

**STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BARBADOS FOR THE 1<sup>st</sup>  
PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER  
RISK REDUCTION  
Geneva Switzerland July 14-15, 2014**

In 2003 the Cabinet of Barbados formally agreed to the tenets of the Caribbean's strategy on Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM). CDM is an all-inclusive policy for involving all of civil society in an all hazard approach at all stages of the Disaster Management Continuum. The goal of the regionally articulated and nationally adopted CDM Strategy therefore is to reduce the risks and losses, attributed by both natural and anthropogenic hazards, to enhance sustainable development.

This policy initiative set the stage for the integration of disaster risk reduction into the national programme which until then carried a mandate skewed towards preparedness, response and relief of meteorological threats.

The adoption of the Hyogo Framework of Action by the Government of Barbados in 2005 therefore complimented what had been started in 2003 and further endorsed the Government's commitment to reduce disaster risks and build national resilience.

Over the last nine (9) years, through the development of policies and legislation founded on the principle of comprehensive disaster management and aligned with the five priorities for action of the HFA, Barbados continues to implement programmes and projects aimed at lessening the country's disaster threats through:

- a. The strengthening of institutional arrangements for Comprehensive Disaster Management including the enactment of the Emergency Management Act 2006
- b. Increased and sustained knowledge management and learning for Comprehensive Disaster Management

- c. Improved integration of Comprehensive Disaster Management at Sectoral levels
- d. Strengthened and sustained community resilience which emphasizes the empowerment of communities to address disaster risk.

My Government has been active in its preparations for the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. On April 30, 2014 Barbados hosted a national consultation to document its priorities and perspectives on the proposed elements of the Post-2015 DRR Framework. Specific recommendations emerging for consideration in the post 2015 framework are:

1. The proposed new outcome statement *“Secure, Healthy, Wealthy and Resilient Nations and Communities”* should be linked to sustainable development goals.
2. Strengthened accountability with respect to Post HFA targets at the impact level in order for such sustainable goals to be achieved. Enhanced results-oriented programming and monitoring at the local, national, regional and international levels is therefore essential.

The Government of Barbados believes that the emphasis in the post 2015 HFA must be on effective and efficient implementation.

As custodian of the Barbados Programme of Action and role of Coordinator of the Group of SIDS in the United National Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva Barbados wishes to emphasize the importance of the recognition of the special vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States in the post 2015 framework. This position is as relevant today as it was in 1994.

Studies by the United Nations have shown that small island developing states are the most vulnerable group of countries to disasters. The United Nations department of Economic and Social Affairs in a publication titled *“Trends in Sustainable Development of SIDS 2010”* indicated that ten of the fifteen most

extreme events reported for the past 50 years took place in the last 15 years alone. Six SIDS are the worst affected countries out of 180 in terms of economic losses due to natural disasters between 1970 and 2006. In some cases their capital stock has been set back several decades. Since then the evidence has become incontrovertible that climate change has considerably worsened the prospects of SIDS.

In this the United Nations designated International year of the Small Island Developing States it is important to make the link between disaster risk and climate change and the serious implications this poses for the sustainability and in some cases the survival of Small Island Developing States. There is every evidence that the frequency and intensity of climate related disasters has increased as a result of higher levels of carbon emissions and the resulting warming of the oceans. This has led to rising sea levels which threaten small islands forcing high levels of expenditure on adaptation and protection of their major sectors and the physical environment against coastal degradation, and prompting increased incidence and intensity of disasters. Yet these countries are not the carbon emitters nor are they the countries responsible for the level of Greenhouse gases. It is therefore important that special consideration be given to small island developing states by major industrialized emitters.

As a SIDS, Barbados strongly encourages the consistent treatment of risk within the Post 2015 HFA and Post 2015 Sustainable Development Agendas. It is imperative going forward that there is explicit treatment of Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction and a focussed thrust in ensuring that comprehensive joint plans of action at national levels are developed and implemented. The effects of climate change, accumulated and increasing exposure to risk will require greater attention to and strengthened capacities to address high-impact climate related events. This is a specific consideration for SIDS given their high vulnerability.

In view of the vulnerability of SIDS, ODA eligibility criteria, which is based on GDP, is in itself an insufficient mechanism by which decisions are made on whether a SIDS receives development inflows which treat with the building of resilience

through reducing disaster risk inclusive of risk posed by climate. The World Conference is therefore urged to give due consideration to this during discussions on resourcing the post 2015 framework.

As small island developing states prepare for the Third International conference in Apia, Samoa they are seeking to enlist the support of international organizations and groups to an enhanced recognition of the special circumstances faced by small states and to incorporate this into their programmes. Disaster Risk is one of the most significant and while other countries also face disasters, in the case of small island states it can mean country- wide devastation. As a result adaptation, prevention, resilience building and sustainable development programmes which include emphasis on a green economy are important. Some SIDS have already started on such programmes. However SIDS cannot do it alone. They need the support of other organizations. As such due consideration must be given to this important issue of the treatment of SIDS as the Post 2015 Disaster Risk Reduction Agenda is being shaped.