

Storm-ravaged Dominica in urgent need of food and water, finds UN assessment team

25 September 2017 – A United Nations disaster assessment official visiting the small island nation of Dominica, which was battered by Hurricane Maria, said today that an estimated 60,000 to 65,000 people, or 80 per cent of the total population, have been affected and that food and water are the most immediate needs.

“There is a big, big urgency to get water and food,” said Sergio Da Silva, UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team leader, who spoke to reporters in New York by phone from the ground, adding that inaccessibility to remote areas has made it difficult to ascertain just how many people have been affected.

“And when you fly over, you see all the trees are down...debris everywhere and people are homeless,” he added.

Created in 1993, UNDAC is designed to help the UN and governments of disaster-affected countries during the first phase of a sudden-onset emergency.

Maria made landfall on the tiny island of 72,000 on the evening of 18 September, with maximum sustained winds of nearly 160 miles per hour.

Mr. Silva said he has been in Dominica since Thursday, assisting in the coordination of incoming international relief.

Along with food and shelter, getting clean water is a priority, he said, as water in the river is not consumable. Work is also under way to restore hospitals.

Delivering humanitarian aid to remote villages remains a huge challenge as many roads were destroyed.

Peru, at UN, calls for more inclusive globalization based on multilateralism and dialogue

25 September 2017 – Underscoring Peru’s endurance in its combat against

terrorism, corruption, as well as its vulnerability to the effects of climate change, the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, said today that the Organization is fundamental for a "peaceful and sustainable" future in Peru, the region and beyond.

Enduring such challenges, he said in his address to the General Assembly's annual debate, therefore means Peru welcomed special attention given to sustainable peace, and prevention of humanitarian crises, adding that access to weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups "is a real threat."

In addressing issues of climate change, he reaffirmed the nation's commitment to the [Paris Agreement](#), and the progress it could mean for a coastal country inundated by torrential rains wrought by El Niño, and the losses of biodiversity and ecosystems to extreme weather phenomena.

Turning to the [2030 Agenda](#) and its Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), Ambassador Cuadra expressed concern about the threat of corruption at the global level, calling it an attack that "erodes democratic governance and legal stability of our countries." He said corruption "triggers disenchantment and distrust in institutions, and bolsters inequality."

Expressing concern for neighboring Venezuela during this heightened time of social instability, he said that while the answer to resolving the country's crisis lies with Venezuelans themselves, the issue nevertheless requires international solidarity and support.

[Full statement \(in Spanish\) available here](#)

[At UN Assembly, Turkmenistan stresses importance for greater global cooperation](#)

25 September 2017 – Speaking at the 72nd annual debate at the United Nations General Assembly, Turkmenistan highlighted its efforts to implement the [2030 Agenda](#) and the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) and called for greater cooperation to address the challenges before the globe.

In her address, Aksoltan Ataeva, the Chair of the Delegation of Turkmenistan, noted the importance of transport connectivity and cooperation for the achievement of the global development goals and informed the Assembly of the global conference on sustainable transport held in the country last November.

Also in her remarks, Ms. Ataeva noted the establishment of a training centre in the country to strengthen capacity in relation to the implementation of the [SDGs](#). She also underscored the importance of energy security and in

ensuring fair access to energy, including as part of the 2030 Agenda.

She also highlighted the importance of sports as a driver of peace, understanding and human rights, and in that context, recalled the participation of the Refugee Olympic Team at the Rio Olympics 2016.

Further in her address the head of the delegation of Turkmenistan noted the challenges posed by terrorism to all countries around the globe and, welcoming the role played by the UN in combatting the scourge, expressed her support for reforms at the Organization, including review of the method of its work and to react to threats in the modern world.

[*Full statement \(in Russian\) available here*](#)

Parties to Afghan conflict show renewed interest in political engagement, UN envoy says

25 September 2017 – Although efforts over the past few years to reach a political solution to the Afghan conflict have led to little progress, the top United Nations envoy in the country today reported a renewed interest in political engagements for peace.

“I am convinced that a political settlement is possible,” Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan, [told](#) the UN Security Council in his latest briefing, citing progress, still daunting challenges, and opportunities for political engagement.

“We should not let another fighting season begin without progress towards substantive negotiations. Opportunities will be lost, with the cost paid in thousands of Afghan lives and at tremendous financial cost.

“I appeal to the countries in the region to conduct a profound reassessment of their strategic interest and renew work towards a viable peace process leading to an Afghan-owned solution to the conflict. If requested, the United Nations stands ready to assist all parties to achieve this goal.”

Mr. Yamamoto said the United States announcement in August of a continuing, conditions-based commitment has removed some uncertainties, while regional countries and key States are actively seeking to promote regional engagements for peace, adding that preparations leading to a peace process are complex and efforts must be pragmatic and flexible.

“The security situation continues to be a major concern,” he stressed, citing the persistence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or Da’esh)

in the east of the country, with new Da'esh activity reported in the north as well as in Kabul, the capital, making the situation more complex.

"The human cost of this violence is high, disproportionately impacting women and children," he said, noting that current Afghan security planning foresees that by 2020 Afghan forces will reach sufficient strength to reverse recent Taliban gains, while the Taliban continue to resist appeals to negotiate with the Afghan Government.

At the current rate of deaths due to conflict, by 2020 tens of thousands more Afghans will have been killed.

Mr. Yamamoto, who also heads the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)), reported some progress on key reforms, with the battle against corruption beginning to bear results after many years in which this debilitating issue was ignored.

There has also been progress on the organization of parliamentary and district council elections scheduled for next July. "It is imperative that we hold the elections according to the plan," he stated, noting that timely elections will enhance the credibility of the political system.

[Uruguay joins other nations addressing General Assembly in calling for stronger, more flexible UN](#)

25 September 2017 – In his speech to the General Assembly's annual general debate, Rodolfo Nin Novoa, Foreign Minister of Uruguay, said strengthened international coordination bodies are needed more than ever, urging respect for the principle of sovereignty.

"The United Nations must become stronger," and the General Assembly must gain greater prominence, he said. He noted that Uruguay's foreign policy is based on the pillars of democracy, human rights, the defence of international law, and pursuit of peace. Such principles retained prominence despite the changes of political power in the country, he said, underscoring Uruguay's commitment to making its voice heard on the international stage.

More broadly, he noted that unprecedented violence, arms proliferation, and the increase in terrorism, cyberattacks, hunger and climate change require a strong commitment from the international community. Today, millions are affected by armed conflict, with hundreds of thousands killed and millions displaced. "We should not get used to standing idly by," he stressed.

He urged all countries to increase efforts to combat human trafficking, and

ensure development and social growth, citing inequality and the persistence of international forces as drivers of those threats. He expressed support for the [2030 Agenda](#) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, noting that Uruguay had recently presented its Voluntary National Report to the Economic and Social Council's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

[*Full statement \(in Spanish\) available here*](#)