

SITUATION

In the afternoon of Sunday, 1st September 2019, Category 5 Hurricane Dorian, the strongest hurricane known this side of the Caribbean, made landfall in the Bahamas in Elbow Cay, east of Abaco island and made another landfall on Grand Bahama island with the same intensity several hours later. With an unprecedented behavior, the hurricane moved slowly through the islands from 1 to 3 of September, leaving a death toll of 43 people as of 6th September (35 people in Abaco and 8 in Grand Bahama). This number is expected to increase due the hundreds of people still missing.

According to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), more than 13,000 houses have been severely damaged or destroyed – about 45 per cent of all homes on the two islands. According to the OCHA report on 7th September, the Abaco Islands are the most severely affected with thousands of houses levelled, telecommunications towers down, and water wells and roads damaged, very limited or no water, electricity and sanitation, and most of the Marsh harbor infrastructure is damaged. In Grand Bahama, the eastern part is the most affected, with homes damaged between Freetown and Deep Water Cay. Oil tanks have also been damaged.

Across Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama, airports and seaports are increasingly becoming operational, allowing humanitarian assistance to be delivered. However, access to affected people, particularly in the Abaco Islands, remains challenging mainly due to damaged roads and infrastructure. Assessments are underway conducted by Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), UN agencies and NGOs to determine the scope of needs, following aerial assessments over Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama on 4th and 6th September.

NEEDS

CDEMA's Rapid Needs Assessment in Abaco recommended that short-term needs are roofing materials, debris removal, full restoration of power, access to safe water and vector control activities. Water systems need to be restored also to minimize health risks for the residents. For Grand Bahama, general relief supplies are needed, a detailed assessment of an oil refinery, restoration of telecommunications, debris removal, and vector control.

STAKEHOLDERS

According to OCHA, the Government of the Bahamas has requested NEMA and CDEMA, as well as UN agencies, NGOs, humanitarian organizations and donors to fill identified gaps. The humanitarian presence is increasing with more than 80 response partners in The Bahamas between government actors, UN agencies, the IFRC and donors. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and USAID deployed a search-and-rescue (SAR) team. A USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) is supporting damage and needs assessments and identifying priority needs. The United Kingdom has dispatched the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) to Mounts Bay to Abaco Islands, delivering shelter kits, water and other basic items. Relief assistance is arriving in Nassau and dispatched to affected areas, including 14,700 individual ready-to-eat meals from the World Food Program (WFP), which arrived on 6th September and immediately delivered to the islands.

ACT Alliance

ACT Alliance has no national forum or direct member presence in the Bahamas. Recognizing the scale of the emergency, ACT Alliance is deploying a Rapid Assessment Team to be led by the Servicio Social de Iglesias Dominicanas (SSID) in the Dominican Republic, on behalf of the Caribbean Sub-regional ACT forum. The assessment will identify needs of the affected population, assess local capacities to respond including those of churches, provide recommendations for a possible ACT Response, and help write a concept note/proposal for an ACT response. To date, the team will be composed of and/or supported by ACT members Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), Church World Service (CWS) and Cuban Council of Churches (CCC). The ACT Secretariat is in touch with ACT members working with local churches and organizations to ensure coordination with the Assessment Team, and sharing information with the World Council of Churches and other actors.

The ACT Secretariat has mobilized \$10,000 from the Global Rapid Response Fund (GRRF19) for SSID to support the requirements of the rapid assessment. This amount will be made part of the eventual response of ACT (either as RRF or Appeal) depending on the outcome of the assessment, and will be replenished should enough funds be generated from donors.

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

For further information please contact:

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