



## PRESS RELEASE

### **EC\$1.1 Million allocated by the Government of Spain to Advance Volcano Relief Efforts in St Vincent and the Grenadines tied to Ash Removal in priority areas**

**31 August, 2021** - The Government and people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will be receiving some much-needed support in their efforts to recover from the far reaching effects of the volcanic eruptions which rocked the island in early April. The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) has provided USD 416,204.00 through a partnership with UNDP Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean to strengthen recovery efforts in country.

The volcanic eruptions which displaced over 20,000 persons, worsened the already fragile socio-economic state caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Speaking on the response efforts and support provided to promote recovery, Ambassador Fernando Nogales, Spanish Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago noted, "This program will be key to get life back into the areas affected by the eruption".

The generous AECID cash injection is part of the Agency's commitment to combat poverty and promote sustainable human development and will be employed to accelerate the efforts of the UNDP Response and Recovery Programme, which has been developed in consultation with national institutions, recovery partners and the UNDP team in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The proposed programme is consistent with the national priorities of the government noting the positive impact such a measure would have in terms of protecting health of residents and restoration of livelihoods. This project will also assist the communities and government in cleaning ash, debris, bricks, cement, rubble and vegetation from the destroyed area, market places, homes and streets to pave the way to rebuilding these areas and allowing safe access to communities and businesses. It can also provide short term financial support to persons who have previously lost their jobs to COVID-19 in addition to being impacted by the volcanic eruption

This disaster, like previous others, has illustrated a disproportionate impact on women and girls, therefore all of the activities executed under the AECID supported, UNDP Response and Recovery Plan will address the differential needs of women, men, girls and boys and ensure equitable, gender-inclusive distribution of benefits and resources while also focusing on preventing the spread of COVID-19. UNDP Resident Representative Valerie Cliff elaborating on the continued efforts to support the nation stated "SIDS like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are extremely vulnerable to hazards and we have a responsibility to bolster their resilience in a fair, equitable, gender responsive manner. This funding allows us to continue efforts to execute the comprehensive plan put in place to assist with immediate recovery and longer-term sustainable rebuilding."

At this time when exogenous threats like COVID-19 and natural disasters are impacting the region, it is vital that developmental efforts are continued to reinforce the need for regional resilience and building forward better. This Response Programme is part of the work of UNDP Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean in its commitment to promoting economic diversification, job creation and resilience with the "Blue Economy for Green Islands" vision. As the Caribbean continues to seek solutions to support traditionally vulnerable groups, UNDP Barbados and the Eastern

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Caribbean, in partnership with governments and stakeholders, remains dedicated to the advancement of inclusive and sustainable development throughout the region and building resilient communities that can withstand shocks and crises through targeted projects and programmes.

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