

Press Statement Disaster Resilience Strategy

Good Afternoon fellow Dominicans.

We are all aware of Dominica's vulnerability to natural disasters of varying forms and intensity. For the past twenty (20) years, the country has suffered the devastating effects of disasters from low pressure systems and troughs to a category 5 hurricane—the worst of those being Tropical Storm Erica in 2015, and Hurricane Maria in 2017. In aggregate, the country lost over 300% of its GDP.

Following Hurricane Maria, the Hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance announced his intention to rebuild Dominica better into the first climate resilient nation in the world. This vision received local as well as international acceptance. Promises of support were received from bilateral partners as well as the donor community.

In February of 2019, the Deputy Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) visited Dominica to discuss possible areas of support. During the visit, it was agreed that the IMF in collaboration with other development partners would assist government to prepare a Disaster Resilience Strategy (DRS).

The purpose of the Disaster Resilience Strategy is to provide a comprehensive plan that includes the policies, cost, and financing for natural disaster resilience.

A DRS was developed for Dominica in February 2020 with the assistance of the IMF. It is premised on three pillars:

- a. **Pillar I: Structural Resilience.**
- b. **Pillar II: Financial Resilience.**
- c. **Pillar III: Post-Disaster Resilience.**

The DRS took into consideration progress that was made in structural resilience and proposed that we continue with the following core investments:

a) *Road Network*

Revision of road standards

Planning road network- mapping and vulnerability assessment

Realignment of existing roads to minimize flooding and land slippage

Improvement of slope stabilization

Sufficient drainage along and through the road

b) *Air transport and connectivity*

Looking at alternate option to existing airports towards larger airplanes used to deploy food and medicine supplies and relief structures for shelters.

c) *Seaport*

Improvements in seaport capacity to provide additional and more resilient structures for uploading and storage.

d) *Flood prevention*

River dredging and re-enforcement of river banks and hillsides to mitigate flooding risk.

e) *Energy*

Investment in renewable energy through investments in large geothermal plants and mini-grids for isolated communities

f) *Health*

Continued significant upgrade of medical services with the construction of the new hospitals and health centres

g) *Housing*

Continued investments in resilient housing

h) Zoning and Land Use

Revision and application of the national land use policy

i) Water and Sanitation

Implementation of DOWASCO's strategic development plan for the water sector

j) Insurance

The plan is to implement a comprehensive insurance strategy with a layering framework for *Small and medium disasters, Large disasters and Extreme Disaster*

k) Government Self Insurance Fund

This proposal assumes the establishment of a Vulnerability and Resiliency Fund(VRF) with government savings which we have already started.

l) Strengthening of private insurance to include low income households

This options propose insurance arrangements for low income vulnerable households who were seriously challenged in the aftermath of hurricane Maria and for which government had to provide support for housing rehabilitation.

For Post Disaster and Social Resilience the four main propositions as follows:

a) Food Security:

b) Effective Disaster Response and Recovery

c) National Action Plan for Risk Reduction

d) Social Data Capture and improvement of Social Safety Nets

The cost of funding the interventions outlined in the Disaster Resilience Strategy (DRS) is approximately, US\$2.8 billion dollars or approximately EC\$8.0 billion dollars.

The DRS conducted various scenarios of applicable funding modalities that involve various sources of state resources. It also assumes a significant role for the donor community. In conclusion, the model-based estimates indicated that the return on resilient investment would outweigh the cost in the long term.

Today the Cabinet of Dominica approved of the Disaster Resilience Strategy as an Annex to the Climate Resilience and Recovery Plan (CRRP), which was published in May 2020.

The Government is committed to implementing this Strategy. As you would have observed, we have already started implementing a number of the recommendations. We believe that this strategy along with the NRDS and CRRP will guide our efforts at becoming the first climate resilient country in the world.

Many of our partners are committed to assisting us in achieving this goal. We thank them again for partnering with us.

May God continue to bless them and the people of Dominica

I thank you!