



REMARKS DELIVERED BY MAJOR CHEVALIER JACKSON, CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGER, ODPM

DONATION OF FIRST AID KITS TO MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Mrs Hermia Tyson-Cuffie, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Community Development**
- **Ms. Susan Corbett, Director of Community Development, Ministry of Community Development**
- **Ms. Chantal Braithwaite, Training and Education Specialist, ODPM**
- **Mr. Dike Noel, Public Information Specialist, ODPM**
- **Employees of the Ministry of Community Development**
- **Employees of the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management**
- **Members of the Media**

Good morning!

This year, 2010, can be described as a year with a significant number of hazard impacts, which have disrupted several countries and their respective cities. We know only too well about the earthquakes of Haiti and Chile and even more recently, New Zealand; citizens of Pakistan, Eastern Europe, Mozambique and other parts of Africa have fallen victims to floods from heavy rainfall; Menacing forest fires in Russia and California have demolished homes and destabilised communities; volcanic eruptions in Indonesia and Iceland have had untold severe consequences and toxic sludge in Hungary, which is still being managed by the Hungarian authorities, is already threatening the lives of citizens in that country.

Regionally, we continue to see and feel the effects of strong hurricanes, tropical storms and unusually heavy rainfall with subsequent flooding. Here in Trinidad and Tobago, while we have escaped the ravages of a Hurricane thus far, you will no doubt recall our experiences of significantly high levels of water from short but intense periods of rainfall.

All these hazard impacts have caused immense human suffering and substantial damage to sustainable development. Climatic conditions and a variety of disasters are changing our world and so, we have to adapt to these changes by making our cities and communities (more) resilient against these undesirable phenomena.

Yesterday, Wednesday October 13, Trinidad and Tobago, along with the rest of the world celebrated United Nations *International Day for Disaster Reduction*. The theme for this year's campaign is "**Making Cities Resilient: My City is getting ready!**" The ODPM noted the importance of this day, not only because it is commensurate with the organisation's mandate and goals, but it is a day to remind all of us of the need to develop safe and resilient communities. The ODPM

acknowledges that the achievement of these milestones still requires a considerable amount of work, and so the strategy adopted is a *bottom up approach*. This approach seeks to build capacity and resilience so that our communities, cities and ultimately our nation can become more safe and resilient.

ODPM commemorated this important day, by conducting a series of projects during this course of this week with activities such as media interviews, the production of print and radio Public Service Announcements, conduct of a "Secure the Home Programme" with Habitat for Humanity, a First Aid and CPR Training Session with the TT Red Cross, a Two-day workshop for 100 of the nation's primary school teachers and the donation of these First Aid Kits.

At a recent UN Assembly meeting, the Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon stated that **"We must not delay. If we are too slow to adapt to climate change, we risk making disasters even more catastrophic than they need to be."**

Today, the ODPM donates these First Aid kits to the Ministry of Community Development as a step toward building community resilience. This gesture is one that empowers the Ministry of Community Development to enhance the communities in which it serves. Additionally, the Ministry must now advocate that First Aid/CPR Training become an integral aspect of its community-based initiatives. While we at the ODPM understand that we must do more to enhance community resilience and capacity, it is our hope that together we can assist in minimising the horrendous effects of disasters within our beautiful twin island Republic.

Let's continue to prepare our citizens and build a consciousness of disaster preparedness and resilience!!!

I thank you.