

## Exploring the Disaster-Development-Security Link

Good Morning.

Let me first thank the Chairman for his kind introduction and for inviting the UNDP to share its experiences with the Committee as it takes on this under-analysed issue of disaster and security linkages, and the Organisation streamlines its approach to dealing with natural disasters.

It is a pleasure for me to be back on familiar territory, and even more so to see several former colleagues among you.

I note the Member State's intention to present a resolution addressing these issues in the upcoming General Assembly, and express UNDP's willingness to participate in any meeting that the OAS may convene to share experiences and methods of analysis of vulnerability and risk.

As the members of this Committee are aware, in the 21st century, both the challenges to security and its protectors have become more complex. In the past, security threats were assumed to emanate from external sources. State security focused mainly on protecting the state—its boundaries, people, institutions and values—from external attacks.

Over the last decades, we have come to understand that menaces to people's security include threats and conditions that have not always been classified as threats to state security. The range of actors is expanded beyond the state alone. In addition to securing borders, people, values and institutions, we now realize that the dangers of natural disasters, transnational terrorism, massive population movements and such infectious diseases as HIV/AIDS, among others, impact on national security. Most significant, there is growing recognition of the role of people—of individuals and communities—in ensuring their own security.

A broader definition of security that is concerned with safeguarding and expanding people's vital freedoms enhances human rights, strengthens human development, and reinforces democratic values. Needed are integrated policies that focus on people's survival, livelihood and dignity, during downturns as well as in prosperity. When looked at in this way, the linkages between natural disasters, development and security are not difficult to visualise.

Let's explore these linkages by looking at the case of Grenada.

On 7 September 2004, Hurricane Ivan, one of the most powerful hurricanes to hit the Caribbean region in the last 10 years, devastated Grenada. Some 37 people died and most of the population of Grenada was seriously affected. Of the six parishes in Grenada, four - St. Andrew, St. David, St. Georges and St. John- were completely devastated, and the destruction was very striking throughout the rest of the tri-island state as well.

Hurricane Ivan caused widespread devastation to the environment, the productive base of the economy, and Grenadian society as a whole.

- 90% of the housing stock was destroyed or damaged; and government estimates indicated over half of the population were left homeless or displaced.
- The agriculture sector was decimated, with 95% of the nutmeg trees uprooted and 90 percent of short-term cash crops wiped out; and the tourism sector was significantly damaged, with virtually all of the hotels experiencing partial - in some cases – total destruction. With the two main pillars of the Grenadian economy in a state of ruin, livelihoods were seriously impacted. Core social indicators are expected to have deteriorated significantly, setting back development gains and jeopardising achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, to which all nations have committed themselves, without immediate strategic, external interventions.
- Institutions and systems of governance were also seriously undermined. Government buildings, including the Governor General's and Prime Minister's residence, government ministries, the Supreme Court, the main prison, were damaged or destroyed. Consequently, most of the ministries and public services were paralysed for several days immediately following the hurricane. Community level governance structures, including churches and community centres, also did not escape the fury of the hurricane.
- Power and telecommunications were severely disrupted.

Grenada, after "Ivan", was the unimaginable case; and placed centre-stage the disaster-development challenge. While other disasters have claimed more lives and have cost more in economic damage, none had devastated an entire country. Years of development gains were lost in a matter of hours. Ivan set back social investments intended to ameliorate poverty, provide access to education, health services, and safe housing, or to protect the environment, as well as economic investments that provide employment and income to sustain livelihoods.

In a matter of hours, too, the security of thousands was eroded. Faced with no way to sustain their livelihoods and the breakdown in infrastructure and the systems of governance, many resorted to lawlessness. The shameless looting, which extended to businesses and private residences, the escape of prisoners following destruction of the prison, the difficulty the security forces experienced in countering these problems due to deficiencies in numbers, equipment, and the widespread infrastructural destruction, diminished public confidence in their capacity to maintain law and order, heightened insecurity, and slowed the relief effort in the early days. The strong external support of the Regional Security System and from individual Caribbean countries, primarily Trinidad and Tobago to the restoration of law and order was vital.

The rehabilitation of the security services, including the re-building of morale in the police force and the prison establishment, has been identified by government as a very high priority. This must be accompanied by efforts to get every citizen to recognize and accept their role in the maintenance of law and order.

Hurricane Ivan not only affected the state of national security, but had security implications at the regional level as well. Ivan left behind thousands of homeless or displaced people in a sub-region of close social, cultural, and familial affinities. As Grenadians sought opportunities in neighbouring islands or elsewhere in the hemisphere, it begs the question – What impact does large-scale migration from disasters and crises have on neighbouring states, and what coping mechanisms are in place? In the case of Grenada, there was also concern over the likelihood of migration of escaped prisoners and the impact it would have on national security in the receiving states.

Grenada also brought to the fore the peculiar concerns of small island developing states. SIDS, under normal conditions, contend with the challenge of monitoring long and porous borders. After a disaster like Ivan where there is a breakdown in governance and security structures, borders are suddenly transformed from porous to being wide open; and limited state capacity prior to the disaster, aggravated by the effects of the disaster, is simply unable without assistance, to cope with trans-border influences. A natural disaster can offer a window of opportunity to very sophisticated criminal elements to plant or strengthen footholds, posing a challenge for a country focussed on providing for basic needs and later on the difficult task of national reconstruction, as well as for neighbouring states.

There are some features of this disaster, development, security link, that while not present in the case of Grenada, are important for this region. Violence and armed conflict can increase disaster risk. Populations of displaced people are a feature of violence and armed conflict. Even before additional risk factors including gender, class, and age, are taken into account, the very fact of being a refugee or an internally displaced person increases vulnerability, and hence disaster risk. Persons displaced by conflict are often forced to occupy the most hazardous locations in cities to which they move because these are the only places where they can find shelter.

The negative impact of hazard events, such as floods, on livelihoods is also a force driving people into armed groups, illegal cultivation, or migration, and contributes to the reproduction of the conflict. A vicious circle therefore exists where conflict feeds hazard, exposure to hazard, and human vulnerability in a process that generates risk. Risk in turn feeds into the conflict, which creates the conditions for yet greater hazard, exposure to hazard and human vulnerability.

Further, little or no attention has been paid to the potential of disaster management as a tool for conflict prevention initiatives, in spite of some encouraging experiences, even though many examples exist of states being brought together through the shared loss due to a disaster – though such improvements are often temporary.

Following earthquakes in 1999, Greek-Turkish relations enjoyed some improvement with a jointly-sponsored UN resolution on natural disasters made in November 2001, and high-level talks on Aegean issues in 2002.

Closer to home, in Colombia, violently opposed local communities in the Department of Meta have worked together to mitigate the impact of floods as a means not only of protecting livelihoods, but also of building trust and reconciliation.

Since natural disasters pose a significant threat to human development and human security, and human development can contribute to a reduction in disaster risk and to improved human security, it is imperative to change the way in which disaster risk is perceived in the development community, as well as the response. We must mainstream disaster risk reduction into development planning, policy, and implementation at all levels of society as a necessary condition for achieving sustainable human development. We also must seize the unique, though transient opportunity for change that disasters offer.

Disaster reduction is therefore a key component of UNDP efforts in crisis prevention and recovery.

As UNDP supports the recovery effort in Grenada, we have eschewed conventional approaches to recovery, which often fail to grasp these opportunities. The recovery effort is about shifting focus from saving lives to restoring livelihoods, effectively preventing the recurrence of disasters and harnessing conditions for future development. As such, we have assigned highest priority to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in the reconstruction and development process.

For mainstreaming to occur successfully in any country, the recovery must be backed by an approved government policy, an enabling national system, the appropriate tools, and the advocacy among all the actors, including civil society.

UNDP, along with other donors such as USAID and CIDA, is supporting the Agency for Reconstruction and Development, the Government's instrument to create an improved policy and institutional framework that will facilitate the social, economic, and physical recovery of Grenada through effective collaboration with government ministries, development partners and other stakeholders, and the transparent stewardship of local and international resources.

In October, the Government of Grenada requested the Caribbean Development bank (CDB) and UNDP to prepare a policy and operational framework for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into the reconstruction and development process. This Policy and Operational Framework was finalised in December. The Government, through its newly established Agency for Reconstruction and Development, will drive the implementation of the policy. They also will need to build capacity for disaster risk reduction at the community and national levels.

To further this process, UNDP also supported the preparation of the national reconstruction programme, and is helping to build the technical capacity of the Agency for Reconstruction and Development to coordinate and monitor implementation of the reconstruction programme. To strengthen governance systems for the reconstruction,

UNDP supported the Government's preparation and conduct of a national consultation around the reconstruction process, which brought together a wide range of stakeholders to assist in building back Grenada better. The results of this consultation, which captures the voices of the population, have been taken into account, where feasible in the national budget and the national reconstruction programme.

UNDP is also supporting the resuscitation of sustainable livelihoods through a programme aimed at ensuring that disadvantaged and the most vulnerable persons are given the opportunity to quickly get back on stream with earning their daily living. This programme also seeks to build local and national capacities for increased resilience, risk management, and sustainable development.

These recovery efforts complement ongoing work to entrench a comprehensive approach for disaster management in the Caribbean to reduce vulnerability to loss of life and property damage in the long run through development of a regional CDM strategy, strengthening of CDERA, the sub-regional disaster preparedness agency, to efficiently implement this strategy at the sub-regional level and building support for it at the national level. Already, our bilateral and multi-lateral partners have been using the Strategy and Framework to define support for disaster management in sub-region.

In addition, Grenada is one of the two countries so far (the other being Barbados) that has recently developed national CDM Strategies and draft programmes that detail the approach needed to transform their systems, structures and operations to achieve effective CDM implementation at the national level. This was the first time a participatory and consultative opportunity was provided for national stakeholders in Barbados and Grenada to review and define the institutional mechanisms, programming structures and solutions necessary to promote resilient sensitive development within the context of Comprehensive Disaster Management in their respective countries.

Further, UNDP's Caribbean Risk Management Initiative will allow the consolidation of our past interventions on disaster risk management and adaptation and climate change in order to demonstrate the synergies that exists between the two disciplines and to capture the lessons learned to improve the response to the emerging capacity building and recovery needs of the sub-region within the context of a common and articulated strategy.

Given our view of the clear link between disaster, development and human security, we agree with this Committee's position that it is necessary to focus on disaster risk reduction and ensure that it is mainstreamed successfully into national development planning and practice.

Again, we look forward to partnering with the OAS on regional initiatives in support of this objective.

I thank you again for inviting me to share our experience in this forum.