

In special edition of Mesa Redonda TV program, Cuban president assesses progress of recovery



Havana, February 13 (RHC)— “In Cuba, we do not toss rolls of paper towels to crowds of victims of natural disasters; we act with no delay or hesitation,” said Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel Wednesday evening on the Mesa Redonda TV program to evaluate the results of recovery efforts after the tornado that recently wreaked havoc in several municipalities of the Cuban capital.

The unusual disaster damaged thousands of houses, left some 170 people injured and six fatalities.

The Cuban leader acknowledged all sectors involved in relief efforts and the speedy recovery which have allowed the full restoration of basic services like electricity, telephone service and water supply.

Diaz-Canel stressed that the progress has been so outstanding due to the socialist system and planned economy that, notwithstanding the well-known limitations, allows tapping of the resources needed for the victims, and most importantly, the reaction of the island’s people, its solidarity, generosity, participation and sense of social justice, that has been so important in the recovery efforts.

"If we continue with this pace, by year's end we will probably have solved the majority of the problems."

Communist Party leaders, Ministers, local government and community leaders spoke about their participation, as well as the leader of students' organizations of the Jose Antonio Echeverria Technological University, who were actively involved in debris collection and damage assessment of affected houses.

According to figures released during the program, some 9,000 people have been assisted in the offices set up to coordinate access to construction material, and 3,600 families whose houses were severely damaged, have received all the materials they need to reconstruct them.

Likewise, 75% of houses that were totally destroyed are already being reconstructed.

There were numerous anecdotes cited during the program, including that of Manuel Guilarte, from Regla Municipality, who told Party leaders: "We were surprised by the tornado, but we were not surprised by the Revolution. We are used to seeing how it does not abandon its citizens amid difficulties."

At the end of the program, President Diaz-Canel highlighted the reasons to feel proud because of the overwhelming participation of all sectors of the society in reconstruction efforts over the last 16 days. He said: "The collective leadership has been strengthened with ministries establishing close links with local governments, amid a very complex international context, with stepped up threats of aggression."

This is the second time since the disaster that the Cuban president participates in a special edition of The Mesa Redonda to report about the recovery progress. And Diaz Canel announced there will be another program next week.

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