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Press release

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UN CALLS FOR SUPPORT TO HAITI RECOVERY PLAN AS REPORT REVEALS US\$2.7 BILLION IN HURRICANE LOSSES

6 March 2017 – There was a call today for urgent support to improve disaster risk management in Haiti following a damning investigation of the country's losses from Hurricane Matthew six months ago.

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Mr. Robert Glasser said: "Hurricane Matthew revealed disturbing truths about least developed countries which lack the capacity to respond adequately to climate change and the rising intensity and frequency of weather-related disasters.

"While the government's civil protection system prevented many deaths, it is unacceptable that over 600 people should have died in a hurricane that was so well-forecast. A very thorough government-led Post-Disaster Needs Assessment has been conducted which shows that the country lost US\$2.8 billion as a result of Hurricane Matthew or 32% of GDP. This would be a devastating blow to any economy. It came on top of two years of drought affecting the food security of one million people and the 2011 earthquake which cost 120% of GDP."

Speaking on the eve of the 5th Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas which opens in Montreal, Canada, tomorrow, Mr. Glasser urged strong support for the recovery plan developed by the Haitian government, the UN and other partners which seeks US\$2.72 billion for a three-year recovery plan which is guided by the need to build back better, centred on reducing future disaster risk, improving multi-hazard early warning systems, and reducing the exposure of impoverished communities to the risk of storms, earthquakes and other hazards.

He said that Haiti demonstrated how implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the global plan to reduce disaster losses, has to take into account the role that poverty plays in driving disaster risk. In 2012, it was estimated that 58.6% of the 10.7 million population live below the threshold of US\$2.4 per day while 24% live in extreme poverty (less than US\$1.23 per day). Haiti is estimated to have lost on average 2% of its GDP to weather-related disasters every year between 1975 and 2012.

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About UNISDR: UNISDR is the UN office dedicated to disaster risk reduction. It is led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and supports implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 which seeks "the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses, in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries."

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