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## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **Disciplined Forces trained for the CARICOM Disaster Relief Unit in Barbados**

**Bridgetown, Barbados May 30, 2017** – 31 participants from the disciplined forces, including police, military and fire services are taking part in the annual CARICOM Disaster Relief Unit (CDRU) training, which is being held at the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) Coordinating Unit and the Headquarters of the Regional Security System (RSS) in Barbados from May 29 – June 2, 2017.

The CDRU is a specialised humanitarian response team equipped to provide assistance to any of the eighteen CDEMA Participating State, affected by natural or technological hazard.

Members of the disciplined forces have been tasked to be bold, courageous and innovative in harnessing the capabilities required to respond. This challenge was issued by CDEMA's Executive Director, Mr Ronald Jackson in his address at opening ceremony.

Jackson highlighted the importance of the CDRU in light of the increased exposure and vulnerability of the region to hydro meteorological events, potential seismic as well as crime and security risks. He also said that there remains a challenge to the Caribbean Community in tackling the humanitarian needs after disaster events, which further underscores the need for a coordinated unit to facilitate response and relief efforts.

“What we have done over the past 25 years and our responses most recently in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew in Haiti, our support after the 2010 Earthquake again in Haiti and our operations in Dominica post Tropical Storm Ericka, only serve to validate that back in 1991, the leaders of the Caribbean got it right in terms of what we need to advance in this regard”, noted Jackson.

The CDRU is one of the specialised teams trained by CDEMA each year as part of the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM). The RRM, which is coordinated by CDEMA, is based on the collaboration and cooperation of key regional and international organisations supported by a collection of Agreements and Protocols.

Major (Ret'd) Jeffrey Forde, Director of Plans, the Regional Security System (RSS) encouraged the participants to enjoy the training and learn as much as they can from the information that will be shared over the week. “Take in as much as you can, learn from the experiences so that going forward the next CDRU will be much better than this one as we want to improve each year,” said Major Forde.

The CDRU comprises military, fire and police personnel drawn from the 18 CDEMA Participating States. The Unit is deployed to provide humanitarian assistance in direct support to the civil authorities of any State affected by natural or technological hazards. The CDRU's mission is to conduct disaster response and relief operations and its main tasks include the management of relief supplies, emergency telecommunications and the provision of appropriate personnel for repairing critical lifeline facilities.

In recent times, the CDRU has been deployed to Haiti in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew in October 2016 and the devastating 2010 earthquake; Dominica in response to Tropical Storm Ericka in 2015.

The CDRU is activated, mobilised and deployed by the Regional Security System's Central Liaison Office (RSS/CLO) in consultation with and on behalf of CDEMA. Its operations are guided by the CDRU

#### **Participating States:**

**Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, Virgin Islands**



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Operational Plan, Standing Operating Procedures and a Memorandum of Understanding between CDEMA and the RSS. The training is funded by the United States Government through the US Southern Command.



Mr Ronald Jackson, Executive Director of CDEMA delivering remarks at the opening of the 2017 CDRU training workshop



Members of the disciplined forces participating in the 2017 CDRU training workshop.

**For further information, please contact:**

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