OVERVIEW OF THE CRISIS

Following the passage of Hurricane Dorian, a category 5 hurricane, from 1-3 September on Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama, the Government of the Bahamas revised the death toll to 43 on 6 September: 35 people died in Abaco Islands and eight in Grand Bahama. Many remain missing and the number of casualties is expected to increase. Search and rescue operations continue, as well as evacuations.

The Abaco Islands are the most severely affected. Initial assessments for Abaco found widespread destruction, with thousands of houses leveled, telecommunications towers down, and water wells and roads damaged. There is very limited or no water, electricity and sanitation. In Marsh Harbour, most of the infrastructure is damaged; “the Mudd” area, mostly inhabited by migrants, many undocumented, has been destroyed, therefore leaving this community in a particularly vulnerable situation. In Grand Bahama, the eastern part is the most affected, with homes damaged between Freetown and Deep Water Cay. Oil tanks have also been damaged.

While many of the 3,300 people estimated to sheltered in Abaco Islands (2,500) and Grand Bahama (800) in Government buildings (as of 5 September) have reportedly been evacuated or left the shelters, those remaining in shelters or in affected areas need water, food, sanitation, medicines, among others.

Across Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama, airports and seaports are increasingly becoming operational, allowing assistance to be delivered. However, access to affected people, in particular in Abaco Islands remains challenging, including due to damaged roads and infrastructure.

Further assessments to accurately determine the scope of needs are underway. In support of NEMA, UN agencies and partners conducted assessment missions in Abaco Islands on 7 September, and will continue in the coming days. These assessments follow CDEMA’s regional Rapid Needs Assessment Teams (RNATs), which conducted aerial assessments over Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama on 4 and 6 September.

In Abaco, the flight mission recommended that in the short term, the emergency response will want to provide for roofing material, debris removal, full restoration of power, support to the Abaco Emergency Operations Centre, immediate shipment of supplies to Marsh Harbour and similarly affected areas, access to safe water and vector control activities, with medium-term considerations for water safety to minimize public health risks.

For Grand Bahama, findings from the aerial reconnaissance indicate that the eastern end of the island was badly damaged. Other potential needs observed include relief supplies, a detailed assessment of an oil refinery that sustained damage, restoration of telecommunications, debris removal and vector control.
HOW CAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR HELP

1 CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY
Relief professionals encourage 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, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance. It is recommended that companies support organizations that have demonstrated experience. You can also make a direct contribution to humanitarian responders on the ground, including to:

A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at: www.interaction.org

2 IN-KIND AND SERVICE SUPPORT
For businesses wishing to contribute to the relief efforts by providing in-kind goods or services, the Government of the Bahamas has issued an Immediate Assistance Supplies List (as of 4 September 2019) through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, specific support for the Water and Sewerage Corporation (WSC) based on pre-impact data and needs analysis undertaken, was issued through the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC).

Please note that this list of items may be outdated, given that information is still coming in from the affected islands. For the most recent information, please visit www.cdema.org/bahamas-disaster-relief.

Please submit offers to connectingbusiness@un.org and be as specific as possible with what you wish to donate, including the time-frame for delivery, if you will cover shipping and other expenses associated with deliver. We will then guide you to the most appropriate organizations. Companies with employees, suppliers, customers in the region, or those with existing agreements with responding humanitarian organizations should reach out and provide support directly to these groups. Please note that it is important to ensure that donated items meet sphere standards and are included on the priority list of needs.

3 CONTRIBUTIONS TO LONGER-TERM RECOVERY
Recovery and development activities should resume at the onset of the crisis, while humanitarian needs are still being addressed. Longer term contributions of technical expertise, infrastructure (re)-development and economic investment are key and must be coordinated with national priorities so that risk conditions are not built back. The United Nations encourage donors to support activities that allow the local private sector to “get back in business” as soon as possible. UNDP and partners are currently working with the Government, companies and foundations in the Bahamas in implementing a recovery strategy. For more information please contact Ava Whyte Anderson - ava.whyte-anderson@undp.org

4 COMMERCIAL OFFERS
If your offer is commercial in nature, please refer to the UN Global Marketplace www.ungm.org for more information.
CRITICAL REMINDERS

✏ The UN Secretary-General encourages companies to coordinate their response efforts with the United Nations and the Government of the Bahamas in order to ensure coherence with priority needs and to minimize gaps and duplications with the other responders.

✏ All response activities should be guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Stakeholder engagement is key to corporate engagement in humanitarian response. Ensuring communities are at the center of, and driving humanitarian action, is critical to ensuring appropriate and timely aid and protection reaches the people most in need. Working collaboratively with existing local institutions, social networks and civil society is critical in this endeavor.

✏ It is important to ensure that donated items meet sphere standards and are included on the priority list of needs.

✏ Business contributions to the UN response efforts must comply with the Guidelines on Cooperation between the UN and the Business Sector www.business.un.org/en/documents/guidelines

RECOGNIZING YOUR CONTRIBUTION

OCHA manages the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), which records all reported humanitarian contributions including cash and in-kind donations. Its aim is to record the total amount of funding and resource gaps in humanitarian crises. To give credit and visibility to your generosity please report your contributions to fts@un.org.

If your contribution is in-kind, please refer to the guide to valuation of in-kind contributions from the private sector here: www.humanitarianresponse.info/ru/programme-cycle/space/document/guide-valuation-kind-contributions-private-sector.

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT

For more information on how businesses can help please contact:

Karen Smith
connectingbusiness@un.org

WHERE TO FIND THE LATEST INFORMATION

For an updated list of maps, situation reports, events please visit:

Humanitarian Response Info

Reliefweb
https://reliefweb.int/disaster/tc-2019-000095-dom