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OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (USAID/OFDA)

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA

Municipal engineers who participated in the Miyamoto International Earthquake and Hurricane Response Preparedness program take their knowledge back to their communities. *Photo courtesy of Miyamoto International*

USAID/OFDA Supports Disaster Preparedness in Haiti

Following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, USAID/OFDA funded programs to build the capacity of the Government of Haiti (GoH) to better prepare for and respond to disasters. However, given the high seismic risk in Haiti, several significant disaster risk reduction (DRR) priorities remain, including updating GoH DRR methodology and materials, expanding DRR-related activities throughout vital urban centers, and laying the foundation for DRR sustainability in Haiti. In addition, given the frequency and intensity of hurricanes that affect the country, it is crucial to incorporate post-hurricane damage assessment protocols and procedures into Haiti's emergency response system.

USAID/OFDA is supporting a program to build technical and institutional disaster response capacities in Haiti. *Photo courtesy of Miyamoto International*

In response to this need, USAID/OFDA is supporting the Miyamoto International Earthquake and Hurricane Response Preparedness program to facilitate the development of a sustainable earthquake and hurricane damage assessment system in Haiti and build technical and institutional capacity for its rapid implementation in the aftermath of a disaster. In addition, this program aims to reduce the impact of disasters by helping develop and enforce seismically-resilient building codes and practices.

In March 2019, Miyamoto International trained 100 GoH municipal engineers on the associated risks of various construction methods, earthquake-resistant construction practices, and Haitian building code requirements. In addition, the training reviewed post-disaster rapid damage assessment in depth. Participants learned about the different types of structural

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OAS Uses Ecuador 911 as a Reference for the LAC Region

The Organization of American States (OAS) has decided to reference the Ecuadorian emergency management model, the Integrated Security Ecuador 911 Service (ECU 911), to design and promote an emergency management protocol for the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region.

In October 2018, a delegation chaired by OAS Director of Public Security Paulina Duarte visited ECU 911 headquarters in Quito. During her visit, Duarte expressed the importance of building a protocol to facilitate the implementation of an integrated 911 assistance service throughout the region, demonstrating interest in using ECU 911 as an example and replicating their emergency management best practices in other LAC countries.

"I was impressed with Ecuador's 911 progress, not only with their new technology and facilities, but also with their capacity to integrate the services of different emergency response actors. I also think it is fantastic, what they have achieved in terms of prevention, not only to prevent disasters, but also domestic violence and traffic accidents. I believe

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In 2017, a team of ECU 911 emergency management specialists participated in the USAID/OFDA-funded DRR in the Americas study tour at Florida International University. *Photo by Marco Marin, USAID/OFDA*

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that Ecuador can contribute a lot to OAS efforts to improve emergency management services in the region. We must join efforts and work cooperatively, not only internally but with other countries of the region and the world," noted Duarte.

"After the April 2016 earthquake in Ecuador, USAID/OFDA, through the Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP), supported ECU 911 capacity building process with activities to improve their abilities to respond to complex emergencies, including training programs, study tours, and technical assistance. We want to congratulate ECU 911 for becoming an emergency management reference for the entire region. ECU 911 will serve as a model to strengthen the region´s capacity to respond effectively to disasters and emergencies," said USAID/OFDA Disaster Risk Management Specialist for Ecuador Michael Camchong, who has been accompanying ECU 911 throughout its capacity development process.

From April 25–26, OAS will hold the International Seminar on Cooperation Mechanisms and Tools on Emergency Services in the Region in Quito, Ecuador. This meeting, which will include emergency agency experts and representatives from LAC countries that are part of OAS, aims to facilitate the creation of a continental 911 assistance service model, using Ecuador as an example for other countries from the region to replicate the technical and operative methodologies implemented. The event also aims to establish mechanisms to guide the optimization of available resources for emergency services in OAS countries and share the experience of the ECU 911 with the region.

After the April 2016 earthquake in Ecuador, USAID/OFDA, through RDAP, supported ECU 911' capacity-building process with training activities and technical assistance. *Photo by Michael Camchong, USAID/OFDA*

Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

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Tel: +(506) 2290-4133
Email: ofdalac@ofda.gov
Internet: www.usaid.gov

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damage, the correct assessment form for each situation and how to correctly conduct them, and how to communicate levels of structural damage after an event. Engineers who participated in the trainings will pass on the knowledge they gained and assist in ensuring that their communities meet building code requirements.

USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor Phil Gelman commented, "Developing and implementing a standardized building code in Haiti has been a major goal since the tragic earthquake in 2010. This program moves Haiti much closer to realizing that goal."

In addition to the trainings, Miyamoto International worked with GoH engineers to produce post-disaster building damage and safety evaluation methodology, user manuals and related technical training materials, assessment forms, and certification exams for engineers to ensure a minimum working knowledge of the materials.

Miyamoto International laid the groundwork for a sustainable post-earthquake and hurricane damage assessment system by working collaboratively with the College National des Ingénieurs et Architectes d'Haiti (CNIAH)—also known as the Board of National Haitian Engineers and Architects—and public and private university partners, such as the University d'Etat d'Haiti and Quisqueya University. Through these partnerships, national engineers and technical specialists will continue training and certifications on post-disaster building damage and safety assessments beyond the life of the program.

The program aims to become self-sustaining by charging reasonable fees to private-sector engineers to participate and receive certification upon completion of the training. The GoH Directorate for Civil Protection of the Ministry of Interior and Territorial Communities plans to coordinate with local and other key national institutions to continue conducting trainings, ensuring engineers are trained and mobilized in the event of a disaster.

Engineer Beverly Saint-Come of Miyamoto International discusses assessment procedures during one of the workshops. *Photo courtesy of Miyamoto International*