

Weekly Note On Emergencies

Latin America & The Caribbean

This note is compiled by OCHA Regional Office from disaster monitoring and inputs from our Regional Humanitarian partners. For input, feedback and suggestions send us an email to ocha-rolac-web@un.org

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What's Inside:

- CHILE: Town of Chaiten evacuated as volcano of the same name erupted.
- BRAZIL: Extra Tropical Cyclone killed 2 people and affected more than 100,000 persons.
- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: Torrential rains left 237,000 houses damaged in the province of Santiago.
- PANAMA: UNDAC Induction Training starts on the 13th of May, 2008.

VOLCANIC ACTIVITY

CHILE: On May 2nd, the volcano Michimahuida erupted after 60 small tremors of up to 4 degrees on the Mercalli scale. The rain of ashes affected the communities of Esquel and Trevelin, located in the province of Chubut in Argentina.

On May 3rd, some 3,900 people from the Chaiten community, in the Southern Chile have been evacuated due to activity from the Chaiten Volcano. According to local authorities, 1 person died during the evacuation.

On May 5th, authorities continue to evacuate the communities of Futaleufu and Palena. Two shelters have been opened, one in the city of Castro with a capacity for 600 people and the other in Puerto Montt with a capacity for 1,500 people. There is not yet accurate data of the number of people in shelters.

The water supply has been suspended in the city of Chaiten, as a preventive measure to reduce the risk of poisoning among the population.

According to ONEMI 115,000 will be distributed to the population of the town of Chaiten.

ONEMI along with the local Health Department provided 4,100 dust masks and 5,700 air-filtering respirators.

International assistance has not been requested.



Some 3,900 people from the Chaiten community, in the Southern Chile have been evacuated due to the Chaiten Volcano eruption. *El Mercurio*©

(Source: ONEMI, ANSA LATINA, El Pais)

TROPICAL CYCLONE

BRAZIL: On May 3rd, an extra tropical cyclone brought strong winds and rains in the Southern Coast of Brazil. Two people were killed and more than 25,000 were evacuated. Over 100,000 people have been affected. In Porto Alegre, 41 districts remained without water and electricity.

(Source: Diario Yucatan, Prensa Latina)

HEAVY RAINS AND FLOODS

ECUADOR: Two months since President Correa declared a national emergency in Ecuador following floods that affected large parts of the country, nearly 10,000 people remain homeless and hundreds of thousands more have limited access to clean water. In February floods forced 250,000 people living in rural areas from their homes. Since then, most people have been able to return home only to face new challenges including contaminated water wells, destroyed or damaged sewerage systems as well as a lack of clean water for drinking, washing and cooking.

(Source: OXFAM)

BOLIVIA: The ECLAC final report was presented to the government on Monday, April 28th. The mission estimates a total of USD 517 million in losses and damages. The most affected sector is agriculture with a loss of USD 276 million. It is estimated that La Niña Phenomenon will reduce the country's Gross Domestic Product by 3.7% in 2008. The report includes an important analysis of the accumulated effect of two consecutive natural disasters on the most vulnerable populations. Most of the analysis was based on the results of UN Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA).

(Source: WFP)

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: On May 3rd, torrential downpour damaged 237,000 houses in the province of Santiago. Some 6,185 people were evacuated. On April 28th, The Emergency Operations Committee declared a yellow alert for 16 provinces, of which 7 provinces remain on alert. The provinces on alert include: Santiago, Samana, Maria Trinidad Sanchez, Espaillat, Duarte, Hato Mayor and El Seibo.

(Source: WFP)

FOOD CRISIS

HAITI: The Inter-American Development Bank will give USD\$27 million in grant money to Haiti to deal with higher global food prices and to revive

agricultural production. The package will provide Haitian authorities with timely resources to address these issues.

(Source: Alernet)

ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION

HAITI: On April 25th, a mission from the Organization of American States (OAS) met with the President and political leaders as well as community and business leaders to discuss proposals and offer ideas on the kind of assistance needed to tackle the food crisis that the Caribbean nation faces. The mission comprised of representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Mexico and the United States as well as the European Union and the United Nations.

MEXICO: In Mexico, in response to the request from the Resident Coordinator and the SRE (MoFA) OCHA participated in a joint mission with UNDP(BCPR) and Canada(DFAIT) to provide recommendations for the future of the Humanitarian Information Centre created during the 2007 floods in Tabasco and Chiapas. After more than 20 years without having requested assistance or interacting with the international community, the Mexican Government wants to be more active on the international scene. Preliminary recommendations from the team's mission were to strengthen center's capacity to triangulate information from international events, international community working in Mexico, and information within the national environment to respond to natural disasters both at National and International level.

PANAMA: Preparation for the UNDAC induction training is on going. Senior UNDAC members are arriving to Panama to support the OCHA ROLAC office in this event, which starts on the 13th of May with more than 35 participants.