

**Report on the Training Workshop on Information to Support Decision Making for
Sustainable Development - Disasters and Climate Change
Belmopan, Belize, February 2004**

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Introduction

The Belize workshop on Information to Support Decision Making for Sustainable Development – Disasters and Climate Change was a one-day training activity following a larger regional initiative held in October 2003. Specifically, UNDESA and the OAS implemented a regional project titled “Capacity-Building in Creating Information Management Systems to Improve Decision-making for Sustainable Development for Small Islands Developing States (SIDS)” also referred to as the IDSD project with four pilot countries. An element of that project involved convening a regional workshop to address regional capacity building in information for sustainable development with a number of key areas comprising, landuse planning; sustainable tourism; coastal zone management and disaster management and climate change. Following my presentation of the training module on disaster management and climate change at the regional workshop, I was requested by the OAS to repeat this activity in Belize to coincide with another mission I was conducting to that country.

This activity was undertaken on Friday 6th February at the Belmopan Convention Hotel.

Agenda

The agenda of the workshop is appended to the report.

Participants

The training activity was primarily attended by Belizean public servants from a wide cross section of institutions. A full participants list is appended to this report.

Workshop Objectives and Structure

The objectives of the workshop were stated as follows:

- Present a decision-making framework in the context of disaster management and climate change adaptation
- Highlight the challenges to decision making on disaster management and adapting to climate change.
- Identify and define tools for effective decision making on disaster management and adapting to climate change.
- Highlight international, regional and local approaches to disaster management and responses to climate change

The workshop was based on the training module delivered at the IDSD Regional Workshop held in Trinidad in October 2003. The training manual that was produced “Methodologies, Tools and Best Practices for Managing Information for Decision-making on Sustainable Development in Caribbean SIDS - Disaster Management and Adaptation to Climate Change Module “ was the main document utilized and was provided to each of the participants at the start of the activity. The structure of the workshop was as follows:

- Decision making and challenges in Disaster Management and Adapting to Climate Change
- Disaster Management and Adapting to Climate Change initiatives
- Tools
- Examples
- Exercises

In addition to powerpoint presentations, some group exercises were also scheduled to facilitate a brief hands-on to some of the tools and concepts presented.

Review of the Workshop

Generally the workshop appeared to be well received and generated some interesting discussion. Participation remained almost constant up to the end of the activity. Furthermore, Dr. Ulric Trotz, Project Manager of the MACC initiative and Dr. Kenrick Leslie, Interim Director of the Climate Change Centre were present for some of the meeting and utilized the opportunity, particularly in the case of Dr. Trotz, of sharing their own perceptions and visions in the areas addressed.

One of the areas that generated most discussion and indeed some difference of opinion was the concept of managing uncertainty in decision-making. Some felt that policy makers as an example, desired unambiguous signals or recommendations and did not see how expressing concepts of uncertainty was beneficial or realistic. This was countered with the point that all decisions have some degree of uncertainty, even if this is not explicitly stated. Examples of hurricane warnings were offered in this regard. This was important as GCC especially but also disaster management does contain a great deal of uncertainty and the issue to be considered is the risk exposure that is acceptable.

It was also noted that greater utilization of cost benefit analysis is and will be critical to comprehensive disaster management and adapting to climate change.

Appreciation

Much appreciation must go to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ms. Sharon Lindo particularly for organizing the workshop and taking care of the logistics.

**Decision making and its Challenges in Disaster Management and
Adaptation to Climate Change**
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8.30 am	Registration
9.00 am	Welcome – Mrs. Pat Mendoza, CEO, Ministry of Natural Resources
9.05am	Introduction of participants
9.10 am	Overview of the IDSD project – its aims and objectives
9.15am	Overview of the workshop
9.20am	Decision making and its challenges in disaster management and adapting to climate change
9.50 am	Decision making exercise
10.15 am	BREAK
10.30 am	Disaster management and adapting to climate change responses
11.30 am	Tools to address disaster management and adaptation to climate change
12.00 noon	EIA and Risk Management Exercises
12.30 pm	LUNCH
1.30 pm	Way forward and examples of applications CPACC CRIS; EPA SDMIS; BVI GIS
3.00 pm	Discussion and wrap-up
3.15 pm	Closing

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