

Press release: Latest on UK response to Hurricane Maria

UK aid teams have been on the ground in Dominica to assess the devastation caused by the recent extreme weather in the Caribbean.

DFID field teams arrived on the island yesterday (20 September) to carry out a three day assessment of the impact of the Category 5 hurricane.

Initial reports suggest widespread destruction, with 90% of buildings damaged or destroyed.

Medical supplies, including insulin and aquatabs, funded by DFID and a medical doctor from the Pan American Health Organisation also arrived on one of the first ships into Dominica yesterday.

Today a UK team will also travel to Monserrat to assess the impact of Hurricane Maria. Initial reports suggest the damage to buildings is not extensive, with the east side of Island being more affected.

It comes as a Red Cross appeal to help the victims of Hurricanes Maria and the earlier Hurricane Irma hit over £2million.

The appeal launched a fortnight ago was boosted by DFID's aid match scheme doubling all public UK donations.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

This is an unprecedented crisis with two hurricanes of such brutal force hitting the Caribbean in less than a fortnight.

Our focus now is on making sure the islands affected have the right supplies in the right places to deal with the aftermath of the latest hurricane.

The British public has once again shown its overwhelming generosity in a time of crisis by helping out the victims of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

This money will ensure food, water and shelter goes directly to those who need it most on the worst hit islands.

To date 75 tonnes of DFID aid has arrived or been bought in the region, including food, water, nearly 3,000 shelter kits, 5,000 solar lanterns and 10,000 buckets.

Another 60 tonnes are on the way on HMS Ocean due to arrive in the region on Friday.

Work to prepare Anguilla for the impact of Hurricane Maria proved hugely successful in preventing further damage to infrastructure. Two tonnes of corrugated iron was provided to bolster hospital and police stations roofs. Food, tarpaulins, hygiene and shelter kits provided by DFID are also being distributed on the island by the Red Cross.

Vital supplies, including food, bottled water and shelters, were distributed to the Turks and Caicos Islands yesterday via three RAF flights and DFID field teams are urgently assessing the damage on the island.