Dominican Republic: ADRA assists families affected by Hurricane Irene

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September 8, 2011 - San Cristobal, Dominican Republic...Libna Stevens/IAD

Nearly two weeks after the Dominican Republic was hit hard by Hurricane Irene, the Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to do its part to aid those in need. The storm killed seven people, flooded homes and displaced thousands of families in the Province of San Cristobal southwest of the capital city of Santo Domingo.

Already, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in the Dominican Republic has distributed hot meals to about 500 people in San Cristobal. Dozens of church members volunteered their time to help.

"Our emergency response team surveyed the affected area as fast as we could," said Luis Miguel Acevedo, ADRA Dominican director. "There were so many people who had not eaten a hot meal for 24 hours."

Hot meals were distributed at designated spots and shelters two days after the Yubazo and Nigua rivers flooded small towns and affected bridges after 20 hours of torrential rains, thanks to the help of some 70 volunteers and funds from the local church conference and funds from the church in Puerto Rico, he added.

A day later, ADRA Dominican distributed 415 sacks of food-each sack equivalent to a two-week food supply.

Church leaders report that five churches sustained damages in the Caribbean island known as Hispanola.

For the 130-member church in Madre Vieja Norte in San Cristobal, Pastor Socrates Payano said that no church members died because of Irene. "Even though churches in this area sustained damages, our worship services have continued," said Payano.

"Our church members' homes were affected, but their trust in is the God of heavens," added Payano.

Church leaders reported that some 1,000 church members were affected in San Cristobal by Hurricane Irene.


Acevedo says ADRA is putting together a proposal to provide mattresses to the thousands who lost their belongings. An additional project is underway to develop an emergency plan in the communities near the rivers, complete with alerting the people where to move in case of a disaster, where to take refuge in identified shelters, identify community members who can measure the rise of the rivers, security measures and other

"We are convinced that we can help improved the lives of these impoverish people in San Cristobal so vulnerable to the flooding and mudslides," said Acevedo. "We have a good group of church member volunteers that could organize and train the community in case of an emergency like this."

For more information on ADRA's work in the Dominican Republic, visit