

MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF NATURAL DISASTERS: LESSONS LEARNT FROM GRENADA

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MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF NATURAL DISASTERS: LESSONS LEARNT FROM GRENADA

- Grenadian reality prior September 7th, 2004
- Grenadian new reality
- Generic challenges left by two hurricanes
- Specific challenges – The tourism sector
- Generic lessons in best practices
- Lessons learnt in best practices – The tourism sector
- Application of lessons learnt – Sector's recovery
- Conclusion

Grenadian reality prior September 7th, 2004

- **Last hurricane was in September 1955.**
- **At 12°N 61°W Grenada was considered too South of major storm tracks.**
- **Only one hurricane passed directly over Grenada since the turn of the 20th Century.**
- **Most Grenadians believed the island would not be struck by hurricanes.**

Grenadian new reality

- **Hurricane Ivan (September 2004)**
 - 28 lives lost
 - \$EC2.2 billion damages
 - \$EC400 million damages to the tourism sector
- **Hurricane Emily (July 2005)**
 - 1 Life lost
 - \$EC140 million damages
 - \$EC 2 million damages to the tourism sector

Generic challenges left by two hurricanes

- Average hurricane damage over past 30 years estimated at 2% of GDP. Damage caused by Ivan estimated at 200% of GDP.
- Rebuilding of housing stock, designated shelters, schools, public buildings, etc.
- Displacement of at least 8% of labour force.
- Rise in unemployment rate.
- Reduction of vulnerabilities.
- Local capacity to conduct damage assessment.
- Protection of vulnerable groups.

Specific challenges – The Tourism Sector

- Reconstruction of hotels in high risk zones (**Direct damages**).
- Reduction of “Business Resumption Period” (**Indirect damages**)
- Loss in accommodation capacity.
- Loss in tourism receipts because of drop in arrivals.
- Marketing and positioning of destination.
- Financing the sector’s recovery.
- **Completion of CWC 2007 preparations.**

Generic lessons in Best Practices

- **Before:** Lessons related to actions to reduce the impact, notification and being able to respond.
- **During:** Lessons related to evacuation and actions during the time community is disorganized and basic infrastructural services not functioning.
- **After:** Lessons related to repair and restoration of productive systems.

Lessons learnt in best practices – The Tourism Sector

- Replace complacency with awareness of the importance of disaster preparedness activities.
- Establish MOU's between government and international agencies.
- Sector's disaster plan must complement national disaster plan.
- Periodic assessment of sector's readiness to cope with disasters.

Lessons learnt in best practices – The Tourism Sector

- Adequate preparation of business units to ensure continuity of operations after the impact.
- Improved communication infrastructure.
- Social wellness of industry workers must be addressed simultaneously with the provision of relief supplies.
- Need for partnerships and collaboration.

Lessons learnt in best practices – The Tourism Sector

- Need for specific initiatives (financing, training, investment promotion, etc.).
- Proper correlation between property values, types and levels of insurance coverage.
- Minimal bureaucracy.