

## At UN, Cuba urges relief to assist storm-hit Caribbean; cites 'setback' in bilateral relations with US

22 September 2017 – In the wake of successive hurricanes Irma and Maria, which tore through the Caribbean and left communities in desperate conditions, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla urged the international community to “give the highest priority to this situation and mobilize resources to assist the small Caribbean Island States and territories.”

Expressing heartfelt sympathies all those affected – including in Mexico which was hit with two earthquakes this month, and the United States, where Hurricane Harvey had struck several southern states – he went on to describe the scene in Cuba, speaking of heart-touching moments from the disaster that also carried a message of hope, scenes such as rescuers saving a girl and giving her back to her mother and of strangers helping one another.

Conveying his country's gratitude for the offers of assistance from the global community, he also offered strength to neighbouring islands which were also hit hard by the hurricanes and natural disasters.

Turning next to political matters, Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla referred to the address by the US President at the General Assembly earlier in the week, noted statistics on extreme poverty, hunger and refugee crises, asking how could global challenges be overcome with an “America first” view.

Calling the new Cuban policy of the US “a setback” in bilateral relations, he said it undermined the basis established two years ago for advancing ties characterized by respect and equality. He condemned the “disrespectful, offensive and interventionist” statement made against Cuba by that country's President, reminding him that the US had no moral authority to judge Cuba.

Despite longstanding tensions with the US, the Minister expressed that he believed in the possibility for coexistence and respect between the two nations.

Concluding his address, he reiterated that the Cuban people will keep up their struggle to achieve the most just society possible. “We will continue to steadily advance down the path of revolutionary transformations that has been sovereignly chosen by all Cubans to further improve our socialism.”

[Full statement available here](#)