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MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 15th May 2020

For Immediate Release

ODPM'S 2020 HURRICANE SEASON AND COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS INITIATIVES

On **Thursday 14th May 2020**, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) hosted its second strategy planning and preparation workshop for the upcoming Wet/Hurricane Season for key national disaster management agencies.

The interactive training session, which blended online and live participants at the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) in Tacarigua, focused on a Whole-of-Society approach to improving national disaster readiness and response. The discussions were shaped by the Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Services' prediction earlier this week, that the country should expect an above-normal Wet/Hurricane Season. This season officially commences on June 1, 2020 and lasts for 6 months until November 30, 2020.

This year's preparations have been made particularly challenging due to the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using this as a backdrop, participants were presented with various scenarios that were initiated by a devastating hurricane impacting both islands and causing widespread damage. Attending the workshop were representatives from the Defence Force; Police Service; Fire Service; Disaster Management Units of the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government; Tobago Emergency Management Agency, Meteorological Services; and the Water Resources Agency.

Participants were required to present their organisations' pre, during and post impact preparation and response actions to the various accompanying hazards such as torrential rainfall, storm surges, coastal erosion, landslides, flooding and power outages. Throughout the process, peers critically and creatively analysed each other's plans leading in the end, to a more integrated and synergistic approach to disaster management at the national level.

At the conclusion of the session, the CEO of the ODPM, Major General (Ret'd) Rodney Smart, thanked the participants for their contributions and challenged them to upgrade their agencies' emergency plans, standard operational procedures and practices, ahead of the impending Wet/Hurricane Season.

Photo and Caption



Photo and Caption 1: CEO of the ODPM Major General (Ret'd) Rodney Smart along with key stakeholders, discuss pre, during and post impact preparation and response actions, following a Hurricane impact video, on Thursday 14th May 2020 at the ODPM's National Emergency Operations Centre.



Photo and caption 2: CEO of the ODPM Major General (Ret'd) Rodney Smart and key stakeholders engage in critical analysis of various hazard impact scenarios on Thursday 14th May 2020 at the ODPM's National Emergency Operations Centre.

ENDS

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