

FOREWORD

This training manual was developed by the Natural Disasters Assessment Team of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean (ECLAC) for use by Caribbean and other small island developing States in response to two imperatives. The first was the need to build capacity through training, in the Caribbean, in the use of the ECLAC methodology to assess the social and economic effects of natural disasters so as to determine overall macroeconomic effects and post disaster recovery and rehabilitation needs required to facilitate dialogue with the international community. The second was the need to significantly refine aspects of the methodology itself to ensure its relevance and applicability to the unique and special characteristics of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The ECLAC methodology evolved over 30 years ago at the ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile, from a perspective that was informed by countries in South and Central America, which were rather larger and, in many ways, different to those in the insular Caribbean. In its original form, the methodology made reference to the central “pampas” and “large scale dairy production”, and to the impact of natural disasters on those and other resources peculiar to the large countries of South and Central America. The impact of natural disasters such as hurricanes on coastal resources and infrastructure such as beaches, corals, jetties, seawalls and marinas, and to coastal tourism plant and infrastructure – effects that are most common in the small island States of the Caribbean - were not discussed. Nor were references made, for example, to the principle of reducing vulnerability over time through sound land use planning, the use of building codes and incentives provided through measures such as insurance coverage. The methodology was therefore significantly refined by the team from the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, to make provisions for the peculiarities of the natural resource base, institutional and human resource capacity constraints which are characteristic of the small islands within this region. This training manual that you have before you, given its emphasis on the effects of natural disasters on the natural resources, productive and social sectors of SIDS, and the need to mitigate effects and reduce vulnerability over time, is thus a pioneering effort by this team in many ways.

The concept of providing training in the use of the ECLAC methodology was also introduced by the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. The first regional training workshop in 1999 introduced the ECLAC methodology to 20 persons from 13 different countries and some regional institutions in the Caribbean, marking the first time that the



methodology had been taught to persons outside of the organization. This initial effort was followed by several national training workshops in the ensuing years in Belize, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, the British Virgin Islands (BVI) and, most recently, Trinidad and Tobago. Over 200 persons have now been trained by this team. Training received by the Belizeans, for example, facilitated their ability, four months later, to produce their own macroeconomic assessment of the effects of another hurricane, and make a submission to the international community.

The materials produced in this manual are the result of the expertise of individual team members as well as the experience that they have gained in the field as a result of undertaking post-disaster assessments in response to requests from member states. Team members involved in the process as post-disaster assessors, trainers and producers of the materials contained herein are: Len Ishmael, Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean and overall coordinator of this effort; Asha Kambon - responsible for the social aspects; Esteban Perez, productive sectors and macroeconomic effects; Lancelot Busby, operational aspects and discussions on the methodology; Erik Blommestein, tourism and team consultants; David Smith, coastal effects and mitigation; and Ivor Jackson – environmental issues, and the use of land use planning and standards to reduce vulnerability over time.

The principle of training, the preparation of training materials and the refinement of the methodology to include SIDs-specific issues are among the pioneering contributions of the team from the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. It is our hope that the work contained in this manual and the training given to workshop participants will enhance the efforts of the people of this region to deal comprehensively with all aspects of pre- and post-disaster planning and management.



Len Ishmael
Director
ECLAC Subregional Headquarters
for the Caribbean

March 2003

