

Press release: Millions more in support for hurricane-hit Overseas Territories

Leaders from 11 British Overseas Territories will meet in Downing Street on Tuesday 28 November at the start of their annual Joint Ministerial Council meeting where Prime Minister Theresa May will confirm a new £70 million package of recovery and reconstruction support for British islands hit by recent, devastating hurricanes.

This new, long-term support will add to the UK's continued efforts to help the region recover and rebuild in the wake of hurricanes Irma and Maria, which affected more than two million people. It will be supplemented by up to £300 million of UK loan guarantees, for territories that need support to access finance.

At today's meeting, the Prime Minister will invite Territory leaders to speak of their experiences in the hurricanes and to discuss progress already made. Leaders of Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos, the worst impacted British territories, will be among those in attendance.

While substantial progress has been made already in the region, the UK is committed to supporting long-term reconstruction efforts so that each overseas territory can continue its important work of recovering essential services such as schools, medical facilities and ports, as well as power and water supplies.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, the Prime Minister said:

I am pleased to welcome leaders of the Overseas Territories to Downing Street today, as they begin regular consultations with their counterparts in the UK Government. I see this as a mark of the strong and enduring partnership that exists between us.

This set of meetings is not only a chance to work together on our shared priorities, but also to hear directly from those territories who suffered from Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

This new £70 million package of support demonstrates the UK's ongoing commitment to help its Overseas Territories as they get on with the difficult work of recovery.

When the first hurricane struck, the UK responded immediately, supplying humanitarian aid and disaster response expertise to the area. We have continued to provide support since then, having already committed £92 million to the region-wide relief effort to date.

The Prime Minister will also take the opportunity today to update leaders on the progress of our discussions with the European Union as we prepare to leave, and to invite leaders to express their views so we can ensure they are properly reflected in our strategy for Brexit negotiations.