

UN calls for support to recovery plan as Haiti loses \$2.7 billion in Hurricane Matthew

6 March 2017 – The United Nations office dedicated to disaster risk reduction today called for urgent support to improve disaster risk management in Haiti, following a damage assessment that shows the country lost \$2.7 billion, or 32 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), as a result of Hurricane Matthew six months ago.

“Hurricane Matthew revealed disturbing truths about least developed countries which lack the capacity to respond adequately to climate change and the rising intensity and frequency of weather-related disasters,” said the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Robert Glasser in a press release.

His call came on the eve of the 5th Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas, which opens in Montreal, Canada, tomorrow.

“While the government’s civil protection system prevented many deaths, it is unacceptable that over 600 people should have died in a hurricane that was so well-forecast,” he added.

The magnitude of the losses shown by a thorough government-led Post-Disaster Needs Assessment would be a devastating blow to any economy. It came on top of two years of drought affecting the food security of one million people and the 2010 earthquake which cost 120 per cent of GDP, he said.

Mr. Glasser urged strong support for the three-year recovery plan developed by the Haitian government, the UN and other partners that seeks \$2.72 billion.

He said that Haiti demonstrated how implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the global plan to reduce disaster losses, has to take into account the role that poverty plays in driving disaster risk.

In 2012, it was estimated that 58.6 per cent of the 10.7 million people live below the threshold of \$2.4 per day while 24 per cent live in extreme poverty or less than \$1.23 per day. Haiti is estimated to have lost on average 2 per cent of its GDP to weather-related disasters every year between 1975 and 2012.