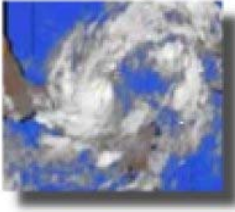


# **Ministry of Health of Belize Keith Impact Assessment Preliminary Report**



## **INTRODUCTION**

Tropical depression No. 15 became a tropical storm (Keith) on September 29 at 3:00 p.m, approximately 270 mls from the coast of Belize. On September 30th, 8:00 a.m. Keith became a category I Hurricane with sustained winds of 80 mph moving slowly in a W NW direction. By 11:00 p.m. Keith had upgraded to a category III Hurricane with sustained winds of 120 mph and became stationary, strengthening overnight to a category IV at 6:00 a.m. October 1st at about 55 mls away from Corozal Town (18.0 N and 87.3 W).

Hurricane Keith remained wobbling over the islands of San Pedro and Caye Caulker for approximately 72 hours, affecting also the northern part of the Belize District, Orange Walk and Corozal Districts, where it downgraded to tropical storm on late October 2nd.

From Saturday to Tuesday morning over 26 inches of rainfall were reported in the country of Belize, with 18 inches in the last 24 hours. Surges of 1-2 feet were experienced in the Coastal areas of Belize and Corozal District as Keith moved in a west direction to the State of Campeche in Mexico.

Ministry of Health activated its Hurricane Plan on Friday, September 29th at 2:00 p.m. Corozal Hospital was evacuated to Orange Hospital on Friday afternoon. Due to the vulnerability of the infrastructure and the location of the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (National Hospital), the decision was taken for early discharge and evacuation of this Hospital. By Sunday 4:00 p.m. the Hospital was evacuated. The hospital remained in operation only with 10 inpatients, Accident and Emergency and Maternity services. One outpatient emergency service was opened in the Corozal District. The Rockview Hospital (Mental Health Hospital) was evacuated on Sunday October 1st.

The Ministry of Health Command Center was established in Belmopan on Saturday 30th September at 10:00 p.m. The National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) was activated September 30, at 10:00 a.m. State of National Emergency was declared by the Prime Minister of Belize on Monday 2nd, October at 2:00 p.m.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Ministry of Health established an MOH/PAHO Keith Health Assessment/Surveillance Team on October 3. The Assessment Team, compiled data reported from the different districts on a daily basis, both in standard and non-standard reports.

## **IMMEDIATE IMPACT WITH HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

- Preliminary reports show four deaths due to drowning and minor injuries (not fully assess)
- Extensive infrastructure damage (housing, roads, electrical and telephone communication, water supply, and sewerage systems)
- Interruption of the operations of the only International Airport.
- Extensive infrastructure damage to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (National Hospital)
- Extensive displacement of persons due to evacuation from vulnerable areas. Approximately 20,000 people were evacuated to shelters.
- Extensive flooding affecting four of the six districts.
- Contamination of water sources and increased potential of proliferation of vectors. Potential risk for outbreaks of communicable diseases (malaria, dengue, cholera, hepatitis, gastroenteritis, etc).

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