

**UN Emergency Relief Coordinator visits the Bahamas in wake of Hurricane Dorian**  
*\$1 million in UN emergency funds for the response to Hurricane Dorian*

New York, 4 September 2019 – Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock today visited the Bahamas to discuss UN assistance with Prime Minister Hubert Minnis and his government in the wake of Hurricane Dorian.

On behalf of the Secretary General, Mr. Lowcock expressed the United Nations' condolences, solidarity and support for the Government and people of the Bahamas. He also reviewed with the Government the scale-up of the immediate relief effort.

Mr. Lowcock announced that the UN Central Emergency Response Fund would provide an immediate US\$1 million for urgent life-saving activities in the Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama, which have suffered damage on a catastrophic scale as a result of the hurricane.

“The people of the northern Bahamas have been devastated by this huge hurricane, the like of which has never been seen here before. The United Nations will do everything we can to support the Government and the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Agency in scaling up the immediate response as the islands most affected now become more accessible to relief agencies. Many people are in urgent need of food, clean water, medical help and shelter. Preventing further loss of life is our top priority right now,” said Mr. Lowcock.

Dorian hit the Abaco islands in the northern Bahamas as a Category 5 hurricane on 1 September and continued west to Grand Bahama where it stayed through 3 September causing further devastation. It is the strongest hurricane on record to make landfall in the Bahamas. At its peak, Dorian had wind speeds approaching 300 kilometres per hour. It caused massive storm surges, flooding of entire villages, destroyed thousands of homes, downed power and telecommunication lines, put health facilities out of action, made roads impassable and contaminated the drinking water system with saltwater. The current death toll of eight is expected to rise, and many people have been injured.

After moving away from the Bahamas, Dorian was approaching the Florida coastline today as a Category 2 hurricane.

The National Emergency Management Agency in the Bahamas remains focused on search and rescue operations. International assessment teams, led by the Government and with the support of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency and others, are expected to begin work this week in the affected areas. United Nations disaster relief specialists arrived in Nassau last week ahead of the hurricane.

“The CERF funds will allow the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to support Government-led efforts to expand critical relief efforts immediately. I am grateful to all Member States and other donors to the CERF who are making this possible,” Mr. Lowcock said. “The funds cover only a fraction of what the people of the Bahamas will need. While the Bahamas has capacity to resource part of the response itself, which it is already doing, this is a huge event, affecting up to 20 per cent of the population of the country, and I urge donors to provide further funding for the humanitarian response and recovery efforts as soon as the specific requirements are known. Staff from my office will join the Government officials and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency in travelling to Abaco and Grand Bahama to begin the process of assessing needs more comprehensively than has been possible so far.”

***For more information, please contact:***

***New York:*** Russell Geekie, [geekie@un.org](mailto:geekie@un.org) +1 917 331 0393 or Hayat Abu-Saleh, [abusaleh@un.org](mailto:abusaleh@un.org) +1 917 224 9751  
***Geneva:*** Jens Laerke, OCHA Geneva, [laerke@un.org](mailto:laerke@un.org) +41 79 472 9750