GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA AND THE UNITED NATIONS CALL FOR ENHANCED COLLABORATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS, HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS & THE PRIVATE SECTOR ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

(Kingston / New York, 18 October 2013): Leaders from 22 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have made a commitment today to further enhance regional cooperation in disaster preparedness and humanitarian response.

At the Sixth Meeting on Enhancing Humanitarian Partnerships (MIAH), which was hosted by the Government of Jamaica and supported by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), regional leaders and representatives from international and regional humanitarian organizations adopted a Plan of Action to support countries and regional organizations in partnership with civil society and the private sector, to strengthen early warning systems, preparedness and response across the region.

“Millions of people are affected every year by floods, earthquakes and hurricanes as well as the impact of rapid urbanization and climate change,” said USG Amos. “Jamaica and other countries have made great strides by strengthening legal frameworks, promoting risk reduction strategies, and improving emergency preparedness and response systems. This has made a real difference on the ground.”

The Meeting is an annual regional forum aimed at improving humanitarian coordination mechanisms through building stronger collaboration between governments and the humanitarian community.

More than 100 representatives participated in the three-day meeting. Included in the Declaration from the meeting are agreements to support the establishment of a Regional Logistics Centre for Humanitarian Assistance for the Americas in the Republic of Panama and a sub-regional hub in Jamaica, to allow for greater efficiency and management of regional and international humanitarian supplies and for fast and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in disaster situations in the region.

"Today we agreed that to meet the challenges of humanitarian crises we need to use communications technology, use the experience of the corporate sector, and better engage with communities themselves, to improve the way we work,” noted Valerie Amos. “The 2013 MIAH Plan of Action encourages Governments to seek more effective partnerships with the private sector, international organizations, civil society and community-based organizations to reduce inequality and increase our work with the most vulnerable in society, including children, women, the elderly and people with disabilities.”

For further information, please call:
Amanda Pitt, OCHA New York, pitta@un.org, Cell +1 917 442 1810
Manuel Rodriguez, OCHA ROLAC, rodriguez31@un.org, Tel. +507 6679 2212
OCHA press releases are available at www.unocha.org or www.reliefweb.int.