

UN relief chief concludes disaster-preparedness mission to Haiti and Panama

The top United Nations emergency relief official has assured the Haitian government of the organization's support for its efforts to prepare against hurricanes and stamp out cholera.

Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, [completed](#) his first official mission to the Caribbean country and Panama, in Central America, on Friday.

"It was important for me to undertake this mission now – at the start of the hurricane season – to see for myself the Government-led and regional efforts to prepare for natural disasters," Mr. Lowcock said about the three-day visit.

Haiti has been hit by successive natural disasters over the past decade and the UN relief chief met with people who are still struggling in their wake.

"After an earthquake, hurricanes, floods and recurring drought, Haitians' remarkable resilience has been proven," he declared. "But it is no surprise that after these successive blows and despite joint efforts of the Government and the international community, a very sizable number of Haitians still require assistance – not only to obtain life's necessities, but also to build livelihoods and become more resilient to future threats," he added.



UN OCHA/Nadia Todres

Mark Lowcock (left), Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator (UNOCHA), with Mamadou Diallo (2nd from left), Officer-in-Charge of the

United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) visit the Departmental Emergency Operations Center (COUD) Nord-Est in Fort Liberte, Haiti on 3 July 2018.

Mr. Lowcock travelled to several areas of the country. He visited a centre in the northeast, at the border with the Dominican Republic, where returnees and deportees receive assistance and protection services.

He also met people living with disabilities who receive assistance at a local organization where many of the staff are also persons with disabilities.

The UN official vowed to share their stories with the world, at the Global Disability Summit that will be held in London later this month.

In the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, Mr. Lowcock held talks with the authorities where he reiterated the UN's support for the Government's disaster preparedness efforts.

He praised the Government's commitment to meeting the needs of its most vulnerable citizens, including those who struggle to get enough to eat, and underlined the UN's commitment to support efforts to eradicate cholera.

However, he pointed out that the country needs more international support as a humanitarian response plan for this year, is less than 10 per cent funded.

In Panama, Mr. Lowcock met with top officials, including Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Isabel de Saint Malo de Alverado, to discuss the country's critical role in strengthening humanitarian action in the region.

He also met with regional development and humanitarian partners, and reiterated support for regional preparedness efforts.