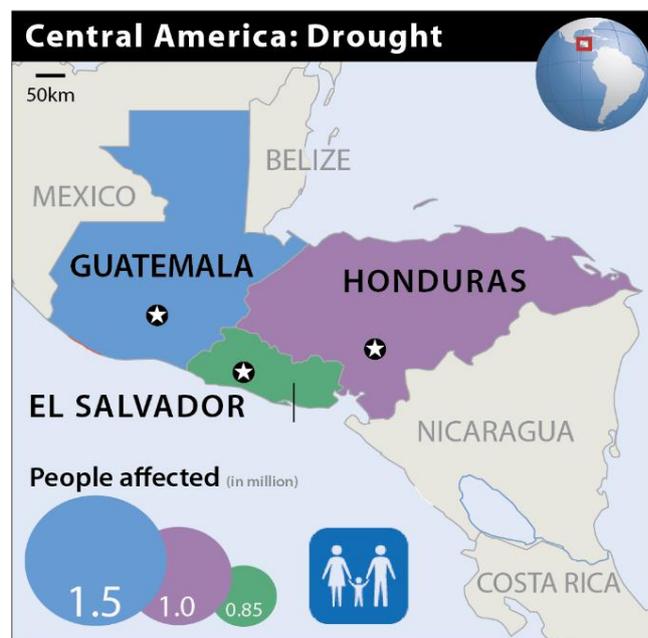




This report is produced by OCHA [Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean] in collaboration with humanitarian partners from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The next report will be issued on or around one month, depending on the evolution of the emergency.

Highlights

- Prolonged drought impacted food security and nutrition for nearly two and a half million people in Central America.
- Loss of maize and bean crops range from 54 to 75% in Honduras and about 75% in Guatemala.
- The majority of people affected are subsistence farmers, labourers and low-income families living along the dry corridor.
- In the coming months food insecurity is expected to worsen as families deplete their food stocks.
- In Guatemala, 30,000 families finished their food stocks in October and are implementing survival strategies¹.
- The UN System has mobilized financial resources and is supporting affected countries in coordinating emergency response plans.



<p>2.5 million</p> <p>People affected by food insecurity (Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador)</p>	<p>75%</p> <p>Approximate losses of maize and bean crops</p>	<p>US\$2.6 million</p> <p>CERF funding for response in Honduras</p>	<p>US\$17.1 million</p> <p>Needed to address the situation in Guatemala</p>	<p>US\$13.2 million</p> <p>Needed to address the situation in Honduras</p>
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Situation Overview

The lack of rain in recent months has resulted in the loss of staple grain crops and death of thousands of cattle in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and to a lesser extent in areas of Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. The most vulnerable population are families of subsistence farmers, labourers and landless farmers, who are characterized by low income, with limited access to land, basic health services and education, and difficulties in obtaining the basic food basket.

Despite mitigation measures implemented in the affected countries, food insecurity has deteriorated for thousands of families and has become a serious humanitarian situation. Data from governments and assessments carried out by humanitarian actors indicate that about 2.5 million people are at risk of food insecurity.

¹ Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP).

Affected families are taking negative coping measures such as reducing portion sizes or variety of food, selling their belongings, reducing health and education costs or abandoning grain production and/or livestock farm animals or farm supplies.

Guatemala: The government declared a State of Public Calamity in August 2014 in 16 departments: Jutiapa, Chiquimula, Santa Rosa, Quiché, El Progreso, Huehuetenango, Baja Verapaz, Zacapa, Retalhuleu, Solola, Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, San Marcos, Guatemala, Suchitepequez and Jalapa. In October the decree was extended for 30 days.



1.5 million

People affected by food insecurity in Guatemala

In September and October, the World Food Programme carried out an Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) on a representative sample of basic grain producing households in areas affected by drought. This assessment was coordinated with the Government, NGOs and the United Nations agencies. In addition to standard food insecurity indicators, new indicators were added for a better understanding levels of acute malnutrition, disease and water availability/quality.

This joint evaluation identified a total of 248,000 households (1 in 4 houses surveyed in the dry corridor) with moderate and severe food insecurity. In addition, 4.7% presented total acute malnutrition and 2.5% presented severe acute malnutrition in girls. The highest rate of acute malnutrition was identified in the eastern part of the country with 5.4%. These figures are extremely worrying given that they exceed the threshold of 2.5% considered for a nutritional emergency.

The evaluation also identified that at least 10% of the surveyed households are consuming water from unsafe sources (springs and streams). Female heads of household, children under age five and pregnant women were identified among the most vulnerable groups given the increased likelihood of suffering the consequences of the effects caused by prolonged drought.

Honduras: The Government declared State of Emergency in the Honduran dry corridor for the impact of crop loss (between 54 to 75%) and household purchasing capacity in affected areas. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs appealed to the international community to support and complement Government response efforts.



1 million

People (approx.) affected by food insecurity in Honduras

The Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) held in September surveyed a sample of people living in the 64 municipalities (571,717 people) considered priority due to incidence of drought, human development and production structure. Preliminary findings indicate that 27% of the total population of the dry corridor (154,364 people) are living with unacceptable nutrition levels.

Preliminary results from EFSA also indicate that 3.4% of children under age 5 are suffering from acute malnutrition, with a greater impact on girls (5.6%). At least 19,559 children are malnourished as a direct consequence of the drought. Food insecurity will have a very negative impact on most vulnerable population groups such as children under age 5, pregnant and lactating women.

Limited access to water, an effect of drought, is having a negative impact not only in food consumption but also in hygiene, which in turn increases health risks, especially acute diarrheal diseases. Health services in rural areas do not have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the affected population and there is a 50% shortage of medicine.

El Salvador: The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources reports that the country is experiencing the most severe drought since 1977, with July 2014 holding a record of lowest rainfall level in the last 44 years. It is estimated that 65% of basic grain producers registered crop losses. Of the producers affected in the eastern part of the country, 82% reported having lost their complete crops.



85,430
People affected by food insecurity in El Salvador

Two out of four households affected by drought report having food reserves for consumption for no more than 2.5 months as of September. At least 56% of households have already adopted negative coping strategies such as selling of assets, which will limit their resilience in the future.

Other countries:

Drought has also affected crops and livestock in Nicaragua, Panama and Costa Rica. National authorities and some national aid agencies in these countries are implementing response programs although no international assistance has been requested.

Humanitarian Response and Funds Requirement

The governments of the affected countries have carried out several damage and needs assessments and have created action plans to cover the short, medium and long term response. In addition to food assistance and the recovery of productive capacities, importance is given to actions aimed at reducing agro-climatic risk in the future and adapting to climate change.

Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT) have drafted Emergency Response Plans in Honduras and Guatemala to comprehensively address the humanitarian needs of the affected population, and are mobilizing financial resources to complement the efforts of national authorities.

Guatemala: The Ministry of National Food Security (SESAN for its acronym in Spanish) launched an Action Plan for drought and is distributing food items in 16 affected departments. The budget to implement this plan is US\$28 million.

The Humanitarian Country Team, led by the Resident Coordinator and supported by OCHA, worked with the national authorities to create the Response Plan. This plan includes actions that complement the national response strategy, specifically in the areas of treating and controlling acute malnutrition, food and nutrition assistance, disease control and management of water quality.

A proposal was also sent to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Financing for the humanitarian response is detailed below:

INSTITUTIN	AMOUNT (USD)	SECTOR/INPUT
USAID-OFDA	\$5.1 million	To be used by WFP for food distribution in four departments: Retalhuleu, Suchitepéquez, Jalapa and San Marcos
Embassy of Sweden	\$2.5 million	For early recovery and resilience activities which are being coordinated by FAO with the participation of UNICEF
WFP	\$1.2 million	Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC)
China – Taiwan	\$300,000	For food items in Chimaltenango
India	\$200,000	Implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) for prioritize municipalities in Zacapa
Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI)	\$250,000	Implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) for prioritize municipalities in Chiquimula
Republic of Korea	\$100,000	Implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP)
Republic of Brazil		4,500 tons of rice + 4,500 tons of beans
Dominican Republic		30 quintals of maize, 9 quintals of beans, 50 bags of <i>incaparina</i>

Several NGOs, such as Save the Children, Action Against Hunger, CARE and the National Centre for Information and Research on Development and Disaster (CENACIDE for its acronym in Spanish), among others, also undertook actions of assessing damage and needs and mitigating the effects of drought in the most affected communities.

The NGO members of the Humanitarian Country Team have released a statement to express their collective concern with the lack of national and international funding to ensure that the emergency response is comprehensive and participatory.

Honduras: The Government of Honduras allocated US\$4.8 million to respond to the drought and, on 8 September, appealed to the international community for their support.

In response to this request, the Humanitarian Country Team and the United Nations agencies developed an Emergency Response Plan to comprehensively address the humanitarian needs of the drought crisis. The plan identified the need for \$13.2 million for four sectors: food security, nutrition, health, and water, sanitation and hygiene.

The Central Fund for Emergency Response (CERF) has allocated US\$2.6 million to address the impact of the drought in 13 municipalities in the dry corridor in Choluteca, Valle, El Paraiso and Francisco Morazan. This fund will allow for activities in the following sectors: 1. Food Security, 2. Health, 3 Nutrition, 4. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

INSTITUTIN	AMOUNT (USD)	SECTOR/INPUT
USAID-OFDA	\$3.9 millions	For food assistance to people affected by drought and coffee rust
Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)	\$2.6 million	To assist 25,234 people (13,426 women and 11,808 men) in 13 municipalities of the dry corridor
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	\$1.3 million	To assist 3,500 families (17,500 people)
WFP	\$850,000	Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC) to assist 3,847 families in the municipalities of Choluteca, Orocuina and Apacilagua
Government of Japan	\$500,000	
China - Taiwan	\$150,000	
UNDP	\$100,000	

El Salvador: The Government, through the Food Security and Nutrition National Council (CONASAN for its acronym in Spanish) in collaboration with several ministries (the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior and Territorial Development, the Ministry of Social Inclusion, the National Centre for Agricultural and Forestry Technology) and UN agencies, has assessed food security among basic grain producers affected by drought and is responding to the emergency.

WFP has received \$1.9 million to provide food assistance to 7,380 families (36,900 people) in severe or moderate food insecurity in areas affected by drought. These resources are sufficient to meet the needs of these families for three months, in the form of FFA/FFT (food for assets/food for training) with transfers through exchangeable bonus for food. This food assistance is expected to start in late November 2014.

UN agencies (UNICEF, PAHO/WHO, FAO and WFP, among others) are expected to present a proposal for CERF funding to meet the needs of families affected.

Humanitarian Trend

WFP assessments indicate that monitoring the harvest season is vital to developing response strategies for the most affected households. In case of a poor second harvest, the food security of many households may deteriorate.

According to the same assessments, in Guatemala, most affected households decided not to plant crops, and in eight of the 16 affected departments, producers are only growing maize. For these subsistence farmers who decided not to plant for second season, the scenario is very uncertain, not only for this year but until the next harvest in August 2015.

An OXFAM study notes that in the next twelve months (from October 2014) food insecurity is expected to worsen, as families deplete the few food reserves that remain and will be forced to implement harsher coping strategies such as selling assets and/or land.

Meanwhile, a Few's Net² study expects food security to improve in most of Central America until March 2015. However, the poorest households in highland areas of eastern Guatemala, southern Honduras and Nicaragua will remain in various stages of food insecurity. Picture © WFP



In the short term, it is fundamental to target people requiring food assistance. In the medium term, a key element of the response is to work on recovering livelihoods to prevent a severe humanitarian crisis. A long-term response requires sustainable and concerted decisions and public policies that prioritize this geographic area in development plans and gives preferential treatment to public and private investment such as irrigation activities, water infrastructure, crop substitution and access routes, as well as the development of education and health programmes that respect the local culture.

General Coordination

United Nations agencies and authorities of the affected countries are working closely in the response to drought. The food security cluster and the sectors involved in the emergency have been activated.

UNDP in Honduras has partnered with the Office of the National Human Rights Commission (CONADEH for its acronym in Spanish), to support the response in coordination with the Government. CONADEH coordinates with national and international entities and organizations to ensure the protection of human rights in its broadest sense, including food security, and respect for the dignity and image of people.

Regional UN Offices are supporting countries in monitoring, evaluation and development/implementation of the Response Plans. From Panama, the Interagency Risk Emergency Disaster Working Group for Latin America and the Caribbean coordinates regional actions.

International organizations and local NGOs implementing community programs in the affected areas are also working closely with other humanitarian actors.

In addition, coordination is ongoing with regional intergovernmental organizations, including: the Agricultural Council of Central America (CAC) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

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For more information please visit www.unocha.org www.reliefweb.int www.redhum.org

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² Few's Net food security update published in Famine Early Warning Systems Network (<http://www.fews.net>).