

PRESS RELEASE

Discussions are underway to identify programme opportunities for Grenada through the United Nations Human Settlements Programme under UN Habitat.

Ms. Jaana Mioch, Human Settlements Officer in the Disaster, Post-Conflict and Safety Section of UN Habitat, is in Grenada on a three-day mission to identify potential areas of collaboration. Based in Kenya, Ms. Mioch has witnessed post-disaster conditions in many countries.

"The level of progress in Grenada is very impressive three years after the hurricane," she said, adding that Grenada has accomplished much more during this period than some other countries where similar disasters have occurred.

Ms. Mioch spent Wednesday touring Human Settlement sites at Soubise and Mt. Gay for which the infrastructure works are managed by the Agency for Reconstruction and Development (ARD). The method of development adopted by the ARD at these sites is very much in keeping with the objectives and goals of UN Habitat.

"The approach is an integrated one where you start with the social and physical infrastructure, not only the house," she said.

She pointed out that "development begins at the beginning; so 'day one' after a disaster is when you begin long-term planning."

On Thursday morning, Ms. Mioch made a presentation to the Human Settlement Task Force, which was attended by representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, the National Disaster Management Agency, the Lands and Surveys Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries, the Housing Authority of Grenada and the ARD.

The role of disaster mitigation and preparedness in both governance and development is critical. Ms. Mioch pointed out that for every dollar spent on disaster mitigation and preparedness, five dollars can be saved in disaster response.

Referring to the undertakings by the ARD, she said the 'Build Back Better' motto that has guided the Agency has a "line of thinking" similar to that of UN Habitat.

"It's all documented here," she said, referring to the ARD 2006 annual report. Following her presentation, Task Force members focused on areas whereby

Grenada can benefit from UN Habitat. These include:

- * Ensuring local involvement in developing human settlements;
- * Training needs for physical planners and the land survey fraternity;
- * Establishing a national cadastre;

- * Completing the remapping exercise initiated by the ARD;
- * Enforcing the Grenada Building Code and Guidelines;
- * Promoting long-term thinking for disaster interventions;
- * Establishing a national agency to coordinate all land-related activities.

Ms. Mioch made a similar presentation to representatives of the non-governmental community on Thursday afternoon, which was attended by representatives of Grencase, Grensave, ART, Newlo and NCH.

On Friday, the final day of her mission, Ms. Mioch will continue her discussions with Government and ARD officials with a view to creating the framework programme for sustainable human settlement recovery and upgrade.

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