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FEATURED Q&A

How Well Prepared is the Caribbean for this Hurricane Season?

Q: This hurricane season has once again brought severe weather to parts of the Caribbean, renewing public attention to emergency preparedness plans and the economic consequences of hurricane events. How far have the Caribbean’s emergency preparedness plans come along in recent years, and what remains to be done? How well fortified are Caribbean nations to withstand the economic consequences of hurricanes this year, and what more should governments and businesses do?

A: Guest Comment: James Morrell: “In September 2004, Hurricane Jeanne flooded the entire northern city of Gonaives, killing 3,000. On paper, measures were taken to prevent a recurrence. In 2005 the World Bank launched a $12 million Emergency Recovery and Disaster Management Project to provide relief, fund an office in the Ministry of Interior, and build levees, terracing, and drainage works. Yet the mayor of Gonaives now reports that his city is flooded again, with water levels of seven feet and rising, and residents trapped on their rooftops. On closer inspection, less than 10 percent of the World Bank project went to the construction of levees. In January 2008 the bank added another $7.4 million but reduced the bricks-and-mortar portion further. It explained that in the absence of...”

Inside This Issue

FEATURED Q&A: How Well Prepared is the Caribbean for this Hurricane Season?.............1

Guatemalan President Finds Hidden Spy Equipment in Home, Office.........................2

Paraguay’s Former President Blocked from Taking Active Senate Seat......................2

Chile’s Central Bank Raises Rates to Highest Level in Decade.................................2

ElcoTel Finalizes $32 Million Acquisition of TV Plant in Mexico.........................3

AIG Makes $38 Million Investment in Brazilian Construction Firm.........................3