

Alert

Colombia – No. 44 / 2010

Floods and heavy rains, Colombia

Geneva, 22 December 2010

1. Brief description of the emergency

Heavy rains due to the La Niña phenomenon have caused floods in 28 of Colombia's 32 departments (districts), from the centre of the country to the north, reaching the Atlantic shores. The floods have left 283 dead, 267 wounded, 63 missing, and more than 55,000 families needing shelter. A total of 309,548 families are in danger.

In total, 2,220,000 people are affected and the floods have destroyed thousands of hectares dedicated to agriculture. These locations have also been affected by armed conflict in Colombia over several years. The government has declared a state of social, economic, and environmental emergency due to the floods.

2. Impact

According the Institute for Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies in Colombia, the rains will continue until the second quarter of 2011, and will affect other departments (districts) in the central region of the country. To date, more than half the municipalities are already affected. The main dam in the Atlantic Region is damaged and is contributing to the floods in the worst-affected area.

The Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development reports that the floods have affected 680,000 hectares of land dedicated to farming and agriculture. The government estimates that costs might ascend to US\$ 2.5 billion, based on the current situation.

3. National and international response

The government has been putting in place several temporary shelters, and other actions to assist the affected population in these regions. Congress has approved a law to re-orient resources from the municipalities to attend this emergency. The Spanish government has sent 20 tons of aid relief (1440 hygiene kits, 816 kitchen kits, 1200 tarpaulins and 2000 mosquito nets) for 2256 families in Bolivar, worth 1.2 million euro.

4. ACT Alliance response

ACT Alliance Forum Colombia participants agreed to take emergency and rehabilitation action in the regions most affected by the weather, and the regions where the churches and

diaconal organisations are working, especially in the departments (districts) of Bolívar, Atlántico, Córdoba, Chocó, Cauca, and Santander y Norte de Santander.

5. Planned activities

A needs assessment has been started for an appeal proposal that should be ready to be forwarded to ACT Alliance by January 2011. ACT Alliance anticipates a need of around US \$600,000 to assist floods victims in these regions.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to ACT Chief Finance Officer Jean Daniel Birmele: Jean.Daniel.Birmele@actalliance.org

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Thank you for your attention.