



FEDERACION UNIVERSAL
DE MOVIMIENTOS
ESTUDIANTILES CRISTIANOS
en América Latina y el Caribe.



Buenos Aires/Cárdenas September 17th, 2017

Request for Solidarity after Hurricane Irma hit Cuba

World Student Christian Federation

In September 7th, Hurricane Irma, the most powerful on the Atlantic according to the Saffir-Simpson Scale (category 5) with winds at its center ranging between 250-295 km / h, arrived to the republic of Cuba after generating material damage and loss of life in several countries and Caribbean islands.

In Cuba, 12 of the 15 provinces were affected by the hurricane. Damage stood out in infrastructure of housing, losses which affect food due to ruined crops and poultry complex, problems with food and electricity supply systems due to damage from power plants, as it is the case of the Matanzas' thermoelectric, being this one of the most affected regions in the island along with the provinces of La Habana, Ciego de Ávila and Villa Clara in the west central Cuba. Losses and serious damages are also reported in the north coast that affected the hotel-touristic complex of Cuba, which is one of the main sources of economic income. This in addition to the crisis and mobilization of evacuated people that the hurricane has caused.

“Ten people dead, destroyed towns, thousands of fallen trees, serious damages in the generation and transmission of electricity, in the supply of drinking water and in the housing, besides strong flooding from storm surges, left the powerful hurricane Irma in Cuba, between Friday 8th and September 10th” reported SEMlac in their mail newsletter.

Evacuees: According to reports from the authorities the passage of Hurricane Irma by Cuba forced the evacuation of 1'738.000 people, 86% of them in houses of relatives and friends. It was also reported that more than 26 thousand people are still in evacuation centers.

Energy Sector: The strongest and most difficult impact to solve in the sector was suffered by the Antonio Guiteras thermoelectric power plant in Matanzas, which house of circulation of sea water, key in the cooling system, was destroyed by the waves. Besides, 15 transmission lines suffered damage and more than 3600 poles and 2039 kilometers of lines were affected. Around 90 oil wells, located in the on the north coast of the west and center, were also broken by the strong waves which the hurricane caused. Currently, the restoration of the electric service will be focused in the provinces of Villa Clara and Ciego de Ávila.

FUMEC ALC / WSCF LAC

Condarco 321 C1406
Buenos Aires, Argentina
fumec@fumec-alc.org
www.fumec-alc.org



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Housing and Infrastructure: According to the Ministry of Construction, the major damages caused by the hurricane are concentrated in housing, especially by roofs that were blown.

Agriculture: It was found that the most serious damage in agriculture is concentrated in the poultry area, because dozens of birds destined to the production of eggs lost their sheds. Also according to the Ministry of Agriculture was explained that processing of feed, plantain and corn crops, as well as fruit crops have been affected. Currently, the work in reactivation of the countryside in several crops is being intensified, and it has been reported that there are seeds, fertilizers and pesticides are available for that purpose.

Public Health: It was reported that the health system maintained its vitality during the passage of the hurricane and to date there are no outbreaks of contagious diseases in evacuation centers or in any territory. It was announced that 516 health units were damaged and work is being done to restore them in the shortest time possible. Additionally it was announced that now priority will be given to environmental sanitation and vector control.

Tourism: on the damages to tourism when the hurricane hit the island there were more than 51 thousand vacationers, around 45 thousand of them were located in the north coast. The tourism sector is one of the most generating economic income and employment in Cuba, damage to infrastructure and recovery is one of the biggest challenges in the upcoming Cuban tourist season. This creates uncertainty thousands of employments and the direct source of income of the population of the most damaged zones.

Updates on the Students of the Student Movement of Cuba:

“It has been a habit of the Movement to mobilize us to offer help in areas most affected by emergent disasters such as Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and Hurricane Matthew in 2016. This time will not be different, we are evaluating how we can get to the cities of the center of the island which had the biggest damages (North of Villa Clara, Yaguajay-Sancti Spiritus, and Ciego de Ávila) to work with people and affected vulnerable groups “Elderly people who live alone, persons with disabilities, children in situations of poverty, etc.” (...) “In the same way, we are worried about what we are already experiencing in regards to food supplies for the population. Agriculture and tourism are two essential sources to generate money and food. The country will have to invest a lot in materials to re-build, while the unemployment generated by the stagnation of tourism services and the recovery of agricultural production will lead us to a period of scarcity and of rising of prices which will affect most of all to those, that as I was saying, represent the most vulnerable sector of the Cuban society.”

Tells us Dianet de la C. Martínez Valdés, president of the SCM of Cuba confirming also that there has been a calling to coordinators of the local groups who are in Sancti Spiritus, La Habana, Cienfuegos, Cárdenas, Matanzas, San Nicolás and Santiago de Cuba and it has been verified that they are all right, although some of the students and young people of the different local groups have had damage in their houses. Besides the SCM of Cuba is preparing for their next regional workshop on leadership training in the west of Cuba, in September 21 to 23, were they will plan the next steps in the agenda of solidarity and mobilization.

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From the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), considering the consequences caused by the Hurricane Irma and the emerging situations that are rising in the reconstruction and recovery stage, we extend a call for solidarity to WSCF friends, Student Christian Movements (SCMs) and the fraternal organizations to participate in the collection carried out by the WSCF to assign to the work of the SCM of Cuba in the process of recovery, social and material accompanying in the zones that were damaged the most and in the 7 cities where the movement develops its work with young people and students.

All that is collected will be used to directly support affected communities, primarily by targeting the most vulnerable people including children, the elderly, people with reduced mobility and following the advice of the SCM of Cuba a possible way to contribute would be through food, personal and household hygiene packs.

WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE:

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BANK NAME: Banco de la República Oriental del Uruguay

ABA/SWIFT/CHIPS ID: BROUUYMM

ABA026003324

ADDRESS: Constituyente 1450, 11200 Montevideo, Uruguay+598 2908 2882

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 196-0564029

ATTENTION: LAC Regional Secretary

WSCF IRO

BANK NAME: Banque Cantonale de Genève (BCGE)

ABA/SWIFT/CHIPS ID: BCGECHGGXXX

ADDRESS: Quai de l'le 17, case postale 2251, 1211, Genève 2,

ACCOUNT NUMBER: LO790.08.11

ACCOUNT NAME: World Student Christian Federation

ATTENTION: LAC Regional Secretary

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Sarahí García Gomez

President of the Board of Directors

WSCF LAC

Marcelo Leites

Regional Secretary LAC

Director Eco Justice
Program

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*Information taken from media: www.cubadebate.com:

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