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OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR

Guatemala

Floods, landslides, Pacaya Volcano Eruption and Tropical Storm Agatha

Situation Report: No.6

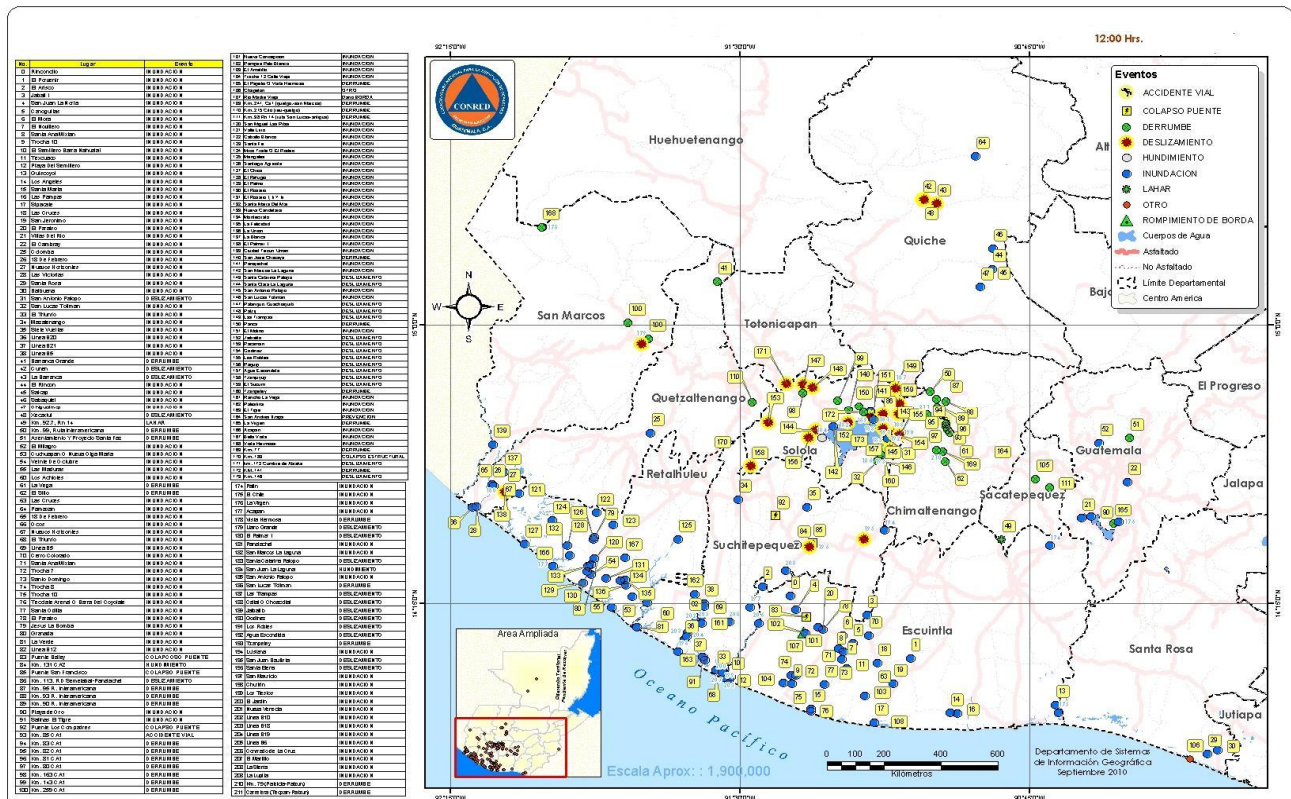
September 6, 2010; 17h00

I. Highlights/Key Priorities

- 44 people have been reported dead, and some 50,364 people have been affected by recent torrential rains.
- The National Coordinator for Disaster Risk Reduction has declared a national level orange alert while the State of National Calamity continues.
- The UN System and the Humanitarian Network have finalized the flash appeal review process in order to continue to support most vulnerable populations.
- UN agencies are currently monitoring the situation on the ground in order to respond and to evaluate the needs of the affected population.
- Food distribution continues in shelters and affected areas around the country

Flooding and landslides events

Source: CONRED



II. Situation Overview

Floods and landslides

Continuous torrential rains have again aggravated the accumulated effects of several natural disasters (a volcano eruption, an extended drought, an economic crisis, high food prices, and three tropical storms).

According to the latest report of the National Coordinator for Disaster Risk Reduction (CONRED), during the last 48 hours 255 incidents have been reported related to the devastating effects of the heavy rains, all of them due to an excess of humidity accumulated in the soil, and causing the blockade of roads.

Some 50,364 people affected, 11,495 people evacuated and 14,291 people have moved to 159 shelters, and a total of 15,898 houses were damaged.

One of the most significant effects of flooding was the collapse of the bridge that joins Guatemala and Honduras on an international road in the northeastern department of Izabal. The population in the highlands have been hit the hardest by landslides and road collapses while the population in the southern coast has suffered numerous flood related events. Infrastructure remains badly damaged with some 64 bridges in need of immediate repair.

The rainy season in the country normally runs from June to November, coinciding with the hurricane season in the Caribbean. Guatemala is currently at high alert due to heavy rain damage, flooding and landslides around the country, including main intercity roads - with parts of the country in a state of emergency.

CONRED warned that the amount of water soaking the ground and the continuous rains in Guatemala, floods and mudslides are likely to continue throughout the country, while Guatemala's meteorological institute forecasts continued rains for at least 4 days more.

The GoG has been unable to fund the 2010 budget properly due to lower than expected tax revenues and an impasse with Congress that would otherwise have allowed the issue of bonds and loans. This is affecting government operations across the country.

Pacaya Volcano and Tropical Storm Agatha

On May 29, the first tropical storm of the Pacific Hurricane season, Agatha, made landfall on the pacific coast of Guatemala, causing severe flooding and landslides in 21 of 22 departments, dumping more than 426mm in 48 hours, a phenomenon not reported since 1948. Two days before, the effects of the Pacaya volcanic eruption caused the closure of the International Airport in Guatemala City, which limited and delayed search and rescue operations, the provision of humanitarian assistance, clogged drainage systems and damaged crops.

According to the PDNA¹, the total population affected is around **412,757** people. This assessment estimates that the total economic damages and losses amount to \$982 million (2.6% of GNP). An Emergency Food Security Analysis (EFSA) was conducted during the last week of July and first week of August 2010, covering 17 departments of the affected area. The results show that some 327,500 people are in need of food assistance because they have either run out of food reserves and/or their crops were destroyed.

¹ Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), carried out by the Government of Guatemala with the assistance of ECLAC, agencies, funds and programs of the UN in Guatemala, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

III. Humanitarian Needs and Response

AGRICULTURE

Needs

Heavy rains leave millions in agricultural losses and several rivers overflowing their banks. According to the PDNA 68,000 families have been affected by TS Agatha.

Response, including local government

The Agriculture Cluster is working jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the recovery of basic grains production, mainly maize through the distribution of consumables like, seeds and fertilizers, to families who lost them

Key gaps in the response

The Agriculture Cluster actors are requesting urgent assistance to increase income generating opportunities in the rural areas. Projects such as recovery of women's productive assets (backyard poultry and small vegetable production) and repairing small irrigation infrastructures are planned. Failure to reactivate agriculture in affected areas will compound the negative effects on the ongoing food insecurity situation.

EARLY RECOVERY

Needs

According to the PDNA, it is estimated that there were several types of losses. Rural water and sanitation systems infrastructure reported damages for \$1,696,178. A total of 16,079 houses affected, with 3,934 (24.5%) completely destroyed, 4,455 (27.7%) partially destroyed, and 7,690 (47.8%) with moderate damages.

Response, including local government

Even though no funding has been approved to date through the flash appeal, the cluster continues to promote actions to mitigate the lack of access to economic opportunities of the affected populations, using other resources in order to avoid the worsening of the current crisis and the replication of risk factors. Support has been provided to the government (SEGEPLAN and SE-CONRED) through joint work on the following issues: i) the assessment of damages and losses by sector, and the estimation of immediate recovery needs; ii) formulation of the national reconstruction plan; iii) transfer of methodologies for the assessment of sites to be used by projects for the relocation of houses

Key gaps in the response

Lack of funding will not make it possible to assist in the prevention of the progressive deterioration of the household incomes from October onward.

EDUCATION

Needs

The lives and health of 100,000 students in 125 municipalities are at constant risk due to the damaged school infrastructure.

Response, including local government

- The Ministry of Education has recognized the urgent need to organize an Institutional Response Plan for emergency situations, such as Agatha/Pacaya.
- Although the school infrastructure and housing in general of at least 125 municipalities were hit hard, it was possible to reactivate educational activities in most places.
- Psychosocial support training to technicians of the Ministry of Education. (UNICEF)

Key gaps in the response

The lives and health of 100,000 students are at constant risk due to the damaged school infrastructure that is being used. Additionally, there is no proper assessment of the vulnerable situation in which schools are located in the country in general.

FOOD

Needs

The Government has requested WFP's immediate assistance with 10,000 families who have children suffering from acute malnutrition and another 30,000 families in high food insecurity, in order to prevent the deterioration of the nutritional status of children

An Emergency Food Security Analysis (EFSA) was conducted in July 2010, which showed that a total of 47,000 families (235,000 people) affected by the Pacaya/Agatha event are identified as a highly food insecure with a very low food consumption score. This group is characterized as depending on only one, unstable, income source and daily labour activities in the agricultural sector, with no food reserves for the coming months. The EFSA further revealed that another 18,500 families (92,500 people) are at high risk of falling into severe food insecurity. This group usually has a more stable income source and slightly more money available to spend on food. In sum, approximately 65,500 families (327,500 people) are in need of food assistance. However, these families have lost their food reserves, including the seeds for the next harvest, as a consequence of the emergency, and will not be able to invest in the up-coming harvest season.

Response, including local government

- Within the first 48 hours after TS Agatha struck Guatemala, WFP distributed food to almost 200 shelters in the most affected areas of the country. Furthermore, during the first week of the emergency WFP received \$500,000 in Immediate Relief funds from headquarters to attend about 75,000 people in some 360 shelters with life-saving food rations. Another \$1.2 million from the CERF made it possible to quickly feed some 48,000 people in 11 departments of the country.
- From June 1st to date, WFP has assisted the affected population with 6.5 million food rations (3,292 mt of food) of maize, beans, CSB and vegetable oil to feed 376,000 people affected by TS Agatha and the eruption of Pacaya Volcano in the departments of Alta Verapaz, Chimaltenango, El progreso, Escuintla, Guatemala, Izabal, Jutiapa, Quetzaltenango, Quiché, Retalhuleu, Sacatepequez, San Marcos, Santa Rosa, Solola, Suchitepequez, Totonicapán, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Huehuetenango and Jalapa.
WFP acquired one (rubhall) prefabricated warehouse (240 sqm), sent from UNHRD Panama, which is currently in use in Alta Verapaz (Tactic) warehouse and is in the process of acquiring at least two more to cope with storage demand.
- From September 3rd to September 10th WFP will be distributing 300,000 family food rations (800 mt) to 10,000 families, with at least one child suffering from acute malnutrition in all the departments of the country. In addition to that, 3,000 families in food insecurity will receive 45,000 family food rations (115 mt) in the departments of Izabal and Santa Rosa. Furthermore, some 7,800 families affected by flooding will receive 85,000 family food rations (219 mt) in the departments of Peten, Retalhuleu and Escuintla. In sum, in a period of seven days, almost 20,000 families (100,000 people) will receive 430,000 family food rations (1,135 mt) in all 22 departments of the country.

Key gaps in the response

A shortfall of \$2,876,309 is still preventing the food cluster from delivering food to all the targeted population.

HEALTH

Needs

The accumulation of natural disasters has had a significant negative impact on the health of 282,962 people and short term prognostics are not favorable. The affected areas are among the poorest in the country, with limited access to health services, high levels of malnutrition and low access to safe water and sanitation.

Response, including local government

- Mobilized rapid response teams, medical and psychological brigades to shelters and communities.
- Epidemiological surveillance of communicable diseases conducted.
- Reorientation of health information to enable a rapid response by health services.
- Medical supplies and essential drugs distributed to limited number of shelters and health services
- Information and education campaigns dealing with issues related to safe water and food, mental health, sexual and reproductive health, as well as dengue carried out geared towards health personnel and affected communities.

Key gaps in the response

- Ensure the delivery of equipment, medical supplies and essential drugs for health care, which were not included in the initial distribution, to the affected population.
- Increase access of the affected population to medical and psychological care through the mobilization of multidisciplinary work teams.

SHELTER AND PROTECTION

Needs

Damages and losses reported from September 3rd to date, reported: 43,043 people at risk, 254 homeless, 11,495 evacuated, 9,160 people in shelters, 16 missing, 56 hurt and 44 dead.

Response, including local government

- The shelter cluster received \$665,000.00 in CERF funds. Some 80% of these funds have been committed. IOM has committed 90% of its portion, UNFPA 60%, and UNICEF 95%. Some 2,400 affected families have benefited.
- Families have received hygienic and kitchen kits, coats, and construction supplies to reinforce shelter structures and to ensure basic sanitation.

Key gaps in the response

- While the number of shelters has diminished significantly to fifty-five the 3,934 initially sheltered and who lost their homes have been sheltered temporarily with families and friends.
- The emergency had a powerful psycho-social impact depriving persons of basic items for every day life and making necessary humanitarian support to face new challenges and to re-establish their livelihoods.
- While previously identified needs have changed little, the revised proposal consists of three instead of eight projects. Necessary international humanitarian resources will allow for the integration of services, efforts, and inter-agency coordination to achieve effective results.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Needs

Many human settlements are still isolated and affected communities are living in temporary shelter with limited access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene practices, thus increasing the risk of illnesses and outbreaks amongst the affected communities.

According to the rapid needs assessment carried by Ministry of Health and the National of Municipal Development Institute, 316 communities of the 21 departments are the most affected. Also a series of small water systems from community there had losses that limit the access of water in communities.

Response, including local government

- Rapid response to enable safe water access in affected towns and communities covering an estimated 10,000 people.
- Immediate response in hygiene and sanitation activities, facilitating appropriate sanitary conditions to affected people, such as latrines and urinals, as well as access to improved sanitation.
- Communication and coordination with departmental and local actors.
- WASH interventions have contributed to prevent outbreaks of waterborne diseases.

Key gaps in the response

- It is estimated that approximately 20,000 families (100,000 people) remain with limited or no access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services.

CROSS-CLUSTER/SECTOR ISSUES

Needs

Particular attention must be given to the needs of women, children, adolescents and disabled people. Women are the population that is most affected. Their assets were either damaged or destroyed thus considerably diminishing their opportunities to recovery food production for self consumption work on income-generating activities.

IV. Coordination

- The government, the United Nations and the humanitarian network are working to ensure that all urgent humanitarian actions are synchronised to augment Guatemala's resilience to future events.
- The sector of coordination continue working and monitoring the situation with local counterparts under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and the UNTT.
- Since the launch of the Flash Appeal on June 11th, additional joint and multi-sector needs assessments have been conducted by the Government, UN agencies, and the Humanitarian Network.
- During coordination workshop held on August 4th and 5th, the Government of Guatemala, UN agencies, bilateral donors, and NGOs, revised and prioritized emergency interventions by clusters.

V. Funding

After the Flash Appeal for \$15,533,045 was launched on June 11th, the Emergency Relief Coordinator approved \$3,376,068 in rapid response grants from the CERF, as well as a \$50,000 as an Emergency Cash Grant for relief items and logistical support.

To date, some 40 percent of the original \$15.5 million requirements have been covered. However, there are significant imbalances between sectors. This is hampering key humanitarian assistance operations being implemented by the Humanitarian Network and the Government of Guatemala. While most clusters have received some funding, the Early Recovery and Education clusters have yet to receive any funding.

It is urgent to continue with the humanitarian assistance to the population that have been affected by food insecurity and acute malnutrition emergency, tropical storm Agatha, torrential rains and dengue outbreak.

VI. Contact

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