

**TRANSCRIPT**

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**Presenter:** *Well a lot of concerned relatives in Britain are following the news of the devastation in Jamaica after Hurricane Ivan or Ivan the Terrible, as people have taken to calling it. The British Department for International Development have sent two representatives to Jamaica to see the situation. They've just got there. Lisa Pereira is one of them and she's with us now. Good evening, Lisa.*

**Lisa Pereira, Dept. for International Development:** Good evening.

**Presenter:** *Where are you tonight?*

**LP:** I'm located in Kingston this evening. This is where we arrived this morning. We've been holding meetings with a number of different government officials and officials from the United Nations as well as our colleagues from the DfID office based in Kingston and colleagues from the British High Commission today.

**Presenter:** *The Jamaican government has asked for help. What kind of help are we in Britain in a position to give?*

**LP:** Well at the moment what is happening is today the first major assessment missions went out to a number of areas that had been identified as priority areas to look at following a helicopter reconnaissance mission on the weekend and what we are currently waiting for is the information back from those teams. They are arriving in tonight and we are gathering information as they come in. Those teams that went out today comprise members of the United Nations, members from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and, very importantly, representatives from the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management from the government.

**Presenter:** *And at this point I gather there are two British ships almost on the scene?*

**LP:** Yes, I mean two British ships were deployed early in the week. HMS Richmond and a support vessel went to Grenada and were able to offer assistance there. They have now moved and are now on the coast off the Cayman Islands with a view to provide assistance there as well.

**Presenter:** *And what kind of assistance can they actually give?*

**LP:** I mean well they're able to give assistance with communications assessments, information about what is actually happening with regard to Cayman, where the communication has been very much interrupted over the last few days. We, as the two-person assessment team that have come out from the Conflict of Humanitarian Affairs Department, have also managed to charter an aircraft which we will be boarding tomorrow morning to go to the Cayman Islands in support of the Governor there as well. And this does not mean that our activities in Jamaica are coming to a halt at all but that the office here will be continuing to collect information and to relay the information back to London with a view to helping us form a humanitarian strategy and look at what possible forward assistance we might be giving.

**Presenter:** *What do you see as the challenge to things like the water supply, the supply of fresh water?*

**LP:** I think that is definitely an issue of concern both in the Cayman Islands and on Jamaica. As I said, the assessment information is currently coming back. We were able to meet with one of the teams that have recently come back today from the Blue Mountains, which are just located north east of Kingston, and I think one of the greatest challenges facing the kind of information collection process at the moment is that access to many of these

areas is still very difficult because there have been landslides, etc. On one of the roads for example in the Blue Mountains there are 13 kilometres of road which are inaccessible because of these landslides. The other key challenge of trying to get this assessment information is communications have been down. So the crux of the effort at the moment is to try and get as many teams out to the areas that have been prioritised as being worst effected by the helicopter reconnaissance mission a few days ago and to try and get their information but obviously clean water is a concern, particularly in the hospitals, etc. where we need to make sure that you know we can provide absolutely pure water.

**Presenter:** *We wish you all speed with your efforts. Thank you very much for talking to us. I'm sure we'll talk to Lisa Pereira again later in the week.*

**Ends**