

Alert

Malawi

Heavy storms cause flooding

Geneva, 23 March 2011

1. Brief description of the emergency

During the night of the 17th of March most parts of Malawi received a lot of rainfall with the southern parts receiving more than above normal rains. Mulanje district registered up to 152mm of rainfall on that particular day. The rains resulted in most rivers swelling and flooding, thus affecting the surrounding communities in the process. The affected districts include Mzimba and Karonga where some crops have been washed away. Salima and Nkhota kota districts in the central region have also been severely affected with houses completely damaged and gardens washed away. A lot of damage has been reported in Nsanje and Mulanje districts in the South and two (2) deaths have been recorded so far. Currently people are staying in make-shift shelters and some are staying in schools.

2. Impact

The floods have affected most of the districts in Malawi but Nsanje and Mulanje are the worst hit. In Nsanje, the preliminary assessment results show that 603 households (3,015 people) have been affected and 252 crop fields damaged¹. Over 5000 people are staying in make-shift shelters.

In Mulanje 433 households have been displaced and 51.9 hectares of farming land washed away. The most immediate assistance required according to the Department of Disaster Management Affairs is shelter and food aid. As a long term response mechanism, seed will be required for the families to re-plant their gardens. Most affected people are accommodated in nearby schools.

Diseases caused by poor hygiene and sanitation have been reported in the make-shift shelters as a result of poor water supply and sanitary facilities.

Most affected areas are cut-off as roads have been rendered impassable.

1 UN OCHA.-Southern Africa Floods and Cyclones Situation update 9, 16 March 2011

3. National and international response

The Malawi Red Cross has responded to shelter needs in some of the areas. However many other areas remain to be covered. Currently most organizations are still in the planning phase of their responses to the affected population.

The UN OCHA Southern Africa Floods and Cyclones situation update 09 of 16 March 2011 reported that government had not yet responded to the flooding situation as the Department of Disaster Management (DODMA) had run out of relief supply. Since 09 March 2011 DODMA continues to receive reports of households affected by heavy storms.²

4. ACT Alliance response

The Malawi ACT forum has not yet responded physically to the affected population but the intention is to respond as a forum through ACT members working in the affected districts. The planning of the response is being coordinated by the Malawi ACT Forum Coordinator. The forum is intending to respond to food and shelter needs in the affected districts through Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD) and the Evangelical Lutheran Development Programme (ELDS).

5. Planned activities

The Malawi ACT Forum through its members working in the affected districts is planning the following interventions:

- General food distribution to the affected households
- Provision of shelter in form of tents and plastic sheeting

The ACT Forum is planning to apply for Rapid Response Funds and will not issue an appeal.

ACT members in Malawi are: Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD), the Evangelical Lutheran Development Programme (ELDS), Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), DanChurchAid (DCA), Christian Aid, Interchurch Organisation for Development Co-operation (ICCO), Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) and the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM).

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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² UN OCHA.- Southern Africa Flood and Cyclone update as at 09 March 2011.