

**1: Update on Hurricane Dennis - Cuba seriously affected**  
(by Dusan Zupka, OCHA).

Dusan Zupka, from OCHAs Europe, Central Asia, Latin America and Caribbean Section gave an update on the situation in the Caribbean, focusing on Cuba, following the strike of Hurricane Dennis. Mr. Zupka based his information on reports from the UN Resident Coordinators office in Havana.

After having briefly struck the Eastern part of Cuba on 5 July Dennis returned on 7 July and affected the Country for almost two days. The hurricane directly hit 12 out of Cuba's 14 provinces with a population of 8 million out of 11.1 million. The hardest hit are the Southern coastal areas.

The hurricane caused 16 deaths, which is rather unusual in Cuba under such circumstances. About 1,5 million cubans were evacuated as well as about 17.000 foreign tourists.

Food preparing centres adequately stocked as well as evacuation centres were activated. Some 140,000 persons worked in life prevention and evacuation activities, and 1,600 Civil Defence units were mobilised.

Impact on different sectors includes damage on housing, electricity and telephone systems, road and railway systems, agriculture, health installations and water. Mr. Zupka underlined the damages to especially the agriculture and food industry, which have been hit hard in all 12 affected provinces. Also the damages to the water and sanitation systems are severe, as many sources were contaminated by flooding.

Pressing needs are mattresses, power generators, water purifications tablets, canned food, jerry cans for drinking water and products for plague control. On the medium and longer term, the needs are identified as roofing and reconstruction of houses and buildings.

The UN system, mainly through the office of the RC, is in close contact with the Cuban authorities. Information and coordination meetings are being held with the UN institutions represented in Cuba, NGOs and other cooperation institutions.

OCHA has released USD 60.000 in emergency cash grant to Cuba, and an UNDAC team has been put on standby.

The Cuban government will most likely not launch an international appeal. Mr. Zupka briefly touched upon the delicate political situation between Cuba and a number of bilateral donors.

Following the update, IFRC mentioned that they have offered their support to the Cuban authorities through delegates in the region and the national society, but that they are obliged to await the outcome of the Cuban Disaster Response Committee meeting next week, which will determine the level of external assistance needed.

A participant underlined the high standard of the Cuban disaster preparedness and response mechanisms, and pointed out that, lessons could be learned from observing them.

Also the effects in other Caribbean countries were mentioned – especially the collapse of a vital bridge in Haiti was underlined.

**2: Briefing on OCHA mission to the Pacific region (Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Australia and New Zealand)**  
(by Merete Johansson, OCHA)

Merete Johansson, Chief of OCHAs Asia and Pacific section briefed on a mission undertaken by OCHA Geneva and Bangkok to the Pacific region in the end of June.

The main purpose of the mission was to review OCHA's role in the region and make recommendations for the future. Focus was on the natural disasters agenda, although the mission also looked at it in the context of humanitarian and development challenges and the role of the aid community as a whole.

Visits from HQ to this distant region are rare and in general the area receives limited attention from the international community. Ms. Johansson underlined the need to register the Pacific as a region distinct from Asia.

The region is divided into 3 sub-regions: Melanesia, which is volcanic and mountainous, and has 85% of the population; Polynesia (8% of the population) and Micronesia (7% of the population), which are both smaller, and low-lying.

The countries in the region (most of which are independent and no longer territories) suffer from the full range of humanitarian and development challenges (natural disasters, health, HIV/AIDS, poverty, governance, brain drain, etc), but without the same support from the UN, in terms of coherent planning, coordination, advocacy, as other regions suffering the same problems. There are enormous access problems, with huge distances and poor transportation network.

Notwithstanding strong support of Australia and New Zealand, Pacific Island Governments and the bilaterals are calling for the UN to play a much more prominent role in the region.

Ms Johansson outlined a number of priorities that needs to be made, both at regional and country level ( PNG, which has about 50% of the regions population and its own particular requirements, needs to be treated as a

special case), some of which are: Strengthening of UN engagement in the region promoting stronger coordination and dialogue with bilaterals (especially Australia and New Zealand), regional organisations, governments and NGOs; Development of an integrated strategy in dialogue with partners, which puts UN in the lead providing assistance that complements the role of other actors; Integration of OCHA into the UN RC system, establishment of Disaster Management Teams as well as revitalising OCHA tools for disaster response, including the UNDAC and INSARAG.

Following the briefing the discussion focussed on the need to ensure linkages between the disaster response and the recovery/reconstruction work. Also the issue of developing better early warning systems for the pacific was mentioned.

**Action:**

- The IASC Secretariat to share the PNG mission report.

**3: IASC Standard Briefing**

(by Fabrizio Gentilono, OCHA)

- On 12 July in New York, and *Ad Hoc* IASC Working Group meeting was held to discuss the Humanitarian Response Review and other initiatives of humanitarian reform. The outcome of the meeting will be circulated to IASC colleagues as soon as possible.
- On Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> of July, the CAP Sub-Working Group will meet from 15.00 to 16.00 in room F3 of the Palais des Nations.

**IASC Weekly Meeting  
13 July 2005  
List of Participants**



<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Paul Paredes	FAO	Pparedes-portella@unog.ch
Segolene Folliet	WVI	<a href="mailto:Segolene.folliet@science-po.org">Segolene.folliet@science-po.org</a>
Florence Sechaud	ICRC	<a href="mailto:fsechaud@icrc.org">fsechaud@icrc.org</a>
Amanda Bok	ICRC	<a href="mailto:abok@icrc.org">abok@icrc.org</a>
Reuben McCarthy	UNICEF	remccarthy@unicef.org
Merete Johansson	OCHA	<a href="mailto:johansson@un.org">johansson@un.org</a>
Jacob Korreborg	IASC Sec.	<a href="mailto:Korreborg@un.org">Korreborg@un.org</a>
Kayo Gotoh	UNDP	<a href="mailto:Kayoko.gotoh@undp.org">Kayoko.gotoh@undp.org</a>
Mirko Forni	UN-Habitat	Forni.habitat@unog.ch
Kristin Barstad	UNICEF	<a href="mailto:kbarstad@unicef.org">kbarstad@unicef.org</a>
Eric Laroche	UNICEF	<a href="mailto:elaroche@unicef.org">elaroche@unicef.org</a>
Arjun Katoch	OCHA	
Claude Jibidar	WFP	<a href="mailto:Claude.jibidar@wfp.org">Claude.jibidar@wfp.org</a>
Franz Josef Homann-Herimberg	OCHA	
Masaaki Nakagawa	OCHA	
Fernando Protti	OCHA	protti@un.org
Mirkka Henttonen	UNFPA	<a href="mailto:henttonen@unfpa.org">henttonen@unfpa.org</a>
Eva Vognild	OCHA	vognild@unorg
Jay Chang	WHO	<a href="mailto:changj@who.int">changj@who.int</a>
Sabine Wähning	UNHCR	<a href="mailto:wahning@unhcr.ch">wahning@unhcr.ch</a>
Andrew Harper	UNHCR	<a href="mailto:harper@unhcr.ch">harper@unhcr.ch</a>
Anatoli Poujai	UNHCR	<a href="mailto:poujai@unhcr.ch">poujai@unhcr.ch</a>
Alia Farah	WFP	<a href="mailto:aliafarah@hotmail.com">aliafarah@hotmail.com</a>
Donato Kiniger	ILO	kiniger@ilo.org