

Update #7

Volcanic Activity in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Report from the Delegation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

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SITUATION

Volcanic Activity

The La Soufriere Volcano on St. Vincent last erupted on April 22, 2021. It has been relatively quiet since then except for emissions of gases from the vent. The hazard level has been downgraded from red to orange consistent with the reduction in explosive eruptions which have been occurring. Notwithstanding this, highly elevated levels of seismicity or fumarolic activity persist. The University of the West Indies, Seismic Research Centre continues to monitor the activities at the volcano from their observation point at Belmont, in the Orange Zone, providing daily updates on activities.

Red & Orange Zone

The Red Zone remains off-limits to all persons except some essential services personnel. Persons from the Orange Zone for the most part has been given the all-clear to return to communities, save and except for the communities of Chateaubelair and Fitzhughs in the northwest. Persons have consequently started to return to their homes.

The main dangers from the Red Zone now seems to be that of Lahars, which become acutely more problematic with the advent of the rainy season.

Evacuations

At its zenith, the National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) indicated that there were some 19000 person evacuated from the hazard areas. That number will now begin to decline as persons return to the Orange Zone Communities.

Damage and Losses

The Ministry of Agriculture has commenced the final damage assessment process. This involves engaging each farmer to get reports of damage and losses. The process has begun in the Green Zone and will move progressively north-wards as far as conditions allow.

GOVERNMENT ACTION WITH RESPECT TO AGRICULTURE

The Parliament of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, on May 11, 2021 passed a supplementary budget containing the following:

- XCD 50.4 million for Social protection to be allocated between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour and the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Local Government, Gender Affairs, Family Affairs, Housing and Informal Settlement;
- XCD 12.5 million for Housing and Community amenities;
- XCD 40 million for environmental protection;

- XCD 7.2 million for economic affairs.

For agriculture, the following proposal was made for intervention into the sector in the very short and short term, at a meeting between the Ministries of Agriculture and Finance and Economic Planning:

XCD 21.6 million to be allocated to the sector: XCD 4 million of this amount to be allocated to a capital programme to provide inputs for crop, livestock and fisheries; and XCD 17.6 million to be allocated to a programme for other support to farmers to include:

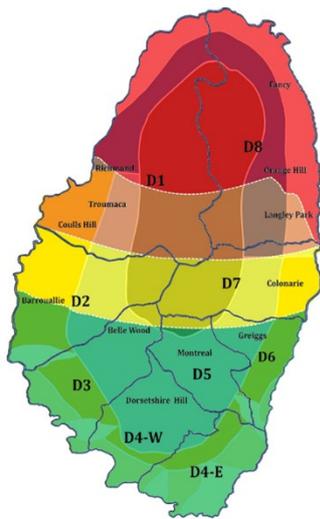
- XCD \$15.8 million for income support to farmers, with farmers in the Red and Orange Zones receiving this support over a period of eight months. Farmers in the yellow and green zones will receive a one-off payment
- XCD 1.8 million - Care packages will be prepared and provided for needy households over a period of three months. These packages will consist largely of primary agricultural produce. The intention is to both support household food and nutrition security needs and also to operate this programme to help to control market conditions and prevent speculative increases in commodity prices in the short term.

ACTIONS BY THE IICA

IICA continues to work closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO and CARDI to support the response and recovery efforts. Our actions to date include:

- Support to the Damage and Loss Assessment exercise which culminated in a report which was incorporated into the CDEMA overall report of damage and loss;
- Support to the development of the short term recovery plan (3-6 months) which was prepared by a team including personnel from the Ministry of Agriculture, IICA, FAO and CARDI;
- Support to the livestock sector through the provision of livestock feed for farmers;
- Consultations with farmers' organisations and the preparation of a project proposal for Canada Fund for Local Initiative (CFLI) which if accepted will provide support for two farmers organization to increase their production and productivity in vegetable production to help address the food and nutrition security challenges consequent on the disaster.
- IICA has engaged with the local, regional and international media to highlight the plight of stakeholders in the agricultural sector and the urgent and necessary actions required to address the challenges.
- IICA negotiated with Bayer and other partners for the provision of vegetable seeds to support the recovery efforts. This initiative is in process and is expected to commence soon with the shipment of seeds to St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- IICA has created space for the national authorities to present on the challenges they are encountering, to assist with receiving bilateral and multilateral support. This has occurred during the SACMI meeting where the minister was given an opportunity to address countries on such issues.
- IICA is also working on an initiative under the DG's Single fund programme which will provide for further assistance to the agricultural sector through a project for aimed at building vegetable production capacity.

Map of St. Vincent



| Agricultural Region | Agricultural District |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | D1, D2, D3 |
| 2 | D4-W, D4-E, D5, D9 |
| 3 | D6, D7, D8 |

Fig. Composite map of St Vincent including Agro-ecological zones (CARDI), Agricultural Regions and Districts (MAFFRTIL) and Volcanic Hazard Zones (UWI SRC). Layers and overlays put together by Colville King, Diversification Officer MAFFRTIL, April 2021.

LA SOUFRIERE VOLCANO HAZARD ALERT LEVEL

| Alert Level | Symptoms | Action Scientist | Action: Civil Authorities |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| Green | Volcano is quiescent (quiet): seismic and fumarolic (steam vent) activities are at or below the historical level at this volcano. No other unusual activity has been observed. | Normal monitoring | Undertake ongoing public awareness campaign and work on volcanic emergency plans. |
| Yellow | Volcano is restless: seismic or fumarolic activity or both are above the historical level at this volcano or other unusual activity has been observed (this activity will be specified at the same time that the alert level is raised). | Monitoring system will be brought up to full capability. Civil authorities alerted. | Undertake ongoing public awareness campaigns and work on volcanic emergency plans. Advise vulnerable communities of evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency. |
| Orange | Highly elevated level of seismicity or fumarolic activity or both or other highly unusual symptoms. Eruptions may occur with less than 24 hours notice. | Monitoring system continuously manned. Regular visual inspection of potential vent areas. Continuous ground deformation and hydrothermal monitoring. Daily assessment reports to civil authorities. | Coordinate evacuation (if necessary) based on hazard zones. Entry to the restricted access zone by scientist will be permitted after evacuation on a case-by-case basis. Organize regular radio and television announcements. |
| Red | Eruption is in progress or may occur without further warning | Measurements as permitted by safety condition. Civil authorities advised continuously. | Coordinate continued evaluation as necessary. Organize regular radio and television announcements. |