

111TH CONGRESS
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H. CON. RES. 17

Expressing the sense of Congress with regard to providing humanitarian assistance to countries of the Caribbean devastated by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike and Tropical Storms Fay and Hanna.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 9, 2009

Ms. LEE of California (for herself, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, and Mr. RUSH) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress with regard to providing humanitarian assistance to countries of the Caribbean devastated by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike and Tropical Storms Fay and Hanna.

Whereas in May 2008, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicted that 2008 would be an above-normal Atlantic hurricane season;

Whereas from August 15, 2008, to September 7, 2008, Hurricanes Gustav and Ike and Tropical Storms Fay and Hanna devastated countries of the Caribbean and many Southern and Eastern States of the United States;

Whereas the people of the United States have similarly faced the harsh consequences of the recent hurricanes and

tropical storms and can empathize with the countries of the Caribbean as they begin the recovery process;

Whereas in the Dominican Republic, Hurricane Gustav and Tropical Storms Fay and Hanna displaced 16,715 people, of whom 5,348 remained in official shelters;

Whereas Hurricane Gustav and Tropical Storms Fay and Hanna damaged 3,343 houses and destroyed 46 houses in the Dominican Republic;

Whereas Hurricane Gustav and Tropical Storms Fay and Hanna damaged infrastructures in the Dominican Republic, including 9 of the country's water systems;

Whereas the storms isolated 96 communities and negatively affected 9 roads and 12 bridges in the Dominican Republic;

Whereas the storms caused mudslides, resulting in 8 deaths in the Dominican Republic;

Whereas the storms Fay, Gustav, Hanna, and Ike affected 850,000 people in Haiti;

Whereas flooding in Haiti has led to nearly 600 deaths and displaced an estimated 151,072 people, including over 111,391 living in shelters;

Whereas flooding in the port city of Gonaives, Haiti alone led to nearly 500 deaths, left over 37 people missing, left 40,000 people in shelters, and left 250,000 people in need of assistance;

Whereas the storms destroyed 10,842 houses and damaged an additional 35,125 houses in Haiti;

Whereas according to the Government of Haiti, the series of storms may have left as many as 1,000,000 Haitians homeless;

Whereas flooding and landslides cut off land routes and hindered delivery of humanitarian assistance in Haiti;

Whereas in Haiti, Hurricane Gustav and Tropical Storm Hanna destroyed the bridge linking the devastated region of Gonaives to St. Marc on the country's mainland;

Whereas in Haiti, extensive agricultural areas of the Artibonite Valley are flooded, and many crops remain underwater;

Whereas in Jamaica, Hurricane Gustav alone directly affected more than 4,000 people;

Whereas in Jamaica, the storm caused substantial damage to infrastructure and caused flooding in at least 72 communities, rendering 120 roads impassable, and affecting 65 percent of the country's water supply, causing 12 deaths, and putting 248 people in shelters;

Whereas the storms contributed to heavy losses in Jamaica's agriculture sector, decimating the banana crop, a primary export commodity in Jamaica;

Whereas in Turks and Caicos, Tropical Storm Hanna and Hurricane Ike affected 12,000 people in the islands and destroyed nearly 90 percent of the buildings on Grand Turk;

Whereas Grand Turk and South Caicos, the 2 islands most dependent on tourism, were the worst hit by Hurricane Ike;

Whereas Hurricane Ike damaged almost 80 percent of the houses on Great Inagua Islands in the Bahamas;

Whereas Hurricanes Gustav and Ike and Tropical Storms Fay and Hanna also impacted the people of Cuba;

Whereas Hurricane Gustav alone severely damaged an estimated 53 percent of the houses in Cuba;

Whereas Hurricane Gustav was the worst hurricane to hit Cuba in over 50 years;

Whereas Hurricane Gustav displaced over 400,000 Cubans and damaged or destroyed 130,000 homes and caused severe damage to infrastructure;

Whereas Hurricane Ike affected the people of Cuba, causing 4 deaths, displacing 55,700 people, and forcing over 2,600,000 people to evacuate;

Whereas the financial burden of providing emergency and reconstruction assistance to the devastated countries is much greater than the Caribbean community can sustain by themselves;

Whereas the cost of providing emergency humanitarian assistance to the Caribbean continues to increase with each passing natural disaster;

Whereas in addition to needing disaster relief, Caribbean governments are under pressure to secure their communities and prevent looters and other criminals from causing further harm to their citizens who are struggling to recover from the devastation caused by the hurricanes;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is coordinating with the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC), the United Nations World Food Program, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), to provide urgently needed food, potable water, temporary shelter, and other basic commodities;

Whereas the series of hurricanes and tropical storms, which have ripped through the Caribbean, have again demonstrated that properly promulgated and consistently enforced building and housing codes significantly reduce the human and financial toll that natural disasters wreck on countries;

Whereas the Caribbean region is recognized as the third border of the United States, and the economic turmoil caused by the series of hurricanes and tropical storms in the Caribbean will have an effect on the United States; and

Whereas the countries of the Caribbean will need significant assistance from the international community for relief and reconstruction efforts: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) expresses solidarity with all people affected
4 by the 2008 hurricane season;

5 (2) commends the governments of the countries
6 of the Caribbean for their efforts to respond and as-
7 sist the people of the region after the devastation
8 caused by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike and Tropical
9 Storms Fay and Hanna from August to September
10 2008;

11 (3) commends the efforts of the Caribbean-
12 American community to provide relief to family and
13 friends suffering in the region;

1 (4) supports the efforts of the Administration
2 to assist in coordinating international humanitarian
3 assistance to help the people of the Caribbean re-
4 gion, assess the damage, and provide relief to af-
5 fected communities, particularly in the Dominican
6 Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Cuba, and
7 Turks and Caicos;

8 (5) urges the international community to take
9 all necessary steps to provide emergency relief and
10 support reconstruction efforts in the Caribbean re-
11 gion;

12 (6) urges the President to continue to make
13 available to nongovernmental organizations, private
14 volunteer organizations, United Nations agencies,
15 and regional institutions the necessary funding to
16 help mitigate the effects of the recent natural disas-
17 ters that have devastated the countries of the Carib-
18 bean; and

19 (7) urges the President, acting through the Ad-
20 ministrator of the United States Agency for Inter-
21 national Development, to provide assistance in co-
22 ordination with other donors to begin the reconstruc-
23 tion of the Caribbean countries that suffered heavy
24 damage from the natural disasters of 2008 and to
25 provide assistance for the governments of recipient

- 1 Caribbean countries to promulgate and enforce rel-
- 2 evant housing and building codes.

