Acknowledgements

2014 was a difficult year for the humanitarian community throughout the world. Climate change; disease outbreaks; crises in Syria, Central African Republic, South Sudan, and Gaza; typhoons Yolanda and Ruby in the Philippines; and the Ebola outbreak in Africa are some of the major emergencies that required humanitarian actors’ attention and challenged their response capacity. At the end of 2014, more than 51 million people were displaced worldwide, the highest level of displacement after the Second World War. During the year US$ 17.1 million was requested from donors to support response efforts.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, people struggled to cope with food insecurity, urban violence, increased migration and displacement, new epidemic outbreaks such as chikungunya, climate change and other threats. Preliminary data from CRED suggests that in 2014 about 4.5 million people were affected by disasters in America, which represents 4.8 per cent of the global total.

In 2014, the United Nations allocated close to $17.5 million in CERF funds (98%) and Emergency Cash Grants (2%) to assist thousands of people affected by disasters in 10 countries in the LAC region.

OCHA supported Humanitarian Country Teams throughout the region to ensure effective response efforts to disasters and crises. OCHA also supported other regions by deploying staff members to aid response efforts to humanitarian crises in Djibouti, the Philippines and Iraq.

The support that OCHA has received from its partners and stakeholders is invaluable. We thank member states, regional and sub-regional organizations, United Nations agencies, international organizations, and cooperation agencies for their contribution in working together to save lives. We look forward to your continued support in the future.

This document provides a glimpse of the events in the region and OCHA’s response efforts for 2014. It includes events and activities that marked an advance in the goal of improving coordination for an effective humanitarian response.

Darío Álvarez
Head of Office a.i.
Index per month

OCHA is the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

This document takes a look at some of the activities, crises and issues that defined OCHA’s work in 2014 and how we helped to save lives.

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Chikungunya and dengue fever

In December 2013 the first local transmission of chikungunya fever was confirmed in the Caribbean island of St. Martin. This virus spread rapidly throughout the region and by the end of 2014 there were over one million suspected cases. With an additional one million cases of dengue during the year, outbreaks became an enormous challenge for countries.

OCHA worked with PAHO/WHO to coordinate preparedness activities with humanitarian organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean countries. OCHA also worked with Humanitarian Country Teams to update contingency and response plans and with national authorities, who focused on immigration procedures and controlling vectors.

The mortality rate for chikungunya is not high, however, the disease weakens patients and often results in prolonged absenteeism, which heightens risk of low productivity.

chikungunya

1 MILLION

Suspected cases in 2014

dengue

1 MILLION

Cases detected in 2014

Source: Pan American Health Organization

© CDC
Floods in Bolivia

350,000 People affected in the country
80,000 People lost their homes in the department of Beni
23,500 People in temporary shelters

The Government of Bolivia declared a state of emergency as flooding worsened. OCHA worked with authorities and humanitarian partners to develop an effective response plan and recovery strategy that included disaster prevention and mitigation components. Response operations continued until September 2014.

3 people deployed
OCHA ROLAC
5 people deployed
UNDAC

$3.2 million
CERF

Clusters: food, nutrition, health, shelter, protection, education, wash, coordination and logistics.

“One of my main tasks was to assist in consolidating a humanitarian strategy that reflected people’s needs in the increasingly precarious situation in Djibouti. The country is experiencing an increase in displaced people due to chronic drought in the Horn of Africa.”

300,000 People affected

Juan Pablo O’Farrell
National Disaster Response Advisor deployed to Djibouti
More than 56 million people in the region moved above the extreme poverty line between 2000 and 2012. However, inequality among social classes is still very high. This inequality increases the level of violence in the region. Crime and violence have high social costs. People often relocate to escape their social situation and end up with limited development opportunities.

OCHA advocates for the integration of elements from humanitarian responses into national protection policies to improve the lives of victims of violence.

HOMICIDES IN LATIN AMERICA

Honduras, Venezuela, Guatemala, El Salvador and Jamaica respectively, are the five countries with the most homicides per 100,000 people in the world, according to the 2012 report from United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

OCHA works with humanitarian partners and cluster leaders to identify and monitor the impact of violence in the region. One of OCHA’s challenges is to ensure access to humanitarian assistance in areas controlled by gangs and illegal groups.

Migration is one of the consequences of the increasing violence and became a humanitarian focus in 2014, especially unaccompanied migrant children detained in the United States.
Heavy Rains in Paraguay

- **225,000** People affected
- **+75,000** Displaced people just in the capital, Asuncion

Heavy rains in Paraguay caused the country’s main rivers to overflow and subsequent flooding affected nine departments. Response efforts continued until July 2014.

- **3 Million** Allocated by the government of Paraguay
- **125,000** Received food assistance
- **3 people** deployed by OCHA ROLAC
- **9 people** deployed by UNDAC

Clusters: agriculture, WASH, health, education, shelter and non-food items

OCHA ROLAC staff member returns after three months of aiding response efforts in Philippines for Yolanda typhoon:

“An interesting part of my information management tasks was mapping out transition plans for departing humanitarian actors to ensure that Philippine Government would have enough support from the international community to proceed with response operations.”

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Brenda Eriksen
Information Management Officer
Earthquakes in Chile and Nicaragua

Major earthquakes in two countries marked the first weeks of April. Close to a million people were affected in an 8.2 earthquake in northern Chile and 6.2 and 6.6 earthquakes in Nicaragua. Chilean authorities organized a mass evacuation from high-risk areas as part of the response.

On April 10
- 6.2°

On April 11
- 6.6°

24,000
People affected

On 1 April, an
- 8.2° earthquake affected northern Chile

+970,000
people affected

OCHA constantly monitors humanitarian situations in the region to ensure rapid disaster response capacity. In this highly seismic region, an effective monitoring system is vital to quickly assist affected populations.

“During the mission in Chile, we facilitated inter-agency coordination between the United Nations, the Federation of the Red Cross and the International Organization for Migration to develop a situation analysis and provide recommendations for the response to the wildfires in Valparaíso. Upon a request from the Chilean government, the MIRA methodology was used in the field analysis. The integration of the MIRA methodology and authorities’ acceptance of the results was positive.”

Ana María Rebaza
National Disaster Response Advisor in Peru

MIRA: Multi Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment

© OCHA

A drawing by a student from Iquique, northern Chile, representing an earthquake and tsunami.
The OCHA Regional Office has 40 staff members in 12 countries and its regional office in Panama. National Disaster Response Advisors represent OCHA coordination functions in seven countries. Redrum representatives, a project coordinated by OCHA for information management, are present in nine countries.

OCHA has created several inter-agency coordination mechanisms to improve coordination: UNETT teams, Humanitarian Country Teams and the REDLAC group.

The UNETT team is a national technical and operational mechanism for emergency preparedness made up of United Nations agencies to enable coordinated disaster response. OCHA has supported the formation of 23 UNETT teams in the region.

Humanitarian Country Teams are formed by the main humanitarian organizations. These include the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration, non-governmental organizations and the International Movement of the Red Cross. There are 11 HCTs in the region.

REDLAC is the Emergencies, Risk and Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean working group, with more than 30 regional organizations in Panama. REDLAC coordinates and advocates for humanitarian actions at a regional level. OCHA is the secretariat of REDLAC.

OCHA has country offices in Haiti and Colombia that are independent from the regional office and report directly to headquarters.
Unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents

The rising rate of unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents from the Central American Northern Triangle (Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador) to Mexico and the United States was a challenge in terms of humanitarian protection during 2014.

“Sixteen-year-old Guillermo left Honduras to flee violence. Neighbourhood gangs insisted that he become a member, but he refused to join. With no other visible option, he began a journey towards the ‘north’ that would involve abuse and misery. Although he is still an adolescent, he is aware of the dangers this journey. Thousands of children and adolescents make this same decision in hopes for a better life.”

OCHA worked with humanitarian partners and national authorities to implement measures to ensure the rights of these children and adolescents. It continues to support partners and efforts to end forced migration by improving living conditions.

Between October 1, 2013 and October 31, 2014

USA DETAINED 66,200 unaccompanied minors trying to cross the border.

58% of these migrant children were affected by violence in their home country. (UNHCR report “Children on the Run”)
Innovation & Accountability in a Changing Humanitarian World

New technological trends and tools continue to emerge and bring interesting possibilities for humanitarian issues. Innovation in the humanitarian context does not only refer to developing technology, but also to learning processes and changing ways of thinking and implementing ideas. Tools for mobile devices, such as field assessments and beneficiary surveys, are replacing paper formats. Campaigns through social networks and text messages via mobile phones are increasingly supporting humanitarian action. Such tools also help to improve accountability to beneficiaries.

**7.2 BILLION**
Global population

**7.37 BILLION**
Mobile phones worldwide

**3.65 BILLION**
Worldwide users

**600 MILLION**
Population in LATAM

**632 MILLION**
Mobile phones in LATAM

**319 MILLION**
Users in LATAM

Source: GSMA.

**2014 - 20%**
Smart mobile phones in LATAM

**2017 - 40%**

Source: GSMA.

OCHA, together with REDLAC, organized the forum in Panama: Improving Accountability and Innovating in a Changing Humanitarian World

An opportunity for humanitarian partners to share experiences and lessons learned in themes of humanitarian effectiveness and transformation through innovation. About 80 persons from 35 agencies, institutions and other entities from 20 countries participated in the event.

KoBo is an initiative of Harvard University, an open code program focusing on data collection and analysis.

In September 2014 KoBo launched the KoBoToolbox, together with the United Nations and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), to collect standardized and reliable electronic data, for easier use in humanitarian crises. OCHA supports and promotes this tool.

Other innovation tools developed and used by OCHA: HDX, Humanitarian ID, Humanitarian Kiosk.
Further details at http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/home

**176 MILLION**
People in Latin America are internet users

**19% + THAN 2013**

**147,249 MILLION**

10% of worldwide audience

Source: Comscore.

**SOCIAL NETWORKS + VISITS**

1. **144.2 MILLION**
2. **34.7 MILLION**
3. **28.8 MILLION**

Source: Comscore.
Natural Disasters in 2014

In 2014, Latin American and the Caribbean experienced 96 disasters that affected about seven million people. Floods and landslides continue to be the most frequent disasters (76 events), while drought and epidemics affected more people (4.8 million combined). South America is the region with the highest number of disasters (54 events), while Guatemala is the most affected country in the continent (36 events). Several unusual events occurred in 2014 in terms of the humanitarian situation in the region:

- The 2014 Hurricane Season was the calmest in recent years
- Migration of unaccompanied children from Central America to the United States highlights an ongoing humanitarian crisis.
- Cases of Chikungunya virus caused the number of people affected by epidemics to double (compared to other years)
- Coffee rust and drought in Central America increased the risk by food insecurity risk
- Increase in number of people affected by floods in Bolivia and Paraguay

**Estimate of people affected by disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2014**

Comparison by type of disaster (2014) and per year (2003-2014)

- **Drought**
- **Epidemic**
- **Earthquake**
- **Floods**
- **Cold Wave**
- **Migration**

In 2014, more people were affected by drought than by floods, which is unique to this year. CRED preliminary data estimates that 4.5 million people were affected in the year. A tally from official documents from Civil Protections published in Redhun raises this estimate to 7 million.

Although the average number of disasters per year remains constant since 2010, the number of affected people has decreased progressively. The region was severely affected by the 2005 and 2007 hurricane seasons and earthquakes in Haiti and Chile in 2010. Source: CRED.
Losses in coffee production caused by the rust fungus

The coffee rust fungus has been causing significant losses in Central America since 2012. Coffee is one of the most important crops in this region. Despite the mitigation measures, humanitarian consequences increased in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

"Plots that used to produce 400 pounds of coffee per harvest two years ago, nowadays only produce 25 pounds. Workdays paid US$10 per day and now only pay $1.25. The coffee rust fungus affects everyone equally, whether big or small producers. Families that harvest coffee on a subsistence level are most affected as they have neither resources nor access to financing to face the crisis.”

In responding to this emergency, OCHA worked with authorities of affected countries, UN agencies and associations of experts in coffee plantation and cultivation. National and regional food security groups were activated and the Risk, Emergency and Disaster for Latin America and the Caribbean working group (REDLAC) coordinated regional actions from the humanitarian regional hub in Panama.

- People severely and/or moderately affected
- People with slight or increasing food insecurity

1.3 MILLION
People affected by severe and moderate food insecurity
(El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras)

2 MILLION
People depend on coffee as their main source of income

$500 MILLION
Losses caused by rust

373,584
Displaced labourers

$2.5 MILLION
Mission for Guatemala

$30 MILLION
Required for response efforts
Food security in Central America

The lack of rain in 2014 led to a prolonged drought that affected food security in Central America.

OCHA supported Humanitarian Country Teams in Honduras and Guatemala in developing national emergency response plans and mobilizing financial resources to complement the efforts of national authorities.

© FAO

2.5 MILLION
People affected by food insecurity (Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador)

75% LOSSES
Approximate losses of corn and bean crops

$13.2 MILLION
Required for response efforts in Honduras

CERF

$2.6 MILLION
To Honduras

$2.9 MILLION
To Guatemala

$17.1 MILLION
Required for response efforts in Guatemala
August 19 marked the celebration of the World Humanitarian Day with the slogan: "The world needs more humanitarian heroes." The global event paid tribute to workers who risk their safety and lives for people affected by conflict and disasters.

OCHA and its partners organized activities to celebrate the World Humanitarian Day. In 2014, twelve countries in the region held fairs, talks, sporting and cultural events, and community efforts to celebrate the life of #HumanitarianHeroes.

In 2008, the United Nations General Assembly designated August 19 as the World Humanitarian Day in tribute to the 22 aid workers killed in the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad in 2003.

#HumanitarianHeroes
SARA facilitates planning and accountability

OCHA ROLAC implemented a new system for collecting and reporting internal activities (SARA - Single Activities Reporting Application). SARA is an innovative tool for monitoring OCHA staff activities. In 2014, more than 1,000 activities were registered, the majority related to coordination meetings, disaster preparedness workshops and emergency response missions.

Systematic reporting on qualitative and quantitative aspects of activities is vital for OCHA to measure progress in the annual work plan and to strengthen accountability. SARA is web-based, which allows for quick and easy access. Staff members upload their activities and relate them to the work plan and indicators. This system improves data collection and analysis processes. New modules are under-way to link activities with disaster statistics, preparedness and response missions and human resource management, which will make the system more robust in 2015.

Example of results from SARA:

- **726 Activities**
- **562 Activities** Included in the Weekly Report
- **312 Activities** Included in the Monthly Report

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**PERCENTAGE BY CLASSIFICATION**

- Preparedness: 64.9%
- Partnership: 19.6%
- Response: 8.1%
- Administration: 3.9%

**TOP 10 COUNTRIES**

**TYPE OF EVENTS**

**COMPARISON BY MONTHS AND BY CLASSIFICATION**

**EXAMPLE OF THE APPLICATION OVERVIEW**
Redhum leading humanitarian information management

In 2014, Redhum completed its **seventh year** as the leading online platform for dissemination of humanitarian information in Spanish. With over **2.5 million** visits in seven years, Redhum remains at the forefront as a humanitarian reference in the region, constantly improving and adapting to new technologies with the aim of facilitating navigation.

“*In 2014 we experienced several emergencies, and having well-established and tested information flows was fundamental to the Humanitarian Country Team and the UNETT. Redhum has been providing support by analyzing and improving these flows, little by little, although we can always keep improving*.”

Member of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Guatemala

“*The information generated and shared in Redhum.org is very useful for the humanitarian assistance in emergencies*.”

CARE Guatemala

Seven years in numbers:

- **8,434** Documents
- **1,304** Maps
- **46,677** News Articles
- **3,410** Vacancies
- **19** Events
- **185** Emergencies covered
- **651** Alerts
- **64,000** Records Uploaded
- **255** Organizations
- **1,281** Contacts

**1 MILLION** Visits | **2.5 MILLION** Pages Visited

*Redhum.org meteorological events monitoring has enabled us to prioritize the areas for assessment of damages, to coordinate with other humanitarian actors and share the information in a fast and continuously way*.”

Action Against Hunger

“*Congratulations to the entire Redhum team for its effort and dedication to the portal and the training workshops. It is not easy to coordinate many elements at once but the important thing is that you achieved it*.”

Member of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in El Salvador
Being prepared is key to saving lives

USAR (Urban Search and Rescue) Teams from 14 countries, regional humanitarian organizations and Costa Rica’s National Emergency Commission attended the earthquake response Simulation Exercise (SIMEX). The exercise enabled participants to improve their ability to respond to a major disaster and to learn about best practices in search and rescue in collapsed buildings and international standards. In 2015, a similar exercise will be held in Chile.

The Humanitarian Country Team in Peru also held a simulation exercise in November. The exercise simulated an earthquake and tsunami in Lima and Callao and emphasized processes of telecommunications and information management. OCHA works with national authorities and Humanitarian Country Teams to implement simulation exercises to evaluate and test disaster response plans.

6 Simulation exercises
578 People participated
63 Workshops
1,768 People participated
Humanitarian Financing

In disasters, OCHA’s mission is to save lives and ensure dignity of affected people. This depends on a fast and effective response. A useful tool to achieve this is the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which is annually supplied by voluntary contributions from several donors. Another tool that is used in the region, often in conjunction with the CERF, is OCHA’s Emergency Cash Grant.

**CERF**

$28 million allocated in 2014  
Latin America and the Caribbean

- **Bolivia**: $0.5 million  
- **Colombia**: $2.5 million  
- **Guatemala**: $5.0 million  
- **Haiti**: $7.0 million  
- **Paraguay**: $12.0 million

In 2014, US$28 million in CERF funds were allocated for emergency response efforts - $17.2 million were for new emergencies in five countries and $10.8 million for underfunded crises (Haiti and Colombia).

Source: OCHA

**Emergency Cash Grants**

$295,000 allocated in 2014  
Latin America and the Caribbean

- **Bolivia**: $50,000  
- **Dominica**: $40,000  
- **Guatemala**: $30,000  
- **Paraguay**: $20,000  
- **St. Vincent and the Grenadines**: $20,000

In 2014, six countries were assisted by emergency funds, directly managed by OCHA. In total US$295,000 were allocated to provide immediate response to disasters.

Source: OCHA

**CERF allocated per cluster**

Latin America and the Caribbean

- **Paraguay**: 100%  
- **Colombia**: 99%  
- **Haiti**: 98%  
- **Bolivia**: 97%  
- **Guatemala**: 95%

Nine clusters implemented projects from the five countries that used CERF funds. Health and food have the most projects, followed by water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter and education.

Source: OCHA

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**Ebola reaches the region**

On October 12, 2014, the first case of Ebola contracted in America was confirmed. It was spread by a nurse that assisted a patient infected with Ebola in Liberia who was diagnosed and treated in the United States.

Health authorities in Latin America and the Caribbean reinforced epidemiological surveillance measures at borders, airports and seaports. OCHA worked with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to monitor the evolution of the disease and coordinate efforts in the region to respond to a possible outbreak. Other than the United States, there have been no cases in the region.

Some 18,000 cases and 6,300 deaths were reported mostly in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.
The United Nations Secretary-General convened the first World Humanitarian Summit (#WHS) in Istanbul in May 2016. The summit aims to find new ways in addressing humanitarian needs in a rapid changing world. Presently, more people are affected by conflict and disaster, more often and longer than previous decades. Nowadays, mankind faces new challenges such as climate change, rapid population growth and urbanization.

The regional consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean, towards the World Humanitarian Summit (#WHS), will be held in Guatemala on May 5, 6 and 7, 2015, within the framework of the VII Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance (MIAH). Throughout the region, consultation meetings are being held with humanitarian system key actors. National consultations are being held during the months preceding the MIAH meeting.

To learn more about MIAH and the Regional Consultation process visit www.redhum.org/miah
OCHA is prepared to meet new challenges in 2015

As the United Nations reaches its 70th year, it also meets the deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite significant progress, a lot of work needs to be done to achieve the eight goals set by 189 countries on human rights.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, factors such as climate change, violence, disorganized urbanization, forced migration and recurrence of minor disasters - when grouped together represent major disasters – continue to be key factors to achieve sustainable development in 2015.

Furthermore, with such a rapidly changing humanitarian context, it is important to bring humanitarian actors together to understand where we are and to establish a humanitarian agenda for the future. The mechanism for this is the VII Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance (MIAH), which will be held in Guatemala in May 2015, together with the Regional Consultation for the World Humanitarian Summit (#WHS). This event will strengthen the summit consultation process, convened by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2016 in Turkey.

A greater engagement with emerging donors in the region and potential leaders in case of disaster will also be benchmarks for 2015. Adequate information management and analysis will remain a priority. OCHA will improve the collection and sharing of information, and it will strengthen internal analysis skills, supported by Redhun and academic institutions in the region.

In 2015, OCHA will continue to work with humanitarian partners to ensure effective and efficient coordination that facilitates preparedness and response to humanitarian needs. The focus of OCHA’s work will remain on aiding affected people and saving lives. Being better prepared and providing greater coordination will make the difference in responding to future emergencies and reducing losses of life and human suffering.