

Title: **Comparative Vulnerability to Natural Disasters in the Caribbean**

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Hazards examined: Multi-Peril

Study emphasis: Economic development through a comprehensive examination of economic variables, agricultural output and numbers of persons affected by hazards/disasters.

Summary: Offers a measure of comparative vulnerability to natural hazards/disasters, based upon the number of people affected and the number of deaths associated with historical episodes.

Vulnerability Indicators: Economic variables, agricultural output, people affected

Economic Development, Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Response and/or Disaster Reconstruction Application: Economic Development

Data Requirements: Economic variables; persons affected: 1970-1999

Output: Alternative measures of comparative vulnerability of economies of the Commonwealth Caribbean to natural disasters.

Results of Application at Case Study Site: The study utilizes secondary macroeconomic data, or data on number of persons affected, for the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Problems are highlighted with each of the measures of comparative vulnerability considered. Different rankings of comparative vulnerability for Caribbean countries emerge from the use of different measures of vulnerability. However, a pattern emerges as to the most vulnerable and least vulnerable countries, that conforms largely to expectations. A compromise measure of comparative vulnerability to natural disasters is generated, based on the number of people affected and the number deaths associated with historical episodes.

Lessons Learned: Historical data alone is insufficient to assess vulnerability to possible future disasters. Expert assessment of future episodes is required, based on aspects such as historical incidence and impact, mitigation measures in place, concentration of development, economic structure, and climatic and geophysical variables.