



PRESS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Early preparations key to coping with natural hazards in small islands

NEW YORK, 10 May: The Chairman of the Bureau of the Alliance of Small Island States and Permanent Representative of Grenada to the United Nations, Angus Friday, has emphasized the role of advocacy and early warning systems in facing up to natural hazards.

Speaking at a discussion on “**Developing Resilience to Natural Hazards in Small Island Developing States**” hosted by Anwarul K. Chowdhury, the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Mr. Friday said that advocacy as well as appropriate legislation and contingency plans can go a long way in preparing a nation for natural hazards.

Mr. Friday also highlighted the importance of having in place communication and security arrangements in case of an emergency.

“Emergency radio communication is important not only for mobilizing emergency response but also lifting the national psyche,” he said.

Ms. Elina Palm of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction made a presentation on initiatives being undertaken to build resilience to natural hazards in the context of the Hyogo Protocol Framework of Action.

She highlighted the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery – a fund set up by the World Bank and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to support efforts to be prepared for and to mitigate the impact of natural hazards.

She noted that the experience of some communities during the Asian Tsunami of 2004 had demonstrated that a community doesn’t necessarily need a lot of financial resources to prepare itself for a natural hazard. She cited a community of 80,000 in one of the most hit areas that registered minimal deaths because information on how to survive such a hazard had been engrained in its culture for many years.

The UN High Representative, Anwarul K Chowdhury, encouraged the Small Island Developing States to take advantage of the available international support to strengthen their capacity to deal with natural hazards.

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