

Alert

UGANDA – No. 32 / 2010

ASSISTANCE TO PEOPLE AFFECTED BY FLOODS IN TESO SUB-REGION, NORTH EASTERN UGANDA

Geneva, 08 October 2010

1. Brief description of the emergency

Since September 2010, Teso sub-region of north eastern Uganda has been experiencing flooding. The floods have destroyed crops in the fields, flooded latrines in homes and in schools and contaminated water sources. Roads have also been damaged and some sub-counties are cut off and not easily accessible.

Teso sub-region has received excess rainfall since April 2010 causing excessive waterlog and flooding. The situation is worsened by water coming through waterways into Katakwi district from Napak and Amuria. The most affected sub-counties are Magoro, Katakwi, Ngariam, Ongongoja and Palam. An estimated 6,600 acres of cassava has been destroyed, 5,800 acres of sorghum, 1,700 acres of ground nuts and 1,000 acres of sweet potatoes. This can be translated into about 16,000 metric tons of cassava, 2,900 tons of sorghum, 600 tons of ground nuts and 1,400 tons of sweet potatoes. In Katakwi district 152 latrines have collapsed (according to district assessment report), 17 schools have flooded latrines and damaged buildings.

The region has been affected by chronic drought and occasional floods in the past but the situation has worsened in the in recent years with erratic weather conditions becoming the norm. In 2007 flooding devastated the region, destroying crops and food reserves. Alongside climatic hazards, cattle rustling from the neighbouring Karamojong people and influx of returnees from Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps are factors contributing to persistent food insecurity and increased vulnerability.

Teso sub-region, formerly Teso district, is located in the north eastern Uganda. It consists of Soroti, Kumi, Katakwi, Amuria, Kaberamaido and Bukedea districts. The region borders Karamoja in the north, Lira in the west and Mbale in the south. The inhabitants are Iteso and Kumam ethnic groups.

2. Impact

These floods have come at a time that the population has low capacity to cope as they are experiencing widespread hunger following a period of inadequate and erratic rainfall in the previous seasons.

According to the Katakwi district officials, the immediate need in Katakwi includes:

- 230 mobile latrines for areas that have lost their pit latrines and public institutions like schools.
- Increment of stocks of both animal (and vaccines) and human drugs and utilities within the District as a standby and to replenish what are being used now.
- Water guards, jerry cans, basins and saucepans for at least 1,000 households (the most affected). The number is increasing rapidly.

- 1,000 Tarpaulins to be used for shelter for those whose houses are destroyed and also as shelter for drying cassava and other food items.
- 68 tents for classrooms for 17 affected schools.
- Support to School Feeding Program in the affected schools.
- Emergency food aid for the estimated 15,000 households (75,000 individuals) that have lost their crops.

3. National and international response

The district officials are planning an extensive assessment with the Central Government to form a basis for an emergency rehabilitation following the water logging.

Among the humanitarian agencies, UN OCHA has already begun supporting the communities through their rapid response funds. Church of Uganda is monitoring the situation through the office of the diocese in Soroti. However, both government and NGO responses have been short term and very limited in coverage so far. To prevent further illness, loss of life and property, and to mitigate the risk of later famine, it is imperative that help and assistance be provided urgently.

4. ACT Alliance response

ACT Members involved in this emergency are DanChurchAid, Church of Uganda/Planning Development and rehabilitation, and Lutheran World Federation. The requesting member is Lutheran World Federation who is implementing other activities in the area. The Uganda forum is in the process of preparing a request to the ACT Alliance to be issued before the end of the week.

LWF Uganda has an office in Katakwi, operating in Katakwi and Amuria districts. The human resource capacity and infrastructure to provide immediate assistance and relief is therefore readily available.

5. Planned activities

Planned activities include:

- Provision of water treatment (water guard)
- Provision of mobile latrines for communities and schools
- Provision of Non Food Items (tarpaulins, blankets, soap, jerry cans)
- Testing of water quality in flooded areas and where necessary treat the water
- Monitor the need for future food aid, continue to assess the situation and prepare for possible intervention to provide food.

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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