



BVI NATIONAL INTEGRATED RELIEF POLICY

NATIONAL EMERGENCY WELFARE & RELIEF DISTRIBUTION POLICY

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**Welfare & Relief Distribution Sub-Committee
National Disaster Management Council**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDERA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency
CDRU	CARICOM Disaster Response Unit
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CU	CDERA Coordination Unit
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
HQ	Headquarters
MIRP	Model Integrated Relief Programme
NDO	National Disaster Organization
NGO	Non-government organization
OGD	Other Government Department/Agency/Ministry
RSS	Regional Security System
RSTS	Relief Supplies Tracking System
SAR	Search and Rescue
SUMA	Supply Management
UN	United Nations

1. BACKGROUND

1.0 Foreword

This Policy has been prepared by the Department of Disaster Management under the authority and direction of the Disaster Management Act 2003 and the Chairman of the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC) of the British Virgin Islands, who has responsibility for all operational arrangements for Disaster Management in the Territory.

Disaster management is one of those subjects which although not reserved in the Constitution as one of the “special responsibilities” of the Governor under section 19, has remained a part of the Governor’s portfolio. Authority is executed under several laws and their associated regulations. The most relevant for the purposes of this plan are:

- ❑ Leeward Islands Emergency Powers in Council (1959)
- ❑ Emergency Powers (Disasters) Ordinance (Cap.239)
- ❑ The Virgin Islands (Emergency Powers) Order 1967
- ❑ The Disaster Management Act 2003

The Disaster Management Act 2003 makes provision for the assignment of responsibilities, the primary tasks to be undertaken, special provisions and precautions and penalties for non-compliance with the provisions of the legislation.

While legislative authority is crucial to the actions of any Government, the Government of the BVI has enunciated a Policy stance (**Disaster Management Policy**), which reflects its commitment to comprehensive disaster management.

1.1 Hazards & Threats in the BVI

The BVI is exposed to both natural and man-induced hazards which have the potential to cause significant loss of life and property, as well as serious damage to the environment, and the economy. The natural hazards to which the BVI is exposed include tropical weather systems such as storms and hurricanes. These can produce primary hazards associated with land based coastal flooding, and inundation from storm surges and associated secondary hazards such as

building collapse and flying debris. The potential hazards of earthquakes are an ever-present reality, while landslides are a lesser hazard.

Man-induced hazards largely consist of the potential, accidental exposure of the environment to hazardous chemicals, large explosions, and accidents related to mass transportation of people. In this respect, oil spills represents one the greatest man-induced or technological hazards to the BVI.

The damage potential and the high probability of occurrence of the natural hazards make them far more significant than manmade hazards. These hazards present threats to the Territory, which range from death, injury and illness to infrastructural, property and environmental damage.

The degree of destruction or damage is difficult to accurately forecast, especially as many disaster events result from the combined effects of the exposure to several hazards.

The vulnerability of the Territory is increased by its very geographical nature, i.e.:

- Small islands widely dispersed
- Main roads on the coasts
- Tourism plant on the coasts
- Fragile ecosystems
- Utility infrastructure above ground
- Limited social infrastructure such as a single hospital
- Small airports
- Limited emergency storage
- Heavy reliance on imports, particularly food

1.2 Relief Management in the BVI

The British Virgin Islands as well as other small islands of the Caribbean are especially vulnerable to the impact of natural and man-induced hazards. Within the past two decades the region has experienced repeated losses from hurricanes and associated winds, rain and storm surge damage, landslides, flooding, droughts, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. These

events have opened a window of opportunity to foster greater attention to disaster management and response measures; as a result the BVI, aided by the considerable efforts made by CDERA and its development partners, have sought to increase their disaster preparedness and response capabilities.

A Disaster Management Policy have been adopted in the BVI which provides guidelines for a response at the national, regional, and international level; outlining a common organizational structure and control method for the management of personnel, equipment, and supplies. The Policy mandates that National plans include the roles and responsibilities of international and regional agencies and organizations such as the CDRU, SUMA, NGOs etc. The national relief plan, as part of the overall national disaster plan, is designed to spawn procedures to provide the detail required to conduct efficient and effective relief operations.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The pursuit of such a policy has been informed by the recognition that the Government will continue to support the development of:

- i. An integrated approach to relief management which incorporates all stakeholders.
- ii. A responsive, strengthened and coordinated institutional framework for relief management which incorporates a mechanism for the acquisition and management of relief supplies
- iii. Partnerships at the Territorial, Regional and International level,

.....and encourage the continued development of:

- i. A National Relief Plan and Standard Operating Procedures which will guide the process by which the provision of relief is effected,
- ii. A National Disaster Relief Fund to support emergency needs (*Guidelines to be inserted here for dispersing the funds*)
- iii. Public information and education programmes on the relief process,

2.0 Vision Statement

An integrated and coordinated mechanism for effectively and efficiently providing relief to affected communities through the implementation of complementary and compatible plans and practices amongst national institutions/organisations/agencies within the Territory and also

including regional and international partners.

2.1 Policy Goals

The main goals of the policy are:

- The promotion of a coordinated and collaborative approach to disaster relief activities at the national, regional and international levels.
- The development of a process for the timely provision of relief to affected populations.
- To guide the development of a National Relief Plans and processes.

2.2 Policy Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are:

- To promote effective coordinated actions amongst all stakeholders;
- To develop a responsive, strengthened and coordinated institutional framework;
- To establish a mechanism for managing and distributing relief supplies in order to eliminate duplication of effort and waste of resources;
- To provide a system for disaster assistance and financial compensation;
- To ensure dissemination of information to all involved stakeholders;
- To develop a reporting system as part of a continuous improvement process.