

**UNICEF Daily Situation Report Dominica
31 August 2015**

Highlights

- * 20 confirmed deaths; unknown number still missing, 720 people being housed in shelters
- * The south-eastern community of Petite Savanne (total population 753) evacuated and eight (8) other areas (population approx. 6,000) declared special disaster areas
- * 29,300 people without access to safe drinking water
- * Small airport in capital operational but commercial airport at Marigot still closed; commercial travel via ferry being facilitated via nearby island of Guadeloupe

Situation Overview

Segments of Dominica began to return to a sense of normalcy on August 31, 2015. However, large portions of the 290 square-mile island which were hardest hit by Tropical Storm Erika have been declared as special disaster areas. These areas suffered widespread devastation when Erika, packing sustained winds of 50 miles per hour, impacted Dominica for several hours beginning in the pre-dawn hours of August 27, 2015.

The torrential rain associated with the fifth storm of the 2015 Atlantic Hurricane Season caused several landslides and flooded communities near the capital Roseau where the majority of the population reside. Several rural communities in the Eastern Caribbean Island were also flooded as swollen rivers broke their banks.

The mountainous island of Dominica is home to 71,293 residents who live close to the shoreline or in valleys which are prone to the effects of flooding and landslides.

The Dominica Government urged all public servants to report to work on August 31 to assist with the clean-up of government offices in Roseau and other areas which were impacted by flood waters. Several businesses in Roseau also reopened and the Prime Minister chaired a meeting with the food distribution sector to ascertain the food and bottle water situation in the country.

The regional and international response to the disaster is being coordinated by the Regional Response Mechanism which is an arrangement for the coordination of disaster response among Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) Participating States.

CDEMA reports that search and rescue operations were continuing in the affected areas. Access to a number of communities has been restored and injured persons have been airlifted to the Princess Margaret Hospital, the island's primary health care facility. A total of 574 persons have been rendered homeless.



Figure 1- Map of Dominica

Humanitarian Needs

The immediate needs identified by the Government of Dominica include:

- Bottled water
- Supplies for babies
- Hygiene supplies for senior citizens
- First aid kits
- Blankets and cots

Inter-Agency Collaboration, Coordination, Cluster Leadership and Key Partnerships

The UN system's response is being co-ordinated under the Regional Response Mechanism (under the leadership of CDEMA) which met on August 31 to discuss the latest situation. While preliminary reports of the immediate and short term needs are trickling in, lack of proper communication with the affected areas has affected this process.



Figure 2-UNICEF supplies being readied for shipment

UNICEF Response

UNICEF collaborated with CDEMA and the Barbados Coast Guard to send 503 boxes of adult hygiene kits, 100 boxes of infant hygiene kits as well as 4,000 water purification tablets to the flood-ravaged areas.

These items arrived on August 31 and will be distributed to the most affected communities.

An assessment of schools is underway and the Office stands ready to supply school-in-a box kits to ensure that the start of school, planned for September 7, is not delayed. Additionally five persons trained in the physio-social Return-to-Happiness programme area on standby in St Lucia for deployment to Dominica as necessary.

Programme Commitments:

- Nutrition:
 - The nutritional needs of children are being assessed. However CDEMA reports that Government is satisfied that since the supply chain into their island has not been broken, the needs of children and the general population can be met on island. However there remains a challenge in getting supplies to affected populations in remote communities.
- Health:
 - PAHO is conducting an assessment of the health situation. There is immediate concerns about mosquito-borne diseases and leptospirosis.
- WASH
 - UNICEF has supplied water purification tablets and has a supply of oral rehydration salts on stand-by

- Child Protection:
- UNICEF is still assessing the need for protective services. Additionally a team of trainers are on standby to implement the psycho-social Return to Happiness Programme
- Education:
- An assessment of schools started on August 31. Government has identified a need for 1,000 exercise books, 480 pens and 480 pencils. UNICEF stands ready to supply school-in-box kits based on the needs identified ahead of the scheduled September 7 start of the new school year

Next steps

- Key areas of intervention will be in the WASH sector to prevent water-borne diseases and in the education sector to ensure a prompt start of the new school year on September 7.
- The next SitRep will be September 1

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