

Alert

Peru

Heavy rain and river floods in Ucayali

Geneva, April 11, 2011

1. Brief description of the emergency

Since late February, unusually heavy and continuous rains and storms (an effect of climate change) have fallen on the Department of Ucayali, in the Amazon basin, causing the worst flooding in the last 50 years. The Ucayali River and its tributaries have flooded marginal urban areas, riverside villages, farmlands, and rural settlements inhabited mostly by Shipibo indigenous people. According to the government relief agency, INDECI, approximately 49,000 people have been affected in the region. Floods have destroyed homes, schools, and sanitary posts, and all crops have been lost. Those with means have fled to the regional capital, Pucallpa, but the poorest and most isolated people, especially the Shipibos, are trapped in the higher forest areas or on wooden platforms over the waters, surviving mostly on the fish they can catch. Respiratory illness and dengue have affected a great number of people, especially children.

2. Impact

The affected region is one of the poorest in the country, with a high percentage of indigenous population. Damages to private property and public infrastructure are significant in a large area of the region. Most of the rural population has lost their livelihood (farmland and crops, farm animals, wild game) for months to come, and epidemics are an immediate life threat. Rains continue, and the end of the season is not predictable due to the change in climate patterns.

3. National and international response

The Regional Government has declared a state of emergency, but the national government has not. INDECI, the government relief agency, has distributed food, medications, mosquito netting, sheets, and roofing material in insufficient quantities. Caritas has also provided humanitarian aid, and UNICEF has set up an emergency fund directed mainly to children. The aid is distributed mostly in the urban and peri-urban areas, due to easier access.

4. ACT Alliance response

The National Coordinator of Human Rights (Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos), has contacted ACT Alliance on behalf of its Ucayali regional chapter and the Federation of Amazonian Communities of Ucayali, an indigenous people's organization. Brot für die Welt (BfdW) – Bread for the World - field office, on behalf of the ACT members, is sending out this alert and assessing the possibility of a Rapid Response request.

5. Planned activities

Humanitarian relief activities will target 18 Shipibo communities, with approximately 4,000 affected people, in the northern area of the Department of Ucayali, adjacent to the Ucayali, Aguaytia, Calleria and Utuquinua rivers. Food and chlorine for purifying water will be transported with the help of the Peruvian Navy. The estimated period is two months.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Jean-Daniel Birmele, ACT Chief Finance Officer (Jean_Daniel.Birmele@actalliance.org).

Thank you for your attention.

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