



DISASTER DIPLOMACY FOR SIDS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RESILIENT STATE VALUE PROPOSITION

Remarks

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I wish to thank the DAOC for organizing the course and the re-igniting of this critical dialogue on DRM Diplomacy in the wider agenda of DRM and Resilience in SIDS.

Thanks also for the invitation to share my thoughts on this agenda.

From my engagement in the panel discussion on **Diplomacy and Building Back Better** I got the sense that the participants were engaged and embracing of the issues and perspectives around this subject. The diversity of your experiences and the sectors in which you are involved undoubtedly provided a platform for robust dialogue.

I want to restate my assertion about **Disaster Diplomacy** in the context of the Resilient State Proposition.

Disaster Diplomacy must be pursued against a desire for a development intervention philosophy that seeks to maximize the opportunities and resources to advance or change policy, strategy and programmes for resilient and sustainable development.

Disaster Diplomacy must be a pre-meditation

The Caribbean has long history of disrupting hazard impacts. This picture of disruption and loss is being sustained in these first two decades of the 21st century. Between the years 2000-2017 13 of CDB's BMCs experienced high rates of loss and damage from natural hazard events estimated at USD 27bn.

At the same time the need for humanitarian resources more than doubled from \$3.3 billion in 2011 to \$7.2 billion in 2014 and the shortfalls in meeting these demands continue to increase (OCHA 2016).

This reinforces the proposition for a SIDS DRM Diplomacy than is anchored on our Pathway for Resilient and Sustainable Development. It is the backdrop essential for shaping the diplomatic space and actions critical in framing strategy and message.

I will be bold to suggest that in this context DRM and resilience diplomacy is an essential service which must be anchored on local and external dialogue and engagement.

What is required is clear thinking and articulation of the issues important to our pathways to resilient and sustainable development and the associated messaging.

This may require a willingness to reflect on the diplomatic structures and arrangements that we have become used to over decades, a new and creative spirit of collaboration across all levels and an openness to new ways of working and partnering.

In such reflection it may be useful to include considerations of how the success of or progress in our diplomacy is measured.

The following come to my mind:

- a. Is DRM and/or Resilience pre-meditated in our states and/or our diplomacy? How so?
- b. Is there an association between those partners who provide the most resources and our identified priorities?
- c. What is relationship between our allocation of diplomatic time and agenda support?

Addressing these questions suggests a broader role for the IIR, DAOC and the UWI in this space.

The good news is that the UWI has already begun to map and explore ways for consolidating its research, teaching and tools to support the resilience agenda in the Caribbean.

The UWI's work in helping the Government of the Bahamas to frame a resilient recovery policy, strategic framework and institutional arrangements for a whole of government resilient recovery agenda is an example. The pioneering work on national resilience governance can reinforce the call for supporting our capacity development as opposed to its marginalization.

The issues in DRM and Resilience to which we can connect our diplomacy include:

- a. Risk financing – access and conditionalities.
- b. SIDs and a multi-dimensional vulnerability index
- c. Bridging the divide between humanitarian and development financing
- d. Good humanitarian donorship and the Instrumentalization of aid
- e. Commitment to as local as possible and as international as necessary
- f. Mutual accountability
- g. Supporting and not replacing local mechanisms

I will end by suggesting that Disaster Diplomacy must lead to genuine change in the way we:

- Negotiate, Manage and Deliver resources for reducing vulnerability and risk
- Resolve to reduce the fragmentation of international assistance into unmanageable numbers of projects and activities
- Champion the dismantling the divide between ex ante and ex post financing for the Resilience agenda
- Advance systematic multi-year support that enables national and local DRM and Resilience leadership and systems.

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