



## **Disaster Risk Reduction Day**

### **What is Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)?**

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and reduce the causal factors of disasters. It involves reducing exposure to hazards, lessening vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improving preparedness for adverse events. DRR aims to reduce socio-economic vulnerabilities to disasters as well as deal with the environmental and other hazards that trigger them.

Disasters often follow natural hazards, and their severity depends on how much impact a hazard has on society and the environment. The scale of the impact in turn depends on the choices we make for our lives and for our environment. These choices relate to how we grow our food, where and how we build our homes, what kind of government we have, how our financial systems work, and even what we teach in schools. Each decision and action makes us more vulnerable to disasters - or more resilient to them.

### **Disaster risk reduction is everyone's business.**

"The more governments, UN agencies, organizations, businesses and civil society understand risk and vulnerability, the better equipped they will be to mitigate disasters when they strike and save more lives." Ban Ki-Moon, former UN Secretary-General.

Disaster risk reduction is also part of sustainable development. In order for development activities to be sustainable they must also reduce disaster risk. On the other hand, unsound development policies will increase disaster risk and losses from disasters. DRR therefore involves every part of society, every part of government, and every part of the professional and private sector.

It is often said that there is no such thing as a 'natural' disaster, only natural hazards. When a community is affected by flood, for example, we think of it as a disaster and something we cannot control. We may not be able to stop a flood from happening through heavy rainfall, but could we have prevented the waters from getting into our homes? Could our buildings have been built in a way that water would not get in easily? Could our drains have been litter-free so that the water could drain off easily? Is the area particularly low and easily flooded? If so, should we have built there in the first place?

Disaster risk reduction is about understanding our personal and environmental risks and finding ways to reduce this risk so that we are not affected by them, or be able to bounce back quickly if they do affect us.

**Disasters do not have to happen - we can all do something to reduce our risk!**



Many people around the world have lost their lives, homes or access to essential facilities, such as hospitals, due to natural disasters which include earthquakes, droughts, tsunamis, heavy flooding, hurricanes or cyclones. Some of these disasters have caused economic damage to some countries in addition to loss of life. The UN acknowledges that education, training, and information exchanges are effective ways to help people become better equipped in withstanding natural disasters.

Effective risk management must involve those most at risk and often children are overlooked. Children are often portrayed as victims of disaster and climate change. However, children can and should be encouraged to participate in disaster risk reduction and decision making.

On Thursday, October 13, Guyana will join the rest of the world to observe the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction. Join us next week to learn more about International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction and how you can do your part in ensuring effective risk management.

*For additional information on Disaster Risk Reduction, contact can be made with the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) at Thomas Road, Thomas Lands, Georgetown on telephone numbers: 226-1114, 226-8815, 225-5847 or 226-1027 or visit the website at [www.cdc.gy](http://www.cdc.gy)*

***You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: “Our Earth, Our Environment”, C/O ECEA Programme, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: [eit.epaguyana@gmail.com](mailto:eit.epaguyana@gmail.com). Follow us on Facebook and Instagram and subscribe to our YouTube channel.***