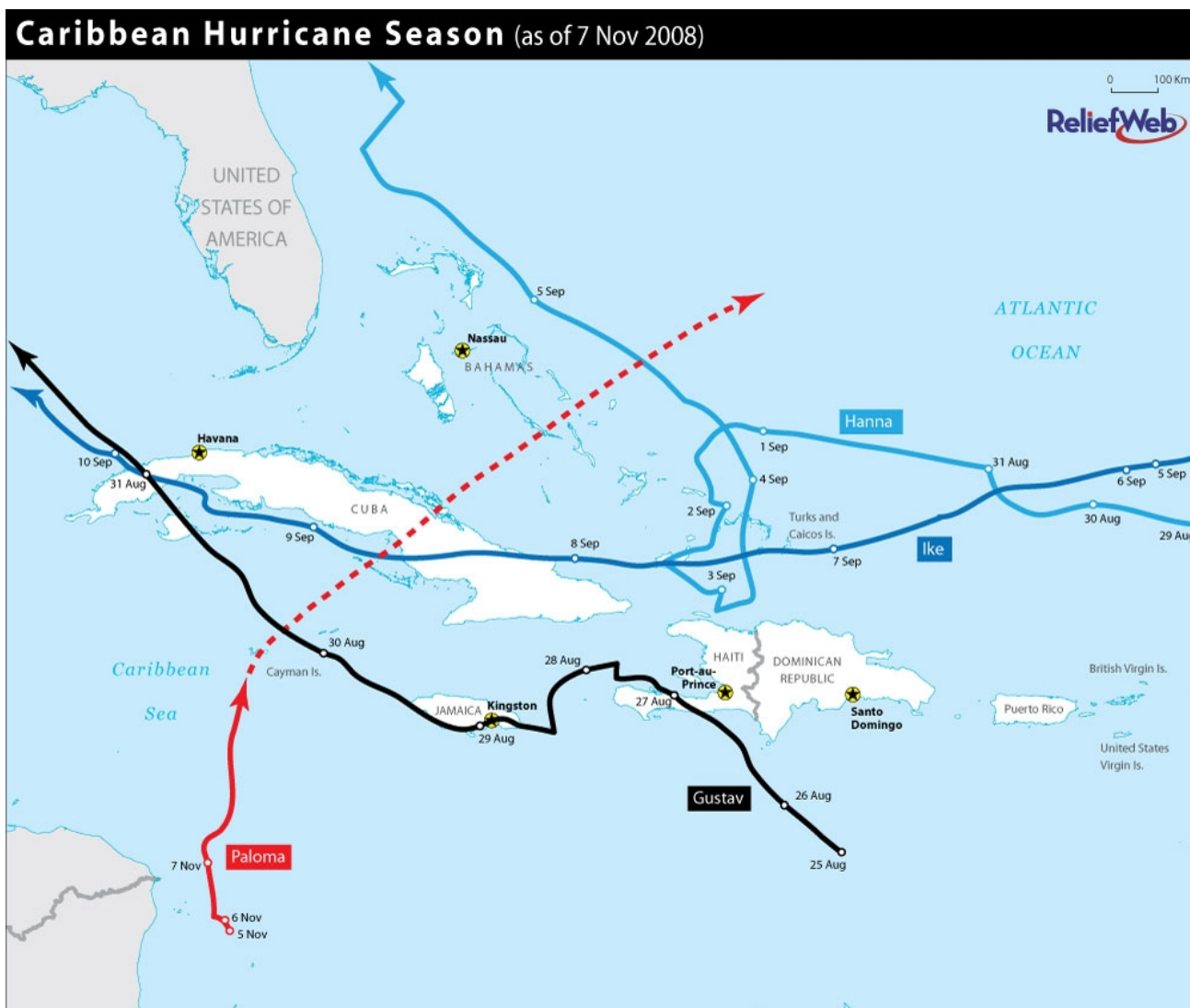




**Situation Report 25 – Caribbean Hurricane Season
7 November 2008**

HIGHLIGHTS

- Tropical Storm Paloma is now a Category 1 hurricane and is heading towards the Cayman Islands and Cuba.
- In Haiti, humanitarian efforts continue in Baie d’Orange, in the South-East commune of Belle Anse, following the identification of a pocket of severe malnutrition on 28-29 October by Oxfam GB and Terre des Hommes. In Grande Anse, five people died because of flooding on 27 and 28 October.



REGIONAL OVERVIEW

1. Tropical Storm Paloma has now transformed into the seventh Hurricane of the season and is heading towards the Cayman Islands. Coming toward the end of the Atlantic hurricane season, which stretches from June 1 to November 30, Paloma will pass near the Cayman Islands late Friday 7 November or early Saturday and is expected to produce rainfall of 10 to 20 centimeters across the Caymans with maximum sustained winds near 130 kilometers per hour. Strengthening is likely and Paloma is expected to become a Category 2 hurricane later today and possibly reach a Category 3 intensity by Saturday 8 November. The hurricane is forecast to then track northeast and strike Cuba's south-



central coast by Sunday and would be the fifth to crash into Cuba this hurricane season. Preparedness measures are being undertaken in the Cayman Islands. Cuba's Civil Defense said authorities were mobilized in all provinces to study the best ways to guarantee the protection of the public and economic resources. Hurricane watches were issued for the provinces of Sancti Spiritus, Ciego de Avila, Camaguey, Las Tunas and Granma. Jamaica and the central Bahamas should closely monitor the progress of Paloma.

2. The OCHA Regional Office in Panama is closely monitoring the situation and is in close contact with the RCs and UNETEs of the affected countries in the region. ROLAC informs that no assistance was required at the moment.

HAITI

SITUATION

3. Departmental authorities in the Grande Anse confirmed the death of five individuals following heavy rains that caused flooding in the commune of Dame Marie on 27 and 28 October. The situation is said to be precarious at Ravine Seche, where all houses were reportedly destroyed and 250 people are being sheltered by host families. Mouline, in the commune of Corail, is also said to be inaccessible and 53 people whose houses have been destroyed are being sheltered by host families.

4. Humanitarian efforts continue in Baie d'Orange, in the South-East commune of Belle Anse, following the identification of a pocket of severe malnutrition on 28-29 October by Oxfam GB and Terre des Hommes. The food security situation of the rural population of Baie d'Orange was aggravated in August by the loss of agricultural crops caused by Tropical Storms Fay and Gustav. In addition the population is now unable to access the dispensary at Belle Anse due to difficult road conditions.

5. Meanwhile, the identification of households with medical and acute nutritional problems, in the areas from Belle Anse to Marigot in the South-East, was agreed upon as the top priority during a meeting held between the UNICEF focal points for Nutrition and WASH, PAHO/WHO, WFP, FAO and OCHA.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

SHELTER

6. The IFRC/Haitian Red Cross is currently distributing around 875 shelter kits (2 tarpaulins, rope, ties and 1 tool kit) to affected families in the communes of Grande Saline, Desdunes and Saint-Marc in the Artibonite department. Further shelter kit distributions are also planned this week in Lower Artibonite, in the communes of l'Estère (350) and Dessalines (300). The IFRC is currently studying the possibility of starting similar distributions in the commune of Cabaret (West department). Nevertheless, there are still very significant needs for shelter material, due to the fact that few agencies are involved in the sector at field level.

7. The national survey to assess the shelter needs of families and host families in affected areas started on Monday and should last for two weeks. A slight delay is expected for the commune of Gonaives. Cluster partners who are conducting the survey in the Grande Anse department are asked to pay special attention to the commune of Dame Marie, following the heavy rains which affected this area during the previous week.

Gonaives

8. Amurt, Care, IOM, Haitian Red Cross, Oxfam, OCHA, Save the Children and UNFPA designed and carried out on 25 October a joint assessment of schools currently used as shelters in Gonaives. This assessment took place after the decision taken at the local level to empty the temporary shelters to allow schools to re-open on 10 November. Based on the results of this assessment, the distribution of kits started on 3 November to families who are willing and able to return safely to their homes. This represents 1,093 out of the 1,964 families currently living in schools.

9. The Departmental Emergency Operations Centre (COUD) distributed coupons to the first group of beneficiaries on the day before the distribution. Some 396 families from 3 different schools were assisted. Distribution is taking place

at the Haitian National Police (HNP) compound. Security is ensured by HNP and UNPOL. Care, IOM and local authorities are carrying out the distribution. The content of the return kits is as follows:

- IOM shelter kit: One 4m x 5m HDPE woven reinforced tarpaulin, 12 meters of rope, 2 3ft. X 6ft. polypropylene sleeping mats, 5 6' x 32" x .36 CGI sheets, 1 24" Handsaw, 1 Hammer Claw, 2 pounds of 2" Nail with head, 1 Cement Trowel 8", 1 Shovel, with wooden handle.
- GoH shelter kit: 1 mattress, 1 sleeping bag, 1 jerry can, 1 blanket, 1 hygiene kit and 1,000gdes (27 USD).

10. No incident was reported during this first wave of distribution and organizers and beneficiaries expressed their satisfaction over the process. On Thursday 6 November, a follow-up assessment took place in targeted school/shelters to identify shelter solutions for the remaining families.

11. Furthermore, the IFRC/Haitian Red Cross is also planning to distribute around 500 shelter kits and 900 family kits in the commune of Gonaives, in coordination with Cluster partners. Important efforts are made by Cluster members and OCHA to ensure that a coordinated policy is implemented with regards to an exit strategy in Gonaives. All agencies need to inform the cluster of their activities in shelters. Uncoordinated actions at this point might engender tension in the communities.

NFI

12. Non-Food Items distribution efforts are being strengthened in the South-East department where PADF, Grap Marigot and ACDI/VOCA carried out distributions over the weekend.

13. In Gonaives, IOM gave 12 tents to Save the Children to set up child-friendly spaces next to temporary shelters in Praville, Chanflot, Desonftaine and Gattereau. Between 2,000 and 5,000 children will benefit from psychosocial support, mainly through games.

WATER AND SANITATION

14. In order to facilitate access to water points in Gonaives, IOM has provided the NGO Hands on Disaster with 200 water gallons for distribution to families living in the Ebenezer tent site, which is located 3km away from the city.

FOOD

15. WFP has distributed 6,609 metric tons of food (1,206,788 rations) to 602,563 direct beneficiaries. Food deliveries on WFP-contracted CITA II vessel were concluded for the southern peninsula. The vessel is being loaded today with a further cargo of 114 metric tons destined for Ile a Vache and Aquin, also in the South department. WFP has, since the beginning of the air operation, airlifted some 322 metric tons of food to areas that would otherwise have been inaccessible. Food items represent 90% of the transported cargo.

16. Following the discovery of a pocket of severe malnutrition in the South-East locality of Baie d'Orange and the medical evacuation of malnourished children to the capital, WFP delivered 10 metric tons of food commodities and 780 kg of high energy biscuits on 2 November. Some 0.5 metric tons of food was previously transported to the area by helicopter on 31 October.

17. WFP partner CROSE has distributed food in the South-East department since 29 October in the communities of Terrenier and Ridore de la Vallee, Bresilienne, Gris-Gris and Baie d'Orange for a total of 13,990 beneficiaries. The tonnage distributed to these beneficiaries amounts to some 67 metric tons of food.

Gonaives

18. To date, WFP has distributed some 4,381 metric tons of food assistance to Gonaives, and large-scale food distributions are on-going. Over 30,000 beneficiaries received food assistance in the community of Trou Sable, where distributions were concluded on 3 November in collaboration with AMURT and Les Soeurs de la Charite.

19. In addition, labour-intensive food-for-work activities are taking place this week to clean up some 25 schools in addition to the 50 already cleaned. Participants in the food-for-work activities have received family food rations.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

20. Following a nutritional assessment by Terre des Hommes at Baie d'Orange, 21 acutely malnourished children were evacuated on 31 October: 10 children were evacuated by WFP helicopter to hospitals in Port-Prince and 11 by road to the therapeutic feeding centre in Les Cayes. The evacuations were organised by Terre des Hommes, Oxfam GB, MSF, MDM, WFP and PAHO/WHO. Reports that a number of children have died at Baie d'Orange due to acute malnutrition are still being investigated by health and nutrition partners. PAHO/WHO is also supporting two nutritionists from the Ministry of Health, who will spend a week evaluating needs in Jacmel and Baie d'Orange. They will discuss the feasibility of opening a therapeutic feeding centre at the General Hospital in Jacmel, which will be supported by UNICEF and PAHO/WHO.

21. During the coordination meeting focusing on the malnutrition situation in the South-East, the following strategy was agreed:

- To identify households with medical and acute nutritional problems, in the areas from Belle Anse to Marigot in the South-East department.
- Strengthen the capacity for paediatric care at the General Hospital in Jacmel, South-East.
- UNICEF and PAHO/WHO will discuss together with the Direction National de Nutrition a short-term calendar of disengagement of the health sector, in favour of the Ministry of Public Health.
- The WASH Cluster will evaluate the water situation at the General Hospital in Jacmel.
- To put in place with the Government, a monitoring system for the quality of health care and assistance provided, to ensure early warning in emergency situations.
- The Nutrition, WASH, Food, Health and Agriculture Clusters will provide criteria for an evaluation of structural vulnerability to OCHA (the criteria are different to those used following a disaster). These structural vulnerability criteria will be discussed and agreed upon during the follow-up meeting to be held on 7 November.
- From Monday to Wednesday next week, an evaluation will take place in those communes of the Nippes department which have been inaccessible during recent weeks. This integrated evaluation will be conducted by PAHO/WHO, WFP, FAO, Terre des Hommes and OCHA/HDCS. PAHO/WHO will provide two vehicles and the teams will work from Les Cayes in the South.
- Training on MUAC (Mid-Upper Arm Circumference) will be provided for all teams going to the field.

22. A dispensary has been temporarily set up in Baie d'Orange to provide health care service to the population. In addition, a local doctor is being supported by a Cuban mobile clinic. PAHO/WHO also deployed on 1 November one doctor and one nurse and provided medicines for 5,000 people.

LOGISTICS

23. Three WFP helicopters are again operational after a few days' break for technical maintenance. Since the beginning of the air operation and during the months of September and October, WFP has provided transport on the helicopters to 50 partner agencies.

COORDINATION

24. The first meeting of the Shelter Technical Group took place on 3 November in Port-au-Prince. Return kits to be distributed outside Gonaïves, as well as distribution methods, are still being discussed. CHF and Habitat for Humanity have joined the Shelter Technical Group. Their participation will contribute to ensure continuity between emergency, transitional and early recovery shelter solutions for affected families in Haiti.



25. During the Inter-Cluster coordination meeting of 3 November, it was agreed to organise a coordination meeting to focus on the malnutrition situation in the South-East and possible pockets of malnutrition in other areas of the country. This meeting took place on 4 November between the UNICEF focal point for Nutrition, WASH, PAHO/WHO, WFP, FAO and OCHA.

26. More information can be found on Reliefweb at www.reliefweb.int and REDHUM at www.redhum.org. More information on the hurricanes and storms can be found at <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>. Humanitarian organizations and donors are encouraged to report all contributions (cash and in-kind) to OCHA's Financial Tracking Service at fts@reliefweb.int or through the on-line contribution format www.reliefweb.int/fts, where a list of already made contributions is available.

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