



28th August, 2020

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEMO URGES VINCENTIANS TO MAKE PREPAREDNESS A PRIORITY AS WE APPROACH THE OFFICIAL PEAK OF THE HURRICANE SEASON IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT.

The National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) is urging Vincentians to step up their hurricane preparedness as we approach the official Peak of the Hurricane Season.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in its release of its annual August update to the Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook, initially issued in May; stated that “atmospheric and oceanic conditions are primed to fuel storm development in the Atlantic, leading to what could be an “extremely active” season”. NOAA also stated that this is one of the most active seasonal forecasts that it has produced in its 22-year history of hurricane outlooks, as the “2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season has been off to a rapid pace and has the potential to be one of the busiest on record.”

According to Director of NEMO, Michelle Forbes, “To date thirteen storms of which four are hurricanes have formed so far. Historically, only two named storms form on average by early August. This means that things cannot be taken lightly as it only takes one storm or period of heavy rainfall for St. Vincent and the Grenadines to be severely impacted.

Forbes is encouraging residents to make it a priority to prepare as it cannot be business as usual. She is appealing to families to inspect their property, do the necessary repairs if needed and ensure that their family emergency plan and all insurance policies are updated. All owners and operators of businesses are also encouraged to update their Business Continuity Plan as this is very important to ensure that measures are in place to safeguard the business so that it can be up and running in the shortest possible time following an impact.

According to Forbes, homeowners should ensure that all drains on and around their properties are cleared to avoid flooding. Cut and trim all overhanging trees and branches. Know where the nearest safe area is located in the event that it becomes necessary to evacuate. Stock up on emergency supplies which include non-perishable food, water, first aid supplies, medication and any other basic requirements for family members with special needs.

This year is even more challenging considering that we are operating in a COVID-19 environment, so Forbes is also encouraging residents to observe the protocols set out by the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment. Also to consider sheltering with friends and family and to make the emergency shelter the last option. She is also reminding the public that all persons entering an emergency shelter must wear mask and undergo a temperature check.

-END-