



Disaster Management and Emergency Preparedness

Franklin J McDonald

University of the West Indie,
Institute for Sustainable Development
13 Gibraltar Camp Rd, Mona Campus, Kingston 7
JAMAICA
Ph 1 876 990 1365, franklin.jmcd@gmail.com

Human societies have a long history of adaptation to a variety of challenges including the risks related to hazards of various kinds. In the last few decades significant improvements have been in the application of Science and Technology to improve upon traditional coping mechanisms and moving societies towards resilience and sustainability. The Millennium Development Goals, the HYOGO Framework for Action (HFA) and the Plans of Action generated by the Rio process - including those related to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have all recognised and emphasised the need to improve, update and modernise Disaster Preparedness, Crisis Response and Recovery mechanisms. Many of these initiatives and mechanism are based on the concept of the past events being a reliable guide to future scenarios. Many developing and developed states were and still are challenged by the need to respond to and address the risks and crises associated with such a cluster 'steady state' preparedness challenges.

The emergence of Climate Change scenarios which postulate futures and extreme events outside of the traditional envelope represents significant indeed profound challenges which require new and innovative approaches! In addition nations and institutions have to overcome a cultural gap between the reactive disaster and emergency response focused 'culture' and leadership which has dominated the preparedness field in the past and the proactive forward looking development oriented leadership which successful adaptation strategies are demanding. An attempt will be made to draw on experiences from the Caribbean and elsewhere in making the transition from reactive to proactive processes. Opportunities and options for innovative actions will be explored. The critical role of new or wider engagement of private sector and civil society stakeholders; knowledge networks and centres of excellence; the research, professional and academic community as well as governance and participatory processes will be addressed.