



# **THE EXISTING CAPACITIES & CHALLENGES IN MHEWS IN THE BAHAMAS**

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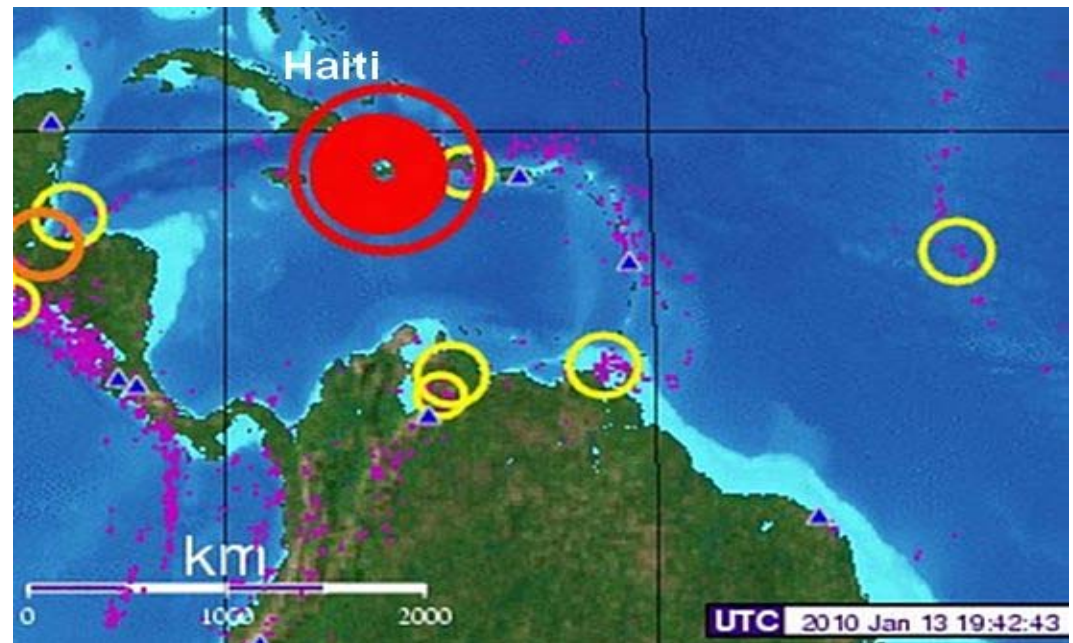


# RECENT EVENTS IMPACTING THE BAHAMAS



# TSUNAMI WARNING

- Issued 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2010
- Triggered by the Earthquake in Haiti





- The Island of Great Inagua – Settlement of Matthew Town – 999 Residents
- 60 miles from the North Western tip of Haiti
- 150 nnw of the epicenter of the earthquake
- Tsunami wave moving at 500 mph – community would have been impacted in 18 minutes
- The entire Bahamas in 90 minutes



# MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup> TORNADO

- Severe weather system moving in from Florida with tornado activities
- Impacted Grand Bahama/Northern Bahamas – 6 homes receiving major damage, 25 displaced
- Impacted the one of Largest Container Ports in the Region
- 3 Fatalities and 4 persons seriously injured



# MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup> TORNADO



- Meteorologist at The Bahamas Department of Meteorology noted that the tornado was embedded in three (3) lines of showers and thunderstorm which moved across the island.
- FCP officials called it a freak weather system that hit around 11:30am that killed and injured several persons employed at the Freeport Container Port.
- Reports noted that a number of employees were performing repairs on a crane when the tornado struck and carried it into the nearby water.





# The Archipelagic Make-up of The Bahamas



- Approximately 700 Islands & 2000 cays
- 100,000sq miles of ocean
- 353,000 residents (Island populations range from approx. 80 to 175,000)



# General Information

- The Bahamas over the past 5 years have attracted in excess of 4.5 million visitors to the islands, and they can be found scattered throughout the Islands and Cays
- 27 main islands with Administrators who serves as the Governments' leader assisted by a council
- Nassau the capital – centre of commerce





# EXISTING EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (EWS) CAPACITIES IN THE BAHAMAS

- For meteorological and hydrological events the Department of Meteorological will:
  - Pass information on to NEMA
  - Notify media houses (radio & television)



## Developments Since The Costa Rica Conference

- Government has procured an Early Warning Siren for a community in Freeport, Grand Bahama. Once installed and tested additional system will be purchased for adjacent communities and islands.
- An emergency notification – text message system was introduced – two (2) tests were conducted of 250 persons including government officials and representatives of all disaster communities in all of the major islands of The Bahamas.



## Developments Since The Costa Rica Conference

- An additional 750 persons to be added to the system by the end of the first quarter of 2011.
- RBDF has 54 station throughout The Bahamas and once message is sent to the Police Central Room they can alert or notify all stations in various sectors of The Bahamas simultaneously of an impending event.



## Developments Since The Costa Rica Conference

- As a last resort, the Police Officers in the various Islands will be required to drive through with sirens and make a broadcast for the local community(ies).
- Similarly BTC has 34 stations in the islands with headquarters in Nassau. Headquarters can also notify all islands simultaneously of an impending event.



## Developments Since The Costa Rica Conference

- The RBDF, the RBPF and BTC all have representative on the local disaster committees in communities where stations are located.
- In some small communities the traditional church bells are used to assemble people for urgent meetings.



## Developments Since The Costa Rica Conference

- Companies with sirens at their facilities we are seeking to add a message to their systems to assist with the notification process.





# EARLY WARNING SYSTEM CHALLENGES IN THE BAHAMAS

- Number of large long islands sparsely populated with people living in clusters.
- Any external threat to the islands, information is processed in the Capital, Nassau and then has to be disseminated to the islands that are likely to be impacted.
- This could result in some serious delays in information getting to the islands.



# EARLY WARNING SYSTEM CHALLENGES IN THE BAHAMAS

- There is limited radio communication in many of the south eastern islands.
- There is limited cable television in several islands as well.



**CONCLUSION**