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## Caribbean Urban Seismic Risk Forum 18-21 September 2016, Haiti

### I. INTRODUCTION

In March 2015, 186 United Nations Member States including the Republic of Haiti adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 which was later endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. This framework targets Disaster Risk Reduction for the next 15 years at a global scale, by proposing a multi-risk and multi-stakeholder approach with special attention to vulnerable populations and by calling for integrating risk prevention and mitigation into national public policies. The four priority actions of the Sendai Framework reflect the strengthening of risk knowledge and governance as well as investing in DRR and enhancing disaster preparedness.

More recently, in November 2015, the global “Climate Change” Conference in Paris highlighted that one of the main consequences of climate change is higher risks and more frequent and intense disasters (flooding, mass movements, hurricanes) and the associated casualties and damages.

Already before the adoption of the “Sendai Framework” and the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, Haiti initiated profound and inclusive discussions to include risk prevention and mitigation in the National Strategic Land Use Plan and the National Poverty Reduction Plan in 2008. Similarly, a road map for reduction of seismic risk was adopted and implemented in 2012.

In addition, an ‘Understanding Risk Forum’ was organized in July 2014, under the auspices of the Directorate of the Civil Protection (DPC), which brought together international and Haitian experts on risk management. This Forum “Understanding risk: Innovate to Prevent” addressed the following topics: Risk Knowledge and its integration into development programmes and projects of the country, with focus on land use planning and community resilience, and the establishment of an institutional and financial environment enabling risk considerations. Its broader goal was also to contribute to the development of a culture of risk and to the development of research and specialized studies in Disaster Risk Management. The Forum was followed by a meeting with countries from the South with the same objectives.

The 2016 Caribbean Urban Seismic Risk Forum is building on previous efforts in Haiti as well as in the Caribbean region. It aims to address challenges identified in the Understanding Risk Forum: the urgent need to expand risk knowledge and to broaden the discussion to all hazards. It further reflects recommendations of the Regional Seismic and Tsunami Risk workshop organized by CDEMA in Jamaica in March 2015, and the Seismic Risk Conference which took place in Cuba in June 2016.





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For Haiti, the 2016 Forum is being organized at an opportune time because sustainable development cannot be achieved without a profound change in our way of building and land-using urban areas. The meeting of scientists, institutional actors, technical and financial partners will harmonize actions. As a result, the forum will facilitate sharing of different lessons learnt, good practices and experiences of the participating countries to design common directives for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Caribbean.

## II. CONTEXT

Devastating earthquakes such as in 2010 in Haiti and in Chile or more recently in Ecuador 2016, are tragic reminders of the geological conditions: Latin American and Caribbean countries are constantly exposed to seismic hazards. This is caused by a constant drift of tectonic plates. Therefore, the population of the region constantly exposed. It is the mandate of governments, international organizations, local authorities as well as the responsibility of each individual to reduce vulnerability.

A wide range of solutions are provided through research and experiences such as proper land use planning, the establishment and use of building codes, public awareness campaigns and the establishment of mechanisms and procedures to increase resilience planning at all levels (public sector, private sector and individuals). The efficient implementation of prevention and mitigation strategies has proven effective in countries also subject to earthquakes (e.g. Peru, Chile, Ecuador, Japan, and California in the USA).

As it relates to the Caribbean region, the 2014-2024 Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy provides the framework for DRR implementation for the 18 Participating States of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). This strategy is being aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The progress made in the field of urban seismic risk is of high relevance towards the implementation of the CDM Strategy. CDEMA in particular contributed by developing the legal and institutional framework in conjunction with other technical agencies, such the Seismic Research Centre.

Over the past decades, Haiti has improved its preparedness related to hydro-meteorological hazards. The 2010 earthquake stimulated efforts towards enhancing knowledge related to natural hazards in general and seismic risk in particular, both in Haiti and in the Caribbean region. The aim has been to increase the knowledge and understanding of seismic risk as well as the resilience of the populations to disasters. One concrete result is the Seismic Roadmap adopted by the Government of Haiti in 2012, which contributed to the progress in terms of preparation.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of risks in order to develop or adapt appropriate tools and mechanisms for the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction in urban and land use planning and to maintain the achievements regarding risk prevention and knowledge in the region. For example, six years after the 2010 disaster in





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Haiti, the investment in the field of risk knowledge and prevention at the national level is rapidly decreasing as a result of other competing priorities while on the other hand some donors' interest has increased in this area.

The Caribbean Urban Seismic Risk Forum is a unique opportunity to gather experts, technicians, civil society representatives as well as local ,national and international decision-makers to share knowledge, experiences and innovative tools in the field of knowledge, prevention, management and earthquake response; to capitalize on experiences at the regional level (problems encountered, good practices, learnt lessons etc.) regarding risk reduction; and to encourage exchanges and the development of improved cooperation between stakeholders on the regional scale. The forum will facilitate the preparation of a regional roadmap for seismic risk reduction.

### III. Objectives

The Caribbean Urban Seismic Risk Forum provides the opportunity to gather local national, regional and international and technicians and experts in the field of seismic risk, in which experiences and, tools will be exchanged regarding risk knowledge, management, communication and prevention and seismic risk in particular. More specifically, the Forum will facilitate:

- Present advances and good practices as well as experiences about seismic risk reduction in the Caribbean region;
- Strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms related seismic risk reduction;
- Identify opportunities to advance in seismic risk prevention and reduction in the Caribbean.

In addition, the forum offers the opportunity to strengthen awareness among policy-makers to maintain the advances and achievements related to risk knowledge and prevention and to enable an environment that supports the inclusion of risk in national development processes.

The Forum is organized around three main themes:

1. Understanding Seismic Risk.
2. Education and Awareness raising for seismic risk reduction.
3. Seismic Risk Governance: Institutional frameworks, structures and mechanisms for disaster risk reduction.





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### IV. Expected Outcomes

The main outcomes of the Caribbean Urban Seismic Risk Forum will be as follows:

1. Experiences between countries, good practices, tools and other instruments shared;
2. Regional road map on seismic risk reduction in urban areas in the Caribbean defined and approved.

The main indicators for the success of the Forum will be:

- i. Participation of different sectors from national and regional level.
- ii. Identify main recommendations to ensure appropriate follow up.

### V. Organization of the Forum

The Government of Haiti will host the Caribbean Urban Seismic Risk Forum which is jointly organized by the Ministry of Interior (the Civil Protection Direction, DPC), the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation (MPCE), the Directorate for Land Use Planning of the Ministry of Civil Engineering (LNBTP, BME and SEMENAH included), the CIAT and UCLBP, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the United Nations Development Program in Haiti (UNDP), Alliance for risk management and business continuity (AGERCA), COOPI –Cooperazione Internazionale, and the World Bank.

The meeting is organized in close collaboration with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) as well as the Seismic Research Center (SRC) of the University of the West Indies.

The forum will be held at the Marriott Hotel in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, from 18 to 21 September 2016. The organization of the forum was possible thanks to support by ECHO, Swiss Cooperation, USAID OFDA and the private sector.

Exchanges will be facilitated through three special spaces:

1. Main meeting room: three days with plenary presentations on specific themes
2. Round table discussions: one specific round table for each theme (one round table per day after the plenary presentations)
3. An exhibition area dedicated to present and exchanges throughout the forum
4. Field visits
5. Film-projection room



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### VI. Participants

The forum is aimed at a well-informed audience:

- Local, National, regional and international experts and technicians in risk prevention;
- Representatives of the Haitian government and regional delegates
- Donor agencies
- Urban planning and construction professionals
- Local government representatives
- NGO representatives
- Private sector representatives
- Consultants, public and private facilities
- Academics, Professors and Students
- Journalists