



Enhancing Resilience to Reduce Vulnerability in the Caribbean Project

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The modern Italian Civil Protection System emerged after 1985. Prior to this it was based on a search and rescue basis managed by the Fire Brigade National Corps and their local detachments. In 1985 the Ministry for Civil Protection was established, with the task of coordinating the resources needed for the search and rescue but also with the task of designing a national policy for preparedness and prevention. In 1992 legislation at the national level was passed to give effect to differentiated levels of responsibility and coordination. Additionally, roles for various sectors including the research community and the volunteer system were enhanced.

The Italian model has therefore developed substantial experience in evidenced based policies and strategies as well as defining roles for the various stakeholders including volunteers. Key elements of the Italian model for Civil Protection includes: a systematic management plan that incorporates all stakeholders in order to deliver maximum effect; a system of monitoring and research to improve response and reduce vulnerability; a strong system of volunteers to give effect to the program at the municipal and local levels.

In this context the Enhancing Resilience to Reduce Vulnerability in the Caribbean project takes an integrated approach to vulnerability reduction and enhancing resilience to climate change, natural hazards and poverty through enhanced civil protection.

It covers Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines). They are highly vulnerable to various natural hazards and climate change impacts, also having fragile ecosystems and concentrations of settlements and major functions in low lying coastal areas and other hazard prone locations. The project focuses on knowledge sharing and building linkages across Caribbean institutions, capacity development, and advancing the linkages between climate change and disaster risk reduction.

This project is funded by the Italian Development Cooperation covering a period of 3 years (2009-2011). By the end of the project it is expected that there will be:

- o A network of real-time decision support centres for early warning systems through real-time sharing and use of hydrometeorological data
- o Strengthened national disaster management mechanisms

Initial emphasis will be on comprehensive data collection and storage. Lack of current and accurate data has been a significant challenge in the region for planning, decision making and response. There will also be activities surrounding the acquisition and application of ICT tools for rapid acquisition and dissemination of information through the disaster management system and to the community. The Italian civil protection model will be a vital source of learning and adapting best practices, being one of the best civil protection systems in the world. The importance of volunteerism in disaster management will also be highlighted, with capacities being built to enhance this aspect of community involvement.