



Situation Report 29 – Caribbean Hurricane Season 21 November 2008

HIGHLIGHTS

- According to experts from the Hurricane Center in the Colorado State University, the 2008 Atlantic Hurricane Season is ending as one of the most devastating, with a huge number of casualties and widespread destruction in the Caribbean, Central America and the United States.
- In Haiti, 23 malnourished children are currently being treated at the St Michel hospital in Jacmel, in the South-East department. This newly-installed therapeutic feeding unit continues to be strengthened.
- Much remains to be done to normalise the water supply in many parts of Haiti.
- Only 13.4% of shelter needs and 27.5% of non-food item needs have so far been met countrywide. In Gonaives, additional tents are urgently needed as well as a decision regarding the use of La Hatte Rocher as a relocation site.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

1. According to experts from the Hurricane Center in the Colorado State University, the 2008 Atlantic Hurricane Season is ending as one of the most devastating with a huge number of casualties and widespread destruction in the Caribbean, Central America and the United States. It was a very active season with 16 tropical storms, eight of which were hurricanes – five of them with high intensity. In comparison, in 2007, 17 tropical storms formed, six became hurricanes of which two were major hurricanes. The hurricane season started early in May 2008 with Arthur while hurricane Paloma became the second strongest hurricane of the season at its end in November.

CUBA

SITUATION

2. As a result of the fourth cold front of the winter season, which passed over the Eastern region of Cuba from 17 to 20 November, torrential rains affected the areas of Holguin and Granma provinces causing severe flooding. The most affected municipalities are Yara, Bayamo, and Manzanillo in Granma province and Sagua de Tánamo, Frank País and Mayarí en Holguin province. This situation adds to the very serious damage caused by the three hurricanes (Gustav, Ike, and Paloma) and two tropical storms (Fay and Hanna) that affected Cuba in 2008. According to official information, these hurricanes have caused around USD 10 billion of damage to Cuba as reported in OCHA Situation Report No. 28 of 13 November. Rains are however expected to decrease.

3. The Cuban authorities activated the disaster management bodies in the provinces of Holguin and Granma and evacuated some 20,000 people. The majority of the evacuees were staying with family and friends, and a few are in shelter. Authorities are monitoring all the dams in Holguin and Granma and have opened the spill-ways for water release to avoid further flooding. Rivers that overflowed have interrupted traffic on many roads in Granma and Hologuin.

4. Moreover, a large quantity of the short-cycle crops, which formed part of the agricultural production recovery plan following the previous hurricanes and storms, have suffered, thus affecting the support plan for food security undertaken by the local governments. In the housing sector, around respectively 400 houses in Granma and 2,000 in Holguin are flooded. In the province of Granma, thus far this year, the communities of La Pompita in Bayamo, Blanquizar-Vuelta del Caño in Manzanillo and Sofía, Las Caobas, Gutierrez and Yamagual in Yara have experienced flooding on more than three occasions.

5. The United Nations System in Cuba maintains all of its disaster management mechanisms activated, due to the situation that the country is going through. The United Nations Country Team in Cuba and UNETE (United Nations Emergency Technical Team) continue to closely monitor the present situation and work on the preliminary evaluation of

damage. OCHA and UNDSS regional offices located in Panama have maintained constant contact with the Resident Coordinator/Designated Official, offering their support. The central and regional headquarters of the agencies of the United Nations System remain in contact with their agencies present in Cuba.

HAITI

SITUATION

6. In Gonaïves, distribution of shelter/return kits has stopped pending further assessment. A total of 1,965 families who were sheltering in schools received these kits. IOM set up a monitoring team to verify the return of families who received shelter kits during the first wave of distributions from 3 to 12 November. Preliminary results of this monitoring confirm that families belonging to the “can’t go home” category were amongst those who received coupons for the return kits.

7. The kits enabled few families to return to their homes and make the essential repairs. In fact, a significant number of families who received kits either went back to collective shelters, found refuge in host families or have no place to stay at all. In general, distribution of return kits is adequate for families that own their own house, but not for those who were renting prior to the disaster.

8. As of 15 November, there were over 1,000 families still sheltered in schools, churches and other types of inadequate infrastructures. Families in some of these sites are at risk of being evicted, while most cannot return home. Around 4,000 more shelter kits are pre-positioned in Gonaïves for future distributions, which will also benefit displaced people living with host families. Catholic Relief Services has also indicated that they have the capacity to distribute enhanced return kits to families still living in collective shelters.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

WATER AND SANITATION

9. Much remains to be done to normalise the water supply in many parts of the country. The urgent repair of 130 disabled water networks requires funding of US\$1.6 million under the updated Flash Appeal. In addition, 260 partially-disabled networks which need to be repaired in the medium-term will depend on approximately US\$1.8 million of future funding.

Gonaïves

10. Several partners continue to distribute drinking water in Gonaïves on a daily basis (MSF Belgium, ACF, Spanish Red Cross and Intermon). Together they are distributing 1,170 m³ per day. Normalisation of the water supply has not yet been achieved due to the following reasons:

- In order to complete additional repairs of the water supply network, engineers from the National Potable Water System (SNEP) will need to be based in Gonaïves for a continuous period of two to three months.
- Several partners are waiting to start the rehabilitation, cleaning and decontamination of private and community wells. A well-cleaning protocol has now been developed by PAHO- WHO and approved by the WASH cluster members. PAHO-WHO and the Department of Public Health are responsible for the identification of private wells for cleaning. Partners are anxious to begin the cleaning and de-contamination of those wells which they have already identified and some pilot activities are underway.

11. Oxfam GB is installing showers and latrines at five different sites for displaced people in Gonaïves (Praville, Ebenezer, Lycée Bicentenaire, Collège Elim and Marché Bienac). In the Artibonite, a project to distribute 1,000 household water filters at Mamont in the commune of Saint Michel de l’Attalaye is underway. This activity is being undertaken by ACF using funding from the Emergency Response Relief Fund (ERRF).



12. The Spanish Red Cross is preparing exit strategies as it will cease its water production and distribution activities on 3rd December. In Gonaïves, discussions are underway for other cluster actors to absorb the water production and capacity points. In the South-East, the SRC will distribute 1,500 water filters. They are currently distributing water in Cayes Jacmel and Cote de Fer. In Cote de Fer, the SRC has also removed 1,750 tons of mud from the city using heavy machinery.

SHELTER

13. The cluster is applying the following overall three-point strategy:

Families sheltered in emergency collective shelters (schools and non-schools).

- Identification of families who are able to return home (upon receipt of a shelter kit).
- Priority is given to shelters deemed at-risk of forced closure, such as schools.
- Development of an exit strategy to close existing shelters, either via temporary relocation or placement in host-family settings.

Country-wide distribution of non-food items

- IOM has NFI stock ready for distribution country-wide. This stock comprises tool kits, hygiene kits and sleeping items and more stock is on its way. IOM is looking for partners with the capacity to distribute these items; and is requesting to receive project proposals from organizations which have already identified needs on-the-ground.

Families sheltered with host families

- Data-gathering to target these populations, which have not been assisted to the same extent as those living in shelters.
- Distribution of NFIs and shelter items, to improve living conditions.
- The host family shelter option is to be promoted for future emergencies.

Shelter situation in Gonaïves

14. Management of tent sites: As of 15 November, these sites hosted over 600 families. Arrangements were made between the Civil Protection-Ministry of Social Affairs and the Humanitarian Coordinator's Representative for providing electricity and installing security checkpoints to regulate movements in and out of the sites. CARE is organising training for the DPC and MAST to support site management efforts in the following tent sites: Praville, Bienac, Lycée Bicentenaire, Elim and Ebenezer. All of these sites have latrines and access to water. All except Lycée Bicentenaire have showers and only Praville and Lycée Bicentenaire have electricity. ACF, Hands on Disasters, OXFAM, MDM, MSF and Save the Children are improving access to water and sanitation, health and education services for these sites.

15. Collective sites: As of 15 November, monitoring of other sites revealed there were over 1,000 families still sheltered in schools, churches and other types of inadequate infrastructures. Families in some of these sites are at risk of being evicted, while most cannot return home. The strategy aims to return as many families as possible to their homes with the help they require to do so.

16. Relocation sites: A shelter site-planning specialist is in Gonaïves this week to assist the cluster. A decision is still awaited from the Haitian Government regarding the possible use of the La Hatte Rocher site.

17. Return monitoring: IOM set up a monitoring team to verify the return of those families who received shelter kits during the first wave of distribution from 3 to 12 November. Preliminary results of this monitoring confirm that families belonging to the "can't go home" category were amongst those who received coupons for return kits from local authorities.



18. The kits enabled few families to return to their homes and make essential repairs that enable them to re-occupy their homes. In fact, a significant number of families who received kits either went back to collective shelters, found refuge in host families or have no place to stay at all; in a few cases, the beneficiaries even deny receiving assistance. In general, distribution of return kits is adequate for families that own their house, but not for those who were renting prior to the disaster.

19. School assessment and shelter monitoring: With the support of the international community, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MAST) is conducting an assessment to find out exactly how many families are still in schools used as shelters following the first wave of return kit distributions. IOM is conducting further assessments to update the general shelter matrix started on 9 October 2008.

20. Trend: As a consequence of the first wave of return kit distributions (which targeted families living in school shelters), it was reported that a significant number of affected families returned to shelters hoping to benefit from humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian community is considering ways to avoid this situation. DPC has asked for all distributions at shelter sites to be stopped for two weeks and for sheltered people to join general distribution schemes and general access to basic services.

21. Host family strategy: Due to the significant decrease in the number of families at collective shelters, the cluster drafted a strategy to address the needs of families and host families in Gonaïves. This three-fold strategy intends a) to track the “invisible families”, b) identify which kind of assistance is most appropriate, and c) ensure that the humanitarian community and the Haitian Government acknowledge and support these efforts of solidarity shown by the affected communities.

NFI

Distribution of NFI and Shelter Goods update 17.11.2008										
Region	Non Food Item					Shelter				
	WCDP	Cooking	Hygiene	Bedding	Mosquito Nets	Tool Kits	Tarpaulins	Plastic Sheeting	Tents	CGI
Artibonite	2.033	18.778	36.102	39.20	44.510	4.347	5.859	12.600	558	9.825
Centre	150	2.117	2.900	8	2.416		30	471		
Grande-Anse	40		800	225				20		
Nippes	800	879	2.151	1.000	1.758					
Nord			109	327						
Nord-Ouest		390	599	807	430			550		
Ouest	1.167	4.373	9.132	10.29	2	1.834	4.167			
Sud	125	140	1.113	780	100			640		
Sud-Est	3.100	2.425	7.105	4.867	4.548	204	438		5	
Nord-Est										
TOTAL	7.415	29.102	60.011	60.98	9	55.596	4.551	10.494	14.281	563

Note: WCDP: Women and Children Dignity Package; CGI: Corrugated Iron

22. In Gonaïves, distribution of shelter/return kits has stopped pending further assessment. A total of 1,965 families received these kits. Around 4,000 more kits are pre-positioned in Gonaïves for the next wave of distributions, which will also benefit displaced people living with host families. CRS also indicated that they have capacity to distribute enhanced return kits to families still living in collective shelters. Discussions are underway to ensure a coordination of



distributions plans. Meanwhile, propositions are awaited from NGOs and partners on the ground (countrywide) with capacity to deliver NFIs to families in need.

23. The Spanish Red Cross distributed 1,000 mosquito nets, 500 hygiene kits, 500 kitchen sets and 500 food packages for 500 families in the Nippes department on 17 and 18 November; Fonds des Negres (100), Petite Rivière des Nippes (142), Paillant (109), Abraham (116) and Dufou (33).

24. Needs and gaps analysis: Overall shelter needs are based on figures issued by the Civil Protection and updates from IFRC and Concern Worldwide. Only 13.4% of shelter needs and 27.5% of non-food item needs have been met countrywide. In the Artibonite department, 9.9% of those in need of shelter assistance have been reached whilst 41% of persons in need of NFIs have been reached. In the South-East department, only 1.5% of persons in need of shelter assistance have been reached whilst 13.9% of persons in need of NFI have been reached. In the West department, 15% of persons in need of shelter assistance have been reached whilst 17% of persons in need of NFI have also been reached.

25. There is an overlooked need for shelter and non-food items within host families, which have hardly been targeted by previous distributions. A Host and Family Survey is currently being conducted in disaster-affected areas by cluster members. Results will be available within two weeks.

PROTECTION

26. Shelter: The shelter situation remains precarious for families whose houses were completely destroyed, both in Gonaïves and elsewhere. Information was received from Miragôane in the Nippes department, where at least 100 families are still living in a temporary shelter under very difficult conditions. The majority of them are children and older people, and sanitation and health interventions are said to be highly necessary, but absent. In Gonaïves, the number of tents remains highly insufficient for those families who had to leave the school shelters. At Collège Bicentenaire, one of the sites for temporary relocation, the number of families is almost twice as high (over 220) as the number of tents (132). In most cases, two or more families have to share a tent, potentially leading to conflicts and insecure situations.

27. Despite this issue being raised by the humanitarian community, no additional tents have arrived. Moreover, the sites for temporary relocation are filling up and lack space for many more tents. If families staying in other collective shelters are evicted (including at least six schools), it is unclear where they will go. Definite decisions on alternative longer-term accommodation, such as the proposed site of La Hatte Rocher, still need to be taken by the relevant authorities.

28. Protection cluster members have indicated the risk linked to people staying with host families over a long period of time, as this increases vulnerabilities. For example, the risk of children being abused and used as domestic workers is said to be higher for children staying with host families.

29. Shelter management: Following up on the previously-raised concern about the lack of adequate shelter management, CARE has submitted a concept note for a project proposal. This proposal looks at building the capacity of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MAST) and the Civil Protection (DPC) for the management of shelters and camps.

30. Vulnerable groups: Older persons are particularly vulnerable following the emergency. While different organisations work for the rights of people with disabilities (among others CRS and Handicap International), there are few funds available to assist the elderly. Their needs include adequate shelter, as well as continuous food assistance, even when distribution changes from general food distribution to food-for-work.

31. Documentation: As mentioned in previous reports, the situation with regards to lost documentation in Gonaïves is serious. On top of the loss of ID cards and birth certificates from people's homes, an additional problem is the damage to the civil registers. Most of the birth and marriage registers were under water and damaged by mud. The Ministry of



Justice and UNICEF are looking into how they can support the civil registry offices in making copies of the information that is still legible. Contact will be sought with organisations that can assist in the electronic storage of information.

FOOD

32. WFP has distributed 8,929 metric tons of food to 632,481 direct beneficiaries. The total number of distributed rations is 1,327,406. WFP has already delivered food to more than 90% of those schools which are included in the school-feeding programme around the country. (This does not, however, include schools in Gonaives where school-feeding will start after the phase-down of the general food distributions in January 2009). WFP and CROSE distributed some 11.92 metric tons of food to 2,555 beneficiaries in Macieux and Amazone near Cote de Fer in the South-East department. To date, WFP and its partners distributed some 1,038 metric tons of food in the South-East (including Baie d'Orange in the commune of Belle Anse).

33. On 18 and 19 November, the WFP helicopter made several rotations to deliver some 15 metric tons of food to L'Asile in the Nippes department. Furthermore, the WFP helicopter facilitated an assessment mission to Jean Rabel in the North-West, to prepare for the provision of emergency food assistance. On 15-16 November the WFP helicopter made several rotations to deliver food to Bossier and Seguin, near Baie d'Orange in the South-East, to Cazale in the West and to Passecatobois in the North-West. Some 41 metric tons of food were delivered.

34. The WFP helicopter made 6 rotations to Cazale, in the West department, to deliver 12.46 metric tons of food to be distributed to the population. WFP has reached 9,730 beneficiaries in the commune of Cabaret, including Cazale, one of the most affected areas, with 55.7 metric tons. WFP's helicopter also made 6 rotations from Gonaives to Passecatobois near Port-de-Paix, delivering some 19 metric tons of food. To date, WFP has distributed some 138.7 metric tons to 15,280 beneficiaries in the areas around Port-de-Paix in the North-West department.

35. A mission from WFP Headquarters has arrived to review programmes and advise the Country Office in shaping its 2009 activities. The team, composed of the Chief of Nutrition and a Programme Advisor for Food-for-Work and Land Rehabilitation, has visited therapeutic feeding centres and met with cooperating partners, local authorities and social leaders. On 17 November, the delegation visited some Food-for-Work activities in Gonaives.

36. WFP continues its assessments in the South-East, in order to verify the nutrition and food security situation. On 14 November, a WFP helicopter facilitated an assessment mission in Wachier, in the commune of Jacmel. This mission was conducted by WFP's Programme Unit.

Gonaives

37. To date, WFP has distributed some 6,363 metric tons of food assistance to Gonaives. On 19 November, in collaboration with AMURT, WFP distributed some 167.6 metric tons of food to 24,225 beneficiaries. A further 107.5 metric tons were distributed at Bienac to 4,715 workers participating in a watershed and soil conservation project, in collaboration with the Federation des Agronomes.

38. On 18 November, WFP and CARE distributed some 202.8 metric tons of food to 29,326 beneficiaries at the distribution centre in K-Soleil area. On 17 November, in collaboration with the Missionaries of Charity and MINUSTAH, WFP distributed a total of 27 metric tons of food to 1,600 beneficiaries (1,200 pregnant women and 400 children). On 15 November, WFP and CARITAS distributed some 147 metric tons of food to 21,250 beneficiaries at the distribution centre in Bigot.

39. On 14 November, WFP distributed a total of 143.1 metric tons of food to 15,860 beneficiaries; in collaboration with Caritas, 12,750 beneficiaries received 88.2 metric tons. Also, in partnership with the ILO, 3,110 workers in the Gateau area received some 55 metric tons of food as payment for taking part in a watershed protection project. In partnership with the Scouts d'Haiti, WFP is continuing to create temporary jobs through repairing electrical installations, painting and rehabilitation of latrines. At least 25 schools are benefiting from these food-for-work activities.



HEALTH

40. Médecins du Monde France is implementing a four-month emergency project to provide free health consultations in 10 health centres in the communes of Anse d'Hainault, Chambellan, Corail, Les Irois, Jérémie, Pestel and Roseaux in the Grande Anse department. The aim is to help populations overcome economic difficulties caused by the effects of the hurricane season.

41. Consultations are being provided by Government health personnel. The project will also ensure that the existing structures are able to offer antenatal consultations and nutritional screening for pregnant women and children aged six to 59 months. Epidemiological surveillance will be assured as well as logistical support to ensure the cold chain and supplies of essential medicines. The project is funded by ECHO and the Fondation Sternstunden and runs until the end of February 2009.

NUTRITION

42. Twenty-three malnourished children are currently being treated at St Michel hospital in Jacmel, in the South-East department. This newly-installed therapeutic feeding unit continues to be strengthened. The unit was installed following the identification of a pocket of severe malnutrition at Baie d'Orange in the commune of Belle Anse.

43. On 14 November, the country representative of PAHO-WHO and the Emergency Coordinator for the Ministry of Public Health visited the St Michel hospital at Jacmel, accompanied by representatives of WFP and OCHA. The visit resulted in the following decisions;

- Three nurses will work at the therapeutic feeding unit until the end of the year (one Cuban nurse and two nurses whose contract extension will be paid for by PAHO-OMS).
- A refresher training course will be held for these nurses.
- The team of two nutritionists (a doctor and a nurse) paid for by PAHO-OMS for four weeks will be on-site at Jacmel hospital from 18 or 19 November.
- From 17 November, PAHO-WHO will provide three meals per day at Jacmel hospital for one adult companion per malnourished child.
- MDM Canada and UNICEF will manage the supplies of therapeutic foods.

44. PAHO-WHO, in coordination with the Departmental Health Director, is responsible for the general coordination of this short-term project to reinforce the hospital at Jacmel. During a four-week period, MDM Canada will be in charge of the technical coordination of the nutritional unit.

45. Following reports of a large number of cases of severe malnutrition and diarrhoea amongst children in the hamlet of Bois Seguin, in the Seguin area of the South-East, the MSF Belgium mobile clinic conducted a rapid assessment on 15 November. Eighty patients were examined but no cases of malnutrition were found and no hospitalisations were necessary.

46. Meanwhile, MSF Belgium is disengaging from Baie d'Orange and undertaking rapid assessments towards the East of the department, up to the border area with the Dominican Republic. This may take up to three weeks to complete. The mobile emergency team of Terre des Hommes has now almost completely explored the whole of the South department (except Fonds des Blancs). It is not believed there are any hidden pockets of malnutrition such as the one discovered at Baie d'Orange.

47. In the Grande Anse, from 19 -28 November, the Ministry of Public Health and PAHO-WHO will jointly carry out a rapid assessment of child nutrition in the four communes of Roseaux, Beaumont, Corail and Pestel.

48. Lutheran World Federation distributed 200 food packages to the most-affected families in Baie d'Orange on 13 November, in partnership with CODAB (Coordination of Organisations for the Development of the Arrondissement of Belle Anse).



LOGISTICS

49. At least 50 people from UN agencies and International NGOs benefit from WFP’s Friday and Saturday helicopter flights between Gonaives and Port-au-Prince.

50. 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> and for Cuba on the United Nations Website in Cuba at www.onu.org.cu. 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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