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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Whitman Orders New Jersey National Guard Troops to Aid in Relief Efforts for Victims of Hurricane Mitch

New Jersey Gov. Christie Whitman today commanded the New Jersey National Guard to help transport relief supplies to aid the victims of Hurricane Mitch in the Caribbean and Central America.

"All over New Jersey, our citizens have responded generously to the horrible images coming to us from these battered nations," Gov. Whitman said. "The response has proven that New Jerseyans share a common concern not only for the many faces that make up our one family here in New Jersey -- but indeed all over the world."

The New Jersey National Guard today transported relief supplies donated from the Monmouth County area to Port Elizabeth. A ship containing those supplies was expected to leave the port tonight. Similar efforts are expected to continue throughout the state next week.

On Nov. 4, Gov. Whitman contacted the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency to offer assistance of emergency personnel and the New Jersey National Guard to the two nations.

Relief effort organizers have said that donations of medical and bulk food supplies are a priority. At the present time, supplies such as clothing and bedding cannot be accommodated while the agencies focus on providing crucially-needed food and medicine.

The U.S. Agency for International Development encourages the public to make donations to private voluntary organizations who are assisting with relief efforts in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Belize, Costa Rica and El Salvador. A list of organizations may be obtained by contacting InterAction directly at 202-667-8227 x 106, or via the internet at www.interaction.org.

"Like many areas of the world, the Caribbean has strong ties to many of our residents here in New Jersey," the Governor said. "I join with all New Jerseyans who are praying for a quick end to the suffering in Honduras and Nicaragua."