



**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**TENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FOURTH REPORT  
OF THE  
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
MINISTRIES, STATUTORY AUTHORITIES  
AND STATE ENTERPRISES  
(GROUP 2)**

**ON**

**THE OFFICE OF DISASTER  
PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT (ODPM)**

**Ordered to be printed with the Minutes of Proceedings  
and Notes of Evidence**

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# THE COMMITTEE

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## Establishment

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Section 66 of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago declares, that not later than three months after the first meeting of the House of Representatives, the Parliament shall appoint Joint Select Committees to inquire into and report to both Houses in respect of Government Ministries, Municipal Corporations, Statutory Authorities, State Enterprises and Service Commissions, in relation to their administration, the manner of exercise of their powers, their methods of functioning and any criteria adopted by them in the exercise of their powers and functions.

Motions related to this purpose were passed in the House of Representatives and Senate on September 17, 2010 and October 12, 2010, respectively, and thereby established, inter alia, the *Joint Select Committee to inquire into and report to Parliament on Ministries with responsibility for the business set out in the Schedule as Group 2, and on the Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises falling under their purview with regard to their administration, the manner of exercise of their powers, their methods of functioning and any criteria adopted by them in the exercise of their powers and functions.*

The business as well as the entities which fall under the purview of your Committee is attached as *Appendix I*.

## Membership

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The current membership of your Committee is as follows<sup>1</sup>:

- Dr. James Armstrong                   - Chairman
- Dr. Victor Wheeler                   - Vice Chairman
- Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, MP
- Mr. Clifton De Coteau, MP
- Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie
- Mr. Collin Partap, MP
- Mr. Kevin Ramnarine

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie was appointed to this Committee w.e.f. September 09, 2011

- Dr. Lincoln Douglas, MP
- Mrs. Lyndira Oudit
- Ms. Alicia Hospedales, MP
- Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey, MP
- Dr. Lester Henry

### Secretariat Support

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Mrs. Nataki Atiba- Dilchan	-	Secretary
Ms. Candice Skerrette	-	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Candice Williams	-	Graduate Research Assistant

### Powers

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Standing Orders 71B of the Senate and 79B of the House of Representatives delineate the core powers of the Committee which include *inter alia*:

- to send for persons, papers and records;
- to adjourn from place to place;
- to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not otherwise readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee's order of reference; and
- to communicate with any other Committee of Parliament on matters of common interest.

# INTRODUCTION

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## **Background**

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) was established in January 2005, and given the responsibility of leading the national effort in protecting public health and safety; providing emergency relief to those affected severely by hazards and restoring essential government services.

In light of recent natural disasters and severe flooding, questions have been raised in the public domain as to the preparedness of Trinidad and Tobago for such occurrences and questions have been raised as to the role that the ODPM is required to play in such circumstances. Major traffic congestion and panic by members of the public are an emerging pattern whenever there is any irregularity in the weather.

There have been criticisms of the poor manner in which the agency coordinates first responders. In August 2010, amidst heavy criticism being leveled at the ODPM for its management of floods ravaging the country, the Head of the Office tendered his resignation. In March 2011 a new Head was appointed.

With the establishment of this Committee it was thought appropriate to invite officials of the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management for discussions on the administration and operations of that agency.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of this inquiry encompassed the following:

- to determine what measures are in place for improving disaster management capacity;
- to examine the ODPMs evacuation plan for high risk areas and the exit plans for high volume traffic flows;
- to examine the emergency response plans of First Responder agencies and how they align with that of the ODPM;
- to determine what measures are in place to mitigate instances of mass panic;

- to ascertain whether the ODPM has an effective and efficient Early Public Warning System (EWS);
- to find out how effective the SMS Text initiative has been and how many persons are reached in this way;
- to establish whether the Geographical Information System (GIS) has been implemented; and
- to determine how successful the ODPMs Public Education Campaign has been.

### **Conduct of the Inquiry**

On Friday July 8, 2011, representatives of the ODPM were invited to a public hearing. Prior to this, notice was given as to the general objectives of the inquiry and written submissions were requested from the Company. These responses provided the basis for the supplementary questions pursued at the hearing.

The ODPM were represented at the meeting of Friday July 8, 2011 by:

Ms. Desdra Bascombe	Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Security
Dr. Stephen Ramroop	Chief Executive Officer
Ms. Desiree Joseph	Mitigation Manager
Ms. Chantal Braithwaite	Training and Education Specialist

Several issues raised at the hearing warranted detailed responses which were subsequently submitted in written form to your Committee.

The draft of this Report was considered and approved with amendments at the meeting of the Committee held on Friday January 13, 2012.

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee with regard to this inquiry are attached as ***Appendix II***.

The Notes of Evidence of the hearing held on Friday July 8, 2011 are attached as ***Appendix III***.



# THE EVIDENCE

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## Introduction

In transforming from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to the ODPM in 2005, a shift was made from a response-centric approach to an approach which focuses more on mitigation and preparedness. By its mandate the ODPM is committed to formulating an all-hazard approach to emergency/risk management. This includes mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

More focus has been placed on the integration of First Responders' capabilities and managing their responsiveness, public education and community outreach activities, prevention and mitigation initiatives, consequence management and critical infrastructure protection.

The ODPM is a coordinating entity. Its key role is that of mobilizing all the key players and resources to bring about the best possible approach to lessening loss of life, and damage to property. These key players include the protective services, all government ministries and agencies, non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, faith based organizations, and the Red Cross.

## Vision & Mission

**VISION** - to be the premier Disaster Risk Management organization in the region, with world class expertise, systems and operations that create and sustain a disaster resilient nation.

**MISSION**-to develop and manage the implementation of pro-active measures to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from all hazards that threaten the people, environment, and economy of Trinidad and Tobago, in collaboration with our stakeholders.

## Disaster Management Operations

The ODPM's Disaster Management Operations are aligned to the components of the Disaster Management Cycle for execution of its key roles in Trinidad and Tobago Disaster Readiness:

*Prevention*      Public Education and Training to promote awareness and increase disaster management capacity.

<i>Mitigation</i>	Measures to analyze and minimize disaster risk and impacts across Trinidad and Tobago.
<i>Planning/ Preparedness</i>	Conduct Preparedness Planning, Emergency Exercises and Training; Test and Maintain Early Warning Systems.
<i>Response</i>	Deploy assets to minimize the hazards created by the disaster; provide critical response and emergency relief to affected systems and communities.
<i>Recovery</i>	Leverage resources to return communities to normal status.

The core functions of the ODPM's Disaster Management Operations comprise the components of the ODPM Performance Cycle. Each component of the cycle must hit or exceed its performance targets to achieve Total Disaster Readiness.

### Key Initiatives

ODPM KEY INITIATIVE/PROJECT	READINESS as at June 2011
<b>PREVENTION</b>	
Advertising and Multi-Media Campaign  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Focus groups, opinion polls have been conducted to assess effectiveness of ODPM's Advertising Campaign.</i></li> <li>✓ <i>A National Preparedness Survey is currently being conducted to measure effectiveness.</i></li> </ul>	<i>Behind Target</i>
Community Disaster Risk Reduction Programme	<i>Behind Target</i>
National Education Campaign	<i>On Target</i>
Private Sector Engagement Programme  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Private Sector Awareness Programme</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Conducted Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Sessions for private sector Awareness Level Training</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Achieved engagement targets of forty (40) company and eighty (80) workshop attendees</i></li> </ul>	<i>Behind Target</i>
<b>MITIGATION</b>	
C.O.R.E. Flood and Smart Project	<i>On Target</i>

Policy Planning	<i>Behind Target</i>
<p>Early Public Warning System (EWS) including SMS Pilot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Established Emergency SMS Service, Emergency Broadcast Service, Community Based Flood Early Warning System- UWI Seismic, Pacific Tsunami, Phone Companies, Community Focal Points and CBOs/CBIs</i></li> <li>✓ <i>System tested successfully in August 2010</i></li> <li>✓ <i>System used during Tropical Storm Tomas</i></li> </ul>	<i>Behind Target</i>
Disaster Risk Management Benchmarking Tool (B-Tool) Workshop	<i>On Target</i>
<p>Geographic Information System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Flood/ Landslide Susceptibility &amp; Risk Assessment</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Completed GIS-based landslide/ flood susceptibility and risk modeling and mapping</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Conducted susceptibility and risk assessments to identify, analyze and mitigate potential flood/ landslide risk</i></li> </ul>	<i>Behind Target</i>
<p>Flood/Landslide Susceptibility &amp; Risk Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>The GIS platform implemented in October 2009 includes a web-based user interface and GIS Based Landslide &amp; Flood Susceptibility &amp; Risk Modeling &amp; Mapping</i></li> <li>✓ <i>ODPM staff and ESFs have been involved in GIS training sessions</i></li> <li>✓ <i>ODPM led GIS committee across Ministry of National Security has been established.</i></li> </ul>	<i>On Target</i>
National Earthquake Consultation	<i>Behind Target</i>
Early Flood Warning Workgroup	<i>On Target</i>
<b>PLANNING / PREPAREDNESS</b>	
Strategic Planning	<i>On Target</i>
<p>Egress Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Port of Spain Egress Plan</i></li> </ul>	<i>On Target</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Port of Spain Plan Implemented</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Plans Tested (Tabletop Test): Port of Spain Mass Egress Plan Tested April 2011</i></li> <li>✓ <i>All Municipal Corporations have submitted their Emergency Operation Plans. Evacuation and Egress plans are Annexes to these plans, and are currently being developed</i></li> </ul>	
<p>FA-HUM Exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Conducted Inaugural FA-HUM Exercise (Human Allied Forces Emergency/Disaster Management Exercise)</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Conducted international/regional relief field and command post exercise to improve interoperability with local emergency/disaster responders and international disaster response assistance</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Simulated a Level 3 response and relief operation</i></li> </ul>	<i>On Target</i>
Evaluation Planning	<i>Behind Target</i>
<p>National Emergency Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>A National Crisis Communication Plan was developed, implemented and tested during National Exercises including Exercise FAHUM 2011.</i></li> <li>✓ <i>A National Telecommunications Plan is to be developed with TATT.</i></li> </ul>	<i>Behind Target</i>
<p>National Stakeholder Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Conducted comprehensive National Stakeholder Training to meet requirements of stakeholders and build Disaster Management Capacity</i></li> <li>✓ <i>All persons requiring training are trained twice per year</i></li> </ul>	<i>Behind Target</i>
BCM Planning Initiative	<i>Behind Target</i>
National Disaster Preparedness Survey	<i>Behind Target</i>
MOU Project	<i>Behind Target</i>
<b>RESPONSE / RECOVERY</b>	
NEOC Management	<i>Behind Target</i>

Emergency Response Plans( <i>First Responder Agencies</i> )	<i>Behind Target</i>
National Volunteer Programme	<i>Not Started</i>
National Emergency Shelter Programme	<i>On Target</i>

### **Disaster Management Strategies**

ODPM's operations are aligned to the strategic plans of the Ministry of National Security, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and other government agencies. A comprehensive disaster management (CDM) framework was approved by Cabinet to transform ODPM into an authority to manage disasters. This CDM will soon be re-presented to Cabinet and will include twenty seven (27) laws which need to be amended with respect to disaster risk management.

### **Disaster Readiness Assessment**

Emergencies are classified into three levels. ODPM serves as a coordinator of agencies that respond to these emergencies. First level emergencies are handled by the Regional Corporations acting as first responder agencies. There is established in each Corporation a Disaster Management Unit which, through monthly meetings, coordinates strategies with the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC), the Water and Sewerage Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (WASA) and the Ministry of Health. In essence, common hazards that affect the country are managed by the regional corporations and not the ODPM.

The second level of emergency occurs when one or two regional corporations are affected and resources are combined in order to increase capacity levels. At this stage, ODPM may utilize national, regional or international resources as necessary.

A level three disaster is defined as one that overwhelms a country, such as the Japan 2011 earthquake. The ODPM's resources have never been tested for a level three emergency. Readiness is determined by drills and simulation exercises.

It has been determined that Trinidad and Tobago is more prepared for a level three disaster than a level one or two because of the existing capacity of regional corporations. As at April 2011, the ODPM has assessed a sixty percent (60%) readiness for overall disaster management

capability and a forty percent (40%) readiness for hazards. Agencies such as fire, police and the defence force are in a state of readiness for a level three disaster. In addition, through the United Nations cluster system, regional and international partners are tested on a daily basis through CDEMA.

The ODPM should also be involved in preparatory stages for major events and assist in the planning of the standard operating procedures from traffic management, accreditation for individuals within the affected areas and other logistics to decrease the likelihood of risks associated with the event. At present, however, this only occurs when event organizers apply for the required approvals and the ODPM is notified.

### **ODPM and Regional Corporations**

ODPM partners with councilors and the Disaster Management Units in the regional corporations. The Office has begun to engage regional corporations to gather and standardize Emergency Operation Plans and to provide training in the area of disaster risk reduction. Emergency Operation Plans comprise Evacuation and Egress, Business Continuity Management, Critical Facilities Infrastructure Protection, Mass Casualty Management and Communications Plans.

ODPM developed a proposal for transmission to Cabinet for the formation of a National Extreme Incident Response Team. This team, would comprise first responders and address a recognized gap in “incident command” that occurs at the scene of many emergencies in Trinidad and Tobago. The ODPM will coordinate this team in order to increase capacity and will also assist in training and lobbying for resources.

ODPM is working with the Ministry of Local Government to engage Community-Based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) and Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) teams in emergency response operations. Training exercises have commenced for these programmes to become community emergency response teams.

The risk level of a community is based on several factors which include a national risk assessment programme, GIS technology, the multi-layering of maps, geological and seismic reports from the University of the West Indies and the density of the population. High risk areas include squatting communities, schools, uncertified senior citizen homes and buildings

that are not OSHA compliant. Thus, this risk map should impact the hazard of flooding in these areas as well as the management of deployed resources.

Recently, the sharing of this risk map with the Ministry of Local Government allowed them to structure their drainage rehabilitation programme to target the hazards in specific communities that are high risk. It is anticipated that this liaising relationship with the Ministry will lead to sustainable development policies, the actual roll-out of programmes over the next 15 to 20 years and a process that is measured by proper metrics.

ODPM has begun to coordinate all agencies with respect to building codes, housing development, geographic information system expansion and regularization of squatter programmes.

ODPM is also engaged in the National Building Codes Programme run by the bureau of Standards under the Ministry of Trade and Industry, which can assist in the reduction of the vulnerability posed by un-regularized squatting communities. World Bank and IDB programmes are also being pursued as sources of funding to assist in the reconstruction of buildings.

### **Community Programmes**

As a part of its Disaster Risk Reduction strategy, the ODPM has commenced initiatives such as the Communities Organized and Ready for Emergencies (CORE). This programme aims to build disaster resilience of communities, and by extension the nation, through raising awareness of the various hazards that affect Trinidad and Tobago. This is driven by scientific evidence which proves that a country's readiness for disaster is almost directly proportional to the person in the house being ready.

It is in accordance with international and regional strategies including the CDEMA, CDM Strategy and the United Nation's International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). CORE utilizes direct community interface as well as events to sensitize households and enhance disaster risk reduction with the aim of creating a more safe and resilient society.

Thus far the ODPM has visited 15 communities, namely Siparia, Curepe, San Fernando, Gasparillo, Woodbrook, Chaguanas, Carapichaima, Grand Riviere, Point Fortin, San Juan/Barataria, Port of Spain, Penal/Debe, St. Helena, Mayaro, Trincity and Claxton Bay.

### **ODPM and Private Organizations**

In order to successfully achieve the stated objectives of the CORE Programme, ODPM has met and partnered with a number of government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO), community-based organizations (CBO) and other such organizations. The partners include:

- National Commission for Self Help
- Global Medical Response of Trinidad and Tobago
- UWI Seismic Research Centre
- United Way of Trinidad and Tobago
- Pro Detection SAR Ltd
- Federation for Canine Registration of Trinidad and Tobago
- Habitat for Humanity
- Adventist Development and Relief agency
- Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross
- Lions Clubs
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- Foundation of the Environment and Enrichment of Life
- Rotary Clubs
- Trinbago Emergency Network Team

ODPM is setting up a National Disaster Risk Committee which is a public/private community-based organization that will translate scientific messages - messages from the meteorological office and seismic centre - into simpler messages for the population. Further, NGOs and CBOs have been engaged through monthly meetings to help reduce the impact of hazards through education and use of their relief-oriented capacity.

### Schools

With the approval by Cabinet of the Critical Infrastructure Policy Framework in April 2010, the ODPM has started to meet with school supervisors and have hosted school sensitization workshops. It is intended that during the latter half of 2011, training programmes will begin for school guards and teachers and will cover evacuation techniques and tsunami and earthquake drills.



### **ODPM in Tobago**

ODPM's programmes and activities are aligned with the Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) and include programmes such as community emergency response teams (CERT), community response teams and other elements of disaster risk management.

Personnel from TEMA liaise frequently with the ODPM to ensure the alignment between both disaster management frameworks of ODPM. A programme also exists which facilitates the exchange of competencies between TEMA and ODPM and thus strengthens their relationship.

### **CDEMA**

ODPM identified that under an existing international stakeholder relationship Trinidad and Tobago has regional sub-focal responsibility for Grenada, Guyana and Suriname agreed upon by CDEMA and Caricom. CDEMA works with ODPM on warehousing, technical expertise and management through this government's bilateral arrangement.

### **The Way Forward**

The ODPM has recognized several current challenges and is intent on pursuing the following remedial actions within the succeeding two month period:

- Development of a leadership and management team within ODPM
- Improvement of Performance Management – including Resource Inventory Management
- Acceleration of the completion of its Strategic Plan
- Implementation of an effective management reporting system
- Implementation of an Integrated Performance Management System
- Acceleration of the initiation or completion of mission critical ODPM and TT

#### Enterprise Projects:

- ODPM Strategic Plan
- BCM Planning Initiative
- Egress and Evacuation Planning
- National Stakeholder Training
- National Flood and Mitigation Project
- Critical Facilities Protection

## **OBSERVATIONS/FINDINGS**

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Your Committee has found this inquiry into the operations of the ODPM to be quite insightful. It became evident that the public notion of the mandate of this Office which was also the perception held by Members of your Committee was inaccurate. There are differences to be noted in the definitions of ‘hazard’ and of ‘disaster’ which would determine the extent to which the ODPM will intervene in a given situation.

Your Committee was appreciative of the Readiness Report, provided by the Office, which appeared to be a thorough and impartial assessment of the operations of the ODPM, and of its achievements thus far. The management score card seems evenly-based to measure performance on a monthly basis. While it has been noted that several of the key projects were behind target, your Committee accepted, as plausible, the explanations offered with regard to the bureaucracy involved in attempting to coordinate the various elements that are mandatory to the success of each project.

In accepting the view that the ODPM is primarily a coordinating agency and is adequately prepared for a Level 3 Event, your Committee remains sufficiently concerned about the state of unpreparedness of First Responder Agencies who are tasked with the management of the more commonly occurring hazards. The logistical problems which arose during the 2011 Redbull Flugtag highlighted the necessity of ODPM’s involvement from the earliest planning stages of any such major event.

Your Committee commends the efforts being made by the ODPM to increase public programmes for communities and schools and its engagement of non-governmental and community-based organizations. Public education and general awareness are essential in nurturing a disaster ready nation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Consequent on the evidence received during this inquiry, your Committee wishes to make the ensuing recommendations with regard to the operations of the ODPM:

### Legislation

Draft legislation should be tabled in the Parliament, early in the next quarter which will:-

- give recognition to the ODPM as the replacement to the NEMA;
- mandate consultation with the ODPM in the preparatory stage of all large-scale private or public sector initiatives;
- give authority to the ODPM to request and be regularly provided with real-time access to information from Ministries as necessary;

### Training

There must be an intensification of the effort to train staff at regional corporations through the development of Emergency Operation Plans and the launch of the National Extreme Incidents Response Team.

### Public Education

There must be expansion of the public education drive through C.O.R.E until every community in Trinidad and Tobago has been visited.

Electronic and print media should be utilized more frequently for public education on the role of ODPM and on the ways individuals can prepare themselves and families to deal with hazards.

Information on personnel/organizations/agencies as responders should be clearly provided to the population.

There should be clearly structured and coordinated linkages to other relevant Ministries, example Local Government and Education with the view to the efficiency and effectiveness of the ODPM.

Defined, coordinated implementation plans with first and second responder agencies should be established.

### Funding

The ODPM should explore the options available for the receipt of funding through World Bank and IBD programmes which can be channeled into proper building re-construction.

### Staffing

The Ministry of National Security must continue negotiations with the Chief Personnel Officer so that the required staff complement is met, with compensation packages to retain trained and qualified staff.

The idea of expanding the organizational structure of the ODPM to include permanent liaison personnel within the local government authorities should also be pursued.

### Accommodation

The Ministry of National Security should pursue, with the Ministry of Public Administration, the options available regarding accommodation for an increased staff complement.

### National Communications Plan

The ODPM must operationalize, by 2012, the National Crisis Communication Plan;

### Risk Assessment

The immediate identification of all high risk communities and the establishment of a risk-assessment plan for the evacuation of persons who live in the identified communities.

The need to immediately conduct earthquake susceptibility and risk assessment on communities particularly those with older high rise apartment buildings.

Your Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the Parliament.

Sgd.  
Dr. James Armstrong  
Vice Chairman

Sgd.  
Dr. Victor Wheeler  
Vice Chairman

Sgd.  
Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie  
Member

Sgd.  
Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, MP  
Member

Sgd.  
Mr. Clifton De Coteau, MP  
Member

Sgd.  
Mr. Collin Partap, MP  
Member

Sgd.  
Mr. Kevin Ramnarine  
Member

Sgd.  
Dr. Lincoln Douglas, MP  
Member

Sgd.  
Mrs. Lyndira Oudit  
Member

Sgd.  
Ms. Alicia Hospedales, MP  
Member

Sgd.  
Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey, MP  
Member

Sgd.  
Dr. Lester Henry  
Member

January 13, 2012

# APPENDIX I

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## BUSINESS ENTITIES

**List of Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises that fall under the purview of this Committee:**

**1. Local Government**

- Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited
- Community Improvement Services Limited
- East Port of Spain Development Company Limited
- Palo Seco Agricultural Enterprises Limited
- Rural Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago

**2. National Security**

- Defence Force Commissions Board
- Defence Council
- National Drug Council
- Strategic Services Agency
- Youth Training Centre Board of Management

**3. Office of the Prime Minister**

- Sport and Culture Board of Management

**4. People and Social Development**

- Social Welfare District Boards
- Trinidad and Tobago Association in Aid of the Deaf
- Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association

**5. Planning and the Economy**

- Advisory Town Planning Panel
- Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI)
- Chaguaramas Development Authority
- Council for Innovation and Competitiveness
- Economic Development Board
- National Population Council

**6. Public Administration**

- Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT)
- Government Human Resources Services Limited (GHRS)

**7. Public Utilities**

- Regulated Industries Commission
- Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA)
  - Water Resource Agency
- The Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (TTEC)
- The Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation (TTPOST)
- Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (TSTT)

**8. Science, Technology and Tertiary Education**

- Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)
- Board of Industrial Training
- College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts (COSTAATT)
- Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (ECIAF)
- John S. Donaldson Technical Institute
- National Institute of Higher Education (Research, Science and Technology)
- National Training Agency
- San Fernando Technical Institute
- Teachers Training Colleges
- Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute
- University of the West Indies
  - Open Campus
- University of Trinidad and Tobago:
- Metal Industries Company Limited (MIC)
  - Government Vocational Centre
- National Information, Communication, Technology Limited (iGovTT)
- Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme Limited (YTEPP)

**9. Sport**

- National Stadia Board of Management
- Regional Complexes
- Trinidad and Tobago Boxing Board of Control
- Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited

**10. Tobago Development**

- Tobago Regional Health Authority

**11. Tourism**

- Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago
- Tourism Development Company Limited

**12. Trade and Industry**

- Betting Levy Board
- Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards
- Trinidad and Tobago Racing Authority
- Weights and Measures
- Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company Limited (e-TecK)
- Export-Import Bank of Trinidad and Tobago Limited
- Trinidad and Tobago Free Zones Company Limited
- Business Development Company Limited
- Point Lisas Industrial Estate
- Trinidad and Tobago Entertainment Company Limited (TTent)
- Trinidad and Tobago Film Company
- Caribbean Leasing Company Limited (CLCL)
- National Flour Mills
- Premier Quality Services Limited (PQSL) subsidiary of TTBS



**13. Works and Infrastructure**

- National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO)
- National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited (MTS)

**14. Transport**

- Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
- Air Transport Licensing Authority
- Pilotage Authority
- Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
- Public Transport Services Corporation
- Transport Board
- Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority
- Caribbean Airlines Limited
- The Vehicle Maintenance Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited
- National Helicopter Company Limited
- Point Lisas Port Development Corporation Limited (PLIPDECO)
- LIAT (1974) Limited

**15. Gender, Youth and Child Development**

- Adoption Board
- Children's Authority
- Interdisciplinary Child Development Centre
- Princess Elizabeth Home for Handicapped Children
- Trinidad and Tobago Association for Retarded Children

# APPENDIX II

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## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**MINUTES OF NINTH MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT  
APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT ON GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES  
(GROUP 2), STATUTORY AUTHORITIES AND STATE ENTERPRISES FALLING UNDER  
THOSE MINISTRIES, HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, RED HOUSE, PORT OF SPAIN,  
ON FRIDAY, JULY 8, 2011**

**PRESENT**

Dr. James Armstrong	Chairman
Dr. Victor Wheeler	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Clifton De Coteau, MP	Member
Mrs. Lyndira Oudit	Member
Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey, MP	Member
Ms. Alicia Hospedales, MP	Member
Dr. Lincoln Douglas, MP	Member
Mrs. Nataki Atiba-Dilchan	Secretary
Ms. Candice Skerrette	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Candice Williams	Graduate Research Assistant

**ABSENT**

Dr. Lester Henry	Member (Excused)
Mr. Kevin Ramnarine	Member
Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, MP	Member
Mr. Collin Partap, MP	Member

**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OFFICE OF DISASTER AND PREPAREDNESS  
MANAGEMENT (ODPM)**

Ms. Desdra Bascombe	Permanent Secretary (Ag.) Ministry of National Security
Dr. Stephen Ramroop	Chief Executive Officer
Ms. Desiree Joseph	Mitigation Manager
Ms. Chantal Braithwaite	Training and Education Specialist

**INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:17 a.m. and informed Members that Dr. Henry had asked to be excused from the meeting.

**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

2.1 The following corrections were made to the Minutes:

Page 4; Paragraph 6.2 (a)	Delete "sport"
Line 1	Insert "sporting activities"

Page 4; Paragraph 6.2 (a)  
Line 13

Delete “athlete capacity”  
Insert “capacity of athletes”

Page 5; Paragraph 6.2 (i)  
Line 1

Insert “for sporting facilities” after “policy”

Page 5; Paragraph 6.2 (l)  
Line 1

Delete “sport activity”  
Insert “sporting activities”

Page 5; Paragraph 6.2 (l)  
Line 1

Delete “was”  
Insert “are”

2.2 The motion for the confirmation of the Minutes, as amended, was moved by Mr. Clifton De Coteau and seconded by Ms. Alicia Hospedales.

2.3 The Minutes, as amended, were thereby confirmed.

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

3.1 The Chairman brought the following matters to the attention of the Members:

***Pg 2 Paragraph 3.2*** The response from PSAEL re: acquisition of assets by UTT was circulated via letter dated June 3, 2011.

***Pg 3 Paragraph 3.2*** SPORTT’s response to follow-up questions was received and circulated.

### **FINALIZATION OF DRAFT FIRST REPORT - PSAEL**

4.1 The Committee reviewed the response from PSAEL dated June 1, 2011 and determined it to be satisfactory. Members agreed to table the report on PSAEL as amended at the meeting of April 08, 2011.

### **FINALIZATION OF DRAFT SECOND REPORT - iGovtt**

5.1 The Committee concurred with the amendments suggested by Ms. Alicia Hospedales as follows:

- Pg. 10 Paragraph 4 Delete “A Memorandum of Understanding had been agreed with Singapore in December 2008...” and insert “A Memorandum of Understanding had been agreed between the Government of Singapore in December 2008...”
- Pg. 16 Productivity of Delete “initiative sin the individual Ministries” and insert Public Service “initiatives in the individual Ministries”

- Pg. 19 Observations/ Delete “of accomplishment” Findings

5.2 Members agreed that this amended version of the report on iGovtt would be tabled.

### **PRE-HEARING DISCUSSIONS**

6.1 The Committee acknowledged the receipt of written submissions from Mr. Peter Alexander Clarke and Mr. George St Aude.

6.2 It was noted that the submission of Mr. Clarke contained serious allegations. After some discussion it was agreed that in-house legal advice would be sought on how to proceed.

6.3 Members agreed to the approach that would be taken at the hearing.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

7.1 The Committee agreed that the next two inquiries would be into the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited (SMCL) and the East Port of Spain Development Company.

7.2 The Secretariat would make the necessary arrangements during the recess period.

7.2 The Committee agreed that it would next meet when the Houses resumed regular sittings.

*(The meeting was suspended and resumed in the Parliament Chamber)*

### **HEARING WITH THE OFFICIALS OF ODPM**

8.1 The Chairman welcomed ODPM officials and introductions on both sides were made.

8.2 The following matters were discussed with the representatives of the Office of Disaster and Preparedness and Management (ODPM):

#### **(a) Overview**

The Committee was informed that the ODPM was established based on a decision of Cabinet in 2005 to supersede the National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA). It is currently a division of the Ministry of National Security and is responsible for the coordination of agencies that respond to disasters.

Its operations are aligned to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and the ODPM collaborates with CEDEMA in the development of its strategic plans.

It was emphasized that the ODPM itself was not a first responder.

The ODPM manages four operations in the disaster cycle which are Prevention, Mitigation, Planning/Preparedness and Response & Recovery.

**(b) Stages of Disaster**

It was further explained that there are three (3) levels of disaster response. At 'Level 1' Regional Corporations act as first responder agencies with their respective disaster management coordinators. At 'Level 2' where one or more Regional Corporations areas is affected, the ODPM coordinates national/regional resources. At 'Level 3' it means that a national disaster (e.g. an earthquake) has occurred and the ODPM automatically goes into action.

**(c) Public Perception**

It was commented that the public perceived the ODPM to be a responding agency in the event of regular hazards such as floods. The Officials agreed that this was indeed so but responding to these hazards was the responsibility of the local authorities. The ODPM acknowledged that there was often a lack of efficient coordination between these agencies.

**(d) Red Bull Flugtag**

Reference was made to the recent situation at the Red Bull Flugtag. The Committee was informed that the ODPM was not involved in the planning process until the last three (3) days prior to the event and that involvement was via self-invitation.

The Officials expressed the view that had the ODPM been involved from the inception, there would have been better traffic management involving the accreditation of residents and the use of water taxis as part of the disaster mitigation effort.

The point was made that the ODPM may need to be more visible to assist organizations and institutions that wished to host large scale events.

**(e) Critically Lagging Readiness Levels**

Members noted that there were several instances on the ODPM scorecard which were graded as critically lagging. An explanation was sought on how this was being addressed.

The Chief Executive Officer explained that there was need to strengthen first responder agencies, particularly the Disaster Management Units at the Regional Corporations.

The ODPM was engaged in looking at the Emergency Operations Plan for each corporation, and incorporating these local plans into a national plan through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and providing additional training.

A proposal was currently before the Cabinet for the establishment of National Extreme Incidents Response Teams. This would provide additional training and resources for first responder teams.

ODPM is also working with the Ministry of Local Government for sustainable development planning and to develop capacity of institutions.

**(f) National Disaster Readiness - Level 3**

On the question of ODPM's readiness for a Level 3 disaster, the Committee was told that readiness was not only about response, but arrangements were in place with regional and international partners.

In the opinion of the Officials, there was better preparedness for Level 3 disasters than for Level 1 and 2 hazards.

Efforts were being focused on building community resilience as this has been proven to be a crucial factor in disaster management.

It was estimated that as at April, 2011 the country was 60% ready for disasters and 40% prepared for hazards.

**(g) Relationship with Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA)**

The relationship between TEMA and ODPM was described as a collaborative one with activities being facilitated by the Tobago House of Assembly. This was evidenced by the existence of plans for the exchanging of competencies to build community resilience with programs like CERT as well as the alignment of structures within both agencies.

**(h) Schools Sensitization Programme**

It was noted that no statistics were provided regarding the sensitization programme for schools. Members were informed that, to date, seven (7) school sensitization workshops had been held and seventeen (17) schools have been visited by ODPM. Key data sets requested from the Ministry of Education had not yet been received.

Members were also told that training was due to commence in the upcoming week with National Maintenance Training and Security Company (MTS) and in August 2011 with teachers.

It was highlighted that the bureaucracy involved in getting sensitive data from the relevant government agencies also hindered the planning ability of the ODPM.

**(i) Public Submissions**

The Officials were informed of correspondence received by the Committee which raised the issues of the ODPM having dedicated ambulances for the Red Cross and the St. John Ambulance personnel and whether emergency stickers were available for personnel and vehicles that were not of the Defence Force and Protective Services; as well as, whether training has been provided to Protective Service Personnel as Air Traffic Controllers and Warehouse Managers.

**(j) Legislative Authority**

Officials stated that legislative amendments were required to effectively streamline response teams. The ODPM was preparing to re-submit to Cabinet the Comprehensive Disaster Management Policy which would entail a proposal for the amendment of twenty-seven (27) Acts and the disbanding of NEMA.

**(k) High Risk Communities**

In response to a query on how high risk Communities were identified, Members were advised that geological and seismic data from the University of the West Indies was utilized. Also factored in was information provided by local authorities on squatter settlements, old age homes, housing and schools in a particular area.

**(l) Mitigation Efforts**

Members were informed of the Communities Organized and Ready for Emergencies (C.O.R.E) initiative and the other education-oriented efforts aimed at building community resilience.

The Officials acknowledged that the educational outreach efforts of the ODPM needed to be strengthened. Community Pilot Programs were now focused on individual homes as global evidence showed this to be an effective approach

**(m) Crisis Communications Plan**

Members were advised of the existence of a National Communications Plan which involved the establishment of call centres and an Emergency Broadcast Frequency.

The point was made by the Officials that whatever structure was developed for the operations of the ODPM, it must have sustainable policies that could be rolled out regardless of the political directorate.

**Adjournment**

8.1 The Chairman thanked the representatives of the ODPM for attending the hearing and for the information provided.

8.2 The meeting was adjourned at 12:16 p.m.

I certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

Sgd.  
Chairman

Sgd.  
Secretary

**July 8, 2011**



# APPENDIX III

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## NOTES OF EVIDENCE

**OFFICE OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT**

Ms. Desdra Bascombe	Permanent Secretary (Ag.), Ministry of National Security
Dr. Stephen Ramroop	Chief Executive Officer
Ms. Desiree Joseph	Mitigation Manager.
Ms. Chantal Braithwaite	Training and Education Specialist

*Introductions made*

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay. What I would like to start with is by asking the ODPM to give us a very brief oversight of your operations, and so on, so that we can get an idea of what your responsibilities are, and so on; just a brief oversight to set the framework.

**Dr. Ramroop:** I think I will take this one, Mr. Chairman, members of the team and, as well, of course, the joint select committee of Parliament. Good morning. The ODPM is an organization which really came out of a Cabinet approval in 2005. There was an organization before called NEMA, which actually is the only legally constituted organization right now. NEMA is still not dissolved. So as it is, ODPM really exist coming out of a Cabinet note in 2005. It is, as you know, a division of the National Security Ministry and it is headed by the CEO.

Now, ODPM's operations are really aligned to the Hyogo framework which was a document that was prepared in Hyogo Japan which is almost like a strategic plan, 2005 – 2015 which guides all participating countries of the United Nations to follow a particular framework in which they conduct their activities in a number of areas, so that you have country resilience and ODPM's role is really to develop that resilience.

**10.17 a.m.**

**Dr. Ramroop:** And resilience by definition is different from resistance. Resilience really is the ability to bend but not break, so we have to translate that into national resilience through our operations.

We had to do that understanding that CDEMA is our bi-Caricom, a local regional body which also looked at Hyogo, but tailored Hyogo for the region, and because we are lined through Caricom and what not to CDEMA we were able to follow the strategic plans of CDEMA and develop our strategic plans. In that as well we also had to look at the national strategic plan, and more recently, of course, the nine pillars and align the strategic plan of ODPM towards that with the Ministry of National Security's three pillars. So, what we are saying now is that the operations of ODPM, at this juncture, is really aligned to the strategic plans of all the previous agencies, authorities and governments that I just told you about. So, basically, we have a number of operational departments or divisions which actually look at the entire phase or cycle of disaster and, as I said, after what I am saying now, everything that I am saying is aligned to

strategy and to the mission for ODPM which is aligned to the national security ministry, and as I told you, CDEMA and Hyogo, so the four divisions are really the prevention department or division, the mitigation department, the planning and preparedness department and the response and recovery department at this point in time.

Right now there is a legislative move to change based on what we call the comprehensive disaster management framework which was approved by Cabinet in April of last year, which transforms ODPM operationally into an authority and this is the comprehensive disaster management framework which actually has been adopted by CDEMA and, as a matter of fact, all of our programmes are now sort of aligned to that change in that operational situation of ODPM.

Now, as you know disaster, really, is a definition which is really determined by the state of affairs at any one point in time, and disaster really means the ability to deal with a situation within a capacity level. In other words then, if you have a situation and the situation exceeds the capacity of the persons to deal with it, it is declared as a disaster. If you do not have the capacity to deal with the problem it is a disaster. You could have a disaster at a home, but it is not necessarily a disaster in the street; you could have a disaster in the street, but it is not necessarily a disaster in the town and you could have a disaster in the town, but it is not necessarily a disaster in the corporation. So, based on that ODPM operations are guided by that principle of the definition of disaster, and because of the comprehensive disaster management framework which has been approved by Cabinet in 2008 – 2010 we are managing the disasters and situations that could escalate into disaster. So, when we manage something, the ODPM must be construed, not as a responder but as a coordinator of the agencies that respond to emergencies. Emergencies can be three levels and this is the three levels that we have declared in terms of the ODPM's operations.

Level one is an emergency which can be dealt with by the regional corporations – and I want to take a point here to point out that the principle of the management of disasters rest with the local government in the sense that the local/regional corporations are the responsible agencies that are the actual first responder agencies. It is at this level that the CEO of the corporation and the chairman or mayor, as it were, are the responsible persons by the Municipal Act that is involved in the approach and dealing with the emergencies in the corporation. It is at this level that they engage all the first responders in a monthly meeting; that is fire, police, T&TEC, WASA, Ministry of Health, all the different first response agencies must come to a meeting that is chaired by the Disaster Management Unit coordinators of the local/region corporation. So, when you have a fire and when you have a flugtag, you have a tanker, or you have a roof that is blown off, or you have a flood that is flooding a home in Port of Spain of

children that are disabled, that is the responsibility of the local/regional corporation primarily, because it has not by definition reached a disaster, which is where the capacity of the corporation is overwhelmed. And those are what we call level one.

When the level two emergency arises is when we have the corporations, maybe one or two, that are so affected, and of course at all points in time ODPM monitors and oversees. It is not that we say it is a level one we do not have anything to do with it, the operations are such that the communication with our emergency responders, and specifically appointed persons in all these agencies call emergency support functionalists, they report back to the ODPM whether it is a level one, two or three. So, we look at the situation because it could escalate to a level two. When it goes into a level two, the ODPM pulls in national and/or regional or international resources as are required.

Level three is like what happened in Japan and Haiti. When that comes, the ODPM automatically comes into play by all the different alerting messages that come in. So, those are the three levels of emergencies and it is based on those levels that ODPM's four divisions operate.

And, finally, as you said briefly, the four areas of operations are really the disaster cycle: it is the prevention, the preparedness, the mitigation – which is really to reduce the impact of any hazard that we would have – the planning and preparedness of that, the actual response, and at the point of response, the international best practice and all the scientists of disaster management are telling you, that recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction begins almost at the same point of response. So, the ODPM actually manages the entire cycle.

**Mr. Chairman:** Just one quick question I want to ask you, and before we do that I would like to recognize that we have been joined by Sen. Lyndira Oudit.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Morning Members.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Morning, morning.

**Mr. Chairman:** Just one quick question again, Dr. Ramroop. One, I would like to thank you for the information that you all submitted to the committee because it has been quite comprehensive and well prepared, the document that you submitted, so we appreciate that very much.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** In going through that documentation reference is made to risk management, mitigation, response and so on, and I got the distinct impression that the ODPM, while it talks about mitigation, planning and prevention, that it focus primarily on response to disasters. In other words, it is a disaster response mechanism, and there is no problem with that. I am just trying to clarify what the mandate is, and if the mandate is also to include mitigation in

the sense that I understand mitigation, whether in fact you are adequately staffed and so on and your activities actually cover both. How would you respond to that?

**Dr. Ramroop:** Well, I think it is a –

**Mr. Chairman:** Again, if you could be brief because my colleagues –

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes, briefly. It all has to do with management really. The mandate of the ODPM is, as I told you, the entire disaster cycle. But what gives you that return on the investment as it were, the value added, is what the public perceives, or what the public wishes or need as much as they can see that gives them that added advantage, that is what they see the ODPM is doing. And because of the way that the first responders – because we have had a lack of sort of, I would not say lack of but maybe not so good coordination between the agencies, the inter-agency collaboration in a response, we have found that the ODPM has actually been called by the public, by even the Government or the political hierarchy, that they almost come into a response phase. They want you to respond because they are not seeing the response from the other response agencies.

So, it is a perception and it is a perception that the ODPM has been trying to remove from the public, because we are not a responder, and we are, actually, if you look at my score card that we introduced, our score card is a balanced score card, *[Interruption]* and if you look at our score card that gives you an assessment of looking at all the metrics from all the different operational divisions, and you can see it is an evenly-based score card, but what happens, if you weigh the scores you would find that you would have to put more emphasis on response, because that is where the hazards actually impact the communities. *[Interruption]* You see you are not seeing mitigation, but you are seeing the impact.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right, I would come back to that later on. Could we have Mr. De Coteau?

**Mr. De Coteau:** I have heard you and you have spoken in terms of the public perception. Should I say to you that the perception is that the ODPM really appears to be full of theatrical competence and when there is in truth a disaster they become totally incompetent. How do we reconcile that with what you have said? Because it is felt that when something happens suddenly the ODPM disappears and it goes back to the municipal corporation, do we really need the ODPM?

**Dr. Ramroop:** The question is we have never really been tested by disaster by definition. As I indicated before, level three is an earthquake. Right? So we have never been tested. Level two is where you have a number of corporations in danger – and again, we have never been tested. What you have been seeing is a number of hazards, these are not disasters.

Hazards are what have been impacting all over the world. Floods for example they are hazards, they are not disasters by definition, they have been dealt with by the corporations. Because you see, if you bring in the ODPM instead of manager or coordinator of national response which is your defence force and your regional capacity and your police force at national levels for every single incident or hazard, then you are defeating the purpose of a national disaster organization. We are managers. We are not responders. So, what you are saying there is because we have never been tested—the ODPM has actually, with our drills and our simulation exercises over the past two years, and I have been involved in it myself from under 17 World Cup, ICC World Cup, summit and CHOGUM, we have had an excellent capacity to coordinate but the country has never been tested. Where you are asking the ODPM to come in is where they do not even have to come in. That is the problem.

**Mr. De Coteau:** Sir, if the ODPM, as I see it, cannot really deal with the simple hazards, would they be able to deal with—for instance, let me focus on bringing closer home. Recently, over the last weekend we had a situation on the peninsula. It was not a major disaster, but it was to some degree catastrophic, was there any intervention on the part of the ODPM? Was it brought to the attention, this is happening, how could we get in there and do something?

**Dr. Ramroop:** Now, and I must make myself quite clear again. The ODPM did not get involved because the ODPM did not have to be involved. It was not a disaster. What it was, it was a poor planning mishap where the organizers did not plan properly like some of our previous events like ICC; you are calling on the ODPM to come into a situation where we do not have the reason to do so. If that situation had escalated into a disaster the ODPM already had resources inbuilt to react to that. What we would have liked to do is to be invited at a proper stage in the planning—we actually invited ourselves in the last three days.

It is difficult to get involved in the normal run of the mill of a country if the processes do not involve the ODPM at a legislative level. The ODPM cannot come to an event to a private promoter and say, “Listen, I want you to have a park and ride”. Although it is in our purview we could do that when the situation occurs. We cannot do that when they are planning, that is a private sector initiative. We cannot do that.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Good morning, I just wanted to make a response to what you were saying, if you would allow me? I am looking at page 7 of your document and it has clearly identified five rules of the ODPM, so I guess that is a summary of what you had indicated as you started.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes, that is correct.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sorry, page what?

**Mrs. Oudit:** Page 7. Now in response to a very crucial incident that took place here in

response to Mr. De Couteau's question, you have indicated that the ODPM is really not in a position to go in before hand –

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes.

**Mrs. Oudit:** – at the planning stages unless they are invited.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes.

**Mrs. Oudit:** You also indicated that there is a difference between hazard and disaster.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes.

**Mrs. Oudit:** That is very instructive and I thank you for raising that point, because I believe the national community, really, must understand what the disaster would be, whether it is natural or manmade, but the hazards, more so, refer to the impact on human life, and human or animal life as the case may be.

Clearly, what we saw – I believe you would agree, the loss of even one life is considered a hazard out of a particular disaster and in so keeping if the role of the ODPM, as is identified, because you identified prevention, mitigation, planning and preparedness, response and recovery. How would you have done stages three, four and five, which includes, conduct, preparedness planning, emergency exercises, training, test and maintain early warning systems, which systems are we testing and how would an incident like last weekend fall under one of the areas that you know, because you just indicated that you were involved three days prior, what sort of testing, preparation planning and emergency training exercises would have been conducted with that particular group and further to that any other similar incidence?

**Dr. Ramroop:** Coming back to the Member, the first thing that has to happen is that the authority, the local authority for that region, the application to use the area, for example the CDA and the local regional corporation – we do not know, there may be a million such incidences, we do not know, it is not in our process to look at that, a process has to be set up of course now, but once the CDA or the regional corporation gets that invitation that that was going to happen 10 months ago the ODPM should have been involved by the State.

**Mrs. Oudit:** And you are saying you were not involved or you were not informed by the CDA?

**Dr. Ramroop:** No, never, never. That is correct, and it happened for ICC, it happened for under 17, it happened for summit, so the legacy that we asked for then was not instituted, because we have to be engaged. Now once we were engaged, all the planning steps, all the standard operating procedures from traffic management that we did for ICC for example, all the accreditation of the individuals in that area, the risk assessment of that area, one artery in, all the logistics to reduce that risk. Risk is defined as hazards multiplied by vulnerability over capacity.

So if I were to reduce the incidence of the hazards—sorry, the impact of the hazards, decrease the vulnerability of the people coming in there and increase the capacity by all the resources; first responder, first aid, putting water taxis in, making sure that we have accreditation for everybody—we did it for ICC. So, in other words, those were the systems and the processes that when we sat with them we would have engaged them and what you would have had there is an affair that was almost the same as ICC.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Well, what I could say is that when I looked through your documentation prior to this meeting I realized that there are two arms to the ODPM; one is the education side and one is the implementation side. Clearly your strength in this document shows or points towards education and the initiatives thus far for educating the public or in terms of surveys et cetera. However, when I looked at your ODPM readiness in terms of your detailed score card—

**Mr. Chairman:** What page?

**Mrs. Oudit:** That is starting on 15 where you have listed the status or readiness level, in particular 14, 15, 16, 18, 22, 23 and 24; indicates critically lagging according to your score card, and when I went through those I realized that those were the actual initiatives that would have been able to deal with—those would have been the implementation aspect of the ODPM and, clearly, if I am to follow your document, clearly, not only are they behind target but they are critically lagging.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Now, my first question, what is the visibility of the ODPM to enable institutions or organizations wanting to host large functions; for example, the flugtag? What is the visibility of the ODPM so that the process is clear and well understood? Which, if your visibility was high then it is possible that not only that incident but others that you referred to would have been avoided.

**Dr. Ramroop:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Two, if you are in fact not as visible as you should be as a national responder, then what is being done to deal with those initiatives that since April of this year have been identified or have been identified as critically lagging?

**Dr. Ramroop:** Well, first thing as you probably would if you have been following the media, you would have seen a change in the manner in which the ODPM has been “so”, we are not advertising again. When I came in a few months ago, about three months ago into the ODPM we were advertising, but what we changed it to do is more marketing, information and knowledge management. Unfortunately, because of the legal—what we say—teeth that the ODPM has we do not have legislative authority, that is one. [*Interruption*]



The second one is just a Cabinet Note of 2005, so we have to change that. In terms of the actually engagement where the private sector just automatically sends a document and say we are having flugtag, that does not exist, because that process can only come because they have to apply to the State for a licence for example and the only time the police knew about it is when they apply for the licence.

**Mrs. Oudit:** So the police – so the licence –

**Dr. Ramroop:** When they apply for the bar licence that is when the police or the national security ministry knew about it and then when they call us and say you should come here, we went in three days before.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Then compounded to that the CDA did not inform you before.

**Dr. Ramroop:** That is correct, so even if the first responder agencies only came into it like the police and the fire just on the latter part of the planning – so you see, the ODPM really is a division of national security ministry, we could only come when we are aware of it. So, part of the problem in these score cards is that we must now strengthen our first responder agencies, but remember, it is easy because the management of hazards in any country and that is international best practice, evidence based, rest on the local/regional corporations. So the strengthening of the corporations in terms of the Disaster Management Unit and the ability of any organizer, whether it is private or public sector must apply to the corporation through the normal processes to get approval to use a venue or anything at all and that is what happened, because public health is there, fire has to make an inspection, police has to come and that is where the capture is.

**Mrs. Oudit:** So would you say that in order for the ODPM to do a far better job the local/regional bodies must be strengthened?

**Dr. Ramroop:** They must, because you see we cannot – we are a management organization that coordinates all the arms so you do not have a mechanism – we have 22 persons, most of these are BSC persons, people are scientists and specialists, we are university graduates who are not responders. Our mandate is to coordinate the responders, that is basically what it is, so you do not have a team of persons. The visibility is you cannot have a response team if you are managers, you do not go to a scene and get blown up in a tanker, you have to manage the responders who are doing it and ensure that they do the right job.

So, what you have seen in terms of that visibility is a scientific management approach now in the last few months where it is not really saying, “Don’t call us, call them”, because that is what the message is that is coming out. What you are seeing is, listen, health has to do this, fire has to do; look at the papers you would see, it is information management now, it is knowledge management. It is not saying, “They are the ones, do not pass the buck, we are managing them

now". This is what housing has to do with building codes, this is what health has to do with public health and public health is the one that has to go to the warehouse that is on fire. It is not EMA, it is public health that has to go first and ask the EMA to come in to do the test. You see, this is what we are doing, we are coordinating them and it is slow, but this is why you would see that we use the score card so I am better able to monitor my critical areas and work on those pretty fast, and you can see I am doing it, my team is doing it. On the media you hear me speaking more, you hear us coming out more on the television and telling the nation and we are not only doing that, we are actually going into the homes of the persons impacted. Why? Because we have a programme called CORE which is what we are doing.

**Miss Hospedales:** Mr. Chair, to Dr. Ramroop, there were seven key areas that were identified which stated that you all are critically lagging in these areas, it includes the national emergency planning, Egress planning, evacuation planning, business continuity management planning initiative, shelter inspection exercise, emergency response plans, national volunteer plans. These are all, as your report stated, areas where you are critically lagging and in order for our country to be ready for any major hazard or even natural disaster, could you state or elaborate to us who execute these plans once the plans are actually finalized and whether it is the first, second or third responder on your levels? And in terms of the area of risk which was identified by my colleague here, I would like you all to tell us how do you all identify communities that are high risk? Whether or not there is actually a risk assessment plan for evacuation of communities and whether or not you all intend to implement such a plan in the near future?

**Dr. Ramroop:** Okay, good. I hope I could remember all the questions, Mr. Chairman. But I must say that the emergency plans, the emergency operation plans are plans that are developed by each of the institutions that we have in the country. The local government has their own plan, but the plan is that all the critical facilities and all the institutions that reside in that corporation would submit their plans to the corporation, because, remember it is the corporation that has—all the buildings that you put up in the country has to go to the corporation for approval, so they are the necessary legal—all the building codes, every time you apply to build a house the corporation is the one. So, in other words, they should have that institutional memory of all your critical facilities. Now, when you build a school you must have an emergency plan and when you have a factory you must have an emergency plan, so that in other words the ODPM really does not hold those plans, the ODPM has to know that the corporation collects those plans.

Now, when I entered what I realized that if you look at my metrics, my score card,

emergency plans is a large weighted score, so if I were to get out of the 14 corporations 60 per cent to 70 per cent of all the plans that they are supposed to get, for example, critical facilities, and critical facilities are like schools and these things, these plans are important, so part of my metric—and that is why you see critically lagging—is that in the 14 corporations I am now beginning to get these plans, because when I threw it on a score—I am beginning to manage the thing now. Yes. So, when you look at your 14 corporations you have a score, you have, let us say, 3,000 plans that they must have and up to now I probably only have about 20 per cent so I cannot be yellow or green, it has to be red, but it is an ongoing process because I have just submitted the June score card, so which mean that as we go along we are monitoring those and we are trying to pull them down, because what amazes me is that it has not been done before.

**Mr. Chairman:** So that the deficiencies may reflect not primarily on the ODPM as an institution but more so perhaps on the local/region corporation.

**Dr. Ramroop:** You see, and I am not trying to knock the corporation, but basically it is really the management of what is essential in terms of disaster risk management. They may be doing a lot of good work, but as far as the ODPM is now managing the risk we are saying that when you look at your score cards the critical facilities are essential for national resilience, which is our mandate. Right?

**10.45 a.m.**

**Dr. Ramroop:** Therefore, it is imperative upon the ODPM to now engage the corporations and push them, not only to get the plans but to standardize the plans, so that we are speaking the same language. That is the metric that you are seeing there. So, I am reporting to you as it looked in April, when I came in. I have submitted a June look at it and since April to June, we have managed to engage the corporations to get more of those plans. So, my numerator is increasing. Yes?

**Mr. Chairman:** Sorry, you had a follow-up question Miss Hospedales?

**Miss Hospedales:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. Just a follow-up question. What you are saying to us is that the seven plans that you all are critically lagging in; all those plans are actually done by the regional corporations?

**Dr. Ramroop:** No, when you say plans, sorry, excuse me, could you repeat the question?

**Miss Hospedales:** In your reports, there are seven critical areas that you all are lagging in, which are—and I outlined them—the National Emergency Plan, the **egress** planning, evacuation planning and the ECM Planning Initiative Shelter, I am asking whether or not the regional corporations are responsible for putting together their own plans, that are outlined here, and whether or not they are trained in writing the plans within a particular framework.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes.

**Miss Hospedales:**— whether they are given that kind of training and empowerment?

**Dr. Ramroop:** The answer to that is yes primarily, because as I indicated to you, that is the system and the process that has evolved in our legislation, in terms of building buildings. When you build buildings and schools it has to go through the local corporations, the answer is yes. So that fire, for example, must make an inspection. So, the answer is yes. The egress plans of any city have to be developed by the local regional corporation. ODPM cannot come in and develop your plan. You know the streets. You know which are your one ways and your two way and your byways. That is why all over the world, the principle of disaster resilience rests on the local government. That is the teaching.

What you do, for example, like Port of Spain, is you develop your plan, you look at your risks and your hazards, vulnerabilities and capacity and say: “Well this is the plan.” OPDM, however, has to be engaged, because when we look at the national risks, we look at the national map we have GIS technology. We have done a national assessment of risks such as flooding, hurricanes and tsunamis. We have them on a computer. When you look at the risks we use a multi-layered technology where we can put the local government risks into the national risks and we can advise, for example, housing and what not. The engagement of the OPDM is now coming on board to assist them in developing, training them in the areas of disaster risk reduction, although there are other components of those plans.

The other thing, before I finish, is that you have about five or six elements of emergency plans. The five are: evacuation plans and egress plans. In other words, when we ask for emergency operations plan the corporation of the city has to give us these as part of the plan.

1. evacuation and egress;
2. business continuity management;
3. critical facilities infrastructure protection;
4. mass casualty management;
5. communication plan.

All of these are elements of the emergency operations plan, so if you do not give the emergency operations plan, then I would not be getting those sections. So that is why, if you look at the reds BCM—critical facilities—the first responder emergency plans. The fire plan, the public health, the WASA plan, the public health inspectors from the Ministry of Health, their plan, we cannot go in their agencies and tell them they have to do it. We are using now the Ministry of Public Administration to do that and they have actually had a Cabinet Note and they have, as far as a week or two ago, engaged the public administration, which is going to bring all the ministries

together. And also, I have been given—through the National Security Council, the Prime Minister has written to some of the Ministers so that we can engage the Ministers in these Ministries to get exactly what you are telling us there, faster.

**Miss Hospedales:** One other question. Do you think that the staff at the regional corporations are actually given sufficient training to put together the plans and to implement the plans during hazards and natural disasters, because I heard the concern expressed by Minister De Coteau, with respect to how first responders or the ODPM responds to hazards in Trinidad and Tobago. It is a chaotic situation to even observe. For instance, if flooding occurs in Port of Spain—I remembered one time some time last year, during the rainy season I happened to be heading west and could not have gotten past the Central Market because there was tremendous flooding in that area. Ton loads of people were actually (1) walking through the water, (2) hopping on these panel vans to get out of the city; and cars were actually covered almost to the top in water, because people were all rushing out of Port of Spain.

The issue of risk management and evacuation plans, all of those things are so serious. For me, I really do not really think that there is sufficient education of the public because, yes, I see you all have an emergency response plan, in terms of your sending text messages, but I have really—it is not really being adhered to. Is an assessment done to see whether or not people are actually informed that they should remain in place until the flood subsides and that they should wait and get a response from the ODPM or whoever else, with respect to leaving the city when it is safe?

**Dr. Ramroop:** The answer to that—I know you asked some questions in between, in terms of your observations. The member has a very important point which I think is—the first thing is that in your first statement, ODPM is not a responder. ODPM does not respond to that flood. We do not respond. It is important that we get that quite clear. We do not respond. What we do is we coordinate the responders who are supposed to respond. That is important. Once we get that clear, what happens is that the coordination of the responders—that incident of the flood belongs to the City of Port of Spain. They have to be given the resources. They have to be given the training and the capacity, but remember there are other corporations around them. Even if the flood does not affect the Diego Martin or San Juan/Laventille Corporation, the resources that they both have could come together so that the capacity is not overwhelmed at the level of the corporation, so ODPM does not have to bring in national resources. We bring in—let us say we deal with every situation in the country and there is an earthquake at the same time, then we have a problem where we have deployed all our national resources for common hazards that are supposed to be dealt with by the corporations and the whole country goes haywire

because we do not have those resources because they are deployed. We must understand that.

But you are correct. What we are doing now is that we have realized that there has been a gap in the incident command at the scene. Because everybody comes in and they have not been coordinating the different agencies, what happens is that people who are supposed to respond have not responded in a timely manner. So, the ODPM has started an initiative informing what we call the National Extreme Incident Response Team. What we have done, because we realize that the number of hazards in level one is so much that it affects the country socially, economically and financially, we have instituted a project where we are forming a team of the same first responders. We are funding them and we are training them, so when something like that happens ODPM now will coordinate that response team, send them down there and let them organize the coordination so we could just sit back and watch. Because what we are doing is we find that we have been asked to organize it; every single incident. Because that is overwhelming the capacity of ODPM, because we have to be there for national disasters, we now have formed that team and we are sending the Note, actually to Cabinet within a week or two to ensure we understand what that team is about, so it would take into consideration that incident of the flooding, as well as the Princes Elizabeth, as well as Flugtag, as well as the tanker, as well as the fire in Trincity. That team of responders will assist a gap in the coordination and the incident command. That will take care of some of our metrics.

**Mr. Chairman:** I think Dr. Douglas wanted to ask a question earlier, or is it okay now?

**Dr. Douglas:** I have a few questions.

**Mr. Chairman:** Could you go ahead and then we will come back?

**Dr. Douglas:** I have been to—I know you explained level one and level two. Those seem to be within the purview—I hear you very clearly—of the corporations. Level three brings some concern to me because you guys tell us that it is not a matter of if, it is only a matter of when. What is a level of—and it seems to me that a lot of—for example, I was in Haiti after the earthquake where “200 and something” people died, as opposed to Japan, which probably had the same level of earthquake—

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes, 20,000.

**Dr. Douglas:** It would seem to me that our preparation, prevention and education approach is very critical. I am just trying to find out how much work has been done in that area in helping this nation to be ready.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Well, first of all I would like to say that the document that I provided, which is yellow, our state of readiness is yellow and it is a weighted score, meaning that we took levels one, two, and three, as well as the different cycles of response. The answer to a level three

is that I think Trinidad and Tobago is more ready for a level three disaster than a level one and two incident in the corporations because of the capacity of the corporations to deal with the hazards. I think that we are more capable of dealing with a level three. If I were to look at the weight of my scores for a level 3, the answer is yes, we are more ready. Why? Because we have tested ourselves with the ICC, CHOGM and recently we have had with **FAHUM**, where we did the test for level three.

**Dr. Douglas:** But you determine readiness by response, not in terms of preparation?

**Dr. Ramroop:** No, no, no, no. Readiness, as my scorecard indicates is a comprehensive matrix. It is a balanced scorecard, where we looked at all the elements of that scorecard. When I say readiness, I am not talking about response readiness.

As a matter of fact, as part of that scorecard, the readiness in terms of response has a higher weight and the answer is yes, because our agencies are extremely ready for a level three response: Fire, police, defence force and what not. Plus, through the United Nations cluster system, we also have a regional. We have tested that and it works. In other words, when we do have a level three disaster, our regional and international partners which we tested and we continue to test on a daily basis at the ODPM through **CDEMA** and our foreign agencies and our partners, that has been tested because we all are geared for level three, because that is what ODPM's main responsibility is.

However, the answer to the fact that you have never been tested – another thing about it is that no country is really ready. But the problem is that what we found is that Japan was ready. They had 10,000; 15,000; 20,000 persons, whereas Haiti was not “ready” because the difference was the community-based resilience; the ability of the people themselves in the households to develop the resilience and that is where the scientific evidence is coming. A country's readiness is almost directly proportional to person in the house being ready and this is why ODPM has focused our programmes, not just for levels one, two and three, on community-based readiness and is where you would see we are working very hard.

**Dr. Douglas:** One of the things I was reflecting on in Haiti is that most of the buildings that I saw there were not –

**Dr. Ramroop:** Properly constructed.

**Dr. Douglas:** –properly constructed, so you could have educated them as much as possible, those buildings were not designed for a wolf blowing on it, really. I am not sure about those kinds of things in Trinidad and Tobago. In your evaluation, committed, or how have we adhered to standards so that it gives us and what is being done or could be done about it?

**Dr. Ramroop:** Remember, I think you were there when you launched the programme up

at the hill. I think that is what we need. Your team invited the ODPM. You were looking at regularization of squatters, you almost were constructing new homes with the ODPM there. That meant that you were mitigating. Those are the programmes that we want. That programme that you did in Lopinot/Bon Air. That is the kind of programmes that we want through all the different, or every single municipal corporation and constituency because you may not be able to affect some of our risks that we have recently at this point, but at least when you are constructing or reconstructing.

For example, recently the National Self-Help told me that they gave funds for the rebuilding of six roofs, but the point is, in two years time some of those roofs were re-blown. When you are reconstructing you are wasting funds, for example, unless you do it properly. That is why ODPM has begun to coordinate all the different agencies; with respect to building codes, housing development; and GIS expansion, in terms of communities and geography and in terms of the project that you are doing, regularization of squatters. Because remember that the equation of risk is hazards multiplied by vulnerability. All your unregularized squatting communities are highly vulnerable. The first thing that ODPM is doing is engaging the corporations again, through their councillors and their disaster management units. We are going down to visit these communities with the necessary agencies and try to let them understand that they have to now fasten their roofs and put their water tank anchored and all of those things. We are working at the level in those identified risk communities. Those are the ones that exist.

We are engaging through the National Building Codes Programme run by the Bureau of Standards in the Ministry of Trade and Industry. We have brought in housing in the thing, so we are looking at the overall picture. Strange to say, again, all buildings, whether they are put up anywhere in the country, have to get approval from the local regional corporation again. In other words, the local regional corporation has a primary role to play in all new buildings. If you can start with your new buildings and revisit some of the old ones, in terms of a risk map, start with the high risk areas first, then we can begin tackling the other one. Recently World Bank in Geneva indicated that they can assist through IDB programmes and World Bank programmes to assist communities and local governments in going back to some of the other homes that were not built properly. That is what we are doing.

**Dr. Wheeler:** What is the relationship between the ODPM and TEMA in Tobago; if you have active collaboration?

The second thing is you stressed that the ODPM is not a responding agency, but a management agency, but I am aware that TEMA in Tobago has developed first responding teams, so what discussions are you having, with respect to this?



**Dr. Ramroop:** Okay, I have to make sure that I think carefully before I answer that question. Basically, Tobago, in terms of the management of the country Trinidad and Tobago, is like another corporation. You have the 14 in Trinidad and you have Tobago. In principle, that is our mandate. We are mandated for disaster risk reduction.

**Dr. Wheeler:** Some people in Tobago would be concerned about the term “corporation”.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Basically, the difference in Tobago is that you have the Tobago House of Assembly. So, although we are responsible in principle, most of our activities and programmes and alignment of strategy has to be facilitated and is based on a relationship. Now, that is extremely important with Tobago, because of the nature of Tobago.

Just Monday I went to Tobago. Since I have started at the ODPM three months ago, we have had very constant engagement with Tobago to now change Tobago’s programmes, not only to include CERT, community response teams but the other elements of disaster risk management and we have been working very, very closely with the head of the organization there. In fact, Monday I was with him, when the Tobago House of Assembly came and they were doing the restructuring exercise for TEMA and we told them that we are currently doing our restructuring exercise in alignment with the comprehensive disaster management framework and they have agreed to come and we are going to send people there, so that their restructuring exercise is aligned to our exercise, because we are the national organization. I can tell you and I can assure you that the CERT teams as they are, are the principle of good community resilience.

Their methodology in Tobago is we are currently using that in Trinidad now, because we have begun through the Ministry of Local Government Corporations to engage the CEPEP teams and the URP teams. We at the ODPM have already begun training these teams to become community emergency response teams because we sent our CEPEP teams to Grenada. We did it in Grenada, so we are now strengthening that team. Instead of the CERT teams in Tobago, we are using our existing institutions because we do not have to go and rebuild or reinvent the wheel. CEPEP exists. We are training them. We are giving them the technology and training at the ODPM. We are now building that community resilience and response in the two or three days when the earthquake hits us, the agencies like fire and police are busy dealing with the schools, the government agencies and the energy industries, that you in your house, the CERT teams and the CEPEP teams are going to be there for you.

**Dr. Wheeler:** Just one little follow-up. Two things, you said you met with the head of TEMA in Tobago.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Mr. Stewart, yes. Monday

**Dr. Wheeler:** Because I know that recently there was a change, the previous head was

relieved.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Mr. Stewart. I met with Mr. Stewart on Monday evening.

**Dr. Wheeler:** One other question. Have you been assisting TEMA in strengthen their resources, because they have been complaining of people who are trained to work in CERT, there is a lot of attrition in the department and they are actually quite short staff now. Have you been able to assist in impressing on the authorities in Tobago, the need to have this department strengthened?

**Dr. Ramroop:** That is why I paid them an official visit on Monday, because through the actual relationship like the corporation, I found that I was not getting anywhere fast, so I actually went to visit Mr. Stewart in Tobago on Monday and what we did was are set up a programme of sort of exchanging of competencies. Some of my teams would go over there, because we tested that in FAHUM. If anything was to happen to our command centres in Trinidad we automatically transfer the command to Tobago.

What happened is when we looked at the test in Tobago – because I flew across with my colleague from the United States from the US South Army – we realized that the resources and the capacity that funneled in Tobago, in other words we went from 26 to 36 persons to seven and one of the fire officers did not come to work that day, and the police officers. At the centre, they were supposed to take control of Trinidad and Tobago in that interim while our systems were down. When we looked at that and we started, I waited on an evaluation, so I needed to know exactly what I was going to do. I did not want to go to Tobago not knowing what I have to do. I would have looked very foolish. When we got the after-action review, I looked at all the deliverables. I looked at carefully the methodology that I am looking at, the metrics that I have to put in and I went and engaged Mr. Stewart on Monday and we have begun that collaboration.

**Dr. Wheeler:** Is it that you will be adopting a supervisory role with respect to TEMA?

**Dr. Ramroop:** I would say more collaboratively.

**Dr. Wheeler:** Okay.

**Mr. De Coteau:** I have listened and while I feel very comforted about the role of ODPM at the disaster level, I am very frightened at the hazard level. Why? Because clearly, you all have increased your competence at the disaster level, but what I am hearing is that you are now in a supervisory capacity. I do not know what your original intent was. What I am seeing is clearly, we need a supervisory team for the hazard level.

Let me show you something. My constituency, Moruga/Tableland, on the main road going to Moruga we have over 94 major landslides, hazards. The accumulation of hazards would end up disastrous.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes.

**Mr. De Coteau:** And again you are saying it is on the shoulder of the municipal corporations. Do you not think, for what you have been saying, that at that level, that supervisory level, there should be a team –

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes.

**Mr. De Coteau:** – supervising these hazards that could link with you?

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes.

**Mr. De Coteau:** Because here you are waiting for a disaster. Those hazards are accumulating. My colleague pointed out the rains.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes.

**Mr. De Coteau:** We hear about hurricanes and all these things. Categorically, we cannot handle one of those things now. I honestly feel that local government should have that kind of supervisory team and you all can liaise and I think there might be greater efficiency.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Your question is, if I were to get it correctly, that – you are correct, actually, in your statement. I indicated to the previous member that we have found that there is a gap, in terms of the command and the control or the coordination of what we are calling now extreme incidents. We have now categorized incidents of level 1 because we want to get more involved proactively. Because what we want to do is start a pick, almost like a low- hanging fruit, hold the hands initially and say this is what needs to be done and train them. Remember at the lower part of that equation I gave you is capacity; increase the capacity by either training, lobbying for resources, both at the executive level as well as the ground level, including communities in order to work with each other. So you would be building capacity; that overriding principle in all our programmes. You are building capacity. I do not want to repeat myself. Everything that we are doing in every level of engagement, we are building capacity, so that is part of an overriding over arching coordination and supervising, if you want to use that word. The answer is yes.

Because of the economic, social and financial worldwide – what we are seeing would be hazards and the frequency of hazards, the ODPM has no choice now but to have a more hands-on supervisory role. That is why we talked about going to Flugtag and we talked about the Trincity fire and the tanker, because after that we called the people together and we said: “But wait, wait, what are we doing? What did you do wrong? Where are we going?” We are not going to have that again if we are engaged. I am telling you, the impact would be less. The trick about hazards is not that you can prevent a hazard, you can reduce the impact of the hazard and to do that yes, I agree with you. We are playing a more major role in that because we have not

set up what is called a National Extreme Incidence Response Team, so that we can now engage that team. I do not want to go through the details of the team. I can send you that document later. In that proposal which will go to Cabinet, you would see how we are getting engaged in just exactly what you talked about; holding their hands in the initial part whilst we actually get it going and then we can come back and say okay you are ready to do your job.

**Mr. De Coteau:** So, basically you would agree that the municipal corporations – because you all are national csecurity – there should be this supervisory team.

**Dr. Ramroop:** There must be. I agree fully and we will – that is part of the proposal we are going to Cabinet with to ensure that protocol and that institution is strengthened, in terms of exactly what you are talking about; that supervisory capacity.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** Dr. Ramroop, on page 6, I see understaffing and ODPM positions are 50 per cent unfilled. When we go to page 16 “private sector awareness” you were able to see how many companies were impacted upon and a number of workshops, but school sensitization programmes, which is extremely critical we were not able to get that figure, for example, the number of school sensitized workshops held, the total number of schools visited and so on. Why is it so?

**Dr. Ramroop:** It is difficult because, first of all, in terms of our under-staffing, what we did is that the new structure that we have completed – remember I told you that we are now going into the Comprehensive Disaster Management Framework. We did not have to go back to Cabinet to fill some of the vacant positions because we had attrition. What happen is we are now engaging persons in such a situation where we can now transition into the new structure. I would say by the end of the year, according to our deliverables, in terms of our targets, we are supposed to get that through to the CPO throughout the normal processes to get that approval to go for that new structure. The other thing as well, infrastructure-wise, our building we currently hold can only hold about 26 persons.

The second thing in terms of the schools is that the critical infrastructure policy framework was approved by Cabinet in April of last year. That gave us almost the legislative authority to begin to engage, not just the private institutions but the ones through the public service, where we now began to meet with the school supervisors and begin the training of evacuations and fire drills and what not. As a matter of fact, that is something. Because, as I have indicated before, the response part of the metric is so high that we have to work on that first because you could talk all about mitigation and fancy stuff but unless you are able to run out of a school when the earthquake hits then we have failed. We have been working on that part of it; that low-hanging fruit, as it were, and we have engaged the schools. It has been difficult because,

I think what happened is because when the ODPM, before I came in, about three and one-half months ago, we were doing a lot of programmes and we were trying to fill all the HYOGO requirements, but what we were not doing is that we were not trying to put it on a scorecard and weigh in to say these are my quick priorities. You would find that an activity will happen and we will respond. We would respond sort of almost automatic. Everybody wanted ODPM to respond. ODPM was so busy trying to tell the nation we are not responders. There almost came response. When I came in I had to pull it back a bit, because all my team members were getting so worried when even bad weather came. And we are not supposed to do that. Bad weather will come. That was the problem. That is why they may not have focused so much on the critical facilities, but now critical facilities, our school children are extremely important in terms of the overall reduction and resilience building. We are aiming that way. We have actually, some massive programmes within the next six months when school is closed to go to MTS. We have started training the MTS guards from next week because they are the persons who would be evacuating the children. They are the ones who have to set up the command centres to link back to the state, so that the children – we are training them from next week, MTS.

Then we also teaching programmes in August of all the geography teachers because we think that the geography teachers are the ones to actually engage the other teachers in something like tsunami drills and earth quake drills and it is part of the syllabus. The geography syllabus involves disaster risks programmes, which is a risk requirement of HYOGO as well. Yes. The answer is there is a sort of refocus in terms of the critical priorities

**11.15 a.m.**

**Mr. Jeffrey:** Because you know we have hundreds of secondary and primary schools –

**Dr. Ramroop:** Even universities, and the numbers of schools that we have actually engaged are on page 16; of item 3. And it is now 70 schools as far as the total number of workshops, seven of the main schools.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** Where is this?

**Dr. Ramroop:** This is page 16 of this booklet, on the third one: number of schools sensitization workshops held as of today is 1; number of schools visited by ODPM, 7; total number of workshop attendees, 70. Now, this is really poor metrics, but what is happening is that as of last week we were trying –

**Mr. Jeffrey:** *[Interruption]* *[Inaudible]* We have the earlier version.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Or, you have the earlier version, April? Basically what it is, is that we have increased the number. As far as I am concerned, I am still yellow, because what has happened is that right now, one of our programmes is all the ministries as I just told you, we are

trying to get the critical facilities. I am just trying to get the number of critical facilities from the Ministry of Health, which is really difficult. I am trying to get the number of schools, for example, early childhood from the Ministry of Education which is really difficult. It is just that somebody has to call and tells us these are my critical facilities. In other words ODPM tonight, if something hits me, I do not know the denominators right now, I do not know how many schools I have, and I need to get that, we do not know it, the Ministry of Education has to provide it. So to develop my metrics I need data, and that data has to come from the ministries. So this is what we are currently doing now, we have engaged them, we are meeting with them, we are meeting with the Ministry, we are asking them for key data sets.

Now, one of the problems I have had is the bureaucracy of data. It seems to me that some ministries do not realize that we are national security, and that when we ask for certain data they are telling us that we have to go through from the medical doctor, to the CEO, the CEO to the ministry, the ministry to the chief medical officer, and then if it is authorized it comes to me. Now that is a problem I had from a key person in disaster management in health. And if I need to know how many hospital beds I have tonight, tonight, tonight, I cannot get that, because it has to go through this bureaucracy, and somebody says that information is sensitive, it cannot be given to me. So you see these are some of the things that we have done over the last week or two through the Ministry of National Security, where the Prime Minister is writing to the Ministers, so I can meet with them and tell them there are certain data sets that I want to get real-time as the head of the DMO here to make decisions.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Mr. Chairman, I have a question concerning what you just indicated. Oh, are you finished? Sorry.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** That understaffing worries me a bit, in the sense that, for example, you have the different corporations which have their responsibilities, they are supposed to have all these plans, if there is a gap, somebody is supposed to be checking to make sure that the Siparia Regional Corporation submits the various plans –

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes, we have four.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** – and therefore I could see the staffing –

**Dr. Ramroop:** We have four area coordinators that are designated to deal with the Disaster Management Units, a coordinator of all the corporations. So how the structure is, every single day at my meeting, I have a morning meeting with my head team and the four coordinators, ODPM report on – now over the past three months key metrics from the Disaster Management Units of the corporations. They are the ones we are interested in, so they have to get what we want. We might want to get how many people, for example, who are living on a

street who have wheelchairs, who are crippled, who have strokes. That is what we want to do, that is the level we are asking for. So we want councillors, we want the Disaster Management Units, agencies, corporations, NGOs, CBOs and faith-based organizations, that is what we are doing with CORE, to go into the streets, it is in your national housing census, they are telling you how many streets you have, how many people live on the street, how many households, it is written in the books and they just did the census. All I am asking for in my unit is tell me in each of these areas in real-time that if I have to evacuate a street how many pregnant persons are there, how many persons are differently abled, because they are the vulnerable ones.

So that is what I want, I cannot do it with 24 persons, but we have managers, we do not need to have 56 persons do this. What we need to do is four of my managers will coordinate with all the 15 Disaster Management Units, inclusive of Tobago. They feed me with the information that I require, and I can now, whether it is level 1, 2, or 3, report to my Minister who sits at the National Security Council and reports to the National Security Council which is Chaired by the Prime Minister to go to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Information and say bring in Tobago, bring in CEDEMA, bring in America, that decision has to be done through me.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** My final question would be, in terms of that understaffing situation, how soon do you think you would be about 80 per cent –

**Dr. Ramroop:** Right now, I would say that by September we are going to be about 60 per cent, because what we have done, I have had to use a management tool to bring in what we call executive coaches. What I have done is that consultancies come in and they bring in a workshop and they do what they have to do. What I did was, I engaged consultants to come in as coaches to sit with my people and develop their competencies. So I have strategic, alignment and procurement coaches; I have an internal audit coach – finance – because I want to do internal audit, of course; I have someone doing HR planning and development with my team. So they are teaching my team. So what I have right now is about eight consultants who are coming within a project management, because everything is a project with a timeline and a target; that is why you are seeing these cards. If I had gone with just my managers you could not have seen the extent of the production that you have there, and you could not have seen metrics and clear. So what you are seeing now it is almost like a set of executive coaches working with me in my organization to transition the organization into CDM and also look at the competencies and develop the position descriptions and the financial packages for that, because you have to do it properly. I do not want to go in there and start putting persons and then realize that you are not in sync with the world.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Mr. Chairman. We have firstly, I think what happened just a while ago is

that you referred to a document clearly which is about a month or two later than the document that we have dated 2011, which was one of the issues I wanted to raise, how are you gauging as you go along, but you have answered the question indirectly by indicating that you do have an updated document.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yeah, we have a scorecard, every month it is reported.

**Mrs. Oudit:** To me that is very admirable I am not sure if many agencies actually do that, it is admirable. I refer to a letter submitted to this committee by Mr. George St. Aude, and in it he raised several questions and one of it was the ODPM's approach to the dedicated ambulances.

Now, in your response prior, you have indicated that you really are facilitating so, therefore, the Ministry of Health and all of that. I just wanted to raise these issues seeing that he was a member of the public who brought in some of these concerns, for emergency dedicated ambulances especially to the Red Cross and to St. Johns Ambulance, as well as the training of protective services such as Air Traffic Controllers. So these are some of the – there are many good comments coming from the public and, in fact, from this committee we always appreciate comments coming from members of the public.

I will like to look at what you have said. Clearly we have a national preparation exercise that needs to be done. You have indicated, from what I can gather, you require legislative authority.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Yes.

**Mrs. Oudit:** From 2005 that legislative authority was not available to you –

**Dr. Ramroop:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Oudit:** –so it hindered the effectiveness of this particular organization. So you have recognized your need for legislative authority which if you are given such legislative authority you would be in a position to do as was mentioned here a gap analysis of where your deficiencies are not only for your organization, but certainly the ability to command information to be better able to gauge the readiness of all external stakeholders including local government, public health, town and country planning, because these are clearly the agencies that are your fingers on your hands.

So when you make reference to the fact that in Mr. De Coteau's area, for example, when there is a landslide while you may be able to deal with hazards of a certain nature, you cannot go in there and fix the roads, or you cannot go in there and do landslide recovery, it has to go through as you have indicated local government. So that your legislative authority if it is given will enable you to then reach faster without having to go through all the various channels to get



your information. I am hoping that this particular – the whole approach that you have identified today, I must say it sounds very proactive, and I say sounds, because in the past we have seen as a nation many documents and plans that have never been implemented, either effectively or at all. So this sounds really well.

I am very impressed with the documentation in front of me. I am also quite impressed with your update, however, I hope you understand that there is a concern especially after last weekend, and while we understand that it is not your fault or your responsibility, you need more stuff. You have to streamline response teams then, and your streamlining in response teams makes you a facilitator. I did recall – in fact I was glad you spoke about CEPEP, because I know that CEPEP is a second responder, and we recently had, I believe, two Ministers indicate the role of CEPEP in Chaguanas and central I think doing that same type of work. So for me I am seeing a national preparation where you are facilitating the responses by the various agencies, and I am very hopeful, Dr. Ramroop, that the ODPM will finally see its original mandate and live up to the expectation, once it is understood that you do not have to go in there and dig the drains, you have to facilitate.

**Dr. Ramroop:** I thank you. I just want to make a statement. There is one piece of legislative authority under the Disaster Measures Act that is where level three – as I said we are better able to coordinate, because under the Disaster Measures Act when I get my information through our first responders, and I advise my National Security Minister, who would then advise the National Security Council, the Prime Minister then transmits that information to the President, he declares a state of emergency and disaster, that gives us the legislative authority by that Act, once he assigns us as the coordinator, to coordinate all the agencies such as the defence force, coast guard –

**Mrs. Oudit:** And like Fire.

**Dr. Ramroop:** – and, therefore, we would not have a problem with anything that we have to get ourselves in.

**Mrs. Oudit:** But you must have a state of emergency declared first of all?

**Dr. Ramroop:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Oudit:** That is on a national level.

**Dr. Ramroop:** That is correct. Now, where I really have the gap is the normal run of the mill common hazards, when I say common that impacts all countries throughout the world, and I think you are so correct and that is why we have now just last week presented through to the permanent secretary – the document which we sent to Cabinet last year in April was almost like a framework, where it was like a policy type framework. What we did, we re-presented it, we are

going to re-present it to Cabinet which is the comprehensive disaster management policy, but with a legislative type design where we have identified 27 Acts and laws which need to be amended: the Coroner's Act, the Public Health Act. There are a lot of Acts which are out dated with respect to disaster risk management. So that will come to Cabinet very soon and, therefore, you would probably see now that it is not just our legislation it is from everything that impacts upon, and that is really the comprehensive approach we are looking at. So that is happening as we speak and once that happens, once Cabinet approves that then we go and dissolve NEMA, because NEMA is still existing on our books, so you see that is happening.

What we are saying here just to clarify, this is not really a plan, this is actually a management scorecard which tells us how we are measuring our performance. So, therefore, I have no hesitation in putting a red, I am not going to come here and lie to anybody that I am yellow or green, because this is my scorecard, because in the final analysis I will be audited by this scorecard, and my performance will – this has to relate very clearly to where I am, however, my challenge now is to develop this scorecard is highly qualitative to a large extent, because the quantitative data to assist me in bringing quantitative metrics to a large extent are not there to a certain extent and legislation has a part to do with that as well as engagement and facilitation.

So my scorecard may be a scorecard that I cannot put my head on a block for it, because there is lot of qualitative metrics rather than quantitative metrics, but hopefully within the next few months as we begin to engage through the Ministry of Public Administration, all the ministries in the public service. We had a meeting with the Diplomatic Corp last week, because they are a very essential population and the university as well where we have foreign students. We have engaged the Diplomatic Corp and they have agreed to assist us in trying to get some of our foreign-based energy corporations, so they are extremely important in terms of not just a corporate responsibility to their fence line communities, but also the risks that they pose as you can well imagine to our community. So I think that is where we are looking at holistically.

**Mr. De Coteau:** Again to you, CEO. I am glad that you were able to honestly score yourself, because one of the things I had here for you, would you say that you are struggling to make a passing grade? But more so listening to you again with that disaster, do you not think it would give you greater scope if we should add just as you have fire and prevention, do you not think we should have office of hazards and disaster which would give you a wider scope to deal with everything? Because right now you know what you seem to be operating is at that level, and at the ABC level you are not there at all. We are very efficient at advance level, but at the ABC level we are not there, and we want to have the competencies that you have up there [*Demonstrates by lifting his hand*] down there at the foundation. So let us be able to deal with the

hazards, treat with the hazards, include it in your name, so that you would have that legislative authority to be able to deal with that and treat with the people, so that they would not say that you are interfering.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Hon. Member, I must say that your exact statement was made in Geneva—the Government had sent me to Geneva as the DMO head, and the discussion was held at some plenary sessions for countries similar to ours with similar problems, and it is not evidence based, it has failed in a number of organizations throughout the world and it is scientifically in the disaster community not acceptable, because the scientific evidence shows that the local government's capacity has to be built. It is the local government, the culture, people, diversity, the religion and everything else is taken into account, if we do that we will go retroactively and we would not have signed up with the rest of our member countries in terms of the Hyogo Framework, in other words it is not recommended by Hyogo. We are the Disaster Management Authority, what we do is we coordinate first responders, what we have to do is ensure that the capacity of our first responding agencies must be developed, supported, sustainable, in a sustainable development—So it sounds like it is a good quick fix, but it is not going to be sustainable.

**Mr. De Coteau:** Then they have to get their own team down there, that is the basic—

**Miss Hospedales:** Mr. Chairman, based on the report that you all had submitted to us, reference was made to flood and landslides susceptibility and risk assessment, but there has—I did not see anything for earthquake assessment. I would also like to know how do you all—what criteria you use for determining whether a community is high risk or low risk?

**Dr. Ramroop:** All right. One is that we have done a national risk assessment programme based on 10 years of history as well as last year, and looked at it as some of our common hazards, for example, floods, landslides, roofs being blown off and high winds, these are scoring pretty heavily. Based on our GIS technology and the multi-layering of our maps, we have excellent maps which show and in fact we shared that with the Ministry of Local Government recently that allowed them to focus their drainage rehabilitation programme in a structured way, so that we can impact upon the hazards in specific communities that were targeted as high risk. Now, it is also I would say about 40/50 per cent ready, because of data, GIS needs data, good data. What we have done is we have signed up an agreement with the IDB and UNDP to do national disaster risk mapping. So what we are doing now is that based on some funding which is coming our way very soon our actual data sets that are going into this GIS maps will be better, so we will have a very good assessment. But, however, we have what we have, and that is why just recently when we engaged the Ministry of Local Government we actually

asked all the corporations and this is a simple metric to give us the number of footage of drainage that needs to be cleared in each corporation. It was presented to Cabinet and eight out of the 14 corporations presented some metrics that were beautiful, they actually listed all the areas and the footage of drainage that needed to be cleared. Now, that is helpful for me, because if I get it in all the corporations I can tell you all that we have forty thousand feet of drainage that need to be cleared, out of those forty thousand, twenty thousand are in high risk areas, so when I come back to you in about a year's time I say out of those forty thousand, 80 per cent of those has been cleared before September, and that means it should impact on the hazard of flooding in these areas, and I can now study that and if it does not then there is something else. So this is the kind of thing that is happening as we speak.

**Miss Hospedales:** So you are talking about flooding and my concern was about –

**Dr. Ramroop:** Earthquakes, sorry. We have – part of that risk mapping is that we have all the risks and earthquake obviously we know we are going to get a big one, plus I think what we have is that our liaisons with our scientists at the University of the West Indies, our advisers are always – listen they call us we call them every day, they love us. So in other words then they are the subject matter experts. We have a whole system of early warnings signs and systems that to as far as the tsunami – Pacific, as far as the Pacific. So that when something even trembles we get a report from them. What we have done now as a matter of fact is we are setting up what is called a national disaster risk committee which is a evidence based committee that is a public/private community-based organization, that is the watchdog which has scientists, IRO everybody in it, and that now will translate scientific messages into simple messages for the population, so that they could understand, because now you are getting messages from the met office or the seismic centre, they are saying well, look we have some heavy winds and then everybody thinks it is a storm, or somebody misconstrues what is prediction and forecasting, because the guy will come out and say I am forecasting and everybody thinks it is prediction. So these are some of the messages that must come through this national disaster risk committee and the ODPM, so that people there do not get confused, you see what I mean, so yes, that is what we are doing with earthquakes. We have gone through the entire country and sensitizing people on – we are going into the homes and telling them what to do in terms of an earthquake, because CORE when we go to the homes we are not just talking about floods we are giving them packages and we are telling them what to do in terms of an earthquake.

**Miss Hospedales:** Okay. My follow up question is how do you determine a community that is high risk for earthquake disasters? How do you determine that?

**Dr. Ramroop:** Based on UWI, UWI has the geological and seismic survey data based on

the whole country, the whole region, the whole world, so they have come they have shown us our maps, they have merged our maps with our GIS persons, so that it is all a question of geography and GIS. You could see exactly where those communities are, and then when you put the density of our population and whatnot, you can actually pick it up. Where we have a problem is we will see a community the only way that we can map the risk is on incidents which happened before. So in other words then, because we are looking at the community, do you know that there are earthquakes occurring as we speak? So what happens is that when the scientists throw up that you can see that these tremors are occurring, you can actually see it flagging that San Fernando or St. Johns Village that is a high risk area, because you are seeing it coming on the map. So that is why when we ask the councillors and the DMUs to go in the area, these are the areas we want them to focus on and say look at the persons who are built on stilts, look at the persons who have board houses, look at the persons who do not have good roofs, this is what we are doing.

**Miss Hospedales:** You know why I am asking that, right? Sometimes we may tend to overlook the housing developments where there are high-rise buildings that over the age, meaning that they have aged out past 25 years and, because of that you find that those buildings structurally are very unsound, and recommendations really should be put forward with respect to getting these persons relocated over a period of time. I am saying that to say that, in the Maloney Housing Development there are 21 such buildings where they have aged out and they are structurally unsound, there are so many problems which can be identified with those structures, those have been highlighted to the HDC before, and I really think that if you all can go in and do a comprehensive assessment of those buildings to determine the level of risks, because there is a major risk. If you look at the structure, things which have been occurring with the buildings, you are seeing metal being exposed, staircases falling apart, corridors coming apart as well, the walls separating from the foundation. So many problems and these problems have been highlighted, but if you all as the experts can go and give a more comprehensive assessment and submit it to the HDC, I mean, that will be a tremendous achievement on our part, because at the end of the day you are talking about 64 apartments in one building, which in total could have been probably over 500 persons living in one building, all of them are structurally unsound, all of them are major, major, major risk for earthquakes and maybe even hurricanes. So that is one area – that is why I was asking you about the issue of risk assessment in terms of communities to really see if you all really understand the problem.

**Dr. Ramroop:** We are coordinating the managers, we are coordinating the experts that is what we do. We are not the experts in a sense we know the risks, we are coordinating the subject

matter experts whether at the scientific level or the technical level. Yes, we are doing that, it is an on-going process unfortunately, you know it is not only that area, it is a lot of areas, all your squatting communities are high risk areas, all your schools, all your old people homes that are not properly certified, all the buildings that are not OSHA compliant there are so many areas. So it is very difficult to go in everyone so, therefore, it has to be a national programme and it has to be a programme of continuous resilience building where persons in the homes and themselves have to be taught.

You can do so much, but even in a big country like the United States, New Orleans still existed. So you will have these pockets, but if we start now with new ones, if we do engage the experts which is what we are doing. I must say that with the IDB/UNDP loan we are going to be doing that through the help of consultants and some of the capacity building that will be going on. So that we are going into these communities and yes, I can assure you that based on our maps, based on your reports, for example, as the Members of Parliament to the Ministry of Local Government that is where we will say, you send it to them and keep on sending it to them, and we are asking them, the Disaster Management Units, to go out and look at the these areas. So if I get out of the 14 corporations all of my MPs writing back to the main areas that is also a good metric, because if I see that that these are the high risk areas of concerns then when I throw it on my map, and I agree with you clearly those are the areas that we will be focusing on when we begin to do our risk mapping, and that also helps me, because if something were to happen in the next instant when I go to the command centre those are the areas that I would be looking at deploying resources and getting information to help the people. So those are extremely important.

**Miss Hospedales:** Do you all plan on having a comprehensive evacuation plan implemented in those high risk areas for instance with respect to earthquakes, fires, how do you get persons out of those buildings into a proper shelter? And the other thing is whether or not you all have a comprehensive education plan to inform the members of the population as to where their shelters are located close to their homes?

**Dr. Ramroop:** The answer is yes, yes, yes. The thing is that we have the CORE programme that we are going into the communities—you see we cannot do—I mean it is really impossible to target all the communities in that regard, so we have to look at standard management tools to inform the public, (1) the school children will take the message home; (2) the media will have to help; (3) the local corporations will have to keep going back to these persons. The most important message is really at the home level. What we have done now is we have engaged—you know one of the biggest capacity we have is the NGOs and the CBOs, the

persons, for example, the faith-based organizations, the church leaders and the sport leaders we are trying to engage them, these persons must have leaders in that community whether it is sports or—we are asking them now to come and meet with us when we do CORE. So we will train these persons, and these persons will go home and train the other persons and tell them what to do when you have an earthquake. So we may not in an instant be able to reduce the hazard, but we may be able to reduce the impact of the hazard and when we go, we are telling them of the shelters, but we need some champions in the area, because of a number of reasons cultural, diversity, you know whatever it is socioeconomic. So this is what we are doing trying to get the persons in the areas to come and meet—we are meeting them, we go into their homes. So that is a methodology and maybe as the MP that is something that we would ask all the Members of Parliament to do, get the persons in the communities who will be able to help us to target the communities at the level of the home.

**Miss Hospedales:** How do you intend to engage—your report said that at the community level there has not been the level of participation you are expecting in terms of the programmes you are having at community level, how do you intend to engage the CBOs, the NGOs, the faith-based organizations, how do you intend to engage them at the different levels?

**Dr. Ramroop:** We have already, we have already. What we have done we have brought them on board, we had a meeting with them, we have meetings with them, we have a structured meeting, every month we meet and we go through some of the deliverables. We have brought the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, we have gotten the Adventist Association, they have asked for radios which we are helping them with. We brought the Rotary Club, I am a Rotarian myself for 26 years, we have brought Rotary Clubs; we have bought TENT an organization which is now formed, we have brought the faith-based organization FEEL which has 120 organizations, they are actually on the table with us. We have brought the Animal Rights Organization, for pet shelters even, so we have actually have meetings with them. We brought the vets, we brought the UWI Society, in other words we have actually had meetings, I can give you a list of all the meetings that we have had. So—

**Miss Hospedales:** It would be nice to get a list of all the organizations—

**Dr. Ramroop:** Of course.

**Miss Hospedales:**—and as well not only to give us for our own benefit, but also to inform the general public, because I am sure a lot of them do not know that these organizations are working with you all and they are actually first responders as well.

**Dr. Ramroop:** No, they are not first responders I must say, but what we are saying is that they are our education—they are the enthusiast, when something happens they actually bring in—

they have a warehouse in Fernandes compound which have thousands of items for relief, they are so relief-oriented, but we have a capacity there, it is all about capacity, it is all about capacity. In other words we do not have to get capacity, capacity is there we just have to coordinate that capacity. So what we are doing now is we are trying to engage these persons, so instead of just relief we are trying them to be a little more mitigation oriented, to prevent the items that you would have to take out of the warehouse, you do not have to take out as much, because they are there with us, so now they can go and spread the message instead of we, we are only 22 persons and the first responders are so busy outing fires you do not expect them to go.

**11.45 a.m.**

Therefore, this is a set of people who would come out with their packages that they are getting from all the places abroad. They have warehouses and donors and they will come in their large amounts. We are just going to coordinate how they come in because we do not want them to bring junk inside, so we are coordinating that as well. These are resources that can come in, but when they arrive—we learnt it from Haiti; we learnt it from Japan even; we learnt it from Grenada—when these big organizations, Rotary and everything come in, do you know what is the problem? We do not have the persons in the communities, like the church leaders and the village council persons and the sports group leaders who know the people; who know where the pregnant person is, who know where the stroke victim is; who know who is left under the rubble; who has three children and no husband. These are the people who are vulnerable and who build resilience. That is the key focus right now. It will give us the value added.

What you are talking about is the concern all over the world; it is not just us. It is most countries like us. Small island states have particular vulnerabilities. So it is a science now and basically that is what we have introduced in the ODPM, a management, the science of disaster risk deduction and climate science adaptation. That is what our strategic plan now empowers.

It is working; it is happening; it has started. I cannot say that it is highly advanced, but it has started and it continues and a lot of good work, which was done by the ODPM, which a lot of persons did not understand because it was so focused on response, response, response, that the ODPM really was in a sort of state that people did not understand them. One of my things is to change the brand of ODPM and I am doing that slowly.

**Miss Hospedales:** One other thing I want just to highlight is that I find that ODPM needs to be much more proactive in terms of informing the population in the event a disaster occurs because most times people do not know. They do not know where to go; they do not know where to get assistance. Yes, you may think that first responders are on the ground. I have been in situations where, after about a week, that is when the first responder actually came. I



really find that people need to be much more informed. Maybe we can have a programme on television informing people where to go. As the event occurs, you let people know where to get assistance, indicate that people would be coming, what type of assistance they can give; so many things can be done.

I remember going to Barbados about four days after Hurricane Tomas. There was a television programme being run almost every hour where people were informed where to put their garbage or debris; the times that the trucks would pick up their stuff at different communities. They were always aware in terms of even things like not having water. They were told when the water would resume; what were the problems created as a result of not having a proper water supply. They were frequently informed, so that caused a calm to come upon the people in that, yes, they may have encountered some measure of loss, but because they are aware of what was taking place where the government and state agencies were concerned, they were not really calling and making a lot of noise about it.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Mr. Chairman, no disrespect to the Member, but I would like to hire her in the ODPM if she ever wishes. You are correct. There is a crisis communication plan. Remember I told you that in the emergency operations plan, there are about six different sets and one of them is a communication plan, so each organization has to have that plan.

Also, there is a National Crisis Communication Plan, which was approved about two years ago when we were doing the Summit of Americas. What you are saying is correct in a sense that we have not begun to roll out that plan. Last week, we met with the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, TATT and we will now, within the next week or two, be launching a call centre for ODPM, which is a personalized call centre and you will be seeing that in the media.

What we are doing now, we had taken what the hon. Member was saying and, going forward, if you have problem, you are calling us anyway, call this call centre and it will be a personalized call centre. Then we will merge all the call centres within the next six months to one call centre like a 990 or 911. So, instead of having 10 different call centres for ambulance, fire and everything, we will have one. That has started. The call centre will be announced within two weeks.

Also, with TATT, we are also engaging an emergency broadcast frequency. What is going to happen exactly through our communications plan, GISL will take control of most of the stations and you will see these messages coming out. That is in the programme as part of our national communications plan.

Since we have never been tested by these big ones, you are not seeing, so you imagine it

is not happening and would not happen. But I want to tell you that we have actually tested this and we have a high degree of sophistication. Because we have never had an earthquake or a major hurricane, you would not have seen it, but that is in place.

**Mr. Chairman:** This brings us back to where I started, which is my concern about mitigation versus response. Based on what I have heard so far in the presentation you have given, it seems that we do have all the bits and pieces in place in different organizations and units. For instance, I understand that you are doing a lot of mapping. You have the technology certainly within the ODPM to research, map and that sort of thing. However, I still have a concern that this information that you might have at your outfit is not being utilized at the level at which it should be utilized.

I hear you saying that the municipal authorities are the people who should really be looking at this whole business of disaster management. You seem to be playing a coordinating role. Do you think that the ODPM should be restructured in such a way that you actually have a link; not just a link, but perhaps a staff member at the local authority level, rather than ODPM being a stand-alone agency and you then have to say: "Well, it is in the local government, or it is first respondent"; but you do not seem to have that direct link and you have to go through the bureaucracy of going to the CEO and to the Minister and then it comes right back. Do you think we should look at the restructuring of the old ODPM so that you can really, one, look at mitigation in terms of planning?

We have not had a National Physical Development Plan since 1984. That must be hindering your work significantly. People are probably building houses right now, as we speak, in flood prone areas and, therefore, instead of responding to, let us say, a critical situation involving maybe 500 families, because of what we are doing now, you may have to respond to a situation in maybe 2,000 families because the mitigation part of it, the planning side of it, we are not really looking at that. This is a problem in a lot of countries. Once you say disaster, it is response, but in terms of really planning, look at Japan and Haiti. That is a good example. So, are you satisfied that the way in which the organization is structured and the functional linkages that you have or the authority at the local level is something that we need to look at?

**Dr. Ramroop:** It is a consideration I think we can look at in terms of the actual implementation of the operations of the organization. I definitely think it is something we can consider. However, I must say it was all a question of the management of ODPM; it is a management thing. I am not saying that the persons who were leading ODPM before did anything wrong, but it is a business and in the last four months I am converting the ODPM into a

business managed with business processes. Once you do that, the management tools that you have in any business allows us to engage certain key stakeholders into ODPM.

The best practices I am guided by in terms of what happens in other DMOs across the world, in similar island states like us – I just went down to Samoa, and in the Pacific, in Fiji, there is a similar situation they are grappling with. Yes, the Ministry of Local Government over the past year – and I have been there only four months – have started actually to come so much on board that they are calling us now to assist them in some of their programmes of mapping and drainage.

So, through the Minister of Local Government, who has been almost like a champion for disaster management, we have to make sure that we are using that at the ODPM as a management priority to make it sustainable because governments change. So the point is that we are now currently looking at the programmes; we are now liaising with the Ministry of Local Government to put sustainable development policies in place that would allow exactly what you are saying; the actual programmes for roll out for the next 15 – 20 years, so that it becomes easily a system and a process that is measured by proper metrics, which is translated and transferred to any government that comes into power.

That is a management tool. It is a business. It is like an IBM or a Nike. If you put in the exact proper business tools and processes, then it makes it sustainable once you monitor and evaluate the performance of the plans. In my opinion, the moneys, the resources and the economic tools that can go in is more efficiently managed by local government. What we are doing now is working with them and developing that capacity, developing the institution and I think that the evidence may suggest that when the Disaster Manager Organization (DMO) comes into play, because the DMO has not just local responsibilities – we even have subregional, focal point responsibilities for Grenada, Suriname and Guyana, plus we have international stakeholder relationship. Even Trinidad has – I do not know if it came out here – a responsibility for Suriname, Guyana and Grenada, when they have their disasters; our DMO. That is important because it is something that has something agreed upon by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and Caricom. We also have to help them when they have problems. These are things we also have to do.

The answer is yes and when we are looking at our structure, we will go back to the consultants so that the executive coaches who are working with us, and we will look at the best practices and maybe, yes, you are correct, maybe we may want to have someone in the local government agencies because that is a key, as part of our sustainable development plan. I think it is something that is worthwhile to consider and I will take it up.

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not mean someone who is there as a disaster officer.

**Dr. Ramroop:** I know what you are talking about; as part of our structure. Right now, we have area coordinators who coordinate, so maybe we are looking at a subject matter expert sitting with them, almost like a coach, giving us the information we want in a structured way. That is correct. I like that.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Dr. Ramroop, you just threw out a little teaser and I am going to respond to that. The fact that we have responsibility for Suriname, Guyana and which other country?

**Dr. Ramroop:** We are what is called the subregional focal point.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Grenada.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Suriname, Guyana and Grenada.

**Mrs. Oudit:** I would imagine that there is a financial obligation on behalf of the respective governments to contribute towards the overall operation if we are responsible –

**Dr. Ramroop:** It is overall disaster management and CDEMA sort of controls that. CDEMA works with us on warehousing items for these countries, which are stored by us and we monitor and have an inventory system and a management system so that when anything happens, we are like a warehouse that exists, plus resources; our technical expertise, our containers of supplies and whatnot can be managed by us at the level of the Disaster Management Unit and then sent in a structured way through government bilateral sort of arrangements.

**Mrs. Oudit:** So you are saying yes.

**Dr. Ramroop:** The answer is yes, yeah.

**Mr. De Coteau:** I would like to compliment Dr. Ramroop for the level of intellectual capacity that he has shown, his commitment, passion and energy; but I wonder; I am reflecting and sharing with my colleague that it is the first organization that came before us and only one man spoke. I wonder if the other members share that passion and knowledge that he has displayed. What it reminds me of, I hope not, they say this management exercise where the leader is to the front and the others are just pushing the vehicle not knowing where they are going. I hope that the sense of direction is there, but I like the commitment and, only four months, so I think he must be complimented. I do not know what he meant. How would he have scored with what you meant?

**Dr. Ramroop:** When I came in, I gave the assessment as I saw it, which is what you have in your April report. What I saw was that we are about 60 per cent ready in terms of the overall disaster management capability. I would say hats off to the persons who were there before: Mr. Saunders, Col. Robinson and Col. Smart. They led a team. You can ask them questions; I have no

problem. They are highly motivated and dedicated to have brought us to the level that I could have given a 60 per cent assessment as a stranger basically, coming into an organization that I saw, with a management perspective; coming in from the health sector where I was a Medical Chief of Staff, for example, and a professional in the health sector; but with a Business Management degree.

When you look at what is happening here, I would tell you that is a very fair assessment, qualitatively to a large extent, of what I found. It was just to me a public perception of ODPM that needed to be fixed. I think that is the problem.

**Mr. De Coteau:** Qualitatively, let us use that word, give me a fair assessment as to our readiness with hazards.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Hazards, as part of this, because of their frequency, I would say that we are somewhere between a red and a yellow. More likely, we are just at the border of red and yellow; at least 40 per cent ready, that is 60 per cent away from our target. One of our strategic goals is 100 per cent readiness. We are about 40 per cent in terms of that area of our entire responsibility. A lot of that has to do with the capacity building at the local government level and interagency collaboration, as well as the tools we are using and the synchronization of communication tools such as wireless radios, satellite phones and training. These are the ones that would build capacity, but do you know what it is? Of the most important part of that entire spectrum is the resilience that is being built at the home, your house. If you have your disaster pack; if you know how to duck under a table when there is an earthquake; if you know how to evacuate your home; if you know how to do first aid on your child that is pinned under a piece of wood, that is where our resilience builds and if we can get to that, we will become like Japan, 20,000. If we do not get to that, we will be like Haiti, 240,000. That is a lot of our work in that area.

**Mr. De Coteau:** We need some more things on TV and those things.

**Dr. Ramroop:** We are getting there.

**Miss Hospedales:** Just in terms of developing resilience, I think it has to do with a lot of training, a lot of exposure; a lot of information being given to the general population because people respond to crisis in various ways and we know how. Most times, we panic. We try to get out of the hazard that may have been the issue, but I suggest the education arm needs to be strengthened with respect to how we get the information out there; how we inform communities; as I indicated earlier, the community groups, face-based groups and all the other groups involved.

**Dr. Ramroop:** Mr. Chairman, may I ask my education person to answer that question?

Please, to make a comment?

**Ms. Brathwaite:** It was not a question, but, as Dr. Ramroop says, with the core programme and the community outreach programmes, we have realized the need to build community level resilience.

In the document you saw, the past community pilot programme that we had, we would be in one position and try to invite people to come, but we realized they were not really interested because everybody thinks God is a Trini and it is only when something happens they are trying to figure out what to do. So, we took the approach; we changed the methodology to go into households and give them the information instead of waiting for them to come to us.

One thing Japan has is a strong community resilience and strong community programmes, so that in any disaster – there was an earthquake in 1995, the Kobe earthquake, and what they noted and what I have found very interesting, was that 70 per cent of the people rescued were rescued by their friends and neighbours. That is not even the first responders. This is Japan, the Mecca of disaster risk management. That is why I agree that we really need to focus on the community level.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Could I just ask one question? I thought we were wrapping up, but I am hearing that it is as if we require the ODPM to provide home-by-home awareness or education, which may be fine, but I think the major thrust of ODPM is not so much how to hold your hand when something happens, it is to act as facilitator to prevent it happening in the first instance. While the hand holding might be nice, the question is, every house, every building, if there is a flagrant disregard for building codes, then your houses and your buildings, regardless of how many hands you have to hold, will collapse even with a gentle shake.

If you do not have proper traffic management or road structures, if you have roads that are built where they are not supposed to be built, on faults or geographic weaknesses, there will be a lot of disasters. So while I realize that might very well be a requirement to come down to the homes and sit and chat with you, I hope that the ODPM's core responsibility is really how to get where we are in terms of all the deficiencies from all sectors. Do a gap analysis; do a SWOT analysis and say: "Here is what. You see these buildings, they should be rebuilt." And, as you identified, if you are given the legislative teeth, then you can say: "For every new building, I do not want the disregard of Town and Country Planning Division rules when it comes to re-zoning. Do not zone agricultural land and put commercial property because the infrastructure is not in place. Do not give me commercial properties where it is close to a fault line or a watershed and build there because it is some friend or family. Do not do it." That is what we have been having in this country.

We have communities that are being built and then the road comes after and somebody is on a hill overlooking and when they flush their toilet or throw out a bucket, it is there. All that has led to our ill preparedness, especially when you talk about flooding in Port of Spain. It is building homes on hills, building improper structures. These are some of the things we have now.

At this point, it is late to deal with some of the existing structures. I am hoping, this is why I got a little concerned when I thought the attention shifted back to holding hands in the communities. I am fine. I am great with holding hands in the communities, but I hope that the responsibility of the ODPM is to say: "This is where the buck stops. You need to do over these buildings. We need to get public health not to give approval. We need to get Town and Country Planning not to give approval improperly."

I am certain that in 10 years, if we were to do forecasting—and we are talking about Japan, China and Singapore—we have Argentina as a prime example of perfect execution of plans and when you have those things you look at in a forecasted 10-year plan, where we are now and where we should be or want to be, that is where we really have to make sure we get that right.

**Dr. Ramroop:** It is not the core responsibility, but it is evidence based as one of the responsibility that is extremely important. We are dealing with disasters. It is like a surgeon, myself. There is a tumour there. The tumour exists, so whilst you would want to operate and remove the tumour, it exists and all the causes of that tumour and the feed of it is what you are currently talking about. So we have to work on what had existed to rehabilitate it and new reconstruction programmes, but we have to look at it in the element of sustainable development. In other words, when we start it, we persist with it.

However, even in developed societies and developed countries, there are certain disasters that will eliminate even a well built structure. It has happened in Japan, it has happened in Christchurch in New Zealand where they have a very strong disaster management system, but it affected the sewerage system. What you saw was that people went to their shelters and,

instead of having 20,000 dead, you would have had 10,000 dead. So the programmes that in terms impact on the pain when the guy has the tumour, the pain and the splinting that is required is really what the public will cry about. That is what the people will feel. That is where the people will die.

So although the mitigation programmes are value added, they are long term because the tumour is there already. We have to tell the people that although you eat new foods and prevent the tumour, you have the tumour already. So we work on prevention and mitigation, but the pain of the tumour is still there and we want to reduce, instead of 100,000 deaths to 50,000 deaths because, in the final analysis, when everything goes, they will forget the building codes and forget everything. You know what they will tell you? You have 100,000 people dying?

So the point is that you have to look at that and that is where, when we look at the evidence base from all the similar countries, they are telling you: "Go down there, tell the people where the shelters are; tell them how to run; teach them how to fix their people." When somebody is dying under a pillar, waiting for a first responder to come who we are training to go; if the building was even properly built, like the Hyatt, they would still be under that pillar because there would still be rubble and that is the difference that makes a country First World, developed. It is really the core programme of disaster risk management.

Although it is funny that you are saying it, all the programmes that you talk about; all the building codes and thing, do you know what is the core service of "Serve the people, serve the people, serve the people", it is the people. It is the person in the house that we have to work with. It is not just focus in that area. What we have done now is develop a score card that allows the manager to look at his score card like a desk top, every day, and see how each of the programmes are going so that your weights are focused in particular areas which are evidence based. So it is working.

**Mrs. Oudit:** I do not want to prolong this particular part, but I have a concern that we believe that giving in to people is serving people. Sometimes, if you think of a parallel, a parent and a child, you feel if you give them everything they want, you are loving them, but in fact, you are creating a dangerous situation.

Serving the people in my mind is not just saying, "Oh, you want to change the laws, go right ahead". It is not that. It is a mixture. Serving the people means that I serve the national community and not the interest of one over others and it should always be to the maximum benefit of every person in office.

That is what I was referring to when we are looking at holding. That incident where you said 10,000 died instead of 20,000, it might have been 100,000 and maybe 10,000 was actually because of good planning.



**Dr. Ramroop:** You are correct. As I said, we do not want to belabour it, but it is exactly right. Everything is happening together and one of the things you will understand about the study of sociology and psychology of populations is you realize that law and regulations are extremely important in the overall safety and protection of populations. You can have very good resilience, but if you do not have good laws and regulations that are enforced – and we do; it is just the enforcement of.

That is where ODPM is not just working at the community, which we know evidence base will save our lives. It is like this, if something were to happen now, now, right now and we are taking so long to have flood risk insurance and crop insurance and all these things for people. These are things that we are working on as well. We could not tell you everything, but clearly that is something we are looking at in the overall picture. I agree with you and that is where we have the problem. The problem is when we sent back the document to Cabinet, we refocused the document into legislation so that we actually picked out all the pieces of legislation and these amendments and that will come to you. You now make that decision; you now take the ball in your court because you are now going to give us the legislative authority to deal with these; from building codes to enforcement of traffic regulations; it is there.

**Mr. Chairman:** I conclude by saying that I like the idea that you gave about the tumours because my interest really is in reducing the number of tumours rather than not paying attention to it and not responding to it.

**Dr. Ramroop:** But the tumour is there; the reality of it.

**Mr. Chairman:** That is my major concern. I thank you very much. Is there anything you would like to bring to our attention that perhaps was not raised? I give you the opportunity to do that. I do not know, Madam Acting PS, whether you have any concluding observations.

**Ms. Bascombe:** You have heard the remit of the ODPM. You have heard about the work they have been engaging in previous to April 2011 as well as within the past four months. I suspect from your body language that you have been impressed with what has been happening. There is a lot more work to be done and we stand committed to serving the national community. The ODPM as well as all our other divisions within the Ministry of National Security can depend on us at head office in terms of policy direction, resource allocation and funding. They all have our support. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** As you know, we will prepare a report, which will be tabled in the Parliament. If we need additional information, we will ask the Secretariat to get in touch with you.

**Dr. Ramroop:** I know I spoke a lot, but this is to me very important. The first responders, our police, our fire officers, coast guard and health workers, even our Ministry of the People and Social Services persons who work, they are extremely hard working and when they

come out into these situations, they do perform.

I was in a helicopter looking at the police officers working to move those persons out of the peninsula last week. I was looking at what they were doing and you know what was causing problems? It was drunk people who were partying in bars who were spilling over on to the road causing bottlenecks. A lady even got knocked down and you could not have moved her because the ambulance that was to come to move her took almost 45 minutes.

The point I am making is that we have an extremely good network of first responders. They work really hard. If you had heard the communication; I was amazed. I saw cameras with infrared. I saw people down at the street level. You do not even know, from the air, that that technology exists. And I am telling you, with what I saw there, I was very impressed. Now, what we have to do is, through the Ministers and the Permanent Secretaries of the different agencies, is just to allow ODPM from national security to begin the process of fast-tracking the bureaucracy of information and knowledge management issues, so that we can integrate it and coordinate it really fast.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank you very much for the presentation and the material you have provided. As I said, if necessary, we will be in touch with you and we will complete our report.

Thank you very much and you are excused.

**12.16 p.m.:** *Meeting adjourned.*