

**REMARKS OF ZENJI NAKAZAWA, PUBLIC SAFETY LEGAL ADVISOR
TO FCC CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI
AT THE U.S.-CARIBBEAN RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP MINISTERIAL**

U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND HEADQUARTERS

MIAMI, FLORIDA

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I am honored to be here on behalf of the Federal Communications Commission. Chairman Pai extends his warmest appreciation to our regulatory friends in the Caribbean. And he is excited to support the launch of the U.S.-Caribbean Resilience Partnership.

In these brief remarks, I'd like to talk about three topics: (1) the FCC's role in disaster preparedness; (2) a few key lessons learned from the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season; and (3) what the FCC can do to support a working group for the U.S.-Caribbean Resilience Partnership.

When a major disaster like a hurricane strikes, the FCC supports the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as part of the nation's overall response framework—specifically Emergency Support Function 2 for communications. Our number one mission in times of disaster is to restore communications connectivity quickly because every minute counts when American lives are at stake. In this capacity, we accept mission assignments from FEMA, coordinate requests for assistance, assess damage, and coordinate response efforts with stakeholders. The FCC also acts on expedited waivers—and even rulemakings—to provide emergency relief, as necessary.

One essential tool that informs our situational awareness on the ground is the Disaster Information Reporting System, or DIRS. Providers in affected areas can use DIRS to request assistance and to report on the status of their networks. The FCC also relies on high frequency radio direction finding and an array of remote radio-frequency (RF) sensors to assess RF activity. We also perform drive-by RF scans before and after a storm called “Roll Call.”

The FCC also supports disaster readiness and response efforts between and among wireless carriers through the Wireless Resiliency Cooperative Framework. Through this voluntary framework, companies have agreed to facilitate roaming, mutual aid, municipal and consumer readiness, and public awareness of service and restoration.

I want to turn now to a few lessons learned and observations from the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season. There are many but let me highlight three overarching themes in particular.

First is the need for better emergency preparation. We learned that in addition to fostering community engagement, authorities at all levels should establish pre-staged areas for processing incoming supplies, refueling, backup power, mobile telecommunications vehicles, and relief crews.

A second observation is the need for improved coordination. We learned that coordination between communications providers and electrical and other utilities is critical to ensure restoration efforts. Coordination ensures that both communications and power are brought back into service quickly and efficiently.

A third observation, and one that is particularly acute given the circumstances in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, is to consider what post-disaster restoration and recovery looks like. Is it a mere “rip and replace” of prior equipment or is it an opportunity for renewed investment to modernize outdated facilities and harden networks? Some of these issues are discussed in the FCC's 2017 Atlantic Hurricane Report.

This leads me to my final topic for today: How can the FCC lend its expertise to promote and the U.S.-Caribbean Resilience Partnership? Here are just a few ideas:

First, given our extensive experience with hurricanes, we should encourage the continued exchange of best practices and ideas for disaster preparedness and network hardening.

Second, we should encourage joint participation in training activities, webinars, and workshops.

Third, we should promote the use of technologies and tools such as the FCC's DIRS platform, Roll Call, and the Wireless Resiliency Cooperative Framework—and consider how such tools could be used by Caribbean nations.

And, finally, we should promote exchange tours of disaster-stricken areas with an eye toward partnering on research to examine long-term communications rebuilding and restoration efforts.

As Chairman Pai said, “we may come from different countries, but we all share common bonds—bonds of geography and, more importantly, bonds of shared values.” It is through these bonds that the FCC hopes to promote the U.S.-Caribbean Resilience Partnership. I look forward to hearing about your concerns and how we can work together to foster this partnership.

Thank you.