

The impacts of Hurricane Sandy on the UN premises by USG Takasu

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At the outset, I would like to express deep sympathy to delegations, delegates and staff and their families who have suffered damages and encountered various difficulties in everyday life from the Hurricane Sandy.

The extreme weather event caused unprecedented severe damages on the extended areas from last Monday to Tuesday. UNHQ premises were not exceptions.

In accordance with UN emergency management framework, under the guidance of the SG and DSG, the Crisis Operations Group (COG) led the effort to address emergency response to this unprecedented natural disaster.

As the lead department of emergency management system, the Offices of DM (OCSS, CMP, OICT, OHRM and OPPBA), together with DSS, have taken precautionary measures and made every effort to ensure business continuity and speedy recovery of functionalities of UNHQ. DSS/Operation center, DPKO/situation center, OICT network operation center continued to function throughout the storm without interruption.

The staff - in particular facilities management, CMP, ICT, and safety and security, situation centers - worked around the clock preparing for and responding to the aftermath of the storm. Even three days when the HQ was not open because of safety concern, the UN global services were provided without break. Their efforts are much appreciated and I would like to pay tribute to them – without them business continuity would not have been possible.

Our overriding considerations are (1) to ensure safety of delegates and staff, and (2) to resume normal operation on UNHQ facilities as earliest as possible with minimum disruption of work.

## 1. Preparedness

DM (OCSS and CMP) and DSS coordinated a series of actions prior to the event and took preparedness actions that significantly reduced the damage to the UN facility. Storm preparations starte

Both the main and temporary HVAC Chiller plants (3 B) were flooded and we had to shutdown of the cooling system.

Electricity switchboard was also flooded and a small fire started.

For safety reason to prevent spread of fire, a complete power shutdown was instituted in the Secretariat building from Monday 7:00 pm to Tuesday 7:00 pm (together with South Annex and Library Buildings); (ConEd power was supplied but we switched off for safety concern.)With regard to the CMP warehouse located in New Jersey, we are still assessing how finished materials stored in the warehouse were impacted.

### 3. ICT

As result of the shutdown of the coo





DGACM/Printing Section has made emergency alternative arrangement with the vendor as well as staff for printing documents required for meetings.

Full assessment on cost estimates of damages is too early to be determined at this point. Parts of the basement are still under examination and we are in the middle of assessing the totality of damages and in the process of discussing with insurance firms and contractors. The process of full assessment will potentially also have to be done in consultation with Insurance unit in phases. The process will require some time to complete.

## **7. Conclusion**

I would like to state that the UN **Emergency Management Framework did work.**

- a. Pre-event preparedness significantly reduced the damage to the facility from flooding, saving money and reducing recovery time.
- b. With focused investment in business continuity, staff support, crisis management and disaster recovery, the Secretariat was able to continue critical operations and quickly recover from the significant disruption caused by Hurricane Sandy.
- c. In accordance with the Emergency Management Framework, we coordinated emergency response and harmonized decision-making through the Crisis Operations Group, chaired by the DSS and attended by all offices concerned. We could ensure that all elements of emergency management were mutually supporting and effectively implemented.
- d. By the dedicated efforts by our staff, the UN global services with overseas duty stations continued without interruption, even three days when the HQ offices were not open because of safety assurance.
- e. The Security Council held a mee

f. Although there were some connectivity problems from complications