

## UN Women’s relief efforts for women and girls after hurricane Matthew

### Facts and Figures

Over 2.1 million people (19 per cent of the Haitian population) are affected by the hurricane

Over 1.4 million people (12.9 per cent of the Haitian population) are in need of humanitarian assistance

752 persons are missing

An estimated 55,000 were still living in temporary shelters before the hurricane

41 per cent of Haitian households being female-headed, and women represent a majority of people living in acute poverty



A woman in Jeremie, one of the affected areas by Hurricane Matthew. Photo: UN/MINUSTAH/Logan Abassi

### The Issue

On 4 October, Hurricane Matthew, the strongest hurricane that Haiti has seen in a decade, tore through the country, bringing death and devastation, particularly in the Southern Grand’Anse and Nippes departments. In response to this situation, UN Women in coordination with other UN agencies is setting up emergency relief efforts to meet the most urgent needs of women and girls and to provide them with reliable income sources to get them back on their feet and exploit their potential as agents of change.

Women and girls are the worst affected by emergencies, especially when discriminatory gender norms are prevalent, and Haiti is no exception. Disasters increase specific risks for women, exacerbating all their existing social, economic and physical vulnerabilities. Additionally, they are among the first responders and most often bear

the responsibility for being the main caregivers and holding their families and communities together in times of crisis. Women’s losses in disasters also tend not to be consistently recorded, with men’s losses being prioritised and addressed. Women and girls are also more likely to be victims of various types of violence and/or discrimination, especially in the context of resource limitations. Displacement, over-crowded internally displaced centres, lack of privacy, lighting and access to information, limited and unsegregated wash facilities and other factors often contribute to higher rates of sexual violence against women.

The goal of UN Women’s humanitarian response to the crisis in Haiti is to ensure equitable and gender-responsive access to humanitarian assistance and women’s leadership and equal participation in the delivery and design of the interventions.

## How UN Women has responded

UN Women's response to achieve this goal will include concrete actions organised in line with five core areas:

1. **Generating gender analysis and an evidence-base for the recognition and integration of women's needs and priorities into national recovery and response efforts.** This will be done by engaging in the Post Disaster Needs Assessment, as well as by undertaking a stand-alone gender analysis.

2. **Supporting national and grassroots women's organisations and networks, including affected women, to lead and participate equally in the design and delivery of relief and recovery efforts.** This will be done providing technical and financial support to women's organizations, including in hard-to-reach areas, to ensure that women and girls, especially single mothers and female heads-of-households, are able to participate equally as contributors to and beneficiaries of the response and early recovery efforts.

3. **Establishing safe and social spaces for women and girls to facilitate access to life-saving protection and humanitarian services.** In partnership with Action Aid, these safe and social spaces within select shelters and resettlement areas, will provide women with access to life-saving information on gender-based violence, women's rights and referral services; recreational activities and trades training. The safe and social "Women's Spaces" will initially provide services to 15,000 crisis-affected women and girls and will likely be scaled up as the programme achieves full funding.

4. **Supporting the self-reliance and economic independence of crisis affected women through a robust cash-for-work component.** This will provide the most vulnerable women with reliable livelihoods thus preventing negative coping mechanisms, such as transactional sex, which was identified as an important issue during the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. The cash-for-work component of the programme will initially cater to 2,500 women, and be gradually scaled up as the programme achieves full funding.

5. **Leading coordination on gender equality and women's empowerment to maximise effectiveness and minimise duplication in humanitarian planning and response efforts.** This will be done by coordinating efforts by national

authorities, grassroots and national women's groups, international development actors and the UN system to deliver the most effective and efficient gender equality and women's empowerment humanitarian interventions.

## Working in partnership

To create the enabling environment for the outcomes to occur, it will require the mobilization, coordination, and capacity-building of a broad range of stakeholders.

UN Women's response will be implemented in the context of existing partnerships with the Government of Haiti, national and grassroots women's organisations, international non-governmental organisations and the UN system. Partners at this stage of programme planning include:

- Government of Haiti: Ministry of Interior (specifically the DPC), Ministry of Women's Conditions and Human Rights, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development, and Ministry of Commerce, as well as local government institutions in the affected areas
- National and grassroots women's organisations and networks and women's rights advocates: Konbit peyizan grandans and Oganizasyon fanm tèt ansanm grandans
- International NGOs: Action Aid
- UN system: UNFPA to coordinate support to sexual and gender-based violence victims, UNDP on cash-for-work and UNICEF to coordinate support to girls and children of women who reach the safe and social spaces

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