

PRESS RELEASE

**AFTER TROPICAL CYCLONE WINSTON: FIJI HUMANITARIAN APPEAL  
REQUESTS \$38.6 MILLION TO HELP RESTORE THE ISLAND NATION**

(Geneva, 4 March 2016): Representatives of the Government of Fiji and the UN today launched an appeal for US\$38.6 million to provide critical emergency relief to 350,000 people affected by tropical cyclone Winston.

Category 5 cyclone Winston – the most devastating tropical cyclone on record in the Southern Hemisphere - struck the Pacific island nation Fiji during the night of 20 February taking more than 40 lives and affecting 350,000 people, 40 per cent of the total population. Some 54,000 people remain sheltered in 960 evacuation centers.

“While the worst is behind us, Winston has left a terrible trail of destruction in its wake. In response, our relief efforts are in full swing. We currently prioritise the restoration of essential services: education, health, infrastructure and agriculture,” said Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji. “In the light of the enormous and long process to recovery and rehabilitation ahead of us, and in the name of the Fijian people, I am calling on the international community’s assistance.”

While comprehensive damage data is still being collected, initial estimates indicate varying levels of destruction, with up to 100 per cent of buildings destroyed on some islands. Hundreds of schools have been damaged or destroyed, health facilities have been severely damaged and the agricultural sector faces a total loss of some \$56 million.

“Almost no part of our nation has been left unscarred. And many of our rural and maritime areas bore the brunt of Winston’s fury. On Koro Island alone, more than 3,000 people were left homeless, with 21 per cent of livestock dead and any crop yield made impossible,” said H.E. Amb. Nazhat Shameem Khan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Fiji to the UN in Geneva. “This is a loss of catastrophic proportions for Fiji, and the immediate loss will be followed by a longer term loss to Fiji’s economic and social growth. We have suffered a terrible blow to infrastructure, health, education, and agriculture. It is a blow which will take us years to recover from. The moment is now, for our friends to stand by the people of Fiji.”

“The UN and our humanitarian partners are supporting the Government and people of Fiji as they lead the response to the catastrophe,” said Marcy Vigoda, Chief of Partnerships and Resource Mobilization in the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva. “It is vital that the international community provides the necessary resources so we can help all the affected people with shelter, health services, water and sanitation, and support students to restart their education.”

The UN humanitarian chief Stephen O’Brien is releasing some \$8 million from the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund to immediate response projects in the appeal. International donors have already made in-kind donations and provided technical assistance worth nearly \$22 million and provided \$9 million in cash donations.

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