all the ACS webpages relating to Disaster Risk Reduction have been recently updated.

In addition, the ACS is partnering with the Trinidad Guardian to publish weekly articles in its business section. The Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction will contribute one article per month with the intention that these articles be eventually reproduced in newspapers throughout ACS member countries to raise the profile of the ACS among the Greater Caribbean region.

Finally, the Directorate is interested in producing a Disaster Risk Reduction newsletter that would serve as a forum for highlighting issues pertinent to the field. With this in mind, we remain open to receiving articles and/or proposals for articles that would be beneficial and informative to our readership.

Conclusion

The progress made by the Directorate for Disaster Risk Reduction in carrying out its mandate is indeed laudable. Notwithstanding, this success would by no means have been possible without the active involvement of ACS Member States and partner organisations. In this regard, the Directorate extends its thanks for your participation and looks forward to your continued support.

Annex 1

“Agreement between Member States and Associate Members of the Association of Caribbean States for Regional Cooperation on Natural Disasters”

Introduction:

It was signed by ACS Member States during the 2nd Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of the States and Territories of the Association of Caribbean States, held in Santo Domingo de Guzman, Dominican Republic, on 17 of April 1999.

1. Status of ratification

There is a requirement that two-thirds or seventeen (17) of the twenty-five (25) Member States deposit instruments of ratification in relation to the Agreement for it to enter into force.

To date there are sixteen (16) ratifications with fourteen (14) of those coming from Member States, bringing the requirement to date to three (3).

Members	Ratification	Members	Ratification
Antigua and Barbuda		Guyana	
Netherlands Antilles	24/04/2006	Haiti	13/07/2009
Aruba		Honduras	
Bahamas		Jamaica	
Barbados		Nicaragua	29/11/2001
Belize	19/09/2001	Panama	30/06/2004
Colombia		Venezuela	26/06/2002
Costa Rica	01/03/2011	Dominican Republic	17/02/2009
Cuba	19/12/2002	France	21/08/2003
Dominica		Saint Kitts and Nevis	06/06/2001
El Salvador	04/03/2003	St Vincent and the Grenadines	30/09/2009
Mexico	21/02/2001	Saint Lucia	
Grenada		Surinam	26/10/2007
Guatemala	27/07/2005	Trinidad and Tobago	