

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Disasters in the reporting period affected 699,020 people. Drought and flooding were the biggest disasters.
- Dengue in Latin America and the Caribbean affected more than 2.2 million people and killed 1,000 in 2013. Central America, the Dominican Republic and Paraguay were the most severely affected.
- OCHA allocated US\$2.5 million in CERF funds to assist people affected by drought in Bolivia, and \$85,000 in emergency funds to assist those affected by heavy rainfall in the Lesser Antilles.
- The Regional Meeting on International Humanitarian Assistance Mechanisms VI was held in Jamaica in October.



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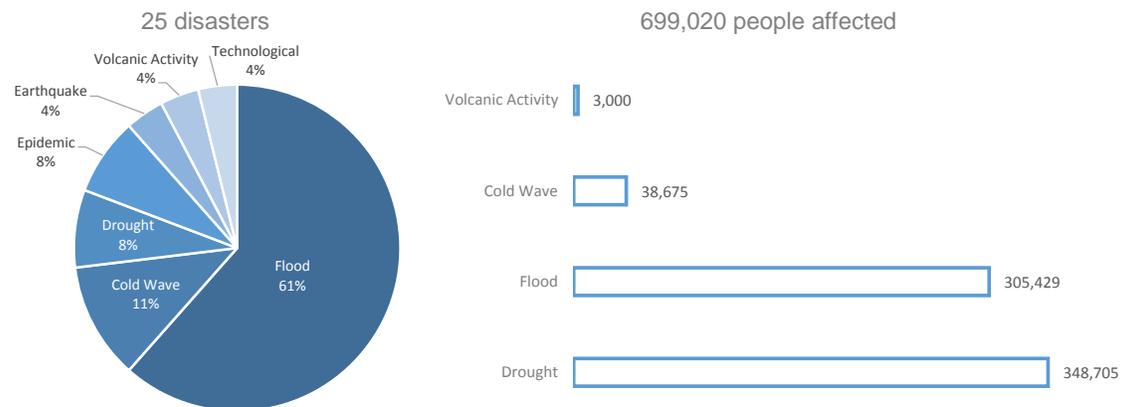
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## Disasters affect 700,000 people from October to December

At least 25 disasters occurred in the fourth quarter of 2013, affecting 699,020 people. The hurricane season, flooding, drought and extreme cold affected 16 countries. Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Paraguay were the hardest hit compared with previous periods. Slow-onset and progressive disasters, such as the drought in Bolivia that began in mid-2013, affected more than 300,000 people. Dengue affected 2.2 million people in the region throughout 2013.

According to a [report](#) issued by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, (UNISDR), local emergencies caused the largest humanitarian impact.<sup>1</sup> These disasters often received little media coverage, rendering the consequences invisible. UNISDR stated that records show the majority of people (90 per cent) and homes (86 per cent) were directly affected by local disasters (from 1999 to 2011). Local emergencies also caused half of the deaths and accounted for 37 per cent of the total of destroyed homes.

Number of disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean from October to December 2013



Currently, floods comprise the majority of disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean. The number of people affected nearly matches the number of people affected by drought, which is principally composed of people affected by the drought in Bolivia. The seasonal period of extreme cold affected countries such as Guatemala, Bolivia and Peru. Due to a quiet hurricane season in 2013, the number of disasters and affected people in the final quarter of the year was low in comparison with the same period in prior years. The epidemic section discusses those affected by cholera. Dengue in 2013<sup>2</sup> affected more than 2 million people in almost all countries in the region. See page 3. Source: Compiled from the reports from national authorities published on: [www.redhum.org](http://www.redhum.org)

### AFFECTED

Drought	348,705
Floods	305,429
Cold wave	38,675
Other	6,211
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>699,020</b>

Source: Compiled from reports by national authorities from 25 emergency situations; published on [www.redhum.org](http://www.redhum.org).

Note: The figures are taken from official reports. However, this does not imply they have been officially approved by the countries as the final figures. The figures are solely for reference. Please contact the national authorities if you require more information.

<sup>1</sup> UNISDR, 2013. Impact of disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1990-2011

<sup>2</sup> Two million people affected in 2013, see page 3



### Floods in the Lesser Antilles

Heavy rains affected the Lesser Antilles at the end of December. At least 15 people died and thousands were left isolated and without water and electricity. OCHA approved \$35,000 in emergency funds for Saint Lucia, \$15,000 for Dominica, and \$35,000 for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The funds were used to support national authorities in assisting the health sector and providing medical supplies, food and cleaning implements in each country. OCHA, along with 15 United Nations agencies, donors and Governments, contributed resources to help affected people.



### Floods in south-eastern Brazil arrive early, affect more than 70,000 people

In December, the usual summer rains affected the states of Espírito Santo and Minas Gerais in the south-eastern region. Nearly 70,000 people were forced to leave their homes or were isolated. Sixty of the 70 cities in Espírito Santo were affected. The Government readied technical assistance and supplies and allocated \$5 million for early recovery projects. In Minas Gerais, 20,000 people were evacuated from danger zones. The authorities dispatched the necessary resources.



### Guatemala: Rainfall affects 630,000 people in 2013

The 2013 rainy season affected 630,000 people and killed 16 people. According to the National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction, civil-protection authorities responded to more than 400 disasters in 2013, including floods and landslides. The rainy season began in May but worsened in September and October, which is when the majority of the victims were affected.

The authorities began assisting people affected by the cold-weather season in November. At the end of 2013, 3,000 people were assisted in eight temporary emergency shelters. The last time Guatemala requested international assistance was in November 2012, when the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated \$1.6 million to assist with disaster relief after a 6.2-magnitude earthquake struck the country.



### Bolivia: CERF releases \$2.5 million to mitigate drought consequences

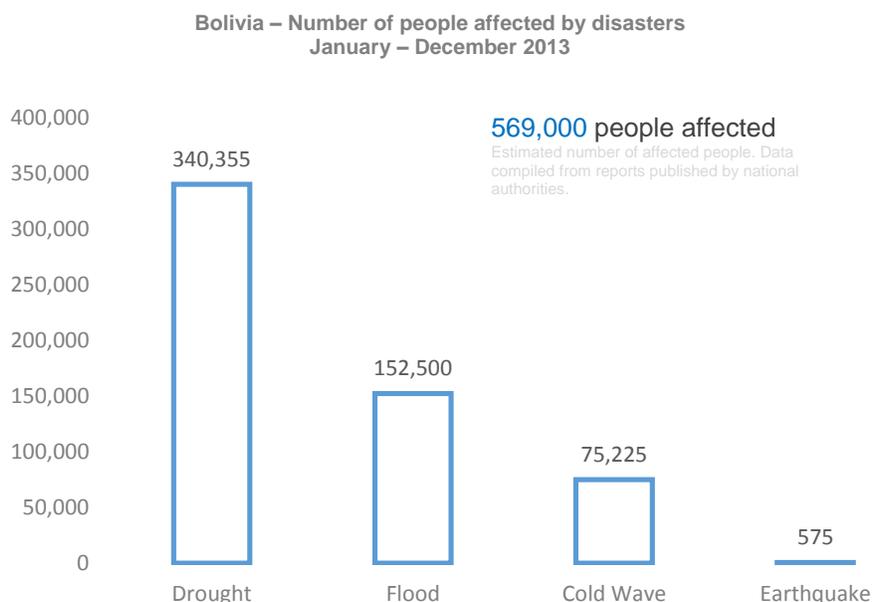
In 2013, drought affected 68,070 families (almost 340,355 people), 193,355 hectares of crops and killed 441,390 head of cattle. The most affected departments were Tarija, La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and Chuquisaca. The total rainfall between April and September was only 94 millimetres, which is well below the average of 147 millimetres. At the end of July, various humanitarian agencies and the United Nations participated in an evaluation led by the Vice Ministry of Civil Defense and departmental authorities. In addition to funding from the national and departmental government, the United Nations allotted \$2.5 million in CERF funds to assist people affected in the sectors of agriculture, food, health and nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene.



### Bolivia: Recurrent disasters continue to affect the country

Hailstorms, strong winds, rains and flooding affected Bolivia in the final quarter of 2013. About 7,150 families (more than 34,765 people) were affected. According to the Vice Ministry of Civil Defense's National Integrated Information System for Risk Management, the most affected departments were Beni, Cochabamba, La Paz, Santa Cruz, Pando and Chuquisaca. A 4.7-magnitude earthquake in Cabezas in the Department of Santa Cruz affected 115 families (575 people). Many of the zones

affected by the rain and flooding were also affected by the previous drought. This magnified the effect of the recent disasters and limited the ability of the affected people to recover.



Bolivia is one of the countries most affected by disasters in the Americas. Drought, flooding and cold waves affect hundreds of thousands of Bolivians annually. In 2013, nearly half a million people were affected, but drought affected the greatest number of people. Source: Official country reports published on [www.redhum.org](http://www.redhum.org).

## Chikungunya, dengue and cholera in the Americas

On 6 December, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) received confirmation of the first cases of transmission of the chikungunya virus in the Americas. The cases were reported on Saint Martin Island. There are also cases in Guadalupe, the British Virgin Islands, Martinique and Saint Barts. The national authorities are on alert. For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/1iq4pF9>



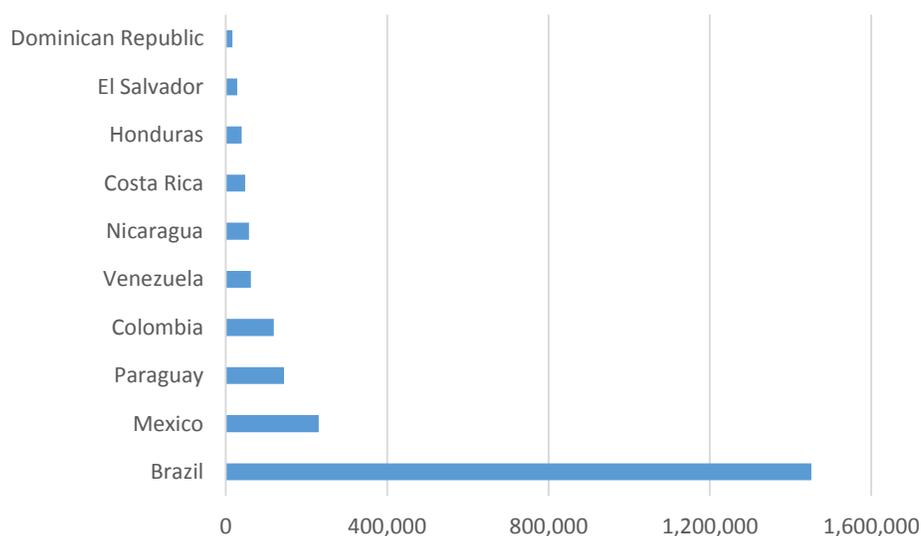
### Latin America and the Caribbean: PAHO considers 2013 an epidemic year for dengue

About 44 countries registered 2.2 million cases of dengue and 1,000 deaths in 2013. Brazil accounted for 68 per cent of the reported cases and 50 per cent of the deaths. Central America and Mexico had the second-highest number of cases. Paraguay was one of the most affected countries, with a reported 200,000 cases. Alerts for the virus escalated in the third quarter of 2013, primarily affecting seven countries in the region: Paraguay, Nicaragua, Honduras, Barbados, Dominican Republic, Brazil and Colombia.

According to PAHO, dengue in Latin America and the Caribbean has a complex epidemiological profile. The virus has four different strains that circulate in conditions favourable to transmission. Dengue's presence in the region is strengthened by the persistence of social determinants, such as population growth, migrations, unplanned and uncontrolled urbanization, pockets of poverty in the cities, and lack of basic services, such as potable water and garbage collection.

Other challenges related to the control of dengue are the lack of social participation in prevention activities, and limited resources to promote and communicate good health practices. Dengue cases are expected to continue to decrease at the beginning of 2014, mainly due to the end of the rainy season in Central America.

Dengue cases in 2013  
10 countries with the highest number of reported cases



The 10 Latin American and Caribbean countries with the highest number of dengue cases. The virus has generated emergencies in the majority of countries in Central America and in Paraguay, which was one of the most affected countries in 2013. ©Pan American Health Organization.



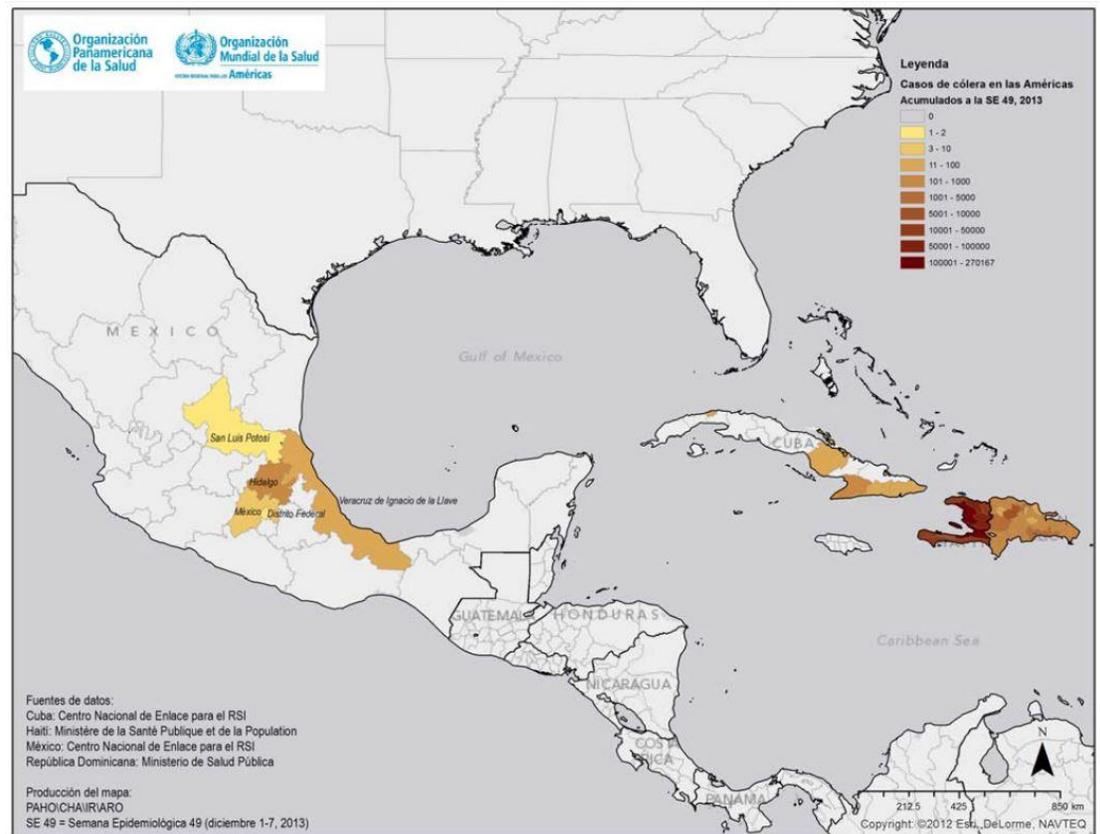
### Mexico: Cholera outbreak alerts regional authorities

Cholera remains a threat to public health in the region's countries. The presence of the disease is often used as a key measure of social development. For example, it does not pose a threat to countries with adequate sanitation conditions and access to potable water, but remains a challenge in countries where these conditions are not present.

Since the beginning of September, 187 cholera cases and one death have been reported in Mexico. The authorities continue to monitor the country's sanitation situation. In 2013, cholera was also present in Cuba (678 cases), Haiti and the Dominican Republic. However, cases have not been reported in Cuba since August 2013.

Since the epidemic began in 2010, Haiti and the Dominican Republic have reported 725,146 cases (693,875 in Haiti and 31,271 in the Dominican Republic). To combat cholera outbreaks in 2013, Central American countries strengthened their internal systems of epidemiological monitoring and reinforced border controls.

### Cholera cases in 2013 Latin America and the Caribbean



Four regional countries had cholera cases in 2013. The outbreak in Cuba was under control by August. Mexico reported more than 180 cases and one death in the final quarter of 2013. Source: Map and data – Pan American Health Organization.

## Hurricane season: Relief for Caribbean countries

The Atlantic hurricane season officially ended on 30 November. It was one of the quietest in terms of the total number of hurricanes. In 2013, there were only 12 tropical storms and two hurricanes (Humberto and Ingrid), both of which were category 1<sup>3</sup>. According to the United States' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the 2013 season had the lowest number of hurricanes since 1982 due to atmospheric conditions unfavourable to the formation of hurricanes. These conditions persisted in the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean.

The Pacific hurricane season was more active, with 20 storms and eight hurricanes, including one major hurricane. Mexico was the most affected country, with 213,000 affected people and more than \$15 billion in economic losses.

<sup>3</sup> the lowest category on a scale of one to five; for example, Typhoon Haiyan, which devastated the Philippines in November 2013, was a category 5 storm.



## Coffee rust: a discouraging outlook for small-scale producers in Central America

Two million people in Central America and the Caribbean depend on coffee production as their principal source of income. The majority are small-scale producers or temporary workers in rural areas. The International Regional Phytosanitary Protection and Agriculture and Livestock Hygiene Organization estimates that coffee rust has affected between 33 and 100 per cent of the harvests in more than 50 per cent of the region's coffee plantations. The International Coffee Organization estimated economic losses of \$550 million in 2013.

The World Food Programme provided food assistance until the end of 2013. In Central America and the Caribbean, coffee rust affected approximately 53,000 families (265,000 people) whose subsistence depends on the crop. A total of 260,000 people were assisted in the region, mainly in the four countries that declared national states of emergency: Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

## Jamaica: MIAH comes to the Caribbean

The [Regional Meeting on International Humanitarian Assistance Mechanisms \(MIAH\)](#) is considered the most important preparedness event in the region. It provides a discussion forum for Government officials, NGOs, the Red Cross, UN agencies and the donor community to propose concrete actions and solutions to improve deficiencies in the humanitarian architecture, and to share their views on topics such as humanitarian innovation and partnerships.

OCHA and the Governments of Canada and Mexico started the MIAH in 2008, when participants from NGOs, regional Governments and the United Nations convened a meeting with the Secretary-General to discuss ways to improve international humanitarian coordination. MIAH has gained strength, visibility and collaborators, and it has been hosted by various countries throughout the region<sup>4</sup> since 2008. Many participants see it as the most creative and best attended event in the Americas.

In 2010, a follow-up event was established to ensure that the recommendations and activities from previous MIAHs were considered at subsequent events. Attendees comprised delegates from Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Ecuador, and they work closely with OCHA representatives.

The theme of this past year's MIAH was "Strengthening Public and Private Partnerships, Toward a Common Regional Platform for Humanitarian Action". This drove the debates and discussions.

The Kingston Plan of Action and the Declaration of Kingston were produced at the MIAH VI. Both contain commitments, tasks, responsibilities and products that will help to achieve joint humanitarian action in the coming months.

At the [World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, in Istanbul, Turkey](#) the Secretary-General expects the entire humanitarian system to contribute ideas and innovations to better serve people in need. As a result, MIAH will be one of the main consultative events in Latin America and the Caribbean in which to suggest issues that should be on the forum's agenda.



In 2013, MIAH VI was held in Kingston, Jamaica, marking the first time that the event took place in the Caribbean. From 16 to 18 October, 168 delegates from 24 countries discussed and debated regional trends in risk, preparation, response, partnerships, innovation, new tools and initiatives and the humanitarian efforts in the Caribbean. ©OCHA.

<sup>4</sup> México in 2008, Brazil in 2009, Argentina in 2010, Ecuador in 2011, Panama in 2012

## Ecuador: Humanitarian Country Team established

To strengthen the national decentralized system of risk management and save more lives in an emergency, Ecuadoran authorities and about 20 organizations, including the United Nations, signed a formal agreement to establish a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).<sup>5</sup>

Eleven countries in Latin America and the Caribbean currently have HCTs. They have produced positive results for the national system and the international response to disasters, as reflected in their ability to rapidly deliver relief in a disaster that is consistent and in accordance with affected people's needs.

In the last decade, disasters have affected 1.2 million people in Ecuador, and 60 per cent of these disasters have been linked to climate-related events, according to CRED. Despite the increase in disasters over the last few years, the number of deaths has decreased due to the country's improved emergency response capacities, primarily in pre-hospital care, evacuation, rescue, emergency shelter management and health care.



Ecuador is the eleventh country in Latin America and the Caribbean to form an HCT, creating opportunities for partnerships with other humanitarian actors such as NGOs, the Red Cross and national authorities. ©National Secretariat for Risk Management.

## Brief Notes

### World Humanitarian Data and Trends

OCHA has published the second version of *World Humanitarian Data and Trends*—a global compendium of data and analysis on humanitarian needs, responses and trends at the national level.

The report helps establish a common humanitarian database to support humanitarian policies and decision-making at the operational level. It is available at: <http://bit.ly/1fjZyUI>



### The International Federation of the Red Cross publishes the World Disasters Report 2013

This year's "World Disasters Report" emphasizes the importance of technology to future humanitarian action. The report, which was written by 40 academics and humanitarian specialists, highlights the ability of local people to save more lives in the critical hours after an emergency strikes. However, many of the primary intervention agents do not have access to information, nor the basic tools to save lives, such as early alert systems, the basic infrastructure of networks and connectivity. The report

<sup>5</sup> The Humanitarian Country Team (known as the Humanitarian Network in Latin America) comprises the country's main international and national humanitarian organizations, including United Nations agencies, the International Organization for Migration, NGOs and the International Red Cross Movement. All have pledged to participate in coordination agreements, and they are under the joint leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator or Humanitarian Coordinator and the executive director of the national agency of emergency management (or the equivalent) in various countries.

acknowledges a profound disparity in the ability to access new technologies. It calls this disparity the “digital gap” and asserts that it is more pronounced in disaster-prone countries. The report is available at: <http://bit.ly/1cA4RwE>

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