



COLOMBIA: FLOODS

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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 185 countries.

In Brief

This DREF Bulletin is being issued based on the situation described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 172,000 (USD 142,857 or EUR 105,838) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 17 August 2007 to respond to the needs in this operation.

This operation is expected to be implemented over 3 months, and will be completed by 17 November 2007; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 17 February 2008). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

This operation is aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background and current situation

Since March 2007, the annual rainy season has caused major floods and landslides affecting at least 276 municipalities located in 28 of the 32 departments of Colombia. According to official data issued by National Direction for Disasters Prevention and Response (Dirección de Prevención y Atención de Desastres – DPAD) (DPAD, 8 August 2007) 121 persons have died, 22 are missing, 652,430 persons (131,992 families) have been affected, 1,136 houses were destroyed and 14,928 severely damaged. Nearly 25% of the country's municipalities report events associated to disasters caused by heavy rains.

According to the Colombian Institute for Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales de Colombia - IDEAM), the dry season is in place in the Andean region. However, the passage of several tropical waves has increased the risk and prevalence of heavy rains throughout the Caribbean Coast. In particular, the water level of the Sinú and San Jorge rivers remains high. On August 11, local authorities have reported the flooding of Cauca river's embankment in La Tea location (Sucre Department). As a consequence, seven families have been relocated in Guaranda municipality. In other affected areas in La Mojana region (located in Sucre and Bolivar departments) the overall situation is progressively improving. Humanitarian assistance is provided under the coordination of Regional and Local Committees for Disasters Prevention and Response (CREPAD and CLOPADS) due to the efforts of several humanitarian actors. According to local authorities, the most urgent need is to restore the livelihoods of thousands of families (nearly 11,382) whose lands still remain flooded.



Above: flooded areas in Colombia. Source: OCHA Situation report

National Response

DPAD continues to deliver food and non-food items for approximately 16,000 families in coordination with the institutions joined under the National System for Disasters' Prevention and Response. The Ministry of Communication mobilized private enterprises' support for the provision of mobile phones for the institutions that are assisting the emergency.

The Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) and Civil Defence are supporting the evacuation of the affected population as well as the management of temporary shelters. Nearly 80 temporary shelters have been installed in six

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of the affected municipalities (some of them have also been damaged by floods). However, according to the CRCS and the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), shelters lack adequate sanitary conditions.

So far, the Ministry of Environment and Housing assigned 3,000 million pesos (USD 1.5 million) to support the reconstruction of damaged houses in the departments of Antioquia and Bolívar.

The Ministry of Agriculture, in coordination with the National Agricultural Institute (Instituto Colombiano Agropecuario - ICA) and regional and local offices for rural development are identifying the affected areas and coordinating the response.

The Colombian Institute for Family Well-being (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar - ICBF) is assisting children under 5 years and pregnant or nursing women. The police and the Colombian Armed Forces are supporting the aerial surveillance of the affected regions, the delivering of food aid and the recovery of critical points along the rivers.

International response

The United Nations (UN) system response mechanisms have been activated in order to mobilize resources to support national efforts to face the emergency. A cash grant of USD 160,000 was mobilised for the construction and equipment of shelters in La Mojana region, which is being managed by DPAD and the CRCS.

The United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) has coordinated a request to the Central Emergency Response Funds (CERF) of the United Nations. Consequently a rapid response grant was approved for the World Food Program (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) of USD 2.4 million to address the needs of people in the affected regions through food and non-food items, shelter, water and sanitation projects.

The Colombian Government, through the Ministry of Internal Affairs requested a three-month extension in WFP's food assistance programmes in the affected regions, due to the magnitude of the emergency.

The Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) is also working to respond to the emergency by providing support for the installation of the SUMA System.

PAHO and United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) set up a situation room with national and local authorities in order to coordinate the flow of information and response.

A number of organisations including Action Against Hunger (AAH) and Oxfam are supporting food security, water and sanitation and shelter actions to support of those affected by the floods.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the onset of the emergency the Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) has undertaken the following activities to assist those affected by the flooding:

- Provide assistance with the equipment and administration of shelters.
- Provide humanitarian assistance through distribution of food and non food relief items.
- Provide Telecommunication assistance in the most affected areas (Radios, High Frequency (HF), Very High Frequency (VHF) and satellite telephones).

The CRCS has mobilized assistance from around the country to manage this disaster using local capacities. Thanks to in kind donations from the Colombian public, the Presidential Agency for social action and International Cooperation, and private companies such as Quala SA and Kellogs Colombia, the CRCS has received over USD 400,000 to assist those affected by the flooding.

Cash donations have been allocated in the following way:

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- USD 10,000 donated by Microsoft will be used to purchase and distribute food and non food items.
- An amount of 2,069,180,000 Colombian pesos (USD 1,052,482) has been allocated from the partnership between the National Emergency fund and the CRCS to provide assistance to temporary shelters, water and sanitation activities and provide subsidies to the departments of Sucre and Bolívar.
- The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has allocated USD 60,000 to purchase items for the water and sanitation programme. OXFAM will also donate EUR 14,173 (USD 19,536) in order to provide water and sanitation assistance.

Thanks to these donations the CRCS has been able to assist 6,000 families (approximately 30,000 people) with the provision of food and non food items: food packages, family hygiene kits, kitchen kits and a set of dishes. The families also received three sheets, three mattresses, three hammocks, three mosquito nets and three blankets for warm and cold weather.

The CRCS Plan of Action aims to provide a further 4,000 affected families with the same food and non food relief items. The allocated DREF funding will be used to assist 1,000 families (approximately 5,000 persons). Additional funding has been secured to provide support to the additional 3,000 affected families.

The proposed operation

Relief

Objective 1: 1,000 families (approximately 5,000 persons) affected by floods will benefit from the provision of food and non-food relief items during the emergency phase as part of the CRCS overall activities targeting 4,000 families.

In order to respond to the immediate needs of 1,000 families the following relief items will be distributed:

- Food package
- Family hygiene kit
- Kitchen kit
- Set of dishes
- Sheets
- Mattresses
- Hammocks
- Mosquito nets
- Blankets

Beneficiaries will be selected according to the extent to which they are affected by the floods and their social and community context. The CRCS humanitarian relief will focus on communities that have not received relief so far; these priorities are coordinated with the United Nations Development Programme project in Colombia – SNPAD.

The content of the kits are based on the SPHERE project humanitarian charter and the code of conduct for disaster relief:

Food package	Family hygiene kit	Kitchen kit	Set of dishes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 pounds of lentils - 1 pound of corn flour - 3 pounds of rice - 2 pounds of sugar - 2 pounds of peas - 1 pound of salt - 2 pounds of panela 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 toothbrushes (adult) - 2 toothbrushes (children) - Toothpaste 150 cm3 - 2 bars of soap 140g - 1 sanitary towels package: (10 units) - 2 razors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 pot # 24 - 1 frying pan # 22 - 1 chocolate pot # 3 - 1 wooden spoon 26 cm. - 1 grinder - 1 box of matches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 deep plastic plates - 4 flat plates - 4 small cups - 4 aluminium spoons

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1 pound of coffee- 1 pound of chocolate- 1000 cc of oil- 400g powdered milk- 500g of bocadillo- 370g of tuna <p>Weight: 13.27kg</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1 plastic comb- 300g soap for washing clothes- 2 cotton towels of 90 cm x 50 cm.- 2 rolls of toilet paper- 1 deodorant for men 65g- 1 deodorant for women 65g		
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Activities planned to reach this objective:

- Survey and selection of the families to receive relief items in coordination with the local authorities
- Reception, storage and transportation of relief supplies
- Distribute food and non-food items to 1,000 affected families in the following areas: Lorica, Purisima, San Bernardo del Viento, Momil
- Monitor and evaluate distributions by personnel of the Headquarters and staff of the involved branches with the support of the Federation.
- Carry out workshops addressing topics on personal hygiene in the affected communities.

Health

Objective 1: 1,000 families (5,000 beneficiaries) will benefit from medical care provided by the mobile health Unit, in order to improve health conditions within the affected communities.

CRCS medical volunteers will provide first aid care to the affected people through the implementation of a mobile health unit.

Objective 2: 1,000 families (5,000 beneficiaries) will benefit from community-based psychosocial support.

The affected families will be provided with psychosocial support through specially designed workshops. It is expected that this will help speed up the physical and emotional recovery process.

Psychosocial support for people affected by the floods will be provided to those who have been seriously affected and have suffered major losses. Particular attention will be given to the needs of women and children. This support will also be provided to volunteers working with those affected. These activities will initially be carried out for a four month period.

Coordination

The CRCS closely coordinates with the National Directorate for Disasters Prevention and Response (DPAD) on a national, departmental and local level, in order to coordinate humanitarian relief and avoid duplication of efforts. In addition, the CRCS is also in close coordination with the UN System, which maintains permanent contact through UNETE and the CRCS National Directorate in order to monitor the situation.

The Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), the Regional Representation Office for South America and the Federation Representative in Colombia are monitoring the situation and are on stand-by for further emergency response to support the National Society.

Communication

A press release was issued by the CRCS in order to raise funds and develop a better understanding of the mission of the CRCS and the activities the organization undertakes in serving affected communities. With the same purpose of raising funds to assist those affected by the flooding, the CRCS, in coordination with the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), organized a public concert with the contribution from several local artists on 1 August 2007.

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