



Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

Meeting on linking the post-disaster needs assessment
to the damage and loss assessment methodology
Rodney Bay Village, Saint Lucia
26 February 2014

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REPORT OF THE MEETING ON LINKING THE POST DISASTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT TO THE DAMAGE AND LOSS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date

1. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) convened a one-day meeting in collaboration with the Caribbean Catastrophic Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) to discuss the evaluation of ECLAC post-disaster assessments in the Caribbean in Rodney Bay Village, Saint Lucia on 26 February 2014.

2. Attendance

2. Emergency Management Coordinators from national emergency management agencies attended the meeting: Civil Defence Commission, Guyana; Department of Emergency Management, Barbados; National Emergency Management Organization, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; and National Office of Disaster Services, Antigua and Barbuda.

3. A representative from CCRIF attended the meeting.

4. Representatives of the following Ministries in Saint Lucia attended the meeting: Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs, Planning and Social Security; Ministry of Infrastructure, Port Services and Transport; Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment; Ministry of Physical Development, Housing and Urban Renewal, and the Office of the Prime Minister. A representative from the Ministry of Finance in Grenada was also in attendance.

5. The following institutions were also represented: Antilles Economics, Barbados; Caribbean Risk Managers Ltd, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture; Learn and Lead Disaster Consultancy, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the Water Resources Agency, Saint Lucia.

3. Agenda

6. The meeting adopted following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Procedural matters and organization of work
4. Introduction to the rapid response methodology
5. Linking the first rapid response post-disaster needs assessment to the DaLA (Session 1)
6. Linking the first rapid response post-disaster needs assessment to the DaLA (Session 2)
7. Conclusions and recommendations
8. Closure

B. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of meeting

7. Welcome and opening remarks were delivered by Willard Phillips, Economic Affairs Officer of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, and the meeting received greetings from Gina Sanguinetti, the representative from CCRIF.

8. The Economic Affairs Officer noted that ECLAC has been undertaking damage assessments in the subregion since the early 1990s, and observed that the need for such assessments has become greater

given the increased frequency of natural disaster events in the Caribbean region over the recent decade. He further pointed out that the evaluation of such assessments has been requested by CCRIF as part of a work programme approved under the terms of a memorandum of understanding signed between ECLAC and CCRIF in 2010. In referring to the recent excessive rainfall event which affected Dominica, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in December 2013, the Economic Affairs Officer indicated that these events make clear the need for continuous dialogue on matters of disasters and disaster risk reduction in the Caribbean. The CCRIF representative also noted the importance of the meeting as a basis for supporting the CCRIF effort to validate its model-based approach to assessing the economic impact of disasters. She also reiterated CCRIF commitment to continued partnership with ECLAC and other relevant partners in the Caribbean.

2. Objectives and organization of the meeting

9. The Economic Affairs Officer of ECLAC outlined that the general objective of the meeting was to examine strategies for linking ECLAC damage and loss assessment (DaLA) methodology to the post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) method, and provided a synopsis of the day's agenda. He noted the importance of participants contributing to the discussions since the validation of the information presented in the meeting depended on their insights as managers of national emergency agencies.

3. Introduction to the rapid response methodology

10. By way of setting the context for the day's discussions, a presentation was made by the ECLAC Economic Affairs Officer, on the Rapid Environmental Assessment (REA) Model for assessing environmental impacts of disasters. The method summarized the work of David Popo, Sustainable Development Officer, Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States, and contextualized the assessment of environmental damages in a broader damage and loss assessment framework. The presentation noted the context for applying the REA to include the mapping and categorizing of environmental resources as well as related hazards, which should take place before the occurrence of an event, and the post-event analysis. Important methodological steps in this regard were identified as: 1) the distribution of environmental safety guidelines; 2) assessment of damage to environmental assets; and 3) implementation of measures to minimize environmental impacts. A notable aspect of the method is its broad approach to defining environmental assets, which for the purpose of the REA approach was deemed to include environmental amenities and services, which may be impaired or disrupted with the occurrence of a natural event.

4. Linking the first rapid response post-disaster needs assessment to the DaLA (Session 1)

11. The presentation in this session focused on strategies for linking the DaLA to the PDNA methodology. The consultant introduced the discussions by noting that while many Caribbean countries had at least some capacity to conduct both initial and detailed damage assessments; many countries did not have a well-defined recovery framework. He noted that the DaLA was a complementary methodology to the PDNA, and both methods, when applied jointly can serve to strengthen this overall framework. He indicated that ultimately both methods sought to provide data and information which could be used by stakeholders to inform the recovery process. Additionally, the Consultant identified other methodologies which could also lend support to the DaLA and PDNA, and cited the damage and needs assessment developed by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency; the United Nations human recovery needs assessment; and the Sustainable Livelihoods approach as relevant models. An appropriate recovery pathway for the use of the methods was also presented.

12. With respect to the key elements for linking the both methodologies, a number of key issues were identified. These include 1) the need for baseline data in the appropriate format; 2) incorporating poverty

assessments into the methodology; 3) the role of satellite imaging as a tool in early assessments; and 4) lack of adequate human resources might limit the assembly of separate PDNA and DaLA teams particularly in small countries.

13. In the ensuing discussions, meeting participants noted the need for baseline data, and enquired whether there is a difference between data that are desirable, and those that are essential, especially given the high cost of data and information gathering. It was concluded that in applying the various methodologies, as much effort as possible should be made to use only the data that are necessary to complete the assessments. Further, there was agreement that countries should seek to strengthen their data and information gathering capacity in times of normalcy, since this would significantly aid the assessment of impact after an event.

5. Linking the first rapid response post disaster needs assessment to the DaLA (Session 2)

14. This session developed further the discussion on challenges to linking the DaLA and PDNA methodologies. In this regard, the Consultant delivered a second presentation which summarized the main challenges. These include the need for training of experts in both methodologies to be an ongoing process, since 1) there is a high rate of turnover of staff within national disaster agencies in the region; 2) the legal framework for implementation might limit the application of both methods; 3) financing may also be a challenge. The consultant however identified some possible solutions to these challenges including increasing the level of training for practitioners in the region, and strengthening the overall disaster risk recovery framework in the countries.

6. Conclusions and closing remarks

15. The meeting concluded with a summary of the main discussion points and closing remarks by Willard Phillips, Economic Affairs Officer of ECLAC.

Annex I**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Michael Andrew, Director, Water Resources Management Agency (WRMA), Saint Lucia.
E-mail: gaspardtalk@yahoo.co.uk

Mary Augustin, Civil Engineer, Ministry of Infrastructure, Port Services and Transport, Saint Lucia.
E-mail: maugustin@gosl.gov.lc

Randy Cadet, Policy Analyst, Ministry of Finance, Grenada. E-mail: randy.cadet473@gmail.com

John Calixte, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs, Planning and Social Security, Saint Lucia. E-mail: jcalixte@gosl.gov.lc

Kester Craig, Operations and Training Officer, Civil Defence Commission, Guyana.
E-mail: k.craig@cdc.gy

Josette Maxwell Dalsou, Programme Manager, Office of the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia.
E-mail: jmaxwell@gosl.gov.lc

Curt Delice, National Specialist, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Saint Lucia. E-mail: curt.delice@iica.int

Michelle Forbes, Deputy Director, National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. E-mail: nemosvg@gmail.com

Nicholas Grainger, Assistant Vice-President, Risk Management, Caribbean Risk Managers Ltd.
E-mail: ngrainger@caribrm.com

Kerry Hinds, Deputy Director, Department of Emergency Management, Barbados.
E-mail: kerry.hinds@barbados.gov.bb

Nadine Isidore, Economist Assistant, Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs, Planning and Social Security, Saint Lucia. E-mail: nisidore@gosl.gov.lc

Dorine Gustave, Social Transformation Officer III, Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment, Saint Lucia. E-mail: dgustave@gosl.gov.lc

Winston Moore, Consultant, Antilles Economics, Barbados. E-mail: winston.moore@cavehill.uwi.edu

Fillmore Mullin, Director, National Office of Disaster Services, Antigua and Barbuda.
E-mail: pfmullin@gmail.com

Jamell Robinson, Disaster Management Consultant, Turks and Caicos Islands.
E-mail: jamell.r.robinson@gmail.com

Gina Sanguinetti, Consultant, Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility.
E-mail: ginacsp@gmail.com

Frances Stanislas, Quantity Surveyor, Ministry of Physical Development, Housing and Urban Renewal, Saint Lucia. E-mail: fstanislas@hotmail.com

Kervin Stephenson, Regional Project Specialist (Caribbean), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Saint Lucia. E-mail: kervin.stephenson@iica.int

Sherman Sylvester, Civil Engineer, Ministry of Infrastructure, Port Services and Transport, Saint Lucia. E-mail: ssylvester@gosl.gov.lc

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

Willard Phillips, Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Development Unit.
E-mail: Willard.Phillips@eclac.org