



International Day for Disaster Reduction

Reducing the number of people affected by disasters by 2030

Though not an island, Guyana is very much a part of the English-speaking Caribbean and like every member of this group, is very concerned about the impact of natural disasters. No doubt, this concern is at an all-time high, in the wake of two recent hurricanes that wreaked havoc in our sister countries of Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica.

However, the threat of natural disasters is not peculiar to the Caribbean region. All around the world, people are faced with the reality of natural disasters, including tsunamis, landslides, volcanoes and tornadoes, among others. In face of this reality, the international community recognises the need for people to be ready for these events. Further, it understands the importance of people and communities around the world being able to reduce their exposure to disasters and responding to these events. In this regard, International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) is observed every year on October 13. This year's focus is tied to the 'Sendai Seven' campaign, which outlines seven targets to be achieved in seven years that will reduce losses from disasters and improve management of disaster risks. As such, IDDR this year focuses on Target B of the Sendai Seven campaign, reducing the number of people affected by disasters by 2030.

In Guyana, flooding has been a main threat, not only to those living along our coastline, but also those in our highland regions, such as Mahdia, and the Rupununi. However, while flooding occurs in periods of excessive and high intensity rainfall, our actions sometimes increase our risk of being affected. If we are to reduce the amount of people affected by disasters, we also need to think about how our actions have been contributing to the threat of flooding. Here in Guyana, one human action that tends to contribute to flooding is littering. There is much litter still in many drains in the capital city, and

LITTER COMPLAINT

If you desire to make a litter complaint, contact our Waste Management Unit on Tel. No.: 225-5471/5467/6044 ext. 237/260 or via email: epa@epaguyana.org/eit.epaguyana@gmail.com

in many trenches in our villages. Litter compromises our drainage systems and especially in periods of heavy rainfall, water cannot drain easily and more often than not, floods the land. It is clear then, that to reduce the number of people affected by flooding, everyone one should desist from littering. Further, we at the EPA remind you that under the Litter Prevention Regulations, littering is a crime that is punishable by law! You are reminded that offences under the Litter Prevention Regulations include:

1. Depositing litter in a public place;
2. Depositing litter from a moving vehicle unto a public place;
3. Causing or permitting persons to commit offences 1 and 2 above;
4. Not providing a receptacle for litter in public transportation;
5. Causing littering from a moving vehicle or trailer; and
6. Littering on another person's premises.

Anyone found guilty of any of these offences will be liable to fines of between \$15,000 and \$100,000.

While as a country we have been fortunate, so far, in being outside the path of hurricanes and areas affected by earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes, we need to plan well to make ourselves more resilient to the impact of flooding. As such, we need to find solutions to integrate flood resilience in our buildings and homes; use technology to plan flood resilient settlements in areas that may flood; grow crops and livestock that will fare better in flooded conditions; improve our drainage systems etc. Of course, such planning will require considerable resources but can be accomplished with conscious and continued effort at all levels.

It may seem a small act, but by choosing not to litter you can help to reduce the number of people affected by flooding.

Sources

<https://www.unisdr.org/archive/49524>

<https://www.unisdr.org/we/campaign/iddr>

***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 or follow us on Facebook and Instagram.