

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Regional Training Workshop for Coordinators of Water and Education Sector Groups, Reorganization and Hygiene (WASH)**

**Santo Domingo, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011-** Professionals in the Water Reorganization, Hygiene and Education Sectors from 11 Latin American and Caribbean countries participate in Santo Domingo in the Regional Training workshop of sector groups for the strategic coordination and common planning for emergencies.

The workshop, organized by the regional United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), is being conducted at the Hotel V Centenario from Monday 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> June.

From Dominican Republic, the participating members work at the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education, the National Institute of Potable Water and Sewer Systems (INAPA), the Emergency Operations Center (COE), and the Dominican Red Cross.

The use of focus on sector groups, also known as Cluster Approach, allows for institutions and countries, to possess the necessary skills and tools in order to provide a timely and efficient response amid emergency situations.

During the inaugural act for the workshop, the event featured the participation of the Director of the General Directorate of General Health (DIGESA), Mr. *Luis Félix Roa*; the Deputy Director of the Emergency Operations Sector, Mr. *Carlos Paulino*; the General Director for School Maintenance and Infrastructure, Mr. Julio Peña; The UNICEF representatives for the Dominican Republic and Haiti, Ms. *Maria Jesús Conde Zabala*, and Ms. *Françoise Gruloos*, respectively; the Officer for the Water reorganization program of the UNICEF regional office, Mr. *Jesús Trelles*; the Officer for the Regional Disaster Reduction and Emergency Education Program, Ms. *Ruth Custode*.

The UNICEF Representative for the Dominican Republic, Ms. *Maria Jesús Conde Zabala*, pointed out during the beginning of the workshop that this type of scope at national level, seeks to ensure a more strategic humanitarian response and to better prioritize the available resources, throughout work, role and responsibility definition of the humanitarian organizations.

In Dominican Republic, this type of scope became active during Hurricane Noel and Olga in 2007, and after the Haiti earthquake in 2010.

“However, our commitment goes beyond formal activation. We continue to support the water, reorganizations and hygiene group, in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Red Cross and others, and the Ministry of Education's Risk Management group, in collaboration with the NGO Coalition for infancy and the National Childhood Council (CONANI) in the coordination and preparation of a response to all emergencies affecting the country”, expressed Ms. Conde Zabala.

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At the workshop featured the participation of 35 professionals from Haiti, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Belize, Nicaragua, Honduras, Paraguay, Jamaica, UNICEF members, Save the Children, the International Spanish Cooperation Agency for Development, CARE International, PLAN International, CARITAS, the Dominican Red Cross, the PAHO, and Government Institutions in the fields of Education Reorganization, Water and Hygiene.

“We always talk about being well prepared for an emergency, but we never are, because we always leave it for tomorrow or that ‘it’s not going to happen to us’ but the reality differs, it can happen to any country in the world. Preparation is key and this workshop is eye-opening; because every country has its experiences of a certain level and also, by adding a UNICEF Haiti group it provides a dimension that is more than extraordinary”, explained the UNICEF Haiti Representative, *Francoise Gruloos*, during the workshop.

*Gruloos*, pointed out that every country when undergoing an emergency situation, also witnesses how its response capacity is affected and that despite what happened in Haiti was an emergency without precedence, nations, regardless of their economic development level, need to be prepared before similar happenings.

Among the workshop facilitators featured Ms. Michelle Messina, of UNICEF Dominican Republic, and Mr. *Jesús Trelles*, of the UNICEF Regional office, whom manifested that the aim of the workshop is to create skill for sector group coordination, possessing the necessary tools to provide a timely and effective response, in the event of an emergency, in the water, reorganization, hygiene and education sectors. From CARE International, served as facilitator Ms. Helen Hawkins; Mr. *Henry Hernandez* from PAHO; and from UNICEF, Mr. Frank Bouvet, Ms. *Ruth Custode*, and Mr. *Herbert Schembri*, among others.

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### About UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world’s largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)