



MEDIA RELEASE

FIFTH SPECIAL EMERGENCY MEETING OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF CARICOM HELD TO DISCUSS IMPACT OF HURRICANE IRMA

PORT OF SPAIN: 9TH SEPTEMBER, 2017

The Honourable Colm Imbert, Acting Prime Minister and the Honourable Stuart Young, Acting Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs participated in the Fifth Special Emergency Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which was convened *via* video conference on Saturday 09 September 2017 to assess the impact of Hurricane Irma on regional States and territories of the Community and the wider Caribbean region.

The gravity of the situation was evidenced by the strong representation by Heads of Government and other high-level participation at the Meeting, both by Members of the Community, as well as Associate Members.

The Meeting received a status update from the Executive Director, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), as well as briefings from other regional Institutions, including the work being done by the Regional Security System (RSS), the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) and the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS), regarding the region's response to the natural disaster. It was recognised that while a full assessment could not be undertaken until the full passage of both Irma and the advancing Hurricane Jose, there was the need to provide an urgent response given the significant effect on human lives.

Heads of Government recognised that the devastation surpassed the loss of lives and the significant damage to physical infrastructure, to include adverse psychological effects on the citizens of the region.

The Acting Prime Minister informed the Meeting that Trinidad and Tobago had assigned a National helicopter to assist Antigua and Barbuda, however it had been temporarily withdrawn due to the approaching hurricane but was on standby to return. Further, the country was making arrangements to ensure the safety of its nationals which may include evacuation.

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- 2 -

Having been apprised of the developments as well as the status of the destruction and the national and regional actions being undertaken to support the relief efforts, Trinidad and Tobago was able to have a better understanding of the extent of the damage in order to enable the provision of appropriate support to nationals, as well as air, maritime assets and other support. In this regard, the commitment was given that Heads would be apprised at the soonest possible time of the comprehensive response to be given. Trinidad and Tobago will also consider what the requisite response will be with respect to its nationals.

The Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs also wishes to remind nationals in the countries and territories affected by the passage of Hurricane Irma and their family members in Trinidad and Tobago to forward the following information to the Ministry at consular@foreign.gov.tt:

- Names;
- Dates of Births;
- Passport Bio-data; and
- Contact information.

Nationals are also reminded that an emergency hotline has been established and as such, contact can also be made *via* telephone to 1-868-715-2154. This would assist the Ministry in being able to identify and locate nationals, as required.

Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs