

# Regional Workshop on Early Warning Systems as a Working Tool for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management

April 28-30 2009 - Santiago de Cuba, Cuba



Convened by Cuba's Civil Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Investment and Economic Collaboration (MINVEC), the local government of Santiago de Cuba and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Cuba, the **"Regional Workshop on Early Warning Systems as a Working Tool for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management"** was organized within the framework of Cuba's country program. The Caribbean Risk Management Initiative (CRMI) played a supporting role sponsoring the participation of a delegate from Trinidad & Tobago and facilitating the participation of the Belize delegation.

The workshop aimed to share good practices and lessons learned in comprehensive disaster risk management, particularly on early warning system. One of the objectives was to create a space to share these experiences among regional partners.

The first day of the workshop emphasized on experiences developed by the Cuban government and by the local government of Santiago de Cuba regarding their risk reduction systems in order to face extreme events. Given its location and its geographical features, Santiago de Cuba is one of the provinces most seriously affected by extreme hydro-meteorological events. Presentations were made on topics that ranged from the Risk Reduction Management Centres and Early Warning Systems, including the meteorological, earth-quake, hydraulic, and forest fires systems.

On Wednesday April 29, participants made a field trip to the Il Frente Municipality, which included visits to an Early Warning Point in Loma Blanca, to the Municipal Risk Reduction Management Centre, and to a shelter where an evacuation exercise was organized. Unfortunately, the activities planned for the afternoon had to be canceled due to bad weather.



During the third and last day, Cuban officials presented their experience following 2008's hurricane season. Then, participants from Belize (a geologist, a hydrologist, a representative of emergency organization), Paraguay (UNDP), Mexico (UNDP, Merida-Yucatan), and Trinidad & Tobago (Disaster management organization) made presentations based on their national systems of disaster risk reduction.

The Belizean delegation was very satisfied with this experience and hoped to follow up with Cuban authorities regarding these matters. The workshop allowed good exchange between all parties and it was unanimously agreed that it was indeed a successful event.

