

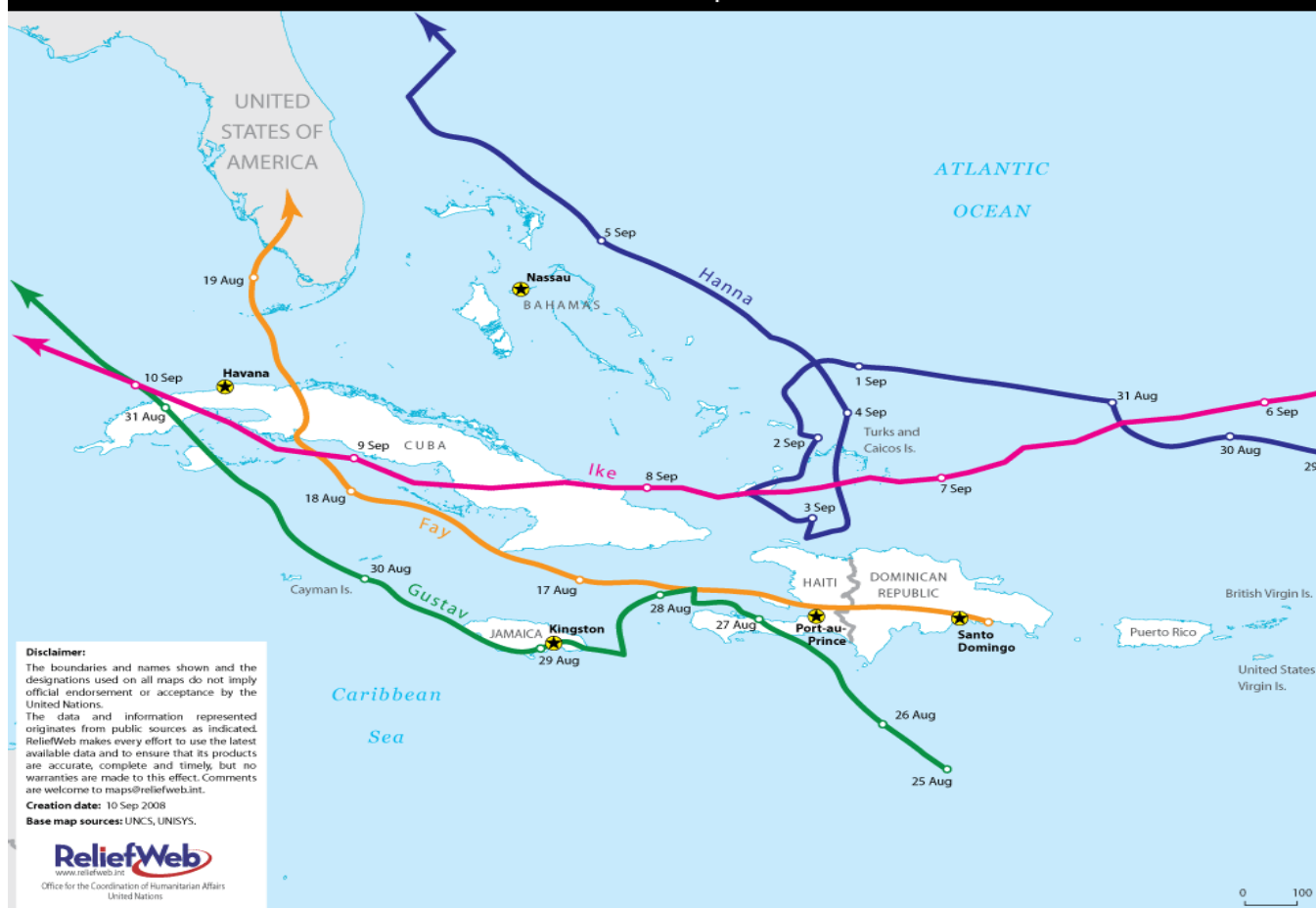
**Situation Report 17 – Caribbean Hurricane Season  
22 September 2008**

This situation report is based on information received from, the UN Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) in the affected countries, the Regional Office in Panama and the National Hurricane Centre. This situation report covers the effects of Hurricanes “Gustav”, “Hanna” and “Ike” in the Caribbean.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- **Weather forecasts indicate a high probability of a storm forming within the next days, causing concern in the already vulnerable Caribbean region.**
- **In Haiti, the Flash Appeal was launched in Port-au-Prince. The Appeal is only 3.4 % funded.**
- **In Turks and Caicos, most services are being restored and rehabilitation plans are underway.**

**Caribbean Hurricane Season (as of 10 Sep 2008)**





## SITUATION

1. A broad area of low pressure centered near the eastern tip of Hispaniola is causing heavy rains in the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the U.S. and the British Virgin Islands. Weather forecasts indicate a high probability of a storm forming in this area within the next two days. Heavy rainfall is expected, affecting Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Hispaniola, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Southern Bahamas.

2. The vulnerability throughout the Caribbean countries has increased dramatically with another 3 months left before the end of the hurricane season. Only little rain can have serious consequences. The region has been affected since 15 August successively by tropical storm Fay, hurricanes “Gustav”, “Hanna” and “Ike” that claimed in the Caribbean more than 350 lives so far, affecting more than 2.8 million persons and damaging more than 600,000 houses-while assessments are still on going.

## HAITI

3. On September 19, the Haiti Flash Appeal was lunched in Port-au-Prince. The ministers of Planning and Education emphasized that all affected departments have to be reached – not just Artibonite, the most affected-, and insisted that the start of the school year is a priority. Hence, school facilities used for shelters have to be vacated, as many schools rebuilt and rehabilitated. Sanitation and environmental projects as well as agricultural projects are essential to support early recovery efforts. Meanwhile, as a tropical depression is expected to bring heavy showers within the next 48 hours, dikes are being reinforced to prevent additional flooding. Authorities expressed great concern.

4. Individual re-housing solutions, voluntary relocation to safer cities, and shutting-down of inadequate shelters to free school facilities are planned by the government. Water levels in Gonaives are decreasing rapidly, enabling access to most areas in town. However mud remains an obstacle and the main roads are now being cleaned. The Direction of Civil Protection (DPC) will put together a cleaning and waste management plan.

5. Since 16 September, the European Commission’s Civil Protection Team is on the ground conducting an assessment of the affected bridges in Mirebalais, Miragoane, Ennery and Montrouis. Findings were preliminarily shared with the US, Canada, MINUSTAH and the government, though they will be made available to all interested parties. The MIC requested 200,000 sandbags and a waste management expert in coordination with UNDAC and UNEP/OCHA. MapAction continues to support UNDAC and the humanitarian community at large – two cartographers extended their mission for an additional week.

## Food

6. Relief response to date has reached 313,679 persons with 1,470 MT distributed. So far, WFP food distribution was conducted by US helicopters and vessels with an average of 120 MT a day. WFP is scheduled to take over next week through its own helicopters and chartered boats; this task is accounted for in the Flash Appeal to reach Gonaives, the southern and the northern departments. WFP sent a truckload of NFIs to Gonaives on the 19<sup>th</sup>, however, difficult road conditions are reported and a bulldozer is needed to pull trucks across the river.

7. WFP is planning to establish a permanent office space and warehouse in Gonaives, which should be operational soon: this includes 15 prefabricated offices and 10 rub-halls or mobile warehouses with a total capacity of 300MT each. Overall distribution will become more efficient thanks to a guideline document jointly prepared with partner organizations, identifying distribution points and a plan for targeted food delivery. This reduces the workload on MINUSTAH and ensures the capacity to reach 19,500 beneficiaries per day (starting Monday 22).

## Nutrition

8. Partner organizations are carrying-out assessments and missions to evaluate the nutrition situation. Additional logistic support was required by Terre des Hommes to cover the South. Save the Children will conduct an assessment mission in the South-East; the West will be covered jointly by MDM-Suisse and ACF. Other areas will be covered by

Concern, while Merlin is currently assessing Nippes. Based on their findings, UNICEF requested the Nutrition cluster to provide an estimate of needs for therapeutic products to facilitate interventions.

#### Shelter and Non-food Items

9. In Gonaives, the DPC requested 400 kitchen sets to facilitate the food/cash for work dikes repair project. Funding sources for this project are being identified jointly with IOM and WFP agreed to provide food rations for the duration of the project. Over the past days, IOM distributed plastic sheeting to 620 families. Oxfam distributed material for the construction of latrines. Distribution of NFIs is carried-out mostly by Caritas. CARE and religious associations inform that their work was hampered by the current fuel shortages. MAST distributed mattresses in the West and DPC gave 20,000 kits to regional and local committees. A total of 1,320 baby kits will be distributed this week in Cabaret, the South-East and the border cities. UNFPA, jointly with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, is also beginning to hand out condoms. Oxfam focuses also on water and hygiene kits, as well as on single mothers in temporary shelters. IFRC will bring 2 shelter specialists to support the shelter cluster with training on shelter rehabilitation.

#### Health

10. The health cluster reported that several areas remain to be assessed in the North-West, in the southern coast from Chardonnière, in the Centre and in Nippes. Main findings so far account for the increased need of medical supplies/distribution, the reported damages of healthcare facilities –believed to be minor-, sporadic cases of diarrhoea and malaria –in areas already endemic-, and no documented epidemics. Thus, the response strategy already underway focuses on: standardizing epidemiologic surveillance, operational since 11 September; increasing outreach to uncover areas initiated by MSF and MDM through mobile clinics; establishing the MSF hospital in Gonaives; delivery of medical kits (PAHO/WHO); deployment of UNFPA support in anaesthetists and obstetricians; planning on anti-vector diseases; continued support to epidemiologic and logistic expertise (by PAHO/WHO jointly with health authorities); shipping vaccines and serum for Tetanus; and keeping medical facilities functioning under good operational conditions.

#### Logistics

11. The WFP logistics cluster in Gonaives focuses on meeting transportation and storage needs. Six commercial trucks were contracted to operate in Gonaives to release the M6s helicopters to other areas in need of assistance that are still inaccessible by other motored vehicles. Partners conveyed procedures and a shared methodology, including compliance to deadlines for timely transportation of their cargo and ensuring fuel provision on the ground.

#### Water and Sanitation

12. Gonaives is producing safe drinking water amounting to a total of 250 m3. A total of 700 wells were identified and a disinfection program is underway to secure clean drinking water, jointly implemented by ACF, MSF and the Spanish Red Cross. Oxfam took the lead in setting-up latrines. In addition, ACF completed a WASH assessment in Gonaives, which presupposes the establishment of 20 distribution points serviced by two water tankers and the setting-up of four water treatment stations.

#### Protection

13. The protection cluster identified as a main priority women's security when returning home from food distributions. Cases have been recorded of women being aggressed and robbed. UNDSS, UNPOL and PNH are to prepare a plan of action. Although food will only be given to women, male family members are encouraged to ensure their security while walking home. A team of midwives was deployed to Jacmel to assess the situation and support women in need. Similarly, many non-registered orphanages are requesting assistance but the lack of information is, however, a good opportunity to regulate unregistered orphanages and IBESR/UNICEF will provide assistance in this area

#### Agriculture

14. An agriculture contingency plan put together by local authorities is underway to address flooded and destroyed crops, lost cattle and livestock.



### Road conditions

15. According to MINUSTAH access to the coastal regions of Chardonniere and Les Anglais (South) is still blocked due to a collapsed bridge and flooded river banks. Tiburon, Arniquet, Chantal and Maniche are still inaccessible by road. In Nippes, access to Anse-à-Veau, Arnaud and Petit-Trou is still blocked by a flooded river, and access to L'Azile and Plaisance is blocked by landslides and a broken bridge.

### Security

16. The situation remains stable in the city of Gonaives. For security reasons, all organizations were requested to provide a list of all temporary workers on a daily basis in order to implement a system of identification cards and prevent unauthorized access the MINUSTAH compound.

## **CUBA**

17. According to a preliminary official report delivered by Cuban authorities, the combined impact caused by hurricanes "Ike" and "Gustav", resulted in 7 deaths, nearly 500,000 damaged houses (mainly roof damages) of which 63,249 were destroyed, leaving some 200,000 are without shelters and other 100,000 with houses in need of repairs. Material losses are estimated by the authorities at USD 5 billion with a significant impact on the infrastructure, basic services and crops. Pinar Del Rio and the Isle of Youth were the most affected by "Gustav" while Holguin, Las Tunas and Camaguey were most affected by "Ike".

18. The Civil Defense System is working with over 87,000 volunteers. As a preventive measure prior to the strike of "Gustav" and "Ike", more than 3 million were evacuated—mostly at relatives and friends' houses. Over 2,000 command centers were activated, along with 1,500 food kitchens and some 2,200 shelters, 1,200 of which were schools. Additionally, 160,000 persons were mobilized; transportation, 1,400 bulldozers, and 4,500 radios and communication equipment were made available. National authorities are prioritizing the rehabilitation of basic services. A huge effort is underway in several localities to ensure all students receive education. To cope with the loss and damage to school facilities, families have been called to offer space in their homes to serve as classrooms. Food is guaranteed for students. Convoys of trucks loaded with priority products for rehabilitation continue to arrive in affected localities, including to those more isolated. The UN has mobilized so far more than USD 3 million.

19. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is seeking CHF 6.4 million (or USD 5.8 million) to support the Cuban Red Cross. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has approved already USD 2.5 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) which will be disbursed through UN agencies on the ground and another application for Ike was received. Individual agencies have also accessed their available funds and in total, the UN has mobilized USD 3.567 million in response to the damages caused by "Gustav". Cash donations can be made at:

Banco Financiero Internacional  
Account Number: 033473  
Account name: MINVEC huracanes restauración de daños

## **TURKS AND CAICOS (TCI)**

20. The local Red Cross Society finished the census of vulnerable and affected population with support from the British Red Cross. As the Recovery Plan is now underway, implemented by the Ministry of Finance, the government suspended blanket and food distributions. The UNDAC Team departed Turks and Caicos.

21. Daily Government policy meetings are continuing chaired by the Governor and attended by line ministries and the Disaster Office. The Red Cross Society and the British Red Cross were designated by the TCI Government as cluster leads/lead agency responsible for aid distribution and coordination. The census focused on elderly persons; single-headed households; orphaned, disabled; isolated children; and persons who lost their homes.

### Infrastructure

22. The royal Bermuda regiment is continuing to assist Grand Turk with repairs of public buildings. Its service personnel will remain in the island until mid-October. Electricity is being restored to the island but it is expected that repairs will take 3-4 weeks to complete. Most of the power lines and electrical poles in the island require replacement. Priority has been given to restoring power to the hospital and key government facilities. The mobile phone service has been restored and improved. Cable and Wireless is providing free wireless internet service and has donated communications equipment.

### Logistics

23. Tropical Shipping Pvt donated a warehouse to replace the previous customs storage Rub halls for storage of relief items that are still required. DHL is conducting an assessment of logistics and cargo handling capacity in Grand Turks Island.

### Environmental Issues

24. Waste management and disposal of debris is of particular concern. A request has been submitted to the Joint OCHA/UNEP Environment Unit for the provision of additional environmental experts to support the government efforts. The Joint Unit is taking the appropriate steps. Potentially deployed experts would work closely with both the Environmental Health Department and the Disaster Management Office. The UNDAC Team conducted an on-site assessment of the municipal waste dump site in Grand Turk. There is a requirement to assess and classify the hazardous and non-hazardous waste derived from collapsed buildings. Of additional concern is asbestos fibre used in building materials, which is scattered around.

### Food

25. Government blanket and food distribution has now ended. Churches and IGA continued food distribution. Approximately 3,000 meals were made available and operations will continue until Sunday. Police vessels delivered food, water and shelter materials to Salt Cay on 18 September.

### Protection

26. Needs are being identified by the protection sector, including psychosocial support for children and youth. The TCI Government is planning on opening outreach centers by 22 September and is currently identifying trained personnel. UNICEF may be required to support the respective ministries.

### Education

27. The Grand Turks High School is planned to reopen on 22-23 September. One of the primary schools (North) was open for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes. Counselling sessions were conducted for students on the first day of classes. Teachers will work extended hours to make up for lost time. It is expected that by Monday 22 September both primary schools will be fully functioning. Education is on track and most teachers are available to resume classes.

### Health

28. The Ministry of Health is working with PAHO to assess the medical services and vector control in Grand Turk and Salt Cay. The Health services have deployed trained personnel to the area while the CDRA assessment of the Grand Turk hospital confirmed that 10% of the medical stock is still available. A new hospital building is planned to open in 2010. An intermediate rebuilding process of the existing hospital is required. No significant gaps in medical treatment were observed. The hospital is operating on a generator until electricity is restored. The South Caicos medical clinic has reopened. No cases of malaria have been reported in Turks and Caicos; however, considering the high prevalence of malaria within the migrant populations, the Ministry of Health remains vigilant on preventing indigenous transmission of malaria. Entomological investigation into possible breeding of *A. aquasalis* is essential.

Water and Sanitation

29. In Grand Turk, water service has been restored to most of the island and the desalination plant is currently operational. Reserve tanks throughout the island have ample amounts of water.

Emergency Shelter

30. Shelter material was distributed to civil servants in Grand Turk on 18 September. Samaritans Purse will revert back on recovery support, currently assessing the situation in partnership with the Disaster Office. The Rotary Club has made available 200 'Shelter in the Box' kits. Once the kits are decommissioned, they will for public use (particularly the tents in the kits). Soup Kitchen organizers have 500 cots and mattresses that they will donate once soup kitchens are decommissioned.

Early Recovery

31. The Ministry of Finance has prepared a draft recovery strategy which will be presented to the cabinet. The plan outlines the establishment of a task force and will focus on reconstruction needs and livelihoods (tourism & fisheries). The Government of TCI has requested technical assistance on Early Recovery and livelihoods restoration. UNDP in Jamaica is currently identifying resources and advisors to support government efforts and is planning on deploying an early recovery advisor on the 22 September. South Caicos has been identified by the Government to have special livelihood requirements, particularly its the fishing industry.

32. Contributions recorded as of 15 September include:

- OCHA Emergency Cash Grant USD 50, 000
- Emergency Relief Grant of US \$100,000 through CDERA
- Up to US \$500,000 for an Immediate Response Loan for the clearing and cleaning of affected areas and emergency restoration of services
- The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility is set to make a payout of approximately USD 6.3million to boost recovery efforts. These funds have been channeled through the Government of TCI.
- IFRC allocated CHF 1.8M
- British Red Cross Society allocated 140,000 GBP from its Disaster Fund and launched a Hurricane Appeal for GBP 30,000
- TCI Red Cross Society allocated 182,000 USD
- DFID has contributed GBP 30,000 through the British Red Cross Society

**REGIONAL RESPONSE**

53. The OCHA Regional Office in Panama is closely monitoring the situation and is in close contact with the RCs and UNETEs of the affected countries in the region. More information can be found on Reliefweb at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int) and REDHUM at [www.redhum.org](http://www.redhum.org). More information on the hurricanes and storms can be found at <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>. Humanitarian organisations and donors are encouraged to report all contributions (cash and in-kind) to OCHA's Financial Tracking Service at [fts@reliefweb.int](mailto:fts@reliefweb.int) or through the on-line contribution form at [www.reliefweb.int/fts](http://www.reliefweb.int/fts), where a list of already made contributions is available. More information on Haiti is available at <http://ochaonline.un.org/haiti> and on Cuba at [www.onu.org.cu](http://www.onu.org.cu).

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