

UN Emergency Fund allocates \$3 million to kick-start aid operations for people in Dominica affected by Hurricane Maria

(New York, 29 September 2017): Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock announced today the allocation of US\$3 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to meet the most pressing needs of the people of Dominica affected by Hurricane Maria. The Category-5 storm made landfall on the island on 18 September.

The devastating hurricane has left people without electricity and water, destroyed homes and health clinics and isolated communities on the mountainous island. Over 90 per cent of Dominicans—some 65,000 people—need immediate assistance.

"The damage caused by this storm is catastrophic. People need food, water, shelter, medications and life's other necessities," Mr. Lowcock said. "The CERF allocation will support the most urgent needs under the flash appeal, which was launched today by the UN team in the region."

The CERF funds will be jointly prioritized by the UN agencies and humanitarian partners on the ground based on the frontline responders' rapid assessment of the damage and needs.

CERF funds will kick-start the response operations but will not be enough to meet the needs of all the communities affected. Further support is urgently needed in the coming weeks and months to help rebuild people's lives and livelihoods.

"My heart goes out to people who lost everything in the storm. I thank all of CERF's donors for keeping the fund replenished at all times so that responders on the ground can act quickly," Mr. Lowcock said.

Last week, CERF allocated \$10 million to enable humanitarians to assist tens of thousands of people in need of assistance in Cuba and several other islands in the Caribbean following Hurricane Irma.

Since its establishment 12 years ago, CERF has been the fastest mechanism for providing emergency funding to people in need, sometimes within hours of devastating hurricanes and earthquakes. In 2017, CERF has responded to critical needs in the aftermath of drought, cyclones, floods and landslides, with materials to rebuild shelters, food, access to clean and reliable water sources, access to education for children, as well as health and nutrition support.

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