

CARIBBEAN – HURRICANE IRMA

FACT SHEET #1, FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2017

SEPTEMBER 7, 2017

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

175 mph

Sustained Wind Speed of
Hurricane Irma
NHC – September 7, 2017

15–20 feet

Potential Storm Surge in
The Bahamas
NHC – September 7, 2017

Up to 25 inches

Anticipated Rainfall in
Isolated Areas of
The Bahamas
NHC – September 7, 2017

1–5 feet

Potential Storm Surge
Along Hispaniola's
Northern Coast
NHC – September 7, 2017

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hurricane Irma—the strongest Atlantic hurricane on record—is traversing the Caribbean and has affected several island nations, including Antigua and Barbuda
- USAID activates a Washington, D.C.-based RMT and a regional DART with staff in The Bahamas, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti
- USAID is coordinating relief operations with host governments, USG interagency partners, and other humanitarian actors

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE HURRICANE IRMA RESPONSE IN FY 2017

USAID/OFDA ¹	\$100,000
\$100,000	

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- During the overnight hours between September 5 and 6, Hurricane Irma made landfall over several eastern Caribbean islands as a Category 5 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Scale, bringing maximum sustained winds of 185 miles per hour (mph) and heavy rains. The storm particularly affected the island of Barbuda, one of the two major islands composing the country of Antigua and Barbuda. On September 7, U.S. Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Linda S. Tagliatela issued a disaster declaration for Antigua and Barbuda due to the impacts of Hurricane Irma.
- The National Hurricane Center (NHC) anticipates that Hurricane Irma will remain a major hurricane through at least September 11 as it tracks toward the southeastern United States. The hurricane is passing north of Haiti and the Dominican Republic on September 7 before tracking northwestward over The Bahamas in the coming days. The storm will likely bring dangerous storm surge of up to 20 feet and 8–12 inches of rain to The Bahamas, according to the NHC.
- In advance of the storm's impacts on the Caribbean, USAID pre-positioned staff and relief commodities and began coordinating with humanitarian stakeholders on potential needs and response efforts. On September 6, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., for The Bahamas Lisa A. Johnson issued a disaster declaration due to the anticipated effects of Hurricane Irma in The Bahamas. In response, USAID/OFDA is providing an initial \$100,000 to address possible hurricane-related humanitarian needs.
- On September 7, USAID activated a Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Team (RMT) to support the regional Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), which includes staff based in The Bahamas, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti.

¹ USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

- On September 6, following the passage of Hurricane Irma, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Gaston Browne conducted an assessment of the island of Barbuda and found nearly complete destruction of Barbuda's infrastructure, according to international media. Initial reports indicate that up to 90 percent of structures sustained damage. Approximately 60 percent of the island's 1,400 residents were left homeless, the prime minister reported.
 - The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) reports that the Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross Society is distributing relief supplies through the islands' collective shelters. IFRC is allocating approximately \$64,400 to support response efforts undertaken by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda (GoAB).
 - On September 7, U.S. Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Linda S. Tagliatela issued a disaster declaration for Antigua and Barbuda due to the impacts of Hurricane Irma on the country. USAID is working to determine an appropriate response to the hurricane impacts on Barbuda in coordination with other U.S. Government (USG) entities, the GoAB, and relief organizations.
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BAHAMAS

- As of September 6, approximately 1,020 people had evacuated from the southern islands of Acklins, Crooked, Inagua, Mayaguana, and Ragged to shelters on New Providence Island, the most populous island in The Bahamas, according to the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas (GCoB). In addition, the GCoB has activated all emergency operations centers throughout The Bahamas in preparation for the pending arrival of Hurricane Irma.
 - Due to the anticipated effects of Hurricane Irma in The Bahamas, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., Lisa A. Johnson issued a disaster declaration on September 6. In response, USAID/OFDA is providing an initial \$100,000 to the Bahamas Red Cross to address the potential needs of hurricane-affected populations.
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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- Hurricane Irma is passing north of the Dominican Republic on September 7, and impacts on the country remain undetermined. The Government of the Dominican Republic maintains a red alert—the highest level of a three-tiered alert system—for 17 provinces as of September 7.
 - The DART Leader and other DART staff members are currently in the capital of Santo Domingo and closely monitoring storm developments. On September 6, the DART met with the director of the national emergency operations center, as well as representatives from UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other donors in the Dominican Republic to coordinate preparedness and response efforts.
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HAITI

- Hurricane Irma is passing north of Haiti on September 7, and impacts on the country remain undetermined. Staff from USAID/OFDA and USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) based in the capital of Port-au-Prince are closely tracking the hurricane and remain in close communication with national emergency officials, other donors, UN agencies, and international NGOs in Haiti regarding their hurricane preparations and response capabilities.
- USAID partners, including the UN World Food Program (WFP), the International Organization for Migration, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), and the American Red Cross have begun pre-positioning teams and relief items in strategic locations to enable immediate access to potentially affected areas.
- According to IFRC, the American Red Cross has pre-positioned staff in Haiti's northern departments to facilitate rapid damage assessments once the hurricane has passed and to support Haiti Red Cross Society relief operations.
- USAID/FFP is preparing to assist hurricane-affected households across Haiti and the broader Caribbean region with emergency food assistance as needed and requested by affected countries. In late August, USAID/FFP provided WFP with a \$4 million contribution to support the local and regional procurement of emergency food assistance to bolster

pre-positioned food stocks. As of September 6, WFP had pre-positioned approximately 3,300 metric tons (MT) of emergency food assistance—sufficient to support the immediate needs of an estimated 150,000 individuals for thirty days—across Haiti. The UN agency reports having pre-positioned food commodities, including cereals, beans, and vegetable oil, to meet the immediate food needs of up to 80,000 people in northern Haiti. WFP has also secured additional food commodity storage in the north of Haiti and has prepared transportation and logistics options to move additional emergency food commodities from Port-au-Prince to hurricane-affected areas in the north, if needed.

OTHER USG RESPONSE

- The Hurricane Irma DART and RMT are closely tracking the effects of Hurricane Irma, as well as the movements of Hurricanes Jose and Katia. Hurricane Jose is forecast to pass over or near Antigua and Barbuda on September 9 as a major hurricane with wind speeds exceeding 110 mph, which may exacerbate the humanitarian effects of Hurricane Irma. USAID staff plan to remain in contact with government officials and other stakeholders in countries throughout the Caribbean to coordinate on efforts to address needs caused by the hurricanes’ actual and potential impacts.
- In addition to staff in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, USAID/OFDA has pre-positioned a three-person team in Barbados, including a regional advisor, a program officer, and a communications officer. USAID/OFDA has also activated Disaster Risk Management Specialists and surge capacity consultants in Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, and St. Kitts and Nevis. A further 80 surge staff located throughout the Caribbean region are on standby should storm impacts warrant their activation to liaise with local officials and help assess damages and evaluate needs. Moreover, additional USAID/FFP food security technical experts are standing by to deploy to the region, as needed.

USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE HURRICANE IRMA RESPONSE IN FY 2017 ¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/OFDA²			
Bahamas Red Cross	Logistics Support and Relief Commodities, Shelter and Settlements	The Bahamas	\$100,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING			\$100,000
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE HURRICANE IRMA RESPONSE IN FY 2017			\$100,000

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect committed amounts as of September 7, 2017.

² USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of September 7, 2017.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at www.interaction.org.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or +1.202.661.7710.
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID website at <http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/working-crises-and-conflict/responding-times-crisis/where-we-work>