



OFFICE OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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ODPEM Responds to Auditor-General's Hurricane Melissa Relief Initiative Audit Report

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The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) acknowledges the observations and recommendations contained in the Auditor-General's Hurricane Melissa Relief Initiative Audit Report, tabled in the House of Representatives on 12 May 2026.

ODPEM takes the findings of the report seriously and recognizes the importance of strengthening governance, inventory management, procurement administration, delivery verification, documentation, and reporting arrangements associated with national disaster response and recovery operations.

The Agency notes that the period under review covers an unprecedented post-disaster operating environment, in which urgent national relief, shelter support, logistics coordination, and recovery activities were being undertaken simultaneously across several affected parishes. Notwithstanding these operational pressures, ODPEM remains committed to ensuring that all relief resources placed under its stewardship are managed transparently, responsibly, and in accordance with the Government of Jamaica's public financial management requirements.

ODPEM assures the public that all materials purchased in support of the Government-Directed Roof Repair Programme have been accounted for and brought into ODPEM's inventory management system. The Agency has also commenced additional measures to further strengthen documentation, stock control, delivery verification, and reconciliation procedures for disaster relief operations.

Utilisation of Donated Relief Funds

In relation to the utilization of donated disaster relief funds, ODPEM advises that funds received in response to Hurricane Melissa were intended to support national relief interventions to support the Shelter Recovery Programme.

In February 2026, ODPEM formally sought approval for the regularization of funds donated in response to Hurricane Melissa, in keeping with the Government of Jamaica's public financial management, accountability and reporting requirements. This was necessary to ensure that the donated funds were properly treated as public monies, and incorporated into the approved budgetary framework before further expenditure could be undertaken.

ODPEM had also indicated its intention to utilize approximately J\$500 million of the regularized funds to support Government and partner-led repair initiatives under the Shelter Recovery Programme, together with other approved relief and recovery projects, including those aligned to donor intent where applicable.

The pace of expenditure must therefore be understood within this wider context. The relatively low rate of cash expenditure from the donated funds was not due to inaction or a lack of recovery activity. Rather, it reflected prudent financial management by ODPEM in light of the availability of almost J\$400 million in donated building materials and sundries, which were already supporting the Government-Directed Roof Repair Programme.

The availability of these in-kind materials reduced the immediate demand for additional cash-funded purchases of similar building supplies. ODPEM therefore sought to avoid unnecessary or duplicative expenditure from the donated funds, preserving those resources for other approved recovery priorities as the needs of the post-Hurricane Melissa recovery programme continued to evolve.

To date, approximately J\$135 million has been expended from the fund in support of the Government-Directed Roof Repair Programme. Some 461 roof repairs have already been completed, and the programme continues to be implemented with the support of the Jamaica Defence Force and other Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

Support for Modular Housing Solutions

As the post-Hurricane Melissa recovery programme continues to transition from structured recovery and reconstruction, ODPEM further advises that J\$600 million from the donated funds has been earmarked to support the Shelter Recovery Programme through the Rapidly Deployable Modular Housing Solutions Programme.

These funds will support the construction of concrete bases for the modular housing units. This is an essential enabling component of the intervention, as the bases support safe installation, anchoring, drainage, durability, utility connections and long-term habitability of the units, particularly within Jamaica's hazard-prone environment.

The construction of concrete bases also protects the Government's investment by reducing the risk of premature deterioration, instability, water damage, corrosion, structural movement and unsafe utility connections. This element of the programme is being advanced in coordination with the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies, including the Ministry of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development.

Delivery Verification and Corrective Measures

With respect to delivery verification, ODPEM acknowledges the Auditor General's finding in which delivery documentation for building materials was transported to the Jamaica Defence Force Forward Operating Bases. The ODPEM advises that two delivery slips reflected only a single receiving signature, that of the receiving party, the Jamaica Defence Force. These deliveries occurred outside of regular working hours within the emergency operating environment.

ODPEM reiterates that the materials in question have been accounted for and recorded. However, the Agency accepts that the related documentation process should be further strengthened to ensure that delivery verification remains robust, even under emergency conditions.

Accordingly, ODPEM is taking steps to reinforce delivery protocols, including improved documentation requirements, clearer handover procedures, strengthened reconciliation between delivery notes and inventory records, and enhanced oversight of material movements during relief and recovery operations.

Commitment to Transparency and Improvement

ODPEM views the Auditor General's report as an important opportunity to strengthen institutional systems and improve the administration of national disaster relief and recovery activities.

The Agency remains committed to full cooperation with the Auditor General's Department, the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, the Office of the Prime Minister, Parliament, and all relevant oversight bodies in addressing the recommendations made.

ODPEM will continue to improve its internal controls, logistics systems, inventory management arrangements, procurement documentation, and reporting mechanisms to ensure that future disaster response and recovery operations are delivered with the highest standards of transparency, accountability and public trust.

ODPEM is committed to serving Jamaicans before, during and after disasters, delivering coordinated support and reassurance, which are especially critical in times of crisis.

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