

resolution as well as our request for additional funding for the region.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands for that very powerful statement and for laying out what is at stake and the reality of life during these very tragic times for those in the Caribbean region.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) whose commitment to the Caribbean is longstanding and unwavering.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California for helping to organize us to be able to address this most important issue this evening.

I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 496, a resolution that simply supports humanitarian assistance to countries of the Caribbean devastated by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne. The recent hurricanes have had devastating impacts on several Caribbean nations. In Grenada, Hurricane Ivan destroyed 90 percent of the homes and 78 percent of the electrical system, as well as numerous government buildings, hospitals, schools and churches. Approximately 60,000 of the island's 95,000 inhabitants were left homeless. In Jamaica, 18,000 people were displaced by Hurricane Ivan, which was the worst natural disaster to hit Jamaica in 50 years. The Bahamas incurred an estimated \$125 million in damage as a result of Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne. In Haiti, Hurricane Jeanne caused extensive flooding and left 300,000 people homeless. More than 1,500 Haitians were killed, and another 900 are still missing. Thousands of people are in desperate need of food, clean water, emergency shelter and medical care. Relief efforts continue to be hampered by water and mud covering the main roads, and stagnant waters have given rise to a large mosquito population that could lead to a malaria epidemic.

The nations of the Caribbean are small island nations that do not have the capacity to respond to the widespread death and destruction caused by hurricanes of this magnitude. Immediate assistance from the United States is critical to enable these countries to meet the emergency needs of their people and begin to rebuild damaged homes and infrastructure.

I am thankful that the President did show some concern, and he proposed \$50 million in supplemental appropriations to cover disaster relief for the nations of the Caribbean that have been devastated by hurricanes and tropical storms. But it is a very small amount, and it cannot begin to meet the tremendous needs of thousands of Haitians, let alone the needs of our other Caribbean neighbors. The affected countries and territories include Bahamas, Barbados, the Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Puerto Rico, St. Vincent, the Grenadines, Trinidad, Tobago, the Turks and Caicos, even Ven-

ezuela, Cuba, the U.S. Virgin Islands, have all felt the devastation of these hurricanes. So we need a lot more to respond to this terrible devastation.

Even though the President has proposed \$50 million in supplemental appropriations, it is a small amount, and it cannot begin to meet the tremendous needs of thousands of Haitians, let alone the needs of all of these other countries. The Congressional Black Caucus is on record now in asking the President for at least \$500 million in disaster relief to mount an effective response. Of course, I would urge my colleagues to vote for H. Con. Res. 496. I would also urge my colleagues to provide a supplemental appropriation of at least \$500 million in disaster assistance to help our Caribbean neighbors rebuild their homes and their lives after these unprecedented storms. This resolution does not have that amount in it, and we know that we must do the work with the Appropriations Committee, but this is a resolution that would give recognition to this tremendous devastation that has taken place and squarely place us on record in wanting to respond to it.

I am very thankful for the opportunity to share with the gentlewoman from California this concern as we demonstrate through this resolution.

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I am a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 496. I fully support helping to relieve the suffering of people in the Caribbean. The news reports of the death and destruction in Haiti, Grenada and elsewhere in the Caribbean is just terrible. We all want to reach out and help our neighbors who are suffering.

USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance has been on the ground distributing emergency aid since just after these storms hit. The \$50 million aid package proposed by the Administration is, by all measures, a good start.

But, it should not be considered an end to U.S. assistance. The current proposal represents what the Administration believes can be spent in the first year. By way of comparison, \$52 million was expended during the first year of implementing disaster reconstruction after Hurricane Mitch hit in 1999. I expect to see more aid going to the Caribbean in subsequent years.

Mr. Speaker, while I believe that \$50 million is not sufficient to meet the needs of the Caribbean in the long term, I do believe it is enough to meet the immediate needs of those nations hardest hit. To meet the long term needs of these countries, I would support an effort to provide additional reconstruction funds. Although I am retiring, I am willing to work with my colleagues to secure long term assistance for the Caribbean nations before I go. I hope that my colleagues here tonight will join me in this area.

I thank my colleague from California for bringing this important resolution recognizing the terrible suffering inflicted on the Caribbean by the same hurricanes that did so much damage to our own country. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 496, a bi-partisan effort urging that Congress support humanitarian

assistance to Caribbean countries devastated by the recent hurricanes.

Four hurricanes—Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne—hit the region within five weeks. The affected countries and territories include the Bahamas, Barbados, the Cayman Islands, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Puerto Rico, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, the Turks and Caicos, Venezuela, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, but the burden is felt by all. More than 440,000 individuals displaced throughout the region.

Tropical Storm Jeanne killed more than 2,000 people in Haiti, and hundreds remain missing. Men and women dig mass graves, scrambling to identify the bodies of lost loved ones. An estimated 300,000 people remain homeless as a result of the floods.

With eight weeks left to the 2004 Atlantic Hurricane season, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) is urging the Caribbean to remain vigilant. The call comes against the background of an updated hurricane season forecast yesterday which calls for three more storms and two hurricanes this month with a 33 percent chance of a land falling storm and 17 percent chance of a land falling hurricane.

The Administration announced providing \$50 million to assist the region—specifically Haiti, Jamaica, and Grenada with small amounts for the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This is a good start, but much more will be needed to help the entire region.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to reiterate my support for H. Con. Res. 496 and urge the Administration to provide even more aid to assist the region.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 496, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### THE JUDGES OF MADISON COUNTY, PART THREE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.