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PRESS RELEASE

The European Union is providing the Caribbean region with 20 million euros for disaster management.

The main purpose of the ACP-EU CARIFORUM Natural Disaster Risk Management Programme is to support the new 2014-2022 CARIFORUM Disaster Management Strategy. The five year programme is to be implemented by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency and the Caribbean Development Bank.

The grant funding is expected to strengthen the capacity of national disaster offices and the CDEMA co-ordinating unit in preparation for the implementation of the CDM strategy. In addition early warning national risk profiling and community-based disaster risk reduction systems are expected to be bolstered locally and regionally. Resilience of the transport and water sector is earmarked for enhancement in key public policy sectors.

Head of the EU Delegation to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Mikael Barfod initialled the agreement jointly with Director General of the Forum of the Caribbean Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM), Percival Marie on 7 April 2014.

Ambassador Barfod said: "Disaster Management is a key priority in the Caribbean region, given the frequent occurrence of disasters, in particular hurricanes, and the impact they have on the social and economic life of the region. Enhancing capacity to prevent, prepare for, mitigate, respond to and recover from disasters underpins the EU's commitment to stability in the Caribbean region. Addressing disaster management in the region is therefore a critical part of ensuring sustainable economic development and poverty reduction."

The European Union has been supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in the Caribbean both through development cooperation and humanitarian aid, pursuing an integrated approach to disaster management with prevention, mitigation and preparedness as equal priorities to response.

Previous EU disaster related assistance includes institutional support and capacity building for disaster management, installation of a regional weather radar system and a financial contribution to the establishment of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility. The EU is also committed to addressing resilience to climate change and food crises and allocates substantial funds to this effort.