

**SITUATION**

As of 6 September 2017, Hurricane Irma, a category 5 hurricane, with maximum sustained winds of 295 km/hour, it has significantly strengthened to become one of the most powerful hurricanes ever recorded in the Atlantic. To date, it has passed over Barbuda, Saint Barthelemy, Anguilla, Saint Marten, British and US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Turks and Caicos, Cuba, the Bahamas and passing through Florida. Irma caused extensive damage in Barbuda and Anguilla where 70-90% of the buildings were destroyed. 27 people reported dead across affected territories, 34,000 people displaced in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Over 1 million people were evacuated, especially from the municipalities in the northern coastline in central and eastern Cuba. 17,000 people in need of immediate shelter across the affected eastern Caribbean islands. Initial reports highlight that in Haiti there are significant damages to agricultural fields, livestock and banana plantations. Assessments will take place over the coming days to determine the number of people in need of food assistance. More than 10,000 people are in temporary shelters in the North. The damage to the Dominican Republic was far less than expected, with no fatalities reported. There is damage to water infrastructure that affects 1.2 million people, according to the national water authorities. Food security assessments are underway and protection measures for vulnerable people in affected communities are being taken. Livelihoods in affected communities are anticipated to be an area of need when recovery efforts begin. The Emergency Operations Center continue to keep 18 to 24 provinces on red alert, due to the possibility of landslides and floods. Irma hit Cuba as the first category 5 hurricane to make landfall in the country since 1924, causing massive destruction and widespread flooding along its northern coast. Within the provinces of the centre and east of Cuba that more damages have reported in agriculture are Holguín and Las Tunas; as well as Camagüey, Ciego de Ávila, Sancti Spiritus and Villa Clara where the affections, mainly in its northern fringe, have been classified as very serious and extend significantly, in addition to the swine and poultry. Irma has reportedly caused widespread flooding in northern Cuba as well including Havana, where roofs have been ripped off buildings and caused power outages. Reports of massive destruction to major crops such as sugarcane, plantain and poultry farms have reported. Concerns have also been raised about possible waterborne disease outbreaks as flooding is likely to persist for 36 hours at least. Most of the coastal municipalities in these provinces are without electricity. Flooding has also begun in the coastal areas of the western provinces of Matanzas, Mayabeque and La Habana, where over six-metre-high waves are expected.

Latest available information from external sources may be accessed through the following links: <http://www.gdacs.org/>, <https://tinyurl.com/yc8brn5p>, <https://tinyurl.com/y95b65bx>, <https://tinyurl.com/ydfgmzyq>

NEEDS

Water and sanitation kits have been identified as priority needs, PAHO is anticipating a strong need for psychosocial support in the coming weeks, given the magnitude of the trauma and the limited capacity in responding, as well as water quality and vector control to be key concerns in recovery to combat vector-borne diseases. In the Dominican Republic, the National Water Institute (INAPA) states that 30 aqueducts were affected, directly affecting the drinking water service for 1,236,860 people, or about 12 per cent of the country's population. There is concern that the contamination and salinization of clean water supplies on affected islands will present major health needs. As a direct result of the hurricane the following humanitarian needs are to be expected: food security, WASH, shelter and NFIs, early recovery, livelihoods, health services. Mobilization of needs assessments would also be a challenge especially in the mountainous regions of Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba.

STAKEHOLDERS

Key stakeholders leading monitoring, assessments and rapid response in the region are the following: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), United Nation system (Pan American

Health Organization [PAHO], the United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UN-OCHA]. The Cuban government prepared by staging emergency supplies and building equipment ahead of the arrival of Irma In Cuba, the government still keep the cyclonic alerts in many of the locations, as storm winds and torrential rains persist, making damage assessments that much more difficult. Reports on damages are still being completed.

ACT Alliance

ACT Alliance members work in Haiti, Dominican Republic and Cuba, in the three countries currently the national forums are working in evaluation of damages and necessities and are in contact with the authorities and other NGOs in preparation to respond. Given the level of damages so far, the Haiti and Dominican Republic forums respectively decided to submit a RRF, and an appeal is going to be submitted to respond in Cuba, the most affected among the three islands. Additional information on forum member agencies are available on the ACT website: <http://actalliance.org/about/forums/>.

A staff person from ACT Alliance Latin American office will be deployed to Cuba in order to provide support in the need assessment and design of the response. The response will be led by ACT national forums, in addition to life-saving assistance, ACT Alliance will endeavor to integrate DRR, preparedness, climate change and advocacy elements in its response. Following the issuance Alert, RRF, Concept Notes and Situation Reports will be issued by national forums and the ACT Secretariat based on needs assessments.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to the Head of Finance and Administration, Line Hempel (Line.Hempel@actalliance.org) and Senior Finance Officer, Lorenzo Correa (Lorenzo.Correa@actalliance.org)

For further information please contact:

San Salvador: Rosa Maria Matamoros, Regional Programme Officer (Rosa.Matamoros@actalliance.org), Carlos Rauda, ACT Regional Representative (carlos.rauda@actalliance.org)

Geneva: Alwynn Javier, Global Humanitarian Coordinator (Alwynn.Javier@actalliance.org)

ACT Haiti Forum Chair: Prosperity Raymond (PRaymond@christian-aid.org)

ACT Cuba Forum Chair: Elina Ceballos (diaconia@cic.co.cu)

ACT Dominican Republic Forum Chair: Lorenzo Mota King (Imotaking@yahoo.es)

ACT Website: <http://www.actalliance.org>