



Disaster Management Alliance

**Building regional disaster management capacity through public-private sector partnerships: Recipient of CDERA/FCIB scholarship plans to continue giving back
Wednesday, July 8, 2009**

Barbados, July 8, 2009 - Roché Mahon, a national of Trinidad and Tobago and a 2006 recipient of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) and FirstCaribbean International Bank (FCIB) disaster management scholarship has set her sights on joining the ranks of indigenous academics at the University of the West Indies, Disaster Risk Reduction Centre (DRRC).

Ms. Mahon is one of the first beneficiaries of the CDERA/FCIB joint scholarship program which was launched in 2005 to enhance disaster management capacity in the Caribbean region. A grant of US \$4000 assisted her in conducting research in Grand Anse, Grenada where she examined the challenge of linking disaster risk reduction to the development process and looked in particular at the role of physical planning in coastal tourism reconstruction in the aftermath of the devastating 2004 hurricane season.

Roché believes that the CDERA/FCIB Disaster Management Scholarship was an excellent initiative for promoting meaningful research and study in the discipline. She is convinced that the availability of such scholarships is also a catalyst for developing untapped human capital in the region as it creates opportunities for young Caribbean nationals who wish to pursue a career in disaster management. "Young professionals have a lot to offer the Caribbean community. It is capacity building Programs like this that will continue to empower them to make their contribution".

Since completing her studies, Mahon has shared her findings at regional and international Seminars and Conferences and is presently employed by the regional disaster management body in the Caribbean, CDERA, as a Programme Officer to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System (TCHWS) Project. She has also been an intern at the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) and did a brief stint at the



Association of Caribbean States (ACS) as a Research Assistant with the Sustainable Tourism Directorate.

Ms. Mahon views her employment with CDERA as an avenue to give back to her region. "I spend many days organizing, planning, monitoring, and evaluating a range of activities that will lead to the establishment of tsunami notification protocols and increased public awareness about tsunamis and other coastal hazards within the vulnerable communities in Caribbean countries. Other opportunities to serve my region have arisen during times of threat or impact by a range of hazards (severe weather systems, floods, earthquakes, influenza A H1N1 virus) during 2008 and 2009. At these times, I have contributed to the effort to coordinate disaster response within the framework of the Regional Response Mechanism. Coordination efforts are usually based at the Regional Coordination Centre at the CDERA Coordinating Unit in Barbados".

In 2010, Roché intends to pursue PhD work on the pressing issue of Climate Change and Tourism in Caribbean Coastal Zones using the case study of her native twin isle of Tobago. She hopes to continue a career in the research agenda of the DRRC upon completion of her studies.

"As a lecturer and researcher, I will be in a position to contribute to the long-recognized need for multidisciplinary training, research and technical expertise in disaster management and risk mitigation in Caribbean communities. Ultimately, I will be a part of a regional team that will document the legacy of disaster management in the Caribbean and have already made strides in this direction."

Roche's story illuminates the benefits of public-private sector partnership initiatives where capacity developed through programmes like the CDERA/FCIB Scholarship Fund remains available to the region.

Roche Mahon completed her Master's Degree at the University of the West Indies in Planning and Development in 2007 and will pursue PhD work at Lincoln University, New Zealand from 2010.

The CDERA/FCIB Disaster Management Scholarship launched in 2005 offered awards to Caribbean nationals pursuing degrees/diplomas in Earth Science, Natural Resource Management, Emergency Management, Contingency Planning or related disciplines, as well as, persons undertaking short-term disaster management training.

For more information on CDERA, please visit the CDERA website at www.cdera.org

More information about FirstCaribbean can be found at www.firstcaribbeanbank.com

Summary of [Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System Project](#) on CDERA website

The Disaster Management Alliance

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