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Disaster Management Alliance

Multi-Sector Roundtable Yields a Private Sector Focus on Saving Lives through School Emergency Preparedness and Risk Reduction
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Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago - Leaders from local and international disaster management organizations met January 9, 2009 with local and regional government authorities and private companies representing the Point Lisas Industrial Estate (PLIPDECO) in an effort to promote and strengthen a developing platform for multi-sector involvement in disaster planning and mitigation.

A healthy list of possible joint initiatives resulted from the roundtable session. Due to limitations the stakeholders decided to focus on school emergency preparedness and risk reduction, especially in flood and landslide prone areas. The American Chamber of Commerce's Health, Safety, and Environment Committee (HSE), with DMA support, coordinates with the Ministry of Health to discuss priority themes and initiatives in this regard. The talks are timely considering that the Ministry of Health is launching a new school health policy this year. Additionally the efforts will integrate specialists from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Local Government and the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) along with other key stakeholders. The AmChamTT HSE committee has offered to facilitate another roundtable session in June 2009 that will bring private sector companies to the table with the hopes of engaging them in the development and implementation of school emergency management preparedness plans by means of an adopt-a-school program. Initiatives could include: development and implementation of school emergency plans, school vulnerability reduction plans, equipment, exercises and drills.



Among other highlights, the municipal authority - the Couva Tabaquite Talparo Regional Corporation (CTTRC) displayed the communications and response equipment donated by the DMA. They skillfully described the valuable upgrades the CTTRC team had made, effectively multiplying the value of the original donation. After the roundtable, Ms. Pamela Doon, the CEO of CTTRC at the time, offered that "Our Disaster Management Plan is now the example for all of the 14 Municipal Corporations in Trinidad. Also, the communications equipment facilitated by the DMA enables us to conduct same-day damage and needs assessments. Our service to vulnerable communities has motivated NGC and AmChamTT to nominate CTTRC for the OSHA award this year. (OSHA is the Occupational Safety and Health Act). CTTRC has been recognized by families assisted who are grateful for such prompt



service enabling them to satisfy basic needs and to stay in their homes."

In attendance at this roundtable:

- Ms. Audrey Mullings, OFDA/USAID, IRG Disaster Risk Management Specialist for LAC from Jamaica
 - American Chamber of Commerce, Trinidad & Tobago
- Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Committee
- Ms. Pamela Doon, CEO of Couva Tabaquite Talparo Regional Corporation (CTTRC)
 - CTTRC team
- Mr. Owen Sandy, Director of the Tobago Emergency Management Agency
- Representatives from 10 out of the country's 14 municipal authorities (known as corporations)
- Louis Alexander and Christine Herridge, PADF representatives

An innovative suggestion from Business Continuity specialist, Mr. Keith Greaves, recommended that CTTRC receive technical assistance from experienced corporate volunteers at PLIPDECO to develop a continuity of operations plan. Additionally, development of a mutual-aid scheme was suggested so that advanced capacities in one municipality, such as CTTRC's communications capacity, could be deployed when needed to assist other municipalities.

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