



PRESS RELEASE

UN Hosts Donor Roundtable to Support Recovery Efforts in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Bridgetown, 11 June 2020. - Two months after the devastating eruption of the La Soufriere Volcano, with thousands still displaced, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, has provided a grim reminder of the ongoing humanitarian crisis, noting *“we really have two countries at the moment”*.

His comments came yesterday as he addressed a Donor Roundtable discussion hosted by UN partners to update on support to the ongoing humanitarian and recovery response, and to ramp up support for unfunded sectors under the **USD\$29.2 million UN Funding Appeal** as the country transitions towards recovery.

Dr. Gonsalves expressed sincere thanks to UN Agencies, regional Governments, development partners, regional organizations and NGOs for ongoing support noting that the country was still facing serious challenges. He told the gathering of diplomats and regional and international development partners time is of the essence. *“People are still suffering there is no question about it. It’s a very difficult time,”* he said.

Despite experiencing no explosive eruptions since April 22, the Prime Minister said the volcano was still venting gas. He added that bringing together and moving of over 20,000 persons from the Red and Orange Zones had resulted in a tremendous uptick in COVID-19. *“The volcano met us with the problem of COVID -19 and the situation has gotten worse as a consequence of the volcano. [It] threatens to get out of hand if we do not take stronger measures than taken before the volcano,”* he warned.

UN Resident Coordinator for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Didier Trebucq, chaired the meeting noting that despite many effective life-saving activities, and the level of collaboration between the Government and regional and international partners, there were still significant needs and gaps to be addressed, as the country moved toward the recovery phase. *“We welcome the continued support of our many donor partners in meeting these remaining needs under our Funding Appeal. The UN is highly committed to helping the Govt and people of SVG rebuild stronger and greener with the support of the UN funding appeal. However, the situation of vulnerability can be exacerbated in the coming months during this hurricane season if the unfunded needs are not covered”* he assured.

Mr. Trebucq cited the establishment of a Logistics Hub for transportation of food and relief items, resumption of education for 3000 students, provision of cash transfers for over 2,000 needy households and other support in WASH, protection, health, food security and agriculture as among key achievements. He indicated that to date, over USD\$7 million had been allocated to Pillar 1 for Humanitarian Response, and USD\$1.4 million to Pillar 2 for restoration and

recovery. Important outstanding unfunded needs are in the areas of Shelter and transition to Housing, Early Recovery for ashes cleanup and repairs, Agriculture and Livelihoods restoration. With most residents of the Orange Zone having returned home, and most in the Red Zone still evacuated, Prime Minister Gonsalves cited food, physical infrastructure, livelihoods support for agriculture, repair, rebuilding or relocation of homes, and restoration of water, electricity, and schools as key priorities.

In outlining achievements and existing gaps under Pillar 1, Acting Representative for World Food Programme English and Dutch Caribbean Office, Regis Chapman, observed: *“The huge challenge in this context is that most of our collective attention looks at hurricanes. One of the positive things coming out of this emergency is that the UN Response has been embedded in the national response. While we will have time to reflect further down the road, this is truly a good example of how national, regional, and international entities can come together, coordinate and support the impacted population. I think we have a lot to collectively be proud of. The leadership of the Government in this response has been a key plank in making it possible.”*

UNDP Representative for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Valerie Cliff, in outlining the key recovery needs under Pillar 2 including ashes clean-up, livelihoods restoration and support for returning evacuees, underlined: *“Limited support has been provided to some sectors with repurposed or pledged funding, but there is a pressing need for additional donor support.”*

Representatives the Governments of Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Columbia, as well as the European Union, World Bank and Caribbean Development Bank, pledged continued support for the Government and people of Saint Vincent, through targeted programming and additional grant or loan funding to support medium to long-term recovery, emergency liquidity and other needs.

To date the UN Appeal has raised USD\$9.1 million or 31%, through repurposed or mobilized funding, with an outstanding deficit of USD\$20 million. For more information on how to contribute contact:

Tia Browne

Development Coordination Officer

Partnerships and Development Finance

Resident Coordinator Office

Email: tia.browne@un.org

Phone: +1 (246) 832-6107

Media Contact

Carol A. Gaskin

Resident Coordinator Office

Development Coordination Officer, Programme Communications and Advocacy

Email: carol-ann.gaskin@un.org

Phone: +1 (246) 832- 6110