

NATIONAL DISASTER ACTION PLAN FOR JAMAICA

May 1997

***MISSION STATEMENT
OF
THE OFFICE OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS
AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT***

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management is committed to taking pro-active and timely measures to prevent or reduce the impact of disasters on the Jamaican people and Economy through its efficient staff and collaborative efforts with National, Regional And International Agencies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NATIONAL DISASTER PLAN

GENERAL

The National Disaster Plan (1997) Revised is the latest revision of a draft plan that has been in existence since 1983. The format and content have been extensively modified to reflect up-to-date thinking and technologies relating to disaster management in the wider context of sustainable national development. It caters to continuous updating and to the addition of sub plans for hazards and disaster related functions as deemed necessary.

It is intended to provide the legal framework upon which disaster preparedness, operations and training are predicated, and under which Government Officers can be held accountable for disaster responsibilities, supported by the Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management Act of 1993.

THE DOCUMENT

This very detailed document is not meant to be used in its entirety during disaster response, but represents detailed administrative and operational information and instructions to provide guidance and ensure accountability among Government Officers. It is constructed in such a fashion that agencies and individuals can pull out relevant sections for use as needed.

It is written in four (4) parts. Part 1 outlines:

- An introduction to the plan which begins with a general overview of the country, in the context of threats from disasters.
- The concept of operations
- The national strategy for dealing with disasters
- The structure of the National Emergency Organization (NEO)
- A matrix indicating the functional responsibilities during disaster response of each agency in the NEO.

Part 2 presents:

- Administrative job descriptions to complement existing civil service standing orders that will legally introduce disaster responsibilities into the duties of Government Officers, for which they will be held accountable.

Part 3 is:

- The operational section of the plan which is organized by hazard type and response function, in such a manner that the relevant section may be pulled out and used as a stand alone guide (aide memoir) for any given situation.

Finally, Part 4 outlines:

- The organization, composition, and procedures for the operation of the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), to include:
 - Displays
 - Forms
 - Equipment
 - Material
- Communications protocols and other procedures.

THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY ORGANIZATION (NEO)

The NEO is the term used to refer to all participants in national disaster management efforts, whether Government (GO's), Non-Government Organizations (NGO's), Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO's) or Volunteers, and is depicted by the Organization chart shown below.

NATIONAL STRATEGY

The National strategy for combating disasters is to continuously **educate** and **inform** the general public and NEO personnel about disaster matters and to adequately **equip** and regularly **exercise** the NEO in their response roles. This is achieved by:

- Rigorous Mitigation, Prevention and Preparedness programmes
- Disaster education starting at primary school through tertiary institution levels
- Local and overseas training courses for disaster response personnel
- Provision of Information at all levels before, during and after a disaster, using the best available technology
- Providing disaster response agencies with appropriate state of art equipment
- Early warning of slow onset disasters, and
- Pre-positioning of human and material resources where sufficient notice is given.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The Prime Minister is Chairman of the National Disaster Committee (NDC) which meets once annually to approve disaster policy matters, and which has an Executive (NDE) that oversees the management of the ODPEM and NEOC when the latter is activated.

During normal (Pre-disaster) times, the NDE Committees will produce and monitor mitigation, prevention and preparedness plans, while the ODPEM will implement these plans, to include provision of education, training and other liaison activities with GO's, NGO's, PVO's and the Parish Councils, which are mandated to provide disaster relief at the local level.

During Normal times also, the Parish Councils, through their own Disaster Committees and Executives will play similar roles at the Parish level that ODPEM plays at the National level. The "Community level" activities (Zonal programmes) are currently undertaken by the Adventist Relief Agency (ADRA). Further details of Parish and Community organizations and activities will be found in Parish Disaster Plans.

During times of disaster, EOC's are activated and the appropriate sections of Part 3 are "pulled" from the plan and used for response as necessary.

Regional Emergency Operations Centres (REOC's) will be activated in cases where only a few parishes are affected, in which events the ODP will relate to the appropriate REOC. Otherwise, the NEOC relates directly to the PEOC's in affected Parishes.

FOREWORD

Throughout history, natural disasters have inflicted heavy cost in human, material and physical resources, and represent a potentially significant obstacle to economic growth and development. Thus the public should be well advised of the precautions and measures to be taken before, during and after any disaster.

Since a disaster is an emergency which suddenly disrupts the daily life of the population of a country, it can result in substantial loss of life and social upheaval, leading to many persons becoming homeless, helpless and hungry, a situation that is further aggravated by the dislocation or disruption of vital production, water, power supplies and communications. It is therefore necessary to seek to protect lives and property, by ensuring that the Country has a disaster plan equipped to respond to such events.

Adequate procedures to deal with disaster situations and relief measures should be planned prior to the event, with strong effective legislation to empower those responsible to carry out that task. Regular training must be carried out covering all aspects of relief, rescue, management and welfare. Careful planning must be put in place to coordinate the use of resources, both human and physical, for the saving and sustenance of life and property, and for the return to a normal life style as soon as possible.

Measures must also be in place to request and receive assistance from outside of the Country. This assistance must be what is required by the Jamaican Government, and not what outside organizations think is required.

The National Disaster Plan seeks to address the issues which have been raised above.

The Prime Minister of Jamaica

Date

**The Director General
Office of Disaster Preparedness
and Emergency Management**

Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1:	GENERAL OVERVIEW AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HAZARDS AND RESPONSE FUNCTIONS ANNEX A HAZARDS AND RESPONSE FUNCTIONS
PART 2:	DETAILED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR COMMITTEES, AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISASTER RESPONSE FUNCTIONS ANNEX A RECOVERY PLAN
PART 3:	RESPONSE SUB-PLANS ANNEX A HAZARD SPECIFIC SUB-PLANS ANNEX B RESPONSE FUNCTION SUB-PLANS
PART 4:	NATIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURES
PART 5:	GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS
PART 6:	SIGNATURES OF CONCURRENCE
PART 7:	DISTRIBUTION LIST