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Barbados Government Embarks on 2020 Hurricane Season Preparedness, Encourages Barbadians to Get Ready

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BARBADOS — The Government of Barbados has embarked on leading the way with its preparations for the 2020 hurricane season, which will begin on June 1.

According to the government, Minister of Home Affairs, Edmund Hinkson, is urging all Barbadians and residents to follow suit with their personal plans and those for their communities, in an effort to strengthen the island's resilience to natural hazards.

He was speaking at the District Emergency Organization meeting at the Gordon Greenidge Primary School on Sunday night.

Mr. Hinkson said the government was already seeking to ensure that the island had greater water and energy capacity post disaster, and that vehicles were available to respond to those who might be affected.

“We have entered into a memorandum of understanding with the private sector [so] that we could command their vehicles, equipment, tractors We also entered a memorandum of understanding with food distributors, so that we can ensure a supply of food in the aftermath of a disaster.

“And, we have also made arrangements [that in the event] parts of Barbados are cut off that food will be distributed pre-event into those parts as well as equipment.

“These are the kinds of strategies that we as a Government have sought to employ within the context of our economic and financial constraints at present. We need to ensure that Barbados is as ready as possible to face and manage a disaster and be resilient,” Mr. Hinkson said.

In addition, he said, the Cabinet agreed to employ 360 people, 12 from each constituency, to clean up Barbados through an arrangement between the National Conservation Commission and the Ministry of Transport, Works and Maintenance, under a three-month program. Once completed, the minister said it would be reviewed to see if it could be continued.

Meanwhile, he called on residents in communities to join together and clean-up their surroundings; a task which would need to be repeated in another six months.

Mr. Hinkson urged persons across the country not to consider “now” as “too soon” to begin their hurricane preparedness, but rather to get prepared as Barbados was within one of the most vulnerable parts of the world, in terms of natural disasters.

He also appealed to homeowners to insure their homes, noting that Government was committed to finding a platform to assist the most vulnerable who were financially unable to insure their homes.

“It has been a challenge of Barbados governments for at least 40 years to be able to comprehensively insure all houses in Barbados, we have to ensure that all houses are sustainable,” Mr. Hinkson emphasized.

He reminded residents that everyone had a responsibility to prepare for the hurricane season and for natural disasters, as Government could not do it all.