

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

ADDITIONAL \$4.1 MILLION REQUESTED FOR THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

(New York, 26 December 2007): On behalf of the Government of the Dominican Republic, the United Nations earlier this week requested an additional \$4.1 million to provide assistance in areas of the country hit earlier this month by tropical storm Olga. At the same time, the original request for relief and recovery funding, made in the aftermath of major devastation caused by the tropical storm Noel which struck the country at the end of October, has now been revised to \$8.4 million, after some \$6 million had already been committed. The new total requested for relief in areas affected by the two natural disasters amounts to over \$12.5 million.

Tropical storm Olga hit the country on 12 December, killing as many as 33 people and displacing another 61,000. The storm brought new hardship and significantly disrupted the recovery and relief efforts that had been undertaken following the impact of tropical storm Noel. Two weeks after Olga hit the country, nearly 14,000 people remain in the 42 shelters, while another 47,700 persons are staying with family and friends. Material damage is also significant, with over 12,000 houses affected, of which 370 were completely destroyed. Together, the two storms killed over 160 people and directly affected more than 130,000 persons.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Resident Coordinator's office and partners in the Dominican Republic identified health, water and sanitation, food security and shelters as top priority needs. Although the impact of Olga was less severe than that of Noel, the recent storm further complicated ongoing relief and recovery efforts since many areas affected by Olga were also previously affected by the earlier storm.

The United Nations and partners are currently supporting the Government of the Dominican Republic in its response to both disasters. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continues its distribution of food packages and hygiene items to populations affected. In addition, the World Health Organisation (WHO)/Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) continue their assistance programme by providing supplementary staff, both local and international, and technical assistance in health and sanitation. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has provided hygiene and cleaning equipment as well as medical supplies, while the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is continuing with the emergency projects that it has been carrying out.

In the aftermath of tropical storm Noel, the affected populations in the Dominican Republic have also benefited from a \$2.8 million grant allocated in November by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in support of immediate, life-saving activities. This year alone the Fund has committed \$212.9 million to rapid response grants in 48 countries, including the Dominican Republic, and another \$124 million in support of underfunded emergencies in 23 countries.