

# CONCEPT NOTE

## Webinar Series for National Disaster Coordinators and Key Stakeholders

### *Updating the provisions on international humanitarian assistance for the Model CDM Policy and Legislation*

**Dates: Oct 1, 3, 16, 2024**

## BACKGROUND

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Within the last decade, countries in the Caribbean have experienced dramatic increases in the frequency and intensity of disasters requiring external humanitarian assistance, including requests from within and outside the region.

At the same time, there have also been increases in the number and variety of humanitarian actors, both domestic and international, actively working in the Caribbean space, and making themselves available to provide humanitarian assistance to disaster-affected countries. While this has provided more opportunities for meeting the humanitarian needs of disaster-affected populations, it has also strained the legal, physical, economic and operational infrastructure of Caribbean countries, which are generally not scaled to receive large inflows of humanitarian goods, personnel and equipment following a major disaster.

In September 2022, a Regional International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) Working Group was established as a joint initiative between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to provide Caribbean-specific perspectives, insights and recommendations for improving the regional regulatory framework for the facilitation and coordination of international disaster relief, based on international best practices such as the *IDRL Guidelines*. The IDRL Working Group is now established under the Work Programme Development Review Sub-Committee of the CDEMA Technical Advisory Committee.

As part of the IDRL Working Group's workplan, it produced a *Regional IDRL Gap Analysis Report*<sup>1</sup> with recommendations on how to improve the current regulatory framework for international humanitarian assistance in the Caribbean. Based on the report's recommendations, the IDRL Working Group also proposed new provisions to the Model CDM Policy and Legislation to strengthen international humanitarian assistance. The IDRL Gap Analysis Report and its recommendations and the proposed new provisions on international humanitarian assistance were presented and endorsed at the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CDEMA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on April 17, 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> The draft report may be accessed at: <https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/node/1005>.

Specifically, the TAC acknowledged the need to address the legal and policy gaps in IDRL in CDEMA Participating States, and noted the robust approach that was undertaken to develop the IDRL Gap Analysis Report and the proposed new provisions to the Model CDM Policy and Legislation. The approach for developing the report and the proposed new provisions included global and Caribbean research, surveys, consultations, including 2 Caribbean workshops (2021 and 2023), focus groups, interviews with CDEMA Participating States and review and guidance by members of the IDRL Working Group. Additionally, the TAC agreed that the next steps for finalization of the proposed new provisions should include addressing comments already received, ascertaining further feedback from all National Disaster Offices, and wider circulation to Attorneys General Offices in each Participating State for further consideration and review.

Notwithstanding the financial and human resource limitations of states, it is recognized that states continue to work towards updating their disaster risk management legal and policy frameworks. The Bahamas and Grenada have recently passed new legislation, while Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana and Belize are among those that are currently engaged in a policy and legislative reform process. Caribbean countries may also benefit from the experiences of countries outside the region like Ecuador, that recently passed comprehensive disaster risk management legislation.

## WEBINAR SERIES ON UPDATING IDRL PROVISIONS FOR THE CDM MODEL POLICY AND LEGISLATION

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The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) in collaboration with the IDRL Working Group of the Work Programme Development Review Sub-Committee and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is pleased to present a webinar series for National Disaster Coordinators entitled, ***“Updating the provisions on international humanitarian assistance for the Model CDM Policy and Legislation”***.

This webinar series is being conducted within the framework of the Climate-Smart Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction Project, funded through the Japanese Red Cross, and within the context of decisions arising from the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CDEMA TAC, where the proposed new provisions on international humanitarian assistance for the Model CDM Policy and Legislation were presented. The TAC supported the recommended IDRL provisions for the Model CDM Policy and Legislation for further consideration and review by CDEMA Participating States.

In this regard, the webinars seek to present in detail the proposed new model provisions on international humanitarian assistance and how they should be interpreted and operationalized within a CDM regulatory framework. Additionally, each webinar will include a space for National Disaster Offices and other relevant stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposed revisions in view of their specific country contexts. It will also be a forum for them to share their own challenges, successes and lessons learned in developing CDM policy and legislation. This may include practical experiences in stakeholder engagement, resource mobilization, defining priorities and strategies, drafting and consultation.

Recognising that National Disaster Offices and their respective Coordinators are usually the main drivers behind the development and implementation of national CDM policy and legislation, this webinar series seeks to equip participants with information and resources needed to support their respective legislative and policy review processes while also sharing good practices and lessons learned. Other stakeholders that also have a role in the system for providing international humanitarian assistance will also be invited to participate, including customs, and ports of entry. Often the provisions for disaster relief are vested in laws other than disaster management which are also the responsibility of these other stakeholders. Awareness must therefore be built and

feedback gathered from these stakeholders will also support the adoption of new or updating of current provisions.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

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Main objectives:

- Promote and sensitize to National Disaster Offices and key national stakeholders on the new provisions on international humanitarian assistance (IDRL) of the Model CDM Policy and Model CDM Legislation that have been endorsed by the CDEMA Technical Advisory Committee.
- Provide a forum for NDOs and key stakeholders to give feedback on the proposed provisions.
- Engage in peer-to-peer exchanges on developing and operationalizing a CDM legislative and policy framework, including sharing experiences on defining priorities and strategies, stakeholder engagement, resource mobilization, and drafting and consultation.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

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- Participants have a clear understanding of the rationale and content of the new model provisions on international humanitarian assistance, its relevance within the CDM regulatory framework, and how the provisions should be interpreted and applied within a national context.
- Feedback on the recommended provisions and commitment to provide national level feedback to inform the revision of the model policy and legislation as well as to inform specific country processes for the development or updating of IDRL provisions.
- Participants benefit from practical experiences and lessons learned from other countries in the region that have recently gone through or are in the process of going through policy and legislative reform, including the sharing of information and resources regarding their approaches to CDM policy and legislative reform.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

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- National Disaster Coordinators of CDEMA Participating States and/or their Deputies
- Red Cross National Societies
- Key stakeholders- ports of entry, customs.
- IDRL Working Group
- Specially invited guests for peer to peer exchanges will include:
  - Ecuador National Disaster Office (TBD)
  - Ecuadorian Red Cross (TBD)
  - Japanese Red Cross Society

## FORMAT

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The webinars will be conducted over Zoom as a series of 3 sessions. The first webinar will focus on the main findings and recommendations of the IDRL Gap Analysis, and an overview of the proposed new IDRL provisions for the CDM policy and legislation. The second webinar will be a continuation of the discussion on the proposed IDRL provisions, where participants will have the opportunity to engage with the facilitator. The third webinar will be a facilitated peer to peer discussion with National Societies and National Disaster Offices.

## REGISTRATION

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The registration information and Zoom link will be shared with invitations.

## CONTACT

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For more information or questions about the event, please contact:

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