United Nations System
Chile: Forest Fires – January 2017
Situation Report No. 01 (as of 31 January 2017)

This Sitrep has been produced by the United Nations System (UNS) in Chile, based on consolidated information from the National Emergency Office of the Ministry of Interior and Public Security (ONEMI) and contributions from the UNS agencies.

Highlights

- A state of emergency has been declared in some zones of the country.
- 7 out of 15 regions have suffered from forest fires.
- The total number of active forest fires recorded in the country is 124, of which 65 are controlled, 58 are being fought and 8 have been extinguished (as of 30 January).
- 1,025 destroyed houses are registered. The majority are located in rural areas where the population had their livelihoods.
- High numbers of livestock and farmland loss are reported, the main livelihood of the population in the affected areas.
- The international community is reacting favorably to the support needs; its intervention needs to be coordinated.
- 46 shelters have been activated: 12 in El Maule and 34 in Biobío providing shelter for 1,151 people.
- The State has mobilised 11,000 people to control and put out the forest fires.
- 592 international brigades are in place and 32 more are expected.
- United Nations in Chile has deployed an UNDAC team of 11 experts that will contribute to the coordination and needs assessments.

Situation Overview

On 20 January, the Chilean Government declared a state of emergency due to the worst forest fires in several zones of the country, this declaration was later extended to a wider zone. The events occurred during the summer season, when fires are often recorded, although the underlying causes of these events have not yet been identified.

The situation reached unsustainable levels, which made it necessary for the Government to accept international assistance. In view of this, the United Nations System deployed an UNDAC team, which is supporting the ONEMI and the UN Office of the Resident Coordinator in coordination and assessment of the situation.

Among the most visible effects, ONEMI reports approximately 400,000 hectares have been burnt and people being affected is as shown in the key figures on this document.
In addition to the immediate national and international response already mentioned, there are 1,500 volunteers from Arica and Parinacota who have been deployed to the region of Los Lagos (firemen).

69 aircraft have been mobilised as well as some 597 land units.

Currently at regional level, Biobio and O'Higgins are under red alert; La Araucania and Maule in yellow alert; and Coquimbo, Los Lagos, Los Ríos, Magallanes, Metropolitana and Valparaiso maintain a preventive early warning.

Since the emergency remains active, there is no registry of the total impact of the disaster on livelihoods, but public information and information obtained directly from the professionals from the municipalities affected, show that mainly livestock (loss of cattle, birds and horses), subsistence agriculture (fruit trees, vegetables, forest fruits), sawmills and woodworking. In some sectors, livelihoods are tourism and beekeeping.

**Financing**

Financing of the immediate response has been fully assumed by the State of Chile. The public institutions in charge are: Ministry of Interior through the National Emergency Office of the Ministry of Interior (ONEMI), Ministry of Defense and National Forestry Corporation (CONAF) of the Ministry of Agriculture.

In regards to the international cooperation, the following donations are known to be destined to actions related to the emergency:

- **US$214,000** from Germany to be executed by the Chilean Red Cross.
- **US$50,000** from the Chinese Red Cross to be executed by the Chilean Red Cross.
- **US$100,000** from the United States of America to be executed by Caritas - Chile.
- **US$35,000** from Canada to be executed by Techo – Chile.
- Also, a **US$740,000** donation will be executed as follows:
  - **US$500,000** to support humanitarian needs of the affected communities.
  - **US$200,000** for personal gear for the fire teams.
  - **US$20,000** to be executed by Caritas – Chile.
  - Caritas to provide tools to build firewalls.
  - **US$20,000** to be executed by ADRA in personal hygiene kits that were recently distributed to the affected of Santa Olga.

It is recommended that all humanitarian actors - including donors and receptor agencies - inform OCHA’s Financial Follow Up Service (FTS - http://fts.unocha.org) on contributions in cash or in-kind sending a mail to: fts@un.org

**Humanitarian Response**

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**

**Needs:**

- In some rural sectors, water systems are damaged, hence, the Ministry of Public Works indicates that two systems (Santa Olga - Maule and Portezuelo – Biobio) are inoperative.
- Some regions suffer from chronic drought of approximately 10 years that especially impact the rural area.
- Several families have lost water collection tools and equipment (hoses and water pumps) although the sector does not have a quantification of damage.

**Response:**

- ONEMI has distributed more than 31,000 water bottles and 4,471 personal hygiene kits.
- This delivered water is for human consumption only, during the beginning of the affectation.
- Municipalities are delivering water with water trucks.

**Gaps & Limitations:**

- No information for this sector is available.
Shelter

Needs:

- Since this is an ongoing emergency, there is no precise data of the affected houses.
- The types of collective centers available are: planned and spontaneous. There are no standards or protocols established to manage them, and schools are often occupied as shelters.

Response:

- ONEMI has delivered 7,650 blankets and 4,581 mattresses.
- Municipalities of the affected communities have turned schools and gyms into shelters with the support of volunteers. The hosted population go to the shelters for short periods of time, sometimes they only spend the night.
- JUNAEB delivers cooked rations to the sheltered population in the collective centers.

Gaps & Limitations:

- Affected people that are not in shelters have more difficulties accessing food and WASH.

Education

Needs:

- The emergency has occurred during summer season, which has not impaired the education period.
- Several education centers are being used as shelters.
- In the Biobio region, 4 schools were destroyed (Florida - 1, Hualqui - 1, Querihue - 2) and 1 destroyed 30 per cent.

Response:

- The sector has not provided information to this date.

Gaps & Limitations:

- It is important to locate the shelters in some place rather than an education center.

Logistics

Needs:

- It is necessary that the sector carries out diary monitoring and maintains updated information on the access to the affected zones and the communications interruptions and cuts.

Response:

- ONEMI’s Operations Team is carrying out the logistics management of the response; it has also supported with 141,000 liters of gas.
- The Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications informed that it has restored the telecommunications system, even though as of yesterday there were 28 dropped points that do not affect the system’s stability.

Gaps & Limitations:

- No information available for this sector.

Nutrition

- This sector has not generated any information

Gaps & Limitations:

- In spite of the lack of information, it is important to place attention to the nutritional surveillance.
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Protection

Needs:
- Due to the geographical composition of the affected zone, many evacuees have been kept near the affected sites in precarious conditions.
- There is no information about the work with specific groups that could become vulnerable during the emergency.

Response:
- There is no information available for this sector.

Gaps & Limitations:
- A specific protection plan is needed to guarantee that the sector does not become invisible, even if the humanitarian impact is minimal.

Early Recovery

Needs:
- The Ministry of Energy informed that 3,381 clients are without service due to the fires.
- The Ministry of Public Works indicate there are two systems (Santa Olga - Maule and Portezuelo – Biobio) that are not operative.

Response:
- The Ministry of Public Works informs that 250 construction machines have been deployed to construct a 331 km firewall.
- To this date, no early recovery plan has been defined at the subnational level because there are many communities that remain in the first response stage.
- The Presidency announced the delivery of vouchers to people with homes that have suffered structural damage.
- In order to maintain labor sources, a labor retention allowance will be provided, equivalent to 80 per cent of the minimum wage of three months and 50 per cent of the minimum wage for the next 3 months.

Gaps & Limitations:
- It is important to address a recovery plan that includes response actions.

Health

Needs:
- Health needs are being attended by the Ministry of Health.

Response:
- The Ministry of Health has deployed 400 workers for rapid response and has delivered the following items to the affected zones:
  - 1,000,000 masks
  - 20,000 ophthalmic solutions
  - 1,100 bronchodilators
- In Santa Olga, a Specialized Medical Care Unit was installed by the Chilean Army and personal protection gear was distributed to people working with debris removal.
- The Ministry of Health sent teams to the field to support the population’s mental health. All the Family Medical Centers (CESFAMs) and hospitals are operative.

Gaps & Limitations:
- This sector has not detected any gaps.
Food Security

Needs:
- Agriculture is one of the most affected livelihoods, mainly subsistence farming; however, an in-depth assessment is needed to establish loss and a recovery plan.
- There are no food security problems in the affected areas, which are covered by the State.
- The evacuated or affected population go to relatives or friends’ homes, which makes access to basic needs granted by the State (such as food) difficult.

Response:
- ONEMI has delivered 880 boxes of food and 51,070 food rations for 12 hours.
- The Ministry of Agriculture indicates that 761 farmers have received benefits.
- The municipalities are also supporting the affected population with food kits.
- The Livestock and Agriculture Service (SAG) will have a fund of up to 10,000,000 pesos, to care for affected productive animals.

Gaps & Limitations:
- No important gaps.

General Coordination

The office of the Resident Coordinator in Chile has contacted the International Humanitarian Network to report all possible information.

On 27 January, the UN Resident Coordinator met with Michelle Bachelet, President of the Republic to support the assistance of the United Nations System. This same day, she met with the Director of the Civil Protection of ONEMI, who requested the assistance of an UNDAC team in Chile.

On 31 January, an UNDAC team had the first coordination meeting with personnel from ONEMI and will meet with the National Director on 01 February.

On 01 February a coordination meeting will be held between the UNDAC team and the plenary of the Humanitarian Network to exchange information and explain the purpose of the mission and articulate efforts for the field assessment.

During the week, two assessment teams of the UNDAC mission will be deployed to the Biobío and Maule regions, with the support of the Humanitarian Network partners.

For more information, please contact:
Alberto Parra, Local Development and GRD PNUD Coordinator, Tel: +56 2 2654.1053, Cel +56 9 9545.0531
Alejandro Mañón, Coordination Officer, RCO, Tel: +56 2 2654.1016, Cel +56 9 8276.3721

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