

SitRep



United Nations System in Costa Rica

Situation Report 2 UN Disaster Management Team - Costa Rica

Tropical Depression 16 Floods and Landslides in Costa Rica 21 October 2008

12:00 hours (local time)

Note: This report is based primarily on information provided by the Emergency National Commission (CNE) to the United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT). Other sources include interviews with national counterparts, the National Meteorological Institute and major newspapers in the country.

According to information from national authorities, this is the last Sit Rep concerning response on Tropical Depression 16

A. Description of the adverse effect:

Due to heavy influence of Tropical Depression 16 at the Caribbean Sea (movement path: from Gracias a Dios Cape towards Belize-Guatemala) Costa Rica was affected by torrential rain from 14 to 17 October. Major impact was suffered by North Pacific, Central Pacific and Central Valley regions: extensive flooding and landslides generated evacuation of hundreds of people, plus destruction of physical infrastructure and croplands.



B. Measures by national authorities:

Weather conditions forced Red / Yellow Alert Mechanisms by the Emergency National Commission (CNE), in coordination with first response institutions. Permanent networking was undertaken with other entities of the Risk Management National System (SNGR) in the country.

By Executive Decree #34805 (Monday 20 October), a state of Emergency was issued for 59 Municipalities, from a total of 81. The aim of the decree is to speed up national efforts to finance rehabilitation and reconstruction. However, public sector funds for those efforts cannot be guaranteed. They depend on available budget surpluses in some Ministries / autonomous institutions.

Both the Ministry of the Presidency and the CNE have requested the ministries to work on the setting of sector priorities (Health, Agriculture/Livestock, Education, Public Works and Transport). There should be a Plan for Rehabilitation and Recovery in oncoming weeks.

C. Impact:

Affected communities:

Affected regions	6
Affected provinces	6
Affected Municipalities	59
Affected Districts	128
Affected Communities	483
Communities affected with landslides	59
Population in shelters	3260 (peak day: Saturday 18 October, 10:00 hrs)
Total shelters	65 (peak day)
# schools used as shelters (from total)	15
# Municipalities with shelters opened	22

(Source: CNE)

Present phase:

- Ø Seasonal rains, at normal levels. Emergency Local Committees advise caution to population living nearby high-risk river basins, at least until 15 November.
- Ø Weather monitoring countrywide, by National Meteorological Institute.

Most affected Municipalities:

PROVINCE	
Guanacaste	Bagaces, Carrillo, Santa Cruz, Liberia, Cañas, Nicoya
Puntarenas	Garabito, Parrita, Aguirre, Buenos Aires, Osa, Golfito, Corredores
Cartago	Cartago, Paraíso, El Guarco, Oreamuno
San José	Desamparados, Dota, Pérez Zeledón, León Cortés, Puriscal, Acosta
Limón	Siquirres

(Source: CNE)

Affected population :

	# Families	# Persons
Directly Affected	3500	18533
In shelters (peak day)		3260
Dead		6

(Source : CNE)

Affected Infrastructure:*

Roads (national – municipal)	174
Landslides on roads	93
Bridges	32
Dikes	9
Drinking water pipelines (aqueducts)	9
Polluted wells	424**
Electricity transmission posts	89
Sewage installations	7
Telephone systems	2

*Damage degree : minor / partial / major

**North Pacific only

(Source : Ministry of Public Works and Transport, CNE)

Housing and public buildings:

	Total
Schools	39
Houses	1396

Damage degree varies on minor / partial / major, depending on field assessments by CNE
(Source: CNE)

Sector Assessments: Underway, information still unavailable.



D. Response actions implemented by the community, organizations and national authorities:

1. The CNE coordinated the Emergency Operations Centre (COE), composed of: Fire Fighters, Red Cross, Ministry of Public Security, 9-1-1 Communications System, Ministry of Health, Social Security System (CCSS), Social Assistance Institute (IMAS), Ministry of Public Works, Aqueducts and Sewage (AyA), Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture. This Committee was activated with the statements of Red / Yellow Alerts.
2. Activation of all Regional and Local Emergency Committees in the affected areas.
3. Co-ordination mechanism with first response institutions (Red Cross, CCSS, police forces) for relief actions in: Parrita, Aguirre, Cartago, Paraíso, Bagaces, Carrillo, Desamparados, Corredores, Dota, Osa, León Cortés, Pérez Zeledón, El Guarco, Puriscal, Golfito, Siquirres, Buenos Aires, Oreamuno, Santa Cruz, Liberia, Cañas, Acosta, Nicoya, Garabito.
4. Co-ordination with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (Emergency Team) to assess / open affected national roads, depending on weather conditions.
5. Contacts with bilateral and multilateral agencies to request financial assistance for relief efforts, as national delivery schemes were surpassed. The CNE asked for financial support from the UN System to afford: air transport to isolated communities (first days of the emergency) and non-food items.

E. United Nations actions:

- a. UNETT (FAO, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, ILO, IOM, UNESCO, PAHO/WHO, WMO, UNDP UNICEF and UNFPA) has monitored the events closely, since 13 October. The group was activated on 14 October, with information flows to the UNDMT. A UNETT meeting was held on 17 October, in order to:
 - Ø Update information exchange
 - Ø Analyse the aid request from CNE
 - Ø Recommend actions to the UNDMT
 - Ø Set tasks for writing of a Situation Report, plus proceedings for OCHA Emergency Cash Grant
- b. Telephone and E-mail communications with OCHA-LAC, to assess emergency situation
- c. Specific UN Agencies (UNDP, PAHO/WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF) have set communication channels with sector counterparts, either for Situation Reports or for specific assistance requests.
- d. PAHO/WHO: Daily information exchange with Ministry of Health, Social Security Institution (CCSS), Institute of Aqueducts and Sewage (AyA) and the Red Cross. Health situation of affected populations, concerning response stage, is under control.
- e. UN System Representatives has kept close communication with national authorities.

F. Assistance

UNDMT and UNETT monitor the situation closely. CNE has lifted all alerts concerning Tropical Depression 16. Nevertheless, normal conditions of the late rainy season (October – November) may trigger emergency situations in saturated soils and high risk river basins, once again. Transition to the dry period will start by mid-November, except for the Caribbean Region (Limon Province).

G. National Contacts (If required)

Comisión Nacional de Prevención del Riesgo y Atención de Emergencias (CNE)

Lic. Marco Vinicio Saborío, Jefe Asuntos Internacionales
Tel: (506) 2210 2843
Mob: (506) 8861 0271
msaborio@cne.go.cr

Lic. Sigifredo Pérez, Jefe Operaciones
Tel: (506) 2210 2732
Mob: (506) 8894 7501
sperez@cne.go.cr

H. UN Contacts (If required)

Sr. Jozef Merx
UNHCR Representative
UN Resident Coordinator a.i.
Tel: (506) 2296 0795
Fax: (506) 2231 36 04
merx@unhcr.org

Lic. Andrés Calvo Barrantes
National Programme Officer PAHO/WHO
UNETT Coordinador
Tel: (506) 2258-5810, ext 341
Mob: (506) 8836-3580
Fax: (506) 2258-5830
calvoand@cor.ops-oms.org

Lic. Vanessa Zamora
Programme Officer UNDP/ OCHA Focal Point
Tel: (506) 2296-1544 ext: 140
Mob: (506) 8825-9257
Fax: (506) 2296-1545
vanessa.zamora@undp.org