

Abe's Report:



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Natural Disasters Youth Summit 2008 was a great learning experience for me from the inception of having written an essay about natural disasters, being one of the global winners, and participating in this project over the years, a few things stood out in my memory.

The joy of greeting the delegation from Japan at the airport will linger in my mind, and working together for the days that followed, then came the morning's opening ceremony – although we were together with Miriam (from Iran) a mere six days before in Finland, when Mrs. Gaspard Taylor used the 'Cat' as part of her presentation I missed hearing Miriam's voice, when Mrs. Gaspard Taylor mentioned the significance of the "little ambassadors" (the stuffed toys) to bring comfort to children who are survivors of natural disasters, that really touched me – so significant was it that UNICEF's Mrs. Goodman underscored what was said about it before.

The interaction with our local schools and their presentations were better than expected, I was very proud of each one. See the hard work that went into the preparation, the visits to the schools all came into play.

The contribution of the UNICEF since we met with them at the IV World Water Forum in Mexico in 2006 was very inspiring and having them stay the distance and beyond as we will continue to work together- while they are not a funding agency the technical support is overwhelming.

We will continue with the project as it is now beginning to get the attention of those that matters – working in the communities with The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on the Vulnerability Community Assessment Programme and now that we were call in to work together with the Office Disaster Preparedness Management, I must say the goal to create awareness had been achieved.

Our declaration was sent to the Honorable Prime Minister, His Excellency the President of Trinidad and Tobago and taken by Mrs. Gaspard Taylor to the Organization of American States (OAS) Civil Society Hemispheric Forum in Florida, and submitted in the workshop on sustainable development including natural disasters and climate change, since returning we have been asked to network with the Secretariat on Team T.T in preparation for the hosting of the 5th Summit of the Americas, when 34 heads of Governments will come together here in Trinidad and Tobago in April 2009, we have put forward a proposal for a "youth constituency within the climate change regime of the hemisphere" the same will go forward to the Commonwealth Heads of Governments which will be held here in October 2009.

Thank you to all and everyone who contributed to the success of the NDYS 2008, the work has just begun.