



## PRESS RELEASE

### **The European Union provides support for the Caribbean to cope with drought**

**Santo Domingo, 9 May 2016** – The impact of natural disasters is increasing, despite countries' efforts to reduce it. Over the past year, drought has affected more than 6.2 million people in the Caribbean, especially in Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

Irregular and insufficient rainfall throughout 2015 has caused loss of crop and livestock in the region. For the third consecutive year, some people are facing periods of drought that threaten their livelihood, with the most vulnerable groups being small producers, day-labourers and people with no land of their own.

In this context, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) is contributing 13.9 million euros to help the Caribbean cope with drought in 2016, facilitating access to food and water, and protecting the livelihoods of more than 429,000 people. The European Commission has allocated 12.2 million euros of this contribution to Haiti, 1.1 million euros to the Dominican Republic and 600,000 euros to Cuba.

Additionally, the European Commission continues its commitment to Disaster Risk Reduction, helping the Caribbean prepare to cope with future droughts by contributing 2.8 million euros in 2016: 1.5 million for Haiti, 700,000 for the Dominican Republic and 600,000 for Cuba. These actions will facilitate the sharing of good practice in the current response implemented at local level, which can then be replicated in the future. It is anticipated that around 200,000 people in the region will be helped during 2016-2017.

These contributions are in addition to the more than 9.3 million euros that the Commission provided for the region for Disaster Preparedness during 2015-2016 through its DIPECHO programme (Disaster Preparedness, ECHO), with the focus on strengthening local ability to cope with future disasters. The key areas of intervention for this programme, which benefits 410,000 people in 12 Caribbean countries, include the strengthening of early warning systems, earthquake risk preparedness and information concerning good practice in Disaster Risk Reduction.

Since 1994, the European Commission has provided the Caribbean with a total of 509.7 million euros in financial aid. Of this amount, 353.7 million euros have been allocated to Haiti, mainly in response to the devastating earthquake of 12 January 2010, the fight against the cholera epidemic, food insecurity and disaster preparedness. The remaining 156 million euros have provided support to the rest of the Caribbean in its response to emergencies and activities aimed at disaster preparedness.

**For more information about the European Commission's humanitarian aid:**

Web page: <http://ec.europa.eu/echo>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ec.humanitarian.aid>

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/ECHO\\_LatAm](https://twitter.com/ECHO_LatAm)

Photos of projects financed with the aid of ECHO in Latin America are available for free on <http://www.flickr.com/photos/69583224@N05/collections/72157628417234019/>

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