Humanitarian Aid: EU announces €18.5 million additional package for Latin America and the Caribbean

Brussels, 23 July 2019

As numerous natural disasters threaten vulnerable communities in the Latin American and Caribbean region, the Commission has announced today new humanitarian funding of €18.5 million. This includes €15 million to support preparedness of local communities and institutions for natural disasters throughout the region: Central and South America, the Caribbean and Haiti. A further €2.5 million will support projects addressing violence, and €1 million for food assistance in Central America.

"Investing in disaster preparedness today saves lives tomorrow. The European Union has assisted the Latin American and Caribbean region in all major recent natural disasters, be it hurricanes, forest fires, floods or volcanic eruptions. Our new funding is part of efforts to help communities adapt to the effects of climate change and better prepared for the next crisis," said Christos Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management.

Funding will boost local capacities to respond to emergencies, implement Early Warning Systems, and increase access to water, sanitation and hygiene. Communities supported include vulnerable ethnic groups living in rural or urban areas and disaster management institutions. Additionally, this support will provide food assistance to populations stricken by natural disasters and severe drought, and provide protection and basic assistance to communities affected by violence in Central America.

Including the latest announcement for Colombia last June, the European Union has allocated a total of €79.5 million in 2019 to support people in need in the region, of which €16 million for Disaster Preparedness and Prevention. Since 1994, the EU has provided over €1 billion in humanitarian assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on the populations most affected by natural disasters and violence.

Background

Latin America and the Caribbean are among the world's most disaster-prone areas, being highly exposed to natural hazards such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, tsunamis, landslides and droughts. Haiti continues to be among the top three countries most affected by extreme events in the last two decades.

Approximately three-quarters of the population live in at-risk areas, and one-third live in areas highly exposed to disasters in the continent. The urban poor are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters with high human and economic costs, affecting societies that suffer from significant inequalities.

Additionally, the El Niño phenomenon regularly causes catastrophic weather events such as droughts and floods with large humanitarian consequences. Vulnerable communities affected by protracted drought are in need of food assistance, livelihood recovery and resilience-strengthening measures.

In Central America, at least 487,000 people are internally displaced (IDPs) as a consequence of organised violence in the three most violent countries in the region (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador). Affected communities require protection as first priority, with specific attention to women and children who are the most exposed to threats and gender based violence.

For More Information

Factsheet - Caribbean
Factsheet - Central America and Mexico
Factsheet - Colombia
Factsheet - Haiti
Factsheet - South America
Press release - EU mobilises €6 million for people in need in Colombia
Carlos MARTIN RUIZ DE GORDEJUELA (+32 2 296 53 22)
Daniel PUGLISI (+32 2 296 91 40)

General public inquiries: Europe Direct by phone 00 800 67 89 10 11 or by email