

UN Bolivia Situation Report No. 16
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Situation Overview

Recent rains in the lower regions have deteriorated the situation of the already flood affected families and have hit new regions generating more displaced families and the destruction of vital infrastructure and crops. The total number of affected families increased to 97,000, as reported by Civil Defense on 18 March. The death toll is of 75 people. However, since Friday 14, rains have considerably decreased across the country.

The ESAE (Evaluation of Food Security, WFP) estimated that about 30,000 affected families by the floods are facing food insecurity. Among them, 17,000 families are at risk of losing their livelihoods, making this group the most precarious.

Situation per Department

Beni

The recent rains have increased water levels again in the Department by 2 cm per day, particularly in the Trinidad city area. As water levels are expected to rise further, it is likely that the number of harmed families in remote communities will increase. There is a concern in the population for a new wave of water coming from the Department of Santa Cruz. SEMENA expects the floods to last at least until mid April, leaving the shelters in place for at least another 45 days.

Of the total 430,049 inhabitants of the Beni Department, at least 88,000 persons have been harmed (19,892 families). Of this total, 5,234 families (23,147 persons) are living in shelters: 33 urban shelters (4,416 families) and 6 rural shelters (818 families).

There are concerns about the sanitary situation in the shelters. The departmental health COE informs the need of 51 additional latrines and 49 water tanks. Containers for waste disposal and cistern trucks to deliver water to shelter camps are needed.

PAHO-WHO informed about the need for transportation of health personnel to disperse rural communities. World Vision still identified needs for tents, temporary housing, latrines, medicines, blankets and small mattresses. UNICEF and the Departmental COE identified the necessity for plastic boots and socks for the sheltered families and communities. UNICEF underscored the need for transportation for children living in shelters, especially in Chetequiye, Tradición and Pedro Ignacio Muiba. A need to repair heavy machinery of the Municipality of Trinidad used to clean the latrines disposals are needed.

Santa Cruz

One of the most affected regions is the municipality of El Torno, where overflows of the Piraf River and large landslides destroyed houses, roads, bridges and crops. Almost 300 families have been evacuated and are living in camps and shelters. There is still an unknown number of affected families in the rural area of the municipality where access is very difficult. The Civil Defense provided 300 10-day food rations mostly to the rural areas. WFP will provide food to all the families in shelters. In the same region, the 1,000 families of the community of Copa Bélgica, as well as their production, continue to be completely isolated by a collapse of the main bridge. In the municipality of Charagua, approximately 1,400 families have been affected. The Prefecture of Santa Cruz will distribute food in this municipality, probable by helicopters, since there is no other means of access.

In the municipality of San Julián, the increase of the Rio Grande waters have caused new affected families. The most critical situation is that of 380 isolated families in 5 communities of

Colonia Berlin. Air transportation is needed to provide humanitarian assistance to these families.

Cochabamba

Given the new food security related developments in this Department, it is expected that the amount of food supplies in the Tropical Area (Chapare) will be reduced from 3,600 to 1,000 families, whereas in the highlands and valleys – where floods have critically affected the food security of some 3,000 families of 12 municipalities - the number of beneficiaries will increase.

La Paz

An evaluation will be carried out to determine food aid in this Department.

National Response

The government has announced a Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Plan. It includes more than 2,000 projects that need more than USD 200 million to be implemented. The Plan will be adjusted according to the results of the ECLAC mission, whose preparatory mission is expected for 26 of March. The assessment mission will take place during April 2008.

UNETT is encouraging meetings of the departmental and national COE to ensure adequate coordination required for the emergency situation.

UN and International Partner's Response

Coordination

WFP and FAO are organizing the joint Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission. The field data collection will take place from 31 March to 5 April. Six groups composed by Government, FAO and WFP members will assess the situation in almost the entire country. The information provided by this assessment will be an important input for the ECLAC mission's report.

The WFP Representative and UNCT Resident Coordinator a.i. visited the recently affected municipality of El Torno in the Department of Santa Cruz. She witnessed the dramatic situation of the families whose houses have been completely covered and destroyed by mud. The Major of El Torno requested WFP food aid for the total number of affected families. The RR/RC a.i. participated in the ordinary meeting of the Emergency Operations Center (COE). Tents, food and medicines are identified among the major needs. A UN Volunteer will support WFP in Cochabamba with the monitoring of activities.

Humanitarian support by IOM, including non-food items, construction materials and relocation support, will be channeled through World Vision and Plan International, in coordination with and in support to the activities of the departmental CEO, the Municipality and the Prefecture.

CERF funds provided to IOM will benefit 1000 harmed families, representing aprox. 5,000 persons in the departments of La Paz, Santa Cruz and Beni.

Response

In La Paz, IOM provided last weekend several non-food items (hygiene, cooking and housing kits) to the Municipality of La Paz, benefitting 108 families, or 500 persons in affected areas (Hampaturi, Periférica, Kupini Balsa, Kupini Khasa, Chichaya, Obispo Bosque y Lojeta).

In Cochabamba, WFP distributed 11 tons of food to in the municipalities of Puerto Villarroel and Sacta to 328 families. 15 Tons of have been shipped to the Municipality of Sacta for 260 families to be distributed on March 19.

In the department of Beni, during the reporting period, the first food distribution to 33 camps in Trinidad has been carried out. With the support of the local government and the army; 101 tons of food were distributed to 4,416 families. WFP will continue distributions to the camps in Trinidad until April. Previously, food has been provided by the Civil Defense, the Prefecture and the local Government.

WFP has distributed a total of 26 tons to 500 families in the Municipalities of San Ignacio, Exaltación, Loreto and San Andres. A total of 8 tons of food have been airlifted by helicopters to 136 families of four isolated communities in the municipalities of Exaltación and San Ignacio. Weather conditions allowed re-establishing helicopter flights with WFP food to the most isolated communities of Exaltación. The most important means of transportation is by boat. World Vision distributed WFP food in the municipality of San Andres. The distribution to 4,416 tons of food to 36 camps in the urban area of Trinidad will start on 17 March.

In the Department of Santa Cruz, 26 tons of food will be delivered to 479 families of the Municipality of San Julián. Access to these communities is very poor. However, with the joint efforts of the counterparts, local authorities and the beneficiaries, food will be transported by road to the affected families. After an initial distribution of food by the Civil Defense and the local Government, WFP has programmed a distribution to 300 sheltered families in El Torno municipality on Monday 24.

AECI estimated that approximately 300,000 EUR will be allocated to WFP EMOP 10616.0 as part of the Flash Appeal. ECHO has confirmed a contribution of USD 408,000 to EMOP 10616.0. With this contribution the Operation still faces a shortfall of USD 0.5 million.

In support of the activities being undertaken by the Government, the Municipality and Prefecture, IOM will provide 200 family tents, to 200 of the 380 harmed families in the Municipality of EL Torno in Santa Cruz, through the municipal COE.