

REGIONAL UNDP/BCRP WORKSHOP ON STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES FOR POST-DISASTER EARLY RECOVERY



Ángeles Arenas (BCPR/LAC- (left) speaks at the workshop inauguration. Participants were also welcomed by UNDP Resident Representative in Cuba, Susan McDade (centre), and Jennifer Worrell, from BCPR headquarters in Geneva.

**Text and photos by Alberto D. Pérez
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HAVANA, July 2007.- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) officials from Caribbean and Latin American countries received specialized training at a week-long workshop sponsored by the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) and the Caribbean Risk Management Initiative (CRMI), with support from specialists from Geneva, New York and Beirut.

The workshop on “Strengthening Capacities for Post-Disaster Early Recovery” – held at the Melia Havana Hotel (July 17-23) – offered UNDP officials substantive and operational information designed to strengthen offices’ capacities to support the region’s countries in facing disasters, and for the incorporation of early recovery development actions.

The Caribbean Risk Management Initiative (CRMI) is based at the UNDP Cuba and Barbados/OECS offices. It covers the entire Caribbean region and focuses on the integration of risk management and climate change adaptation communities, which is key to the sustainability of early recovery activities following a natural disaster. This initiative operates in French, English and Spanish, with a wide range of materials available on its website: www.undp.org/cu/crmi.

The workshop’s opening session, on July 17, featured welcome addresses by Susan McDade, UNDP Resident Representative in Cuba; Jennifer Worrell, Director of the Early Recovery Division at BCPR headquarters in Geneva; and Angeles Arenas, Regional Advisor on Risk Reduction for BCPR/UNDP, based in Panama.



Foto de grupo tomada en el Hotel Meliá Habana, sede del encuentro

Alessandro Villa, representing the European Union, reported in detail to participants on the various funding windows and support that this institution provides to victims of catastrophes.

On Sunday, July 22, workshop participants visited one of the Risk Reduction Management Centres supported by UNDP Cuba. Located in the rural municipality of Guira de Melena, 25 kilometers southwest of the capital city, this Centre undertakes prevention and early warning work over an extensive area at risk of seawater flooding on the Cuban coast.

The preventive work undertaken by this Centre has saved numerous lives when forceful hurricanes sweep through the region, accompanied by seawater flooding.

In the workshop conclusions, both Jennifer Worrell and Angeles Arenas ratified the UNDP's commitment to supporting countries in the incorporation of an early recovery focus in their development activities, in order to minimize the negative impact of disasters and to enable the affected population to resume their normal lives as soon as possible.

Participants stated their appreciation for the knowledge gained in this training, and thanked UNDP, BCPR and CRMI for this valuable training opportunity.

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