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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2019**

**For Immediate Release**

### ***NATIONAL AGENCIES STAND READY IN THE EVENT OF PIPARO MUD VOLCANO ERUPTION***

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM), a Division of the Ministry of National Security, in collaboration with the Disaster Management Units (DMUs) of the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government and other key national stakeholders, simulated a night-time eruption of the Piparo Mud Volcano. This simulation was conducted on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at the Piparo Community Centre.

This Tabletop Exercise was a step-up from the day simulation that was held one week ago on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The exercise commenced with a 2 a.m. eruption of the mud volcano that activated the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and national response and recovery agencies. To create realism, a 3D Model of the Piparo Mud Volcano and environs, which was constructed by the Engineer Battalion of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment, allowed participants to test and assess the national incident management system to real-life scenarios. Critical areas that were tested included alerts and warning, response and evacuation, search and rescue, air operations, security, traffic management, medical response, recovery and shelter management operations.

At the conclusion of the exercise, Ms. Candice Morharsingh, committee member of the Piparo Village Council, expressed how elated she was to witness the level of preparation that was being undertaken for the safety of her village. She expressed her sincere gratitude on behalf of the Piparo community for the efforts and continuous work that was being done.

The CEO of the ODPM, Major General (Ret'd) Rodney Smart thank all in attendance for their in-depth planning and preparation, and felt confident that the national agencies were now in a much better position to respond to an eruption of the Piparo Mud Volcano. He noted that

through the ODPM's various coordination efforts, preparation was enhanced and great strides had been accomplished. He thanked the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) for the installation of the lights at the mud volcano and with Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT), for addressing the leaning utility poles in the area. Additionally, he extended his thanks to the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Gary Griffith, for donating four (4) sirens, as well as the Director of the CCTV Unit of the Ministry of National Security, for the soon-to-be installed surveillance cameras that together will enhance the village's early warning system.

Attending the Tabletop exercise were the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the ODPM Major General (Ret'd) Rodney Smart; ODPM's Regional Coordinator and Exercise Director, Mr. Eric Mackie; Planning Development Officer, Mr. Anwar Baksh; Representatives of the Piparo Village Council; Divisions of the Ministry of National Security inclusive of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force; Trinidad and Tobago Police Service; Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service; the Princes Town Regional Corporation and the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation; the Town and Country Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning; Ministry of Works and Transport; Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT); and the Red Cross Society of Trinidad and Tobago.

The ODPM remains committed to boosting the capabilities of first responders agencies and building the resilience of the Piparo community through continuous partnership, dialogue, planning and training.

## Photos and Captions



**Photo Caption 1:** Chief Executive Officer of the ODPM, Major General (Ret'd) Rodney Smart analysing maps of Piparo with stakeholders during the day-time simulation in the event of an eruption.



**Photo Caption 2-** Chief Executive Officer of the ODPM, Major General (Ret'd) Rodney Smart; Director of Exercise Operations of the Piparo Initiative, Mr. Eric Mackie and Planning and Development Officer of the ODPM, Mr. Anwar Baksh photographed with key stakeholders at the night-time simulation exercise.



**Photo Caption 3:** Director of Exercise Operations of the Piparo Initiative, Mr. Eric Mackie leads stakeholders through the night-time simulation exercise using a 3D Model of the physical representation of the Piparo Community.

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