**Mission of the RR/RC and DRR to the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands**

**21 – 25 July 2014**

**Key Issues and Next Steps**

1. **BAHAMAS**
2. Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Date: 21 July 2014

Attendees: Mr. Philip Miller, Permanent Secretary; Mr. Eugene Torchon-Newry, Foreign Service Officer; Mr. Frank Davis, First Assistant Secretary

Key Points:

1. Briefing on meeting in Turkey to which the Bahamas mission (Tishka) was present
2. Facilitate presentation of RC’s credentials to the Bahamas to determine how we work with the Bahamas Government to help with its national priorities.
3. UN Supported National Consultations in 2013
4. Follow-up on whether support is needed for SIDS conference in Samoa
5. Formalize relationship with UN Country Team in Bahamas to strategically provide more services with more cohesiveness and more synergy
6. How UN can support the Government in Post-2015 and MDG Acceleration Framework
7. Clarifications provided on link between UNDP and UNEP.
8. Support in tax reform through UNDP Fiscal Simulation Tool

Next Steps:

1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs to explore possibilities for formalizing relationships with UN
2. UN to follow-up on possible financial support for SIDS conference in Samoa
3. UNDP to explore possibilities for MDG assessment + MAF + National Development Plan
4. RC to organize possible meeting of UN Agencies having activities in the Bahamas
5. Ministry of Environment & Housing

Date: 21 July 2014

Attendees: Ms. Camille F. Johnson, PS; Mr. David L. Cates, Under Secretary, other technical officers

Key Points:

1. Brief on Marine Protected Areas, a project undertaken by the Ministry
2. Climate change and disaster preparedness
3. Cabinet has approved SNC with small edits
4. UNEP visits Bahamas twice a year
5. Ministry is not sure that GEF V funds have been fully utilized
6. Problems of registering the Bahamas for the SIDS
7. MDG assessment undertaken by Health Ministry in 2010
8. UNDP can help with comprehensive MDG Assessment + possible MAF +Fiscal toolkit
9. UNDP is not on the preferred list of Agencies for GEF projects
10. TNC Prodoc is ready. Not sure it will meet the deadlines.

Next steps:

1. Follow-up on possible financial support for SIDS conference in Samoa
2. Ministry to send financial report on SNC as soon as possible
3. Ministry to clarify why UNDP is not on the list of preferred Agencies
4. Ministry to clarify whether all GEF V funding has been utilized
5. RR/RC to organize a meeting with Mr. Weech to continue conversation
6. UNDP to follow-up on SIDS registration technical problems
7. UNDP to follow-up on timing for TNC, should it be requested to do so.
8. National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)

Date: 22 July 2014

Attendees: Captain Russell, Mr. Luke Bethel

Key Points:

1. NEMA presented how it is organized and how it is preparing the country for disasters. Issues of challenges of being an archipelago, communications, funding, access, etc. were discussed.
2. Northern focal point for disaster was presented and includes Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, Bahamas, and Belize)
3. RC discussed HCT and possible inclusion of NEMA in monthly meeting
4. RC discussed inviting Captain Russell to Jamaica to share experiences
5. Issues related to BCP were discussed and RC promised to seek support.

Next steps:

1. Western Caribbean Donor Group to be explored by RC starting with the 5 countries above
2. UNDP to reach out to Haiti to encourage their continued participation to northern focal group.
3. UN to send CVs of resource people for BCP
4. PAHO

Date: 22 July 2014

Attendee: Dr. Dr. Gerry Eijkemans, PAHO Representative

Key Points:

1. RC briefed PAHO on the various meetings
2. Issues related to formalization of UNCT arrangement and PAHO cooperation strategy were discussed
3. Issues related to Dr. Bain, Buggery Law, HIV/AIDS, MSM, Human Rights in Jamaica were discussed
4. PAHO indicated increased youth unemployment, lower life expectancy amongst the poor, human trafficking
5. PAHO indicated that UNHCR national officer will be hosted in their office

Next Steps:

1. RC to explore possibilities for organizing meeting of UN HoAs with mandate for the Bahamas to discuss joint initiatives for the country
2. SGP to seek areas for work in poor communities, particularly in waste water management and other GEF conventions (Mercury convention, etc.)
3. Find out how the Clinton Foundation is working in the Bahamas
4. US Embassy

Date: 22 July 2014

Attendees: Ms. Lisa Johnson, Charge d’Affaires; Ms. Brown, Acting Deputy Chief of Mission

Key Points:

1. Foreign assistance is limited
2. Small grant programmes not more than $15,000
3. Areas of intervention: law enforcement, anti-drug and anti-gang activities, migration
4. Education exchanges in several areas including gender equality, disability
5. Small grant to IOM for traffic-in-person
6. Possible partnerships for security trainings under Caribbean Basin Security Initiative

Next steps:

1. US Embassy to share list of upcoming trainings to which Jamaicans can possibly join
2. RR/RC to discuss with US Embassy in Kingston potential partnership areas with the Bahamas, especially on security trainings
3. RR/RC to discuss with Gary Rex small arms proposal UNDP submitted on behalf of MNS
4. Ministry of Finance

Date: 22 July 2014

Attendee: Mr. John Rolle, Financial Secretary

Key Points:

1. Environment and education high on the development agenda
2. In the Finance Ministry, key areas are fiscal consolidation, public financial reform, tax policy on the revenue side, investment in information systems
3. Technical assistance and capacity development is needed in the area of debt management and revenue analysis and forecasting
4. Ministry is working on UN and IMF categorization to extract financial information in order to have an internationally comparable view of public accounts
5. Fiscal analysis is being done by IADB. There may be need for further technical assistance.
6. National Development Plan is being undertaken by the Office of the PM and funded by IADB
7. Statistics Department has an interest in monitoring the MDGs with the help of the Ministry of Health. Many need support.
8. Government may have possibility to finance some of the activities where they need technical expertise that is not readily available to them and that can be brought by UNDP.

Next Steps:

1. Identify areas where the Government and UNDP can work together (including public finance issues, data and statistics)
2. MDG Assessment, MAF and NDP support can be provided by UNDP
3. Fiscal analysis tool can also be explored
4. Health Ministry

Date: 22 July 2014

Attendee: Ms. Hyacinth Winder Pratt, PS; Dr. Gerry Eijkemans, PAHO Representative

Key Points:

1. Ministry of Health responsible to monitor only MDGs related to health
2. Several health areas are lagging behind, such as, infant mortality (target is 8/1000 births by 2015. Is now 19/1000 births)
3. Possible MAF area can be identified in the health sector
4. Issues of coordination of all the MDGs were found important for the country’s National Development Plan

Next Steps:

1. Government to assign a coordinating body to monitor the MDGs.
2. RR/RC to write to PS Miller on above and possible support from UNDP
3. **TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS**
4. Ministry of Border Control and Labor

Date: 24 July 2014

Attendees: Hon. Min. R. Don-Hue Gardiner; Virginia Clerveaux, Director Disaster Unit

Key Points:

1. Migration issues – Larger than usual influx of Haitian migration and new Cuban migration
2. Will sign MOU with Cuban Ambassador in Kingston in mid-October
3. Working on MOU with Haitian Government
4. Worked with UNHCR to help with Cuban migrants
5. Working on voluntary repatriation and asylum agreement through IOM grant. Some Government funding assistance will be provided in repatriation. Will need IOM support with resettlement.
6. 2% of national budget utilized in repatriating Haitians
7. Drafted immigration law with inputs from UNHCR
8. Also reached out to CARICOM in ensuring better secured border
9. Increased challenges in disaster and increased need of shelters due to “invisible” vulnerable groups
10. National debt is approximately $270 m. Assistance received from the British Government by providing guarantee to help refinance their debt.
11. Not eligible for loan until 2016 after they have finished repayment of their debt
12. Considered an Associate member of CARICOM
13. National Development Plan in progress. Hope to launch it by the end of their fiscal year (March 2015). Will look for technical assistance.
14. Use of Radar tracking station to track illegal immigrants. Hope to use Bahamian vessels to turn away illegal boats.
15. Possibility of acquire farmlands in Haiti and send labor to go there.
16. Haitian goods would have to be packaged better to attract businesses.
17. Premier and Minister of Finance

Date: 24 July 2014

Attendees: Premiers, Minister of Finance, PS Energy, Virginia Clerveaux

Key Points:

1. Interested in re-engaging with UNDP
2. Challenges: Financial crisis emerging from global recession; unemployment; capacity; training; skills availability
3. Job creation though direct foreign investment
4. See great potential in small business development
5. Began to work with EU on SME programs and began to develop new policies in this area
6. There may be a need for skills audit
7. Poverty Assessment Report has been done by CDB, covering the period up to 2012. Focus was on poverty, cost of living, access to homes, illegal migration
8. Need to safeguard environment, working with CARICOM
9. Challenges linked to climate change, especially the threat on tourism
10. SIDS in Samoa
11. High energy costs and impact on environment
12. First disaster bill was passed
13. MDGs: Need to reassess HIV status; however, access to care and medication is good. Possible issues with transmission and discrimination. Maternal mortality is under control, except for the illegal population who do not seek treatment for fear of being repatriated. Primary healthcare system is well structure but may need to be improved. Education access is good from early childhood. Vocation training is also available. However, there may be a need to assess the MDG progress across the board.
14. Tourism: Negative impact of climate change, health, disaster, environment
15. TCI will lead healthy tourism product concept for the Caribbean
16. Support in technical expertise in MDG assessment, MAF, NDP
17. Some of the funded programmes can be implemented by UNDP
18. Fiscal simulation
19. Knowledge sharing – best practices
20. Issues of inequality were discussed. Minister of Finance proposed a categorization of countries based on GNP rather than GDP
21. Unfinished work on Social Economic Development Plan
22. No Policy Unit anywhere in the Government, leading to a need for training in Policy development
23. Need for capacity building in debt management
24. Support in drafting Energy Policy
25. Technical assistance for writing proposals

Next Steps:

1. Government to identify areas where they may have resources where technical assistance could be needed (low hanging fruits)
2. UNDP to work on a MOU with the Government
3. UNDP to seek better understanding of the status of Overseas Territory
4. UNDP to assist in the area of capacity development upon request from the Government
5. UNDP to help with writing proposals based on a cost-recovery scheme, as requested by the Government
6. UNDP could also provide support in the area of procurement
7. Possible technical capacity for MDG assessment, fiscal tool simulation, NDP, as requested by the Government
8. UNDP can get ILO involved in skills audit
9. UNDP to explore how it can support participation of Government to SIDS.
10. Various Stakeholders

Date: 24 July 2014

Attendees: Regulatory body for utilities; Land Planning Unit; Planning Department; Community Development; Public Works

Key Points:

1. Challenges identified: human resource capacity; lack of resources; legislative and regulatory reform; record keeping and data collection and interpretation in several areas, including disaster
2. Severe Issues: informal settlement (squatting)
3. Low capacity to deal with Crown Land issues. Ordinance and regulations are in place but no staff capacity to enforce them
4. Existing Budget to develop National Physical Development Plan, but may need support
5. Issues related to high cost of energy, road maintenance, street lightning
6. CDG assisted with flood risk management study. Support will be needed to implement the recommendations that came out of the report
7. In terms of seismic risk, there is a no systematic use of seismographic analyses
8. Energy policy drafted, important to improve environmental sustainability and improve energy security
9. Support needed in hazard mapping and storm surge modelling.
10. No Met department. Relies on Bahamas for info

Next steps:

1. Identify low hanging fruits where human and institutional capacity can be strengthened
2. Government to communicate to UNDP where they have some funding in which they will need technical assistance to deliver
3. Find out how TCI can benefit from Cuba’s expertise in RRMC
4. UNDP to share with TCI opportunities where resources may be mobilized
5. UNDP can provide help, at cost, in finding consultants for example to write proposals
6. UNDP has a knowledge base (Teamworks) where best practices can be shared
7. Meeting with Governor

Date: 25 Jul 2014

Attendees: His Excellency Peter Beckhingham, Governor; Sophie Mitchell, Deputy Director, Office for Disaster

Key Points:

1. Governor identified several priorities: NDP; migration issues, particularly concerning illegal Haitian immigrants; ongoing prosecution related to corruption in the past; unemployment (more than 15%), particularly youth.
2. More than 70% of the 300,000 inflow of tourism is high end
3. Private jet is the third highest in the Caribbean
4. Problem of capacity and resources
5. Ease up on immigration to identify how they can leverage good immigration to address their own capacity gaps
6. UK Government/DFID provides approximately Euros 1.5 m in technical assistance
7. UNDP has a country level agreement
8. Possible areas where UNDP can provide support to TCI: technical assistance to deliver grants, procurement support. tax analysis and simulation, NDP support, MDG Assessment/MAF; economic advice in a professional manner.

Next Steps:

1. Governor to discuss with Premier and Minister of Finance technical assistance proposal from UNDP
2. UN relationship with OTs
3. Identify Capacity Development opportunities
4. Meeting with Finance Ministry

Date: 25 July 2014

Attendees: Minister of Finance; PS Finance; Revenue commissioner; Under-Secretary, Investment; Under-Secretary, Trade; Personal Assistant to the Minister

Key Points:

1. A proposal is being prepared by the Disaster Office to access $400K – 600 K from CDB. Deadline is 12 August
2. RR briefed the team on previous day discussions in which it was proposed that the Government identifies areas where there are resources that needed technical capacity to be delivered. UNDP can link TCI to expertise, assist in procurement while providing quality assurance. UNDP can also leverage south-south partnership and share information on areas of interest, using its knowledge platform, Teamworks.
3. MDGs need to be monitored
4. Currently have a country programme with EU under EDF 10. $15 m in grant under direct budget support to improve business climate
5. EU EFD 11. Access to $ 20 m focusing mostly on transportation
6. Smart immigration to address capacity gaps

Next Steps:

1. Follow-up on MOU to frame UNDP’s intervention
2. Communicate with PS on cooperation with UNDP
3. Government to identify where there are resources and need for capacity building and communicate same to UNDP
4. UNDP to explore possibility for doing a MDG assessment
5. Ministry of Environment

Date: 24 July 2014

Attendees: Minister of Environment, Ms. Virginia Clerveaux

Key Points:

1. Issues related to climate change, engagement of the Private Sector
2. Access to climate change adaptation funds
3. SIDS meeting in Samoa

Next Steps:

1. UNDP to share techniques of using tyres to prevent erosion