

# Report of the seminar on disaster risk management for the postal sector in the Caribbean region

DATE: 13 - 15 April 2016  
VENUE: Caribbean Postal Training Centre,  
Bridgetown, Barbados



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# REPORT

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**PARTICIPANTS:** 21 representatives from 18 UPU member countries (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Christopher (St. Kitts) and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Sint Maarten, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago), and experts from the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Caribbean Postal Union (CPU), the Department of Emergency Management of Barbados (DEM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development/Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), the United States Postal Service (USPS, via video link), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO, via video link), and the UPU International Bureau. In total, 38 persons took part.

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### Opening Session

(Moderator: Ms Dorcas Scantlebury, Coordinator, Caribbean Postal Training Centre)

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- Guests of the opening session
    - › **Mr Nigel Cobham**,  
Postmaster General, Barbados Postal Service.
    - › **Mr Francisco Fernández Peña**,  
Ambassador of Cuba to Barbados.
    - › **Mr Nobuhiro Matsuoka**,  
Chargé d'affaires ad interim, Embassy of Japan  
in Barbados.s Chisa Mikami, Deputy Resident  
Representative of the UNDP in Barbados  
and the OECS.
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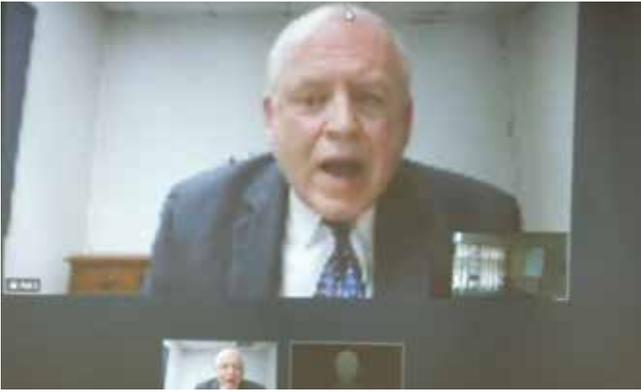
**Mr Nigel Cobham,**  
Postmaster General, Barbados Postal Service

- This workshop is not only very important, but also very timely, since it comes a mere six weeks ahead of the start of the Atlantic hurricane season.
- In Barbados, one third of postal infrastructure is located in close proximity to the coastline, meaning that it is particularly exposed, and our preparations always reflect this area of vulnerability.
- Sharing experiences in this workshop will be very helpful for all representatives to deal with the challenges on disaster risk reduction.
- We thank Japan for its invaluable contribution towards the hosting of this workshop and for the excellent work they continue to undertake within the Universal Postal Union



**1.2 Mr Olivier Boussard,**  
Coordinator, UPU International Bureau

- Message from Mr Bishar A. Hussein, UPU Director General: During the 2013–2016 cycle, the number and intensity of large-scale disasters has increased, resulting in more human casualties and economic damage.
- The postal sector has been severely affected by disasters, which have caused destruction and interrupted services. Unfortunately, the Posts in the Caribbean region have been heavily impacted by major natural events over the past few years.
- However, the Post can be a key player in disaster response, for example by serving as a distribution point for emergency supplies and money transfers in the affected areas, and by providing a basic means of communication when no other system is available.
- During the 2013–2016 cycle, the UPU has made numerous efforts to raise awareness, put in place a framework for UPU disaster risk management (DRM) activities and provide a platform for exchanges of best practices. DRM is a rather new activity for the UPU, but it has gained momentum and is now an integral component of our development cooperation policy. This seminar is an example of the concrete actions being implemented by the UPU to meet this objective.
- In the coming years, the UPU will continue to promote DRM in the postal sector by integrating DRM principles and objectives into UPU development cooperation frameworks and projects, especially at regional level.



**Mr Patrick Mendonca,**

Senior Director, Office of the Postmaster General, United States Postal Service, Chair of the UPU Ad Hoc Group on DRM (participating in the seminar from Washington D.C. via video link)

- Disasters affect the postal sector and operators' ability to conduct business and serve their customers. Historically, the UPU has played an important role in assisting in the response to the effects of natural disasters on Posts.
- Because disasters will continue to happen, any steps that can be taken to prepare Posts and make the sector more resilient will be an investment in our future. The Caribbean region has been hit hard by natural disasters. We can learn from the experiences of the region's member countries and postal operators on how to prepare for and respond to disasters. It is critically important for all parties to work together to ensure the resilience of the postal sector.
- The UNDP likes to note that "each dollar invested in disaster preparedness saves seven dollars in response"; that is why DRM is critically important for the postal sector as a whole, and for UPU designated operators.



**Mr Nobuhiro Matsuoka,**

Chargé d'affaires ad interim, Embassy of Japan in Barbados

- As the frequency and severity of natural disasters have increased in recent years, the impact of and damage caused by natural disasters have been seriously affecting populations, infrastructure and socio-economic activities. Japan too has experienced many various natural disasters.
- In the light of our own many experiences, the Government of Japan has promoted initiatives on disaster risk reduction (DRR) in cooperation with relevant stakeholders in various fields, for example:
  - › hosting the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai in 2015;
  - › proposing a resolution to establish a World Tsunami Awareness Day at the UN General Assembly;
  - › launching a Japan–Caribbean Climate Change Partnership in cooperation with the UNDP;
  - › supporting UPU DRM activities, etc.
- Japan is particularly delighted to have been able to contribute to the holding of this seminar and the completion of the UPU guide on disaster risk reduction.



**Ms Chisa Mikami,**  
Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP in Barbados  
and OECS

- We are all acutely aware that sustainability, equity and resilience are central to the development agenda, and these themes have particular resonance in the eastern Caribbean.
- The Caribbean is one of the most hazard-prone regions in the world, and the UNDP office has supported and continues to support national counterparts in increasing their resilience to the impact of hazards. It should be noted that the UN system remains committed to resilience building and vulnerability reduction in the Caribbean. Postal service can be a key player in disaster response; e.g., the Post can serve as a distribution point for emergency supplies and money transfers in affected areas, providing basic means of communication when no other system is available.

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## Session 1: Caribbean region and natural disasters (moderator: Olivier Boussard)

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**Comprehensive disaster management: a space for  
engaging the postal sector in DRM (CDEMA),**  
Ms Elizabeth Riley, Deputy Executive Director

- CDEMA is the regional inter-governmental agency responsible for disaster management, of which 18 countries and territories of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) are members.
  - CDEMA's objectives are:
    - › Relief and response coordination;
    - › Mitigating consequences of disasters;
    - › Providing information on disasters;
    - › Encouraging disaster loss reduction and cooperative arrangements and mechanisms to facilitate the development of a culture of disaster loss reduction;
    - › Coordinating the establishment, enhancement and maintenance of adequate emergency disaster response capabilities.
  - The Caribbean region is very prone to hazards such as hurricanes, earthquakes and manmade disaster. Exposure to natural hazards has been increasing over the past three decades.
  - Climate variability and change are likely to increase the intensity of hydrometeorological events. For example, the potential impacts of a one-metre sea level rise are very serious:
    - › Approximately 1,300 km<sup>2</sup> of land area lost;
    - › Over 110,000 people displaced;
    - › At least 149 multi-million USD tourism resorts damaged, etc.
  - Comprehensive disaster management means: stronger institutions; knowledge management; DRM mainstreamed within sectors; and community resilience. CDEMA challenges its member states to unify three themes:
    - i. Greater ability to prepare and mitigate;
    - ii. Greater ability to respond;
    - iii. Greater ability to recover and rehabilitate.
  - CDEMA provides the Regional Response Mechanism, a system for coordinating disaster response, including a disaster relief unit, a rapid needs assessment team, and search and rescue teams.
  - CDEMA can cooperate with the postal sector in the field of damage assessment and needs analysis, capacity building, risk-sensitive investment, business continuity, etc.
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**DRM in Barbados (DEM),** Capt. Robert N. Harewood,  
Acting Deputy Director

- The vision of the DEM is to ensure the development of a well-informed, better prepared society and a natural and built environment which is hazard resistant, less vulnerable, and in which the nation's development successes can be sustained.

- The DEM's mandate is as follows:
  - › Coordinating the National Emergency Management System (NEMS): multi-sector stakeholder mechanism coordinated by the DEM;
  - › Informing, educating and training entities in DRM using the CDM approach;
  - › Mobilizing resources to respond to emergencies, crises and disasters;
  - › Coordinating emergency management activities.
- The Barbados Postal Service can assist the national DRR mechanism as follows:
  - › Damage assessment and needs analysis: provision of resources to support the damage and needs assessments process;
  - › Sharing of information: the geo-coding system/database would be greatly beneficial in improving the current information system;
  - › Plan development, training and exercising: the DEM is ready to act on training in DRR and DRM and plan development;
  - › Skills and resources, which could certainly provide invaluable assistance to the NEMS.
  - › Discussing a partnership with a practical and sustainable action plan.



**Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) in Latin America and the Caribbean,**  
Mr Clive Lorde, Disaster Risk Management Specialist,  
International Resources Group)

- USAID leads the U.S. Government (USG) response to natural and manmade disasters internationally through the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).
- The mandate of OFDA is to save lives, alleviate suffering and reduce the social and economic impact of disasters. The role of OFDA is to:
  - › Coordinate and lead the humanitarian response of the USG;
  - › Identify needs and set priorities for USG assistance;
  - › Provide funding through NGOs, the UN system, and other partners for humanitarian assistance.
- In the Latin America and Caribbean region:
  - › USAID/OFDA provided more than 24.6 million USD for DRR projects in 2015;
  - › USAID/OFDA supports local and national self-sufficiency in disaster preparedness and management;
  - › USAID/OFDA helps to strengthen the capacity of disaster management institutions.
- USAID/OFDA also provides the Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP), which support DRRs by providing technical assistance (training, small grants, etc.) to strengthen national organizations in the area of disaster management.
- USAID/OFDA's strategic goals between 2015 and 2019 are:
  - › Ensure that DRR is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation;
  - › Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning;
  - › Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels;
  - › Reduce the underlying risk factors;
  - › Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

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## Session 2: Climate change and weather-related events in relation to DRM (moderator: Olivier Boussard)

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### **Weather/climate services and early warning systems in the Caribbean region (WMO),**

Mr Alasdair Hainsworth, Chief, DRR Services Division –  
via video link with Geneva)

- The WMO organizes regional frameworks and programmes linking national meteorological agencies for weather and climate services. These agencies are connected to a global observation system via a satellite and global telecommunications network.
- The WMO can share data among member countries, and this data is used for the Global Data Processing and Forecasting System (GDPFS) Tropical Cyclone Warning Service, based on the data of the global observation system, and the Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS).
- The GDPFS is a system for preparing meteorological analyses and forecast products, and making them available to members in the most cost-effective way.
- The MHEWS can promote synergies and partnerships among stakeholders at national, regional and international levels. The UPU could be a partner with the international MHEWS.

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### **Posts and weather information: case of USPS,**

Mr Patrick Mendonca (via video link with Washington D.C.)

- Posts have infrastructure and employees everywhere, and operate up to seven days a week, 24 hours a day. As a result, in the event of severe weather-related natural disasters, the operations of a Post will likely be affected. The use of meteorological information can help Posts prepare for and react to upcoming severe weather.
- A daily weather report is issued by the U.S. Postal Service to its operations managers using national and other open-source weather information. This data is used by operations managers to prepare for the effects of severe weather in the locations under their purview. This includes issuing preparedness checklists to employees and advising customers of contingency plans.



**Posts and climate change (UPU),** Mr Olivier Boussard

- The postal sector is making efforts in terms of climate action and links to DRM. UPU climate solutions can be summed up in four words: measurement, mitigation, offsetting and adaptation.
- Measuring carbon emissions: the UPU has a new online tool called OSCAR (Online Solution for Carbon Analysis and Reporting), which enables member countries and their Posts to measure and report their greenhouse gas emissions and identify mitigation opportunities.
- Mitigating impact on climate: some Posts (e.g. Barbados and Anguilla) in the Caribbean region are taking steps to mitigate their impact through, for example, improvement of energy efficiency and eco-driving.

- Carbon offsetting: the UPU launched the Postal Carbon Fund as an offsetting mechanism to enable Posts in industrialized countries to offset their emissions by funding projects with a positive impact, either directly or indirectly, on the postal sector.
- Adapting to the consequences of climate change: raise awareness and train staff; enforce emergency preparedness plans; review location of new facilities; reinforce protection of existing facilities; protect valuable assets, etc.

## Session 3: UPU and the United Nations: DRM frameworks and projects at global and regional levels (moderator: Olivier Boussard)

### **UPU DRM framework and activities (UPU International Bureau), Mr Yukio Teramura, Associate Expert**

- The UPU DRM framework was established in 2014 in line with other international frameworks (e.g. the Hyogo Framework for Action and the UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience). In 2015, the Sendai Framework was adopted as a new international framework, and the UPU DRM framework was also revised.
- UPU activities in the area of DRM include:
  - › The Emergency Information System (EIS): Around one third of all service interruption messages sent via EIS between 2013 and 2015 were linked to natural disasters;
  - › The UPU DRM website ([www.upu.int/en/activities/disaster-risk-management-in-the-postal-sector](http://www.upu.int/en/activities/disaster-risk-management-in-the-postal-sector));
  - › Publication of a leaflet to promote UPU DRM activities;
  - › The Emergency and Solidarity Fund (ESF): the ESF is the main financial mechanism designed to support emergency assistance projects for UPU member countries. However, the funds will not be sufficient to cover future needs, and appropriate decisions must be taken to sustain an adequate level of resources.
- In conclusion, UPU DRM activities should be continued in the next cycle. The UPU is currently preparing a proposal of a general nature which includes promotion of DRM in the postal sector, capacity building and development of international partnerships. The proposal will be submitted to the Istanbul Congress.



### **The UN and DRM in the Eastern Caribbean (UNDP in Barbados and the OECS): Ms Danielle Evanson, Programme Manager, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Resilience**

- The UNDP focuses on policy and advisory services that facilitate poverty reduction, improved democratic governance, sound environmental management, climate resilience, options for sustainable energy, and building resilience to natural and manmade hazards.
- The UNDP creates an enabling environment in which national governments have enhanced capacities. UNDP Barbados and the OECS Office focus on:
  - › advocacy and mainstreaming of DRR;
  - › preparedness/response/recovery;
  - › climate change adaptation and risk resilience.
- The UNDP is involved in many climate change and DRR initiatives such as the Caribbean Tsunami Information Centre, the Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership, etc.

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## Session 4: DRM best practices/country cases in the postal sector (moderator: Olivier Boussard)

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**Jamaica Post:** Ms Marcia Williams-McDonald,  
Welfare Officer

- Jamaica Post's goal is to provide a safe, healthy and sustainable work environment for staff members. In particular, all staff members are instructed in essential safety management procedures as well as basic standards that will contribute to the organization's recovery process should Jamaica Post's operations be disrupted as a result of any natural or manmade disaster.

- Jamaica Post has many potential hazards:
  - › natural disasters (hurricanes, flood, earthquake);
  - › human behaviour (pandemic, terrorism, civil unrest, exposures to chemicals and hazardous materials);
  - › technology or utility disruption.
- Jamaica Post was obliged to interrupt its service by a string of disasters such as Tropical Storm Gustav (2008), the methylene chloride leak (2014) and the Riverton City Disposal Site fire (2015). In such cases, Jamaica Post determines the severity level and, where appropriate, other key stakeholders may get involved.
- All members of staff know what is expected of them before an emergency, including knowing the location of emergency exits, emergency actions, etc. The success of any evacuation exercise depends on the magnitude and intensity of the emergency.
- All the same, some points for improvement were noted after past disasters, such as:
  - › Training and capacity building of staff (basic life support and first aid);
  - › Practical emergency plan for the operations floor;
  - › More drills and exercises needed;
  - › Renewed commitment to the urgency of having an emergency plan, etc.
- Our ongoing partnership with external stakeholders has allowed us to monitor the environment in which we work and to be prepared to follow the sequence of disaster response.



**Cuba Post:** Mr Rafael Leopoldo Ramos Martinez,  
Director General

- Cuba has worked extensively on disaster reduction in line with various international frameworks on disaster risk reduction and climate change.

- Cuba faces two types of risks: hurricane and earthquake. In recent years, Hurricane Sandy (2012) and the earthquake in Santiago de Cuba (2016) have caused severe damage.
- Correos de Cuba is a part of the Cuban Civil Defence system, composed of all the forces and resources of the society and the state, with the function of protecting people and their property, social infrastructure, economy and natural resources. Cuban Civil Defence has a surveillance system to collect information systematically and continuously to assess risk and organize measures for disaster risk reduction.
- For prevention and preparation, the following activities are key:
  - › Securement of emergency generators and fuels;
  - › Preservation of equipment;
  - › Conducting vulnerability studies and assessment;
  - › Coordination with publishers to dispatch of information.



**Dominica Post:** Ms Junie Morvan, Senior Executive Officer

- Tropical Storm Erika in 2015 affected the Commonwealth of Dominica severely and caused flooding of all the country's 365 rivers and landslides in many areas. Dominica Post was obliged to interrupt its service.

- Dominica Post's response was as follows:
  - › Confirmation of damage and confirmation of the safety of employ-ees and their families;
  - › Assessment of damage to postal items and equipment;
  - › Exploration of route options for transportation of outgoing mail through regional postal organizations;
  - › Facilitation of mail delivery to affected areas through house-to-house delivery service.
- Lessons learned:
  - › Take all necessary preparatory measures prior to a storm to secure postal structures and equip-ment;
  - › Incorporate a disaster preparedness plan for use at all post offices island-wide;
  - › There is need for greater cooperation and communication among regional postal operators



**Bermuda Post:** Mr Allan Wayne Smith, Postmaster General

- Hurricane Fay and Hurricane Gonzalo hit Bermuda in 2014 and caused severe damage to the Post, with the destruction of a post office and no mail deliveries for several days.
- Bermuda Post took the following actions:
  - › Rehabilitation of building;
  - › Allocation of staff to work at sub-post office;
  - › Regular communication to all stakeholders.
- Important lessons learned:
  - › mitigation against storm;
  - › contingency planning;
  - › regular communication among stakeholders;
  - › insurance premium for upcoming disasters.

These actions should be performed not only at the office but also at home.

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## Session 5: UPU Guide to Disaster Risk Management Introduction

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In this session, Mr Paolo Iscaro, a UPU consultant, summarized the draft of UPU DRM Guide.

### Chapter 1: Purpose

- This guide provides a framework and emergency checklist templates for various natural disasters. It focuses on natural disasters such as typhoons, tornados, earthquakes, wildfires, tsunamis, winter storms and volcanic eruptions, but it is applicable even to manmade hazards, including violence in the workplace, wildfires caused by arson, and chemical and accidental events.

### Chapter 2: Basic principles of DRM

- DRM is a continual and dynamic process of designing and implementing policies and measures to both improve the understanding of disaster risk, and promote disaster risk reduction. The DRM process has five major components: risk prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.
- The purpose of the DRM programme is to:
  - › Identify potential and manage actual disaster risks;
  - › Reduce disaster-related risks;
  - › Establish the emergency management organization used to mitigate any serious emergency or disaster;
  - › Identify policies, responsibilities and procedures to protect the health and safety of employees and customers;
  - › Ensure ongoing review and assessment of policies associated with DRM, and of how these policies are integrated and coordinated within the organization;
  - › Promote understanding of programme elements within the organization through training, practice and development of guidance;
  - › Establish the operational concepts and procedures associated with the day-to-day field response to emergencies.

### Chapter 3: Understanding risks: vulnerability and risk assessment, a fundamental first step to DRM

- Vulnerability and risk assessment are key components of a successful DRM programme.
- Using the risk grid as a starting point, it is possible to direct efforts to the highest priority risks.

### Chapter 4: The five phases of DRM

- Risk prevention: the implementation of integrated measures taken to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk, strengthen resilience, etc.

- Mitigation: the measures taken to eliminate or reduce the intensity of hazardous events. There are three types of mitigation: physical, socio-economic and environmental.
- Preparedness: aims to improve the capacity to respond rapidly and effectively to a natural disaster through the emergency management plan, business continuity plan and training.
- Response: a relatively short period of time after the disaster (within 48 hours), postal operators should prioritize securement of 3Ps (people, properties and products).
- Recovery: recovery activities take place after an emergency and aim to restore relatively normal conditions in the affected postal facilities and communities.

### Chapter 5: Post-disaster damage and needs assessment (PDNA)

- A mechanism for joint assessment and recovery planning following a disaster.
- A tool to assess the impact of a disaster and define a strategy for recovery, including an estimation of the financial resources required.
- PDNA information needed by the UPU, including:
  - › Establish baseline pre-disaster data/information on the Post;
  - › Determine the extent of impacts on employees, mail operations and infrastructure (3Ps);
  - › Develop a recovery strategy for physical assets, infrastructure and resumption of services.

### Chapter 6: Partners and resources for DRM

- There are many stakeholders that the Post can cooperate with: national and local governments (planning departments, ministry of interior, etc.); first responders (police, fire, etc.); and academic and technical institutes.
- Regional and international partnerships are also important. For example, the WMO and the UPU cooperate to share information and need to discuss further cooperation.

### Appendices: Checklists and other information

- The guide contains two sets of checklists for designated operators (HQ level and field level) against various natural disasters. These checklists include two phases: pre-disaster and post-disaster.
- The guide also includes abbreviations, a glossary, references and a list of regional/international organizations related to DRM.

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## Session 6: UPU Guide to Disaster Risk Management – Table-top exercise (moderator: Paolo Iscaro, UPU consultant)

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- The purpose of this table-top exercise was to familiarize postal operators with the DRM Guide, consider how leadership coordinates actions, and gain understanding of needs to prepare for and respond to a catastrophic disaster.
  - › The table-top exercise assumed the case of a hurricane and consisted of three modules:
  - › Preparedness (48 hours before disaster);
  - › Response (within 48 hours after disaster);
  - › Recovery (after 48 hours).



### Module 1: Preparedness

- Participants discussed what actions they can take to minimize the impact of an incoming hurricane as follows:
  - › Collect information from media, Internet and meteorological agency;
  - › Check evacuation sites;
  - › Order employees to stay at home or another safe place;
  - › Secure drinking water and food.
- Check and share information on means of communication (taking into account the possibility that telephones are unusable).
  - › Take control of valuable assets and postal items, and move them out to a safer area or onto high ground.
  - › Shield entrances and windows of offices and shut off electrical panels.



### Module 2: Response

- Participants discussed the response actions as follows:
  - › Collect information from media, Internet and meteorological agency: radio is the most important tool for getting information in the wake of a disaster;
  - › Assess safety of employees (and whether dis-placed or not) through call trees;
  - › Help casualties (employees);
  - › Assess damage (initial check);
  - › Take photos to record damage, and report and ask government for support;
  - › Clean up office/building



### Module 3: Recovery

- Participants discussed the following actions:
  - › Assessment of damage: identify which equipment should be replaced and what recovery actions are required;
  - › Ask for assistance: the Post can seek assistance not only from the government but also from the CPU and the UPU;
  - › Difficulty of delivery to displaced people:
    - Deliver mail to the nearest available points such as schools (and announce this on the radio);
    - Bring mail to community access points and ask community members to deliver it;
    - Prepare cluster box units to make delivery and collection of mails easier.
- Electronic money orders: not many member countries have electronic postal money order systems, which could be useful in assisting recovery in terms of providing financial support.

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### Conclusion

- Preparedness is the key to successfully reducing risk.
- It is important to arrange table-top exercises, considering each country's particular situation, twice a year, and continuously improve the DRM plan through exercises.

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## Closing session

**Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:** SVG Post's network represents a good communication tool, and employees have good experience in delivering messages, which is useful for citizens when disasters occur. Regarding money transfers, SVG Post has no emergency generators, so when a disaster occurs and causes a power outage, it is difficult to send money by means of electronic orders.

**Montserrat:** We have good communication with the Disaster Management Coordination Agency, and cooperate well against flooding. Our building is the national disaster management HQ.

**Saint Lucia:** We will use the many experiences shared at this seminar to help us prepare for disasters.

**Aruba:** We learned a great deal during this seminar, and have much to do when we go back to Aruba. We are not very well prepared for earthquakes and hurricanes.

**Cuba:** Our positive point is that employees are well prepared. Not only the Post but other agencies cooperate well. Medical assistance is also important for employees. In Cuba, medical assistance is free of charge, and this should also be the case in other Caribbean countries. Sharing experience among countries and their citizens is very important.

**Sint Maarten:** Our island is very small and all our employees work with the national disaster management team. There is much work to be done.

**Barbados:** We have a business continuity plan, but we need a practice plan for employees to understand it in depth. Communication between HQ and staff is important, as is use of checklists and training.

**Grenada:** We lack a business continuity plan and this is a weakness. I will take this opportunity to improve the situation.

**Dominica:** We have good communication links with police, and when rivers flood the police help to support evacuation. But we need to build a business continuity plan, and we also need to have a good exchange of information with the disaster preparedness office. The dangerous issue is the location of post offices. We need to consider how to improve it.

**Guyana:** In terms of this programme, our strength is that we recently formulated a plan which covers sustainable development, and we can try to promote disaster risk management as part of this plan. On the other hand, our weakness is enforcement of the plan because, for cultural reasons, people don't take it seriously.



**Bermuda:** As I mentioned in my presentation, we recently experienced two big hurricanes in 2014, but we established drills and a contingency plan so that we could take decisions quickly. A checklist is very helpful in taking the right decision. At this seminar, we were able to share experiences, and we can improve our structures and make them more comprehensive.

**Trinidad and Tobago:** After this seminar, we can improve our business continuity plan and union management to strengthen governance, start training and discuss cooperation with national government.

**Belize:** An area for improvement is that all staff should understand what they should do when a disaster occurs. Our headquarters is located by the coast, making it vulnerable, so training is a key issue.

**Jamaica:** I found this seminar very informative, and I hope to be able to implement this knowledge. We need

to strengthen our preparedness, improve our business continuity plan, and promote partnerships to collaborate with stakeholders, especially with the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management. And we have poor infrastructure, and our building is vulnerable. We need to replace it with a more resilient building and we need evacuation drills.

**Bahamas:** We need more preparedness. Physically we have no preparedness for disasters and I have never had any drills in the Post. We need to understand what we should do in the event of a disaster. I will discuss in Bahamas Post what we can do and start training our human resources. Checklists are also useful.

**Antigua and Barbuda:** This workshop assisted us in developing our business continuity plan, we thank the UPU, CPU and Japan for facilitating the workshop. We will finalize our disaster plan.

**Anguilla:** We put in place a hurricane preparedness plan after Hurricane Luis in 1995. We consult with the Department of Disaster Management. Our building is not very resilient, and represents a risk. Like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, we do not have a generator, and electronic money transfers are not available when a power outage occurs.

**St Kitts and Nevis:** We already have a disaster preparedness plan and checklist. We also have a community centre to use as an evacuation site in the event of a hurricane. The main post office is at risk from flooding and needs to be improved.

## CLOSING REMARKS

**Ms Owena Beepot**, Regional Project Coordinator, UPU

It was a very excellent workshop. Last year we had a workshop on sustainable development and did a table-top exercise, but this time there were many excellent presentations from participants and we were able to share good experiences. We encourage you to read the excellent UPU DRM guide, which wasn't available last year, and share it with all employees when you return to your country.

**Mr Olivier Boussard**, UPU

- This workshop was absolutely necessary and very positive. The Caribbean region is one of the key target regions for the UPU's efforts on DRM, along with Asia-Pacific. We are focusing on your region specifically to build this effort at the UPU level.
- What we also take away from the discussion is that there are many good and excellent initiatives and activities in your countries that is important to share among member countries in a spirit of cooperation.
- DRM is a new activity for the UPU, launched in 2013, and we still need to improve as well. This seminar can serve as a springboard for developing actions based on what we have discussed over these three days. We want to have a dialogue with you on how

we can help you. We can offer you support in terms of technical assistance, for example developing drills. Some countries have mentioned that they do not have generators, and we may be able to help through the Quality of Service Fund. We can talk to you on a bilateral basis. Let's build activities together to fill these gaps.

**Ms Anastasia Jessemy-Lynch**, Director of Corporate Affairs, Guyana Post

- On behalf of the participants, thank you very much to Mr Patrick Mendonca and Ms Flori McClung of the USPS, Mr Olivier Boussard, Mr Paolo Iscaro and Mr Yukio Teramura of the UPU, the Barbados Post, the CPU, the Caribbean Postal Training Centre, the Japanese Government, and all representatives from the UNDP, Department of Emergency Management in Barbados, CDEMA and WMO.
- This training programme has achieved its objectives, and we really appreciate being able to take the disseminated information away as a tool and make use of it in our own DRM activities. The UPU has publicly committed to offering technical assistance, which is important for us.
- Now we know all the issues surrounding DRM, and when we go back home we can change the way our organizations approach it. Thank you very much.

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## Post-seminar participant questionnaire

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After the seminar, the International Bureau received responses to the participant questionnaire from nine member countries. This document summarizes the questionnaire responses.

**Q1. Does the Post in your country have a role in the national disaster preparedness and response programmes?**

• **In two member countries, the Post is involved in the national DRM programme:**

- i. The Post Office is invited to attend various national disaster preparedness planning meetings and training
- ii. On request from the authority, the Post Office provides contact information for an officer at each office to be used as a point of reference in case of a national disaster

• **In seven member countries, the Post is not involved in the national DRM programme**

**Q2. What are or would be the priority actions for your Post in implementing a DRM programme?**

The identified priority actions of the Post include:

- Conduct a vulnerability and risk assessment;
- Policy decision on a DRM plan for the organization;
- Proper communication with employees;
- The safety of the employees and customers first;
- Make and implement DRM plan and business continuity plan for the Post;
- Form an emergency planning committee (responsible for creating a DRM plan) and adequate allocation of resources in case of emergency;
- Establish viable training and exercise plans at all levels of employees;
- Timely coordination with other responsible governmental agencies, and cooperation with the community and local governmental institutions;

- Create a list of actions to mitigate each hazard that was identified;
- Securement of equipment, postal items, buildings and records;
- Evaluate the resources and tasks to determine the ability to respond to more than one emergency at the same time;
- Prepare a detailed emergency response and recovery plan that outlines a list of guidelines for implementation, responsibilities, location, telephone numbers, immediate action to be taken by individuals, available resources and equipment, etc.;
- Review, suggestions, changes and approval of DRM policy/programme;
- Examine the old DRM programme and use the knowledge gained and handouts to implement a much better and more organized DRM programme;

**Q3. What type of support would you need from the UPU and regional actors in implementing or enhancing your DRM programme?**

**1 Interface between government and Post**

- Approach the government to help it understand the role of the postal sector
- Have more collaboration between the UPU, regional organizations and national governments in the future

**2 Technical support**

- Risk and vulnerability assessment support
- Support in drafting and implementation DRM plan and programme including business continuity plan
- Training support

**3 Financial support**

Support for purchasing required items, equipment and vehicles (e.g. cellular phones, gas masks, ladders, helmets, rubber boots, identifiable webbed vests, outdoor gloves, stretchers, first aid kits, solar flashlights, night vision goggles, water-resistant/breathable coats, generators, etc.)

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