

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND
EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR, STEPHEN O'BRIEN**

STATEMENT ON FIJI, TROPICAL CYCLONE WINSTON

(New York, 22 February 2016) I am concerned by the devastating impact on Fiji of Tropical Cyclone Winston, which has so far claimed at least 21 lives and affected hundreds of thousands of people. This cyclone is reportedly the strongest ever to hit the South Pacific. Whole villages have been destroyed, homes and crops have been damaged, power lines have been cut and more than 8,100 people are currently sheltering in over 70 evacuation centres.

The Government of Fiji is leading the response, distributing food and other relief supplies, and providing emergency shelter. A state of natural disaster has been declared, and the Government has asked for international assistance.

I offer my deepest condolences to all who have been caught up in this disaster. The United Nations and our humanitarian partners across the Pacific stand ready to support the people and the authorities with any expertise and support they may need. We must do all we can to help people rebuild their lives and livelihoods.