



**Emergency Humanitarian Aid Decision**

**23 02 01**

Title: Emergency assistance to the victims of floods and landslides in Ecuador

Location of operation: ECUADOR

Amount of Decision: EUR 1,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/ECU/BUD/2006/01000

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**Explanatory Memorandum**

**1 - Rationale, needs and target population:**

1.1. - Rationale:

Ecuador has been experiencing heavy rainfall since early February. Between 9 February and 20 March 2006, the rainfall was particularly intense, resulting in serious flooding, rivers overflowing and landslides in five out of 22 provinces in Ecuador, affecting most of the coastal region<sup>1</sup>. It is important to note that the precipitation during the period of reference was marked by its intensity, causing torrential rainfall registering 105 mm/m<sup>2</sup> per day, when the normal average in this period is 60 mm/m<sup>2</sup>/day according to INAHMI (National Meteorology Service).

The Ecuadorian Civil Defence estimations of 23 March indicated that 27,525 families (165,150 people) are affected by these heavy rains over most of the coastal region, based on data provided by the municipalities. Floods and mudslides triggered by heavy rains have left 13 confirmed deaths; 800 families (4,800 people) have been evacuated to public shelters and 703 families (4,218 people) have lost everything (houses, sources of income). Data are corroborated by some NGOs, church organisations and the OCHA situation reports. The authorities say up to 4,100 families (25,000 people) are facing food insecurity and lack of drinking water after two months of downpours.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Guayas, El Oro, Manabí, los Ríos, Esmeraldas

<sup>2</sup> WFP press release of 22 March 2006  
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All provinces have reported losses in rice, corn, cocoa, bananas, peanuts and maracuya. According to preliminary information from the Ministry of Agriculture, the initial agricultural losses are around 12,201 hectares in rice and corn production alone. The total number of farmers affected is estimated at 4,663. This figure will increase when the evaluation of the other crops in the most remote areas is available. According to an NGO long established in the region, more than 25,000 hectares of crop land, primary rice paddies have been destroyed by the floods.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the affected communities have experienced damage to major roads and bridges, causing difficulties in accessing affected areas. In El Oro province five bridges have been destroyed, and in Los Rios province four roads have been seriously affected. The initial estimation of damage to houses in this province alone is that 1,489 houses are affected.

Key stakeholders (Communities, Civil Defence, Ministry of Health and Ecuadorian Red Cross staff) share the view that the phenomenon is utterly atypical, because of the speed of the water increase, the fact that it happened in two consecutive rounds, its intensity and its impact on the population. It is very similar to what happened in the country during the El Niño disaster in winter 1997-1998. According to INAHMI, the high rainfall trend will continue until the beginning of May, when the rainy season ends. Extreme rainfall and strong winds are expected in the coming weeks.

On 21 March, the Ecuadorian government declared a national agricultural and educational emergency. The government is unable, or unwilling, due to serious budgetary restrictions, to sign a national emergency decree which would imply allocating additional funds for the response. Ecuador is currently experiencing a difficult climate where social tensions are growing among the population. Social unrest is spreading in at least five provinces (Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, Tungurahua, Imbabura and Pastaza). Reasons for this include the central government's failure to transfer to the provinces their annual financial allocations; social protest against the TLC (*Tratado de Libre Comercio*) with the USA; and demonstrations of the petrol workers' association claiming significant financial compensation for persistent poor labour rights management.

As a consequence, the national and local capacity to respond is complicated by budgetary constraints, political strikes and road blockades in many provinces. The Civil Defence, having seen its annual budget reduced last year from USD 500,000 to USD 50,000 for the entire country, is weakened and does not have many windows of opportunity to implement a full evaluation of damage and a proper needs assessment, let alone respond to a disaster such as the current one.

It has also to be recalled that Ecuador is a highly disaster-prone area and is characterized by high vulnerability:

- 40.8% of the population lives in poverty and 17.7% in extreme poverty (UNDP 2005)
- 21.1% of children under five years old suffer from chronic malnutrition, and 11.1% from underweight (SIISE<sup>4</sup> 2004)
- 58% of children under five years old suffer from anaemia (SIISE 2004)
- In rural areas, access to basic services is limited. Only half of the population has access to safe drinking water, while basic sanitation facilities are only available for 37% of the population

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<sup>3</sup> Catholic Relief Service, press release of 21 March 2006

<sup>4</sup> SIISE: Ecuadorian social indicators integrated system

Furthermore, the affected regions are just emerging from a drought which occurred in late 2005<sup>5</sup> and lasted for three months, resulting in a compacting of the ground and already putting at risk a significant part of the agricultural harvest production.

The response of the government is minimal: USD45 will be donated per family per month, for the two coming months, covering two thousand families and the Ministry of Social Welfare is distributing 6,267 family food rations.

The number of affected families currently supported by humanitarian assistance does not cover the full range of needs and the local capacity remains limited. The Ecuadorian Civil Defence has almost no means to respond to the emergency, and neither does the Ecuadorian Red Cross. The stocks are mostly empty and the financial means exhausted, as observed during the DG ECHO<sup>6</sup> field mission in two of the most affected municipalities (Quevedo & Mocache) of Los Rios province.

A DG ECHO mission was deployed to Los Rios province from 22 to 23 March in order to assess the humanitarian situation in the disaster-affected areas, and to help to design DG ECHO's intervention. Two meetings were called with DG ECHO partners operating in the country with the aim of coordinating the humanitarian assistance response<sup>7</sup>. The following conclusions were reached:

- An aggravation of the situation is highly probable, due to the fact that the rainy season will not end before May.
- The affected families are especially vulnerable people from the rural and marginal-urban areas, with extremely limited coping capacities and with significant needs in terms of water and sanitation and crop recovery. A need to improve disaster management and preparedness has been identified;
- The limited amount of resources already pledged by the different donors is focused on the very short-term emergency phase, but acute needs for the following months are soon going to be the priority.

The current evaluation of the situation would indicate that no further humanitarian intervention after this one will be required. Nevertheless, DG ECHO will closely monitor the evolving situation, in conjunction with the monitoring of projects under this decision, so that an appropriate response can be made to any continuing serious humanitarian needs which remain unmet.

## 1.2. - Identified needs:

The main impacts observed during the DG ECHO mission in the coastal areas consist primarily of the following:

- The main impact of the floods seems to be on cultivated areas. The subsistence crops have been severely affected (corn, rice, vegetables, watermelons, cocoa, maracuya) and in particular short cycle crops such as rice and corn. The drought which occurred

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<sup>5</sup> At least USD50 million of damages relative to the drought/cold wave of December 2005 was reported (Source: Sitrep ECHO 10/1/2006.)

<sup>6</sup> DG ECHO : Directorate General for humanitarian aid – ECHO

<sup>7</sup> Six ECHO partners were represented: Solidaridad Internacional, CAFOD, Red Cross, CRIC, CARE, Intermon.  
ECHO/ECU/BUD/2006/01000

at the end of 2005 has generated a delay in the sowing season; therefore, when strong rainfall started in February, the short cycle cultivations had a low level of development and were more vulnerable. Waves of muddy water, in some areas reached up to 2,5 meters high during five to six days. In some cases the second wave of muddy water has destroyed the reserved seeds intended for sowing after the first wave, leaving no resources to start any planting in May, which is the latest possible time to plant before the next season in five to six months time.

- Extensive losses to livestock and poultry have also been reported<sup>8</sup>, causing significant economic losses and putting at risk the farmers' main sources of subsistence. However, no official estimation is available.
- The most affected population in rural areas are small farmers with less than 10 ha of land and *arrendatarios* (landless peasants renting the land). This sector of the population is usually quite vulnerable economically, by credit to banks or private agents among other things. In urban areas the most vulnerable are mostly living in poorly planned neighborhoods and have been evacuated to provisional shelters.
- Dwellings have been submerged, sanitary systems and wells have been damaged and filled with garbage. It is estimated that around 2,000 septic tanks have overflowed or burst due to excess water<sup>9</sup>.
- The sediment made of mud mixed with garbage and sand is a potential vector of pathogens which can cause losses to non-submerged crops through the exacerbation of common diseases and creation of new ones.
- One of the greatest concerns is for public health. Stagnant waters could lead to outbreaks of tropical diseases such as waterborne illnesses, respiratory infections, diarrhoea, dengue and leptospirosis as well as human skin diseases. The Ministry of Health has warned that due to the current hygiene conditions, the malaria falciparum cases could again become a public health problem in the country, while since 2001, morbidity had decreased drastically.
- There are a number of cases of flooded health posts and schools<sup>10</sup>.

The primary needs reported by Civil Defence and UNETE<sup>11</sup> (The UN agency visited the area between 14 to 23 February) are for safe drinking water, sanitation, health, shelter, food aid, non-food items and disaster preparedness:

- Immediate *distribution of safe drinking water* to affected people, as well as the provision of non-food items such as hygiene, disinfectant.
- *Safe sanitation, initially prioritizing environmental sanitation*: drainage of stagnant waters, removal of dead animals, vector control (mosquitoes, rats, snakes and other reptiles), latrine rehabilitation, solid waste management. It is important to underline the significance of the sanitary conditions, mainly due to the fact that latrines and septic tanks have been flooded and water has been contaminated. Victims are exposed to the threat of diseases from being in contact with infected water or danger related to snake bites. The

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<sup>8</sup> Source : OCHA Situation Report N°1, 11 March 2006

<sup>9</sup> COOPI needs assessment (mid March 2006)

<sup>10</sup> Source : 28 March 2006 -PAHO, member of the Crisis Health Committee reported that in the two provinces of Manabi and Guayas, at least 28 health centres, 12 sub-centres and 5 hospitals were affected and 4 health centres isolated due to landslides and road blockages.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Equipo Technico de Emergencia

local health system reported increasing of morbidity of patients suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting. In this context, children, women and the elderly are especially vulnerable groups whose special needs must be taken into account.

- *Emergency cleaning and disinfection of affected health centres and schools:* In order to maintain a minimum quality assistance of basic services, priority should be given to the resumption of their functioning, including emergency rehabilitation of water systems.
- *Food aid/food security:* Provision of food rations is important not only for the population housed in public shelters but also for those who will be returning to their homes once the water levels descend or once the levels of soil saturation by rainfall drop to normal. Most vulnerable communities have lost their main food and income source due to heavy rains and floods. Due to the loss of harvest in the rural areas, in a period of two to three months from now, this lack of food production will generate a deficit in the food security situation and have a potential negative impact on coping mechanisms at household level. Furthermore, agricultural activities have been severely affected by the floods. It is therefore important to help restore livelihoods through the promotion of short-term emergency agricultural activities (distribution of seeds/plants, agricultural inputs and livestock/small cattle). In the medium-term, food distribution will need to be complemented by food security activities.
- *Temporary shelters for displaced people:* for the moment, more than 4,800 people are living in provisional shelters and are receiving some humanitarian assistance mainly through the Civil Defence, responsible for distributing food aid. Displaced people mainly consist of urban dwellers whose coping capacities have been reduced to a lower level. It is expected that the evacuated families will return to their homes in the following days/weeks.
- *Disaster risk reduction* should be mainstreamed as much as possible in humanitarian operations. The adoption of risk reduction activities in the humanitarian response will be considered. This component will complement the four ongoing DIPECHO projects currently being implemented in El Oro, Manabi, Esmeraldas, Cotopaxi and Los Rios provinces.

### 1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

The Decision will target a population of 10,000 families (around 60,000 people) living in the most severely affected provinces of Ecuadorian Coast.

Operations will need to take into account the special needs of vulnerable groups such as children, women, elderly, disabled and indigenous minorities.

To the extent possible, priority will be given to communities in the most remote areas. Children under five will be given special attention. Women heads of family should also be preferential beneficiaries of the humanitarian assistance.

Priority will also be given to operations that mainstream disaster risk reduction in their relief activities as the population targeted by this decision will most probably continue to live in disaster-prone areas.

#### 1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

Weather conditions in the forthcoming weeks constitute the main risk if rain continues and forecasts by INAHMI do not foresee any improvement. The risk of further rainfall or landslides could worsen the sanitary and household food security situation, and increase the needs to be covered.

Worsening climatic conditions may hamper resumption of basic activities, causing further worsening of the overall situation, impeding access to beneficiaries for the distribution of food rations, or preventing a reasonable level of food security production.

If the current political situation becomes more unstable, and the provinces continue with the strikes and road blockage, the projects could suffer from the non-provision of material needed for the intervention.

## **2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:** <sup>12</sup>

### 2.1. - Objectives:

Principal objective:

To preserve lives and alleviate the suffering of the populations affected by the floods and landslides in Ecuador.

Specific objective:

To assist the victims of floods and landslides with integrated relief and restoration of basic livelihoods.

### 2.2. - Components:

The components funded under this Decision mainly include the following:

- Water and Sanitation: water supply, cleaning of stagnant waters and polluted sources, waste disposal and latrines, basic rehabilitation of water systems, water treatment.
- Food Aid/Security: Food aid distribution, short-term emergency agricultural activities (seeds, tools, agricultural inputs, small cattle and livestock).
- Health: health education campaigns, basic preventive and curative health care, drugs supply.
- Non Food Items: provision of hygiene and domestic kits, mosquito net distribution, etc.

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<sup>12</sup> Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid are awarded in accordance with the Financial Regulation, in particular Article 110 thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Article 168 thereof (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, OJ L248 of 16 September 2002 and No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 of 31 December 2002).

Rate of financing: In accordance with Article 169 of the Financial Regulation, grants for the implementation of this Decision may finance 100% of the costs of an action.

- Emergency repairs to health centres and schools. Repair of water and sanitation systems in the affected buildings. Cleaning/basic equipment for schools used as temporary shelters.
- Disaster preparedness: Strengthening of local capacities in risk management and disaster preparedness through mitigation works to protect vital infrastructures, contingency plans revision, etc.

### **3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:**

The duration of humanitarian aid operations shall be six months.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 21 March 2006.

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this Decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. In this respect, the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

### **4 - Previous interventions/Decisions of the Commission within the context of the current crisis**

There were no previous interventions during the last three years in Ecuador.

## 5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms.

Donors in ECUADOR the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others***	
	EUR		EUR		USD
		DG ECHO (DIPECHO)	900,000	OCHA	78,000
		Other services		IFRC	56,900
Belgium				COSUDE	13,000
Cyprus				CAFOD	35,000
Czech Republic				CRS	46,400
Denmark					
Estonia					
Finland					
France					
Germany					
Greece					
Hungary					
Ireland					
Italy					
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Luxemburg					
Malta					
Netherlands					
Poland					
Portugal					
Slovakia					
Slovenia					
Spain					
Sweden					
United kingdom					
Subtotal		Subtotal	900,000	Subtotal	
		Grand total	900,000		

Dated : 29/3/2006

(\*) Source : DG ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://hac.cec.eu.int>

Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

\*\*\*pledges in response to the current flood emergency situation

WFP has already distributed 5,000 family rations, and in the following weeks they plan to distribute 18,000 more, prioritizing remote rural areas and families who have suffered agricultural losses. These rations will be distributed each 15 days, during a two-month period; The International Federation of the Red Cross has allocated USD 56,900 to the Ecuadorian Red Cross, in order to provide food and hygiene relief to 1,600 families. CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development) will assist the affected populations with food aid and hygiene relief in El Oro and Manabi provinces with USD 35,000. CRS will assist 370 families with a budget of USD 46,400. COSUDE (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) has allocated USD 13,000 for hygiene kits in Manabi province. OCHA has also allocated USD 78,000 through the UN Agencies to provide food rations and medical and sanitation supplies.

The Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) is collaborating with the Ministry of Health, in order to carry out public health surveillance to be able to control any outbreak of dengue, malaria, etc.

## 6 - Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the Decision: EUR 1,000,000

## 6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

<b>Principal objective:</b> <i>To preserve lives and alleviate the suffering of the populations affected by the floods and landslides in Ecuador</i>			
<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)</b>	<b>Geographical area of operation</b>	<b>Potential partners<sup>13</sup></b>
Specific objective 1: To assist the victims of floods and landslides with integrated relief and restoration of basic livelihoods	1,000,000	Provinces affected by floods and landslides in Ecuador	- CAFOD - CARE NEDERLAND (FORMER DRA) - COOPI - CROIX-ROUGE - ESP - INTERMON - SI - UN – PAHO - UN - WFP-B
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,000,000		

<sup>13</sup> CATHOLIC AGENCY FOR OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT (GBR), COOPERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE (ITA), CRUZ ROJA ESPAÑOLA, (E), INTERMON OXFAM, (E), SOLIDARIDAD INTERNACIONAL, (E), Stichting CARE Nederland, UN - WORLD FOOD PROGRAM - LIAISON OFFICE, UNITED NATIONS - PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION

**7 - Budget Impact article 23 02 01**

-	CE (EUR)
Initial Available Appropriations for 2006	470,429,000
Supplementary Budgets	
Transfers Commission	
<b>Total Available appropriations</b>	<b>470,429,000</b>
Total executed to date (27/03/2006)	252,550,000
Available remaining	217,879,000
<b>Total amount of the Decision</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>

**COMMISSION DECISION**  
**of**  
**on the financing of emergency humanitarian operations from the general budget of the**  
**European Union in**  
**ECUADOR**

**THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,**

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,  
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid<sup>14</sup>, and in particular Article 13 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Coastal areas of Ecuador have suffered, from early February to mid March 2006, unusually heavy and continuing rains, resulting in floods and landslides that affected more than 165,000 people;
- (2) Floods and landslides have also destroyed about 25,000 hectares of crops of 4,000 vulnerable farmers;
- (3) 25,000 people are facing food insecurity and lack drinking water after two months of downpours;
- (4) Heavy rains are expected to continue over the coming weeks, according to meteorologists, as Ecuador's rainy season continues;
- (5) A field assessment carried out by the European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid - ECHO has shown that there remain substantial humanitarian needs in the affected populations which have not been met;
- (6) Humanitarian aid operations financed by this Decision should be of a maximum duration of six months;
- (7) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 1,000,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to over 60,000 people affected by the floods, taking into account the available budget, other donors-contributions and other factors.

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<sup>14</sup>OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6  
ECHO/ECU/BUD/2006/01000

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 1,000,000 for emergency humanitarian aid operations to provide the necessary assistance and relief to 60,000 victims of floods and landslides in Ecuador by using line 23 02 01 of the 2006 general budget of the European Union.
2. In accordance with Article 2 (a) of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:
  - To assist the victims of floods and landslides with integrated relief and restoration of basic livelihoods.

The total amount of this Decision is allocated to this objective.

*Article 2*

1. The implementation of humanitarian aid operations funded by this Decision shall have a maximum duration of six months from their starting date.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 21 March 2006.
3. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to force majeure or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

*Article 3*

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission