

November 18, 2025

Press Release

Japan Supports Enhanced Disaster Preparedness in Trinidad and Tobago

On Monday, November 17, 2025, His Excellency Dr. Akima Umezawa participated in the National Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) Forum in Port of Spain. The forum, hosted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), reported on the IDB's project, "Strengthening the Integrated National Early Warning System in Trinidad and Tobago," which is funded by the Government of Japan through the Japan Special Fund.

Amongst the many participants were the Honourable Khadijah Ameen, Minister of Rural Development and Local Government; Mr. Julian Belgrave, Country Representative, Inter-American Development Bank; Mr. Ugo Blanco, Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme; and other members of the diplomatic corps, senior governmental officials, and local disaster management practitioners.

In his address, Ambassador Umezawa underscored Japan's commitment to supporting Trinidad and Tobago, drawing upon Japan's own experience as a natural-disaster prone country. He articulated that a strong MHEWS requires two core mechanisms: (1) a data system for collection and analysis, and (2) a networking system for information gathering and dissemination, both underpinned by the cooperative actions of the government and the community.

In reviewing the project's progress, Ambassador Umezawa noted opportunities to further accelerate the initiative, suggesting that the optimisation of coordination between the IDB and regional stakeholders would be a key area for enhancement. To ensure the most effective outcomes, he underscored the importance of a rapid and highly coordinated initial phase in the event of a disaster. Furthermore, Ambassador Umezawa emphasised that effective disaster management is fundamentally supported by robust, community-based, on-site efforts.

Consistent with this vision of enhancing national capacities, Japan has also funded a parallel project in cooperation with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to establish a high-resolution radar system in Trinidad and Tobago. This is intended to significantly boost the country's capacity to collect and analyse disaster-related data, providing timely and accurate hazard monitoring. The recent commissioning of the Community

Emergency Response Team (CERT) Speyside Response Centre, funded through Japan's Grant Assistance for the Grassroots Human Security Project (GGP), complements this initiative by aiding in the reduction of the island's climate vulnerability risk.

The Government of Japan looks forward to the successful completion of the aforementioned initiatives which will ensure a safer, more inclusive and resilient future for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.



H.E. Dr. Akima Umezawa (centre) with (left to right) Mr. Ugo Blanco, Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme; Mr. Sanjay Singh, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Planning Economic Affairs and Development; Dr. Simone Titus, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Homeland Security; the Honourable Khadijah Ameen, Minister of Rural Development and Local Government; Mr. Julian Belgrave, Country Representative, Inter-American Development Bank; and H.E. Víctor Hugo Morales Meléndez, Ambassador of Mexico.