



Commission on  
Human Settlements

Distr.  
GENERAL

HS/C/5/2/Add.3  
13 January 1982

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

Fifth session  
Nairobi, 26 April - 7 May 1982  
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

ASSISTANCE TO DOMINICA

Report of the Executive Director

SUMMARY

This report has been prepared in response to Commission on Human Settlements resolution 4/7 in which the Commission requested the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) to explore the possibility of extending assistance to the Government of Dominica so as to replace lost and damaged human settlements speedily. The report describes ongoing UNCHS (Habitat) assistance, a mission specifically organized to formulate a project proposal and a UNCHS (Habitat) project designed to improve hurricane-resistant technology and rural housing construction. In addition, the report refers to bilateral assistance for the rehabilitation of housing and related infrastructure in Dominica.

1. In its resolution 4/7 adopted at its fourth session, the Commission on Human Settlements requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to explore the possibility of extending assistance to the Government of Dominica so as to replace lost and damaged human settlements speedily. The Commission further requested the Executive Director to consult with other specialized agencies and organs of the United Nations system on the matter of assistance to Dominica and to report on the resolution to the Commission on Human Settlements at its fifth session.
2. In the same resolution, the Commission recalled General Assembly resolutions 34/19 of 9 November 1979 and 35/102 of 5 December 1980 in which the General Assembly expressed concern at the magnitude of the damage caused in Dominica by hurricanes "David" and "Frederick" in 1979 and hurricane "Allen" in 1980. The Commission also expressed its appreciation to those States, organizations and United Nations agencies that had provided assistance to Dominica following the hurricanes.
3. The Executive Director therefore informed the Government of Dominica of the Commission's resolution and invited the Government to submit a proposal for possible UNCHS (Habitat) assistance in the field of human settlements. It may be recalled that UNCHS (Habitat) already had a physical planning and housing project under way in Dominica (DMI/81/003) and that the development objective of the project in question is to contribute to the Government's efforts to improve overall conditions in human settlements, particularly in terms of the provision of better and expanded housing facilities for lower-income groups. Prior to this project, assistance had been provided to the Government of Dominica in the field of human settlements as part of a subregional project which had started in 1972 and which had culminated in the preparation and publication of the "Dominica National Structure Plan 1976-1990".
4. In October 1981, a UNCHS (Habitat) staff member undertook a mission to Dominica which resulted in the formulation of a project proposal which is designed both to give a practical demonstration of low-cost house design and construction techniques through the actual construction of four model housing units and the preparation of physical plans for a housing redevelopment scheme and to establish a small building materials testing and research facility that would encourage the production of lower-cost indigenous building material components and promote the wider application of hurricane-resistant physical-planning, design and building-construction methods and techniques.
5. It may further be noted that the Government of Norway, through an agreement with UNCHS (Habitat) to provide short-term expertise in building materials technology, has shown an interest in the project proposal and may be willing to contribute expertise at the appropriate time.
6. About 80 per cent of Dominica's housing was damaged by the hurricanes of 1979 and 1980. As a result, the efforts of the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) have been directed towards bringing the housing stock to its pre-hurricane levels. For this to be possible, however, the construction capacity of HDC must be upgraded, in particular because the Government wishes

to ensure that the new housing projects that are being formulated will better meet the needs of lower-income households. Acting on their own initiative, most affected residents quickly rebuilt or replaced their damaged housing, but technical guidance is needed to ensure stronger resistance to any future calamity, as well as to reduce the cost per unit of housing for families with very low incomes.

7. The Government of Dominica has concluded an agreement for a loan of \$EC 13.4 million with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago under the latter's Caribbean Aid Project. Under the agreement, a substantial portion of the funds made available will be utilized in the rehabilitation and expansion of housing and related infrastructure. The UNCHS (Habitat) project, the cost of which is estimated at \$US 62,000, will contribute to the preparations for the proposed programme, since it is designed to improve hurricane-resistant technology and lower house construction costs through improvements in architectural design, physical planning and the increased use of local building materials and appropriate hurricane-resistant building construction methods and techniques. In-service training, public participation in the development process and a limited study tour will also constitute important components of the project.