

## **Preliminary Statement SAC 20**

*5<sup>th</sup> November, 2015*

During the past year the Soufrière Hills volcano has shown no significant changes in its behaviour. While the major part of the lava dome remains stable and rockfall activity continues to decline, the dome still has the potential to become unstable. Temperatures of volcanic gases that escape through fractures and fumaroles have remained high with the hottest fumaroles persistently above 600<sup>0</sup>C over the 5 years since the last major activity.

In the last year seismicity has continued to decline to a very low level except for occasional short episodes of volcano-tectonic earthquakes, sometimes accompanied by elevated outputs of sulphur dioxide. Typically sulphur dioxide emissions range between 300 and 400 tonnes/day. Monitoring of ground deformation indicates a slow but continuous lengthening trend over the island as well as a significant amount of uplift of several centimetres over the last 5 years. When these observations and measurements are taken together we conclude that the volcano remains in a state of internal unrest and that lava extrusion is still possible. However, there are no signs that this is imminent.

The absence of pyroclastic flows or major rockfalls in the last year is an indication that the lava dome continues to stabilise. The chance that pyroclastic flows will occur within the next year remains low. However, the volcano is still a potential source of hazards, some of which could occur at any time with little or no warning and could pose a threat to people working in or visiting Zone V.