

Update #4

Volcanic Activity in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Report from the Delegation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

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Date: April 16, 2021

SITUATION

Volcanic Activity

Since the time of the last update, April 14, 2021, episodic eruptions have continued at the La Soufriere Volcano on St. Vincent. Seismic activities continue to follow the now established pattern with bands of tremor 13-15 hours apart followed by swarms of long-period earthquakes. Eruptions from the volcano are less energetic with increasing periods between eruptions.

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 Red Zone, providing daily updates on activities.

Red & Orange Zone

The situation in the Red and Orange Zones indicated on the map below remains hazardous. The continuing eruptions have affected the commencement of the comprehensive damage and loss evaluations that must be undertaken. The Zones are off limits to unauthorized personnel with only essential services having access to the area.

Evacuations

Prime Minister, Dr the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves ordered evacuations from Red and Orange Zone communities from Friday, April 9, 2021. Most people have relocated southwards.

Most of the evacuees have been located to green and yellow zone areas in the south. The National Emergency Organisation (NEMO) has indicated that over 3800 persons have relocated to the 87 shelters operated by the state. There are additionally, over 6000 persons, registered by NEMO who have relocated to private residences in the safer zones. It is anticipated that the final number will be significantly higher given the 2012 population and housing census, which showed a population of over 15000 persons living in the red and orange zone areas.

Damage and losses

There has been no reported loss of human life because of the disaster up to this point. There is substantial property damage, especially in the Red Zone. This has been occasioned mostly by roof collapse caused by several inches of ash. Some roadways are impassable or difficult to navigate and access to the most northerly points, on the eastern and western coast remains difficult.

IMPLICATIONS FOR AGRICULTURE

Today, Friday, April 16, 2021, IICA participated in a tour of the Red Zone communities in the northeast. The tour party included senior ministry officials including the Honourable Saboto Caesar, Nerissa Gittens, Permanent Secretary, Renato Gumbs Chief Agricultural Officer, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) Representative Gregory Linton, members of an

evaluation team from Venezuela, members of the media and other officials. This tour, which allowed for an initial qualitative evaluation confirmed earlier pronouncements of the extensive damage to the agricultural sector in this zone. There has indeed been immense crop loss from the disaster. There was also evidence of livestock loss and the urgent need for continued action to support the welfare of animals in the communities. The observation revealed extensive damage to established coconut palm plantations, banana and plantain cultivation, root and tuber crops, cocoa and other tree crops and vegetable cultivation. It is anticipated that the final quantitative assessment will reveal an extremely high percentage of crop damage and loss, in the Red Zone areas visited.

The team anticipates visits to the northwest in the coming days, to conduct similar assessments.

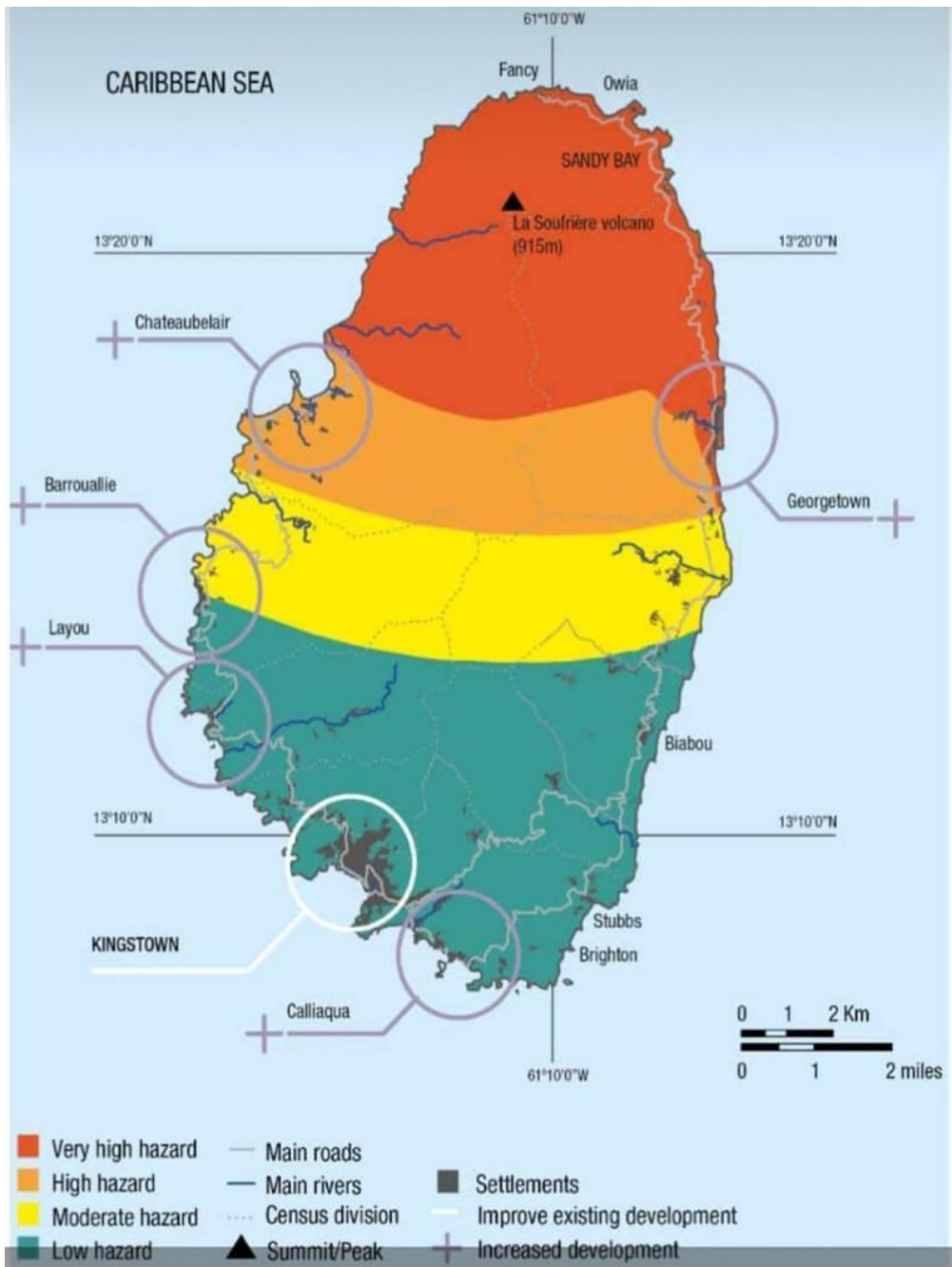
OTHER ISSUES

The wider implications of the disaster, mentioned in the previous updates remain relevant and become more evident by the day. They include:

- Economic implications encompassing not only agriculture but also other forms of livelihood including fisheries, which is an important occupation of communities in this zone.
- The ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic with low levels of vaccination in the population to this point. This will have implications for the persons in the shelters, the communities in which the shelters are located and the nation as a whole.
- Ongoing security concerns occasioned especially by persons breaking houses and removing property. Praedial larceny is also a continuing concern as many animals are now left unattended.

ACTIONS BY THE IICA

Today, April 16, IICA handed over 1254 fifty-pound sacks of livestock feed to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour. This handover represents assistance provided by IICA to initiate a Programme for support to livestock farmers that is being conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture. The handover was made to the Minister of Agriculture, Honourable Saboto Caesar by the Technical Specialist at the IICA Delegation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Michael Dalton. The Minister during the handover expressed his especial thanks to IICA for the support which puts the Institute among the first responders in the agriculture sector. [video of the event to be provided next week. See accompanying pictures]



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.