

Alert

Thailand

Floods in Thailand

Geneva, 14 October 2011

1. Brief description of the emergency

Unusually heavy monsoon rains that have been plaguing South East Asia since July have already caused a third of Thailand and 3.4 million acres (1.38 million hectares) of farmland – a landmass 13 times the size of Hong Kong - to become submerged underwater. The situation that has already destroyed hundreds of lives, damaged thousands of homes and crippled countless businesses continues to worsen.

2. Impact

Over 280 people, including around 55 children (OCHA) have been killed so far; with more people still missing and over 700,000 homes have been destroyed or damaged. More than 2.34 million (OCHA) and 8.5 million livestock from 30 out of 77 Provinces in the country have so far been affected. 225 roads in the country remain impassable and, according to a report issued by the Ministry of Education, a total of 2,212 educational institutions have been damaged to a cost of THB 1.39 billion (USD 45 million).

Seven billion cubic meters of run-off water from the north is heading for the capital and due to arrive around 15-16 October, coinciding with projected storms and more heavy rains. High estuary tides are hampering the river's flow into the sea, causing serious concern about where the water is going to go.

The floods are expected to cost an estimated THB 30 billion (USD 1 Billion) in losses (OCHA). Thailand is one of the world's biggest exporters of rice and water has already destroyed more than two million tons of un-milled rice—around 8% of the country's main harvest. Transport links to the main ports in Bangkok and Laem Chabang have also been badly disrupted. Thailand's Ministry of Commerce has already cut its forecast for the main rice harvest from 25 million to 21 million tons.

3. National and international response

The Ministry of Education has set up nine centers to help flood victims in Bangkok, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Lop Buri, Saraburi, Sing Buri, Chachaoengsao, Ayutthaya, and Nakhon Sawan. They have been provided with boats, accommodation, food, and first-aid. Many schools have been opened as shelter and parking lots for the victims.

The Royal Thai Military and the Royal Thai Police have mobilized resources including over 12,000 personnel and are providing food assistance. The Department of Public Health, the Provincial Public Health Office and the Emergency Medical Institute of Thailand have also been providing medical assistance including 1.34 million emergency medical sets. The Thai Red Cross (TRC), the Rajaprachanukroh Foundation under royal patronage and the royal family, as well as local non-governmental organizations are also providing relief assistance including over 85,100 sets of emergency relief kits and over 400,000 bottles of drinking water.

The Japanese government, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, has pledged eight essential relief items, such as tents, sleeping bags, blankets, and water purifiers, worth 30 million yen, or 12 million baht. New Zealand has also said it would donate 100,000 New Zealand dollars.

Considering the government's overall response capacity and emergency relief efforts thus far, a formal request for international assistance is still seen as unlikely. Nevertheless, the humanitarian country team (HCT) in Thailand has made a formal offer of assistance (on 10 October 2011). Meanwhile, some UN agencies and INGOs have already begun working with and offering specific support to key counterparts in some aspects of the relief work.

The TRC has received \$19,000 from Norwegian Red Cross and 1 million baht (\$33,000) from USAID. A total of \$170,000 was disbursed from the South East Asia Region Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF) to the Emergency Medical Institute of Thailand (EMIT). China has given \$1million in cash and \$1.5 million in kind assistance to the RTG.

4. Planned activities

ACT forum members in Thailand, including Church World Service-Asia/Pacific, Diakonia, Dan Church Aid (DCA), and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) met with the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT) in Chiang Mai on 14 October to seek possibilities of support from the ACT Alliance. Currently, CCT's team is on the ground, and after the needs assessment a preliminary appeal will most probably follow for emergency distribution of food and non-food items. ACT forum members in Thailand will also work closely with CCT to help in enhancing its capacity in emergency response, utilizing the experience and expertise of agencies already based in Thailand.

The CCT has formed an Emergency Relief Committee (ERC). The committee is developing plans and a budget for emergency relief and rehabilitation. The committee also coordinates with local authorities and related church- organizations.

The Student Christian Center (SCC) in Bangkok is opening its kitchen for three days, 12-14 October 2011, to cook food for flood affected. A meal-box will also be distributed to the flood affected in Ayutthaya

Province in Ban Dab Mu 7 and Mu 5, 6 Borpong sub-district to 500 individuals. SCC encourages students, churches and walk-in visitors for solidarity. As of now, CCT's Social Development and Service Unit (SDSU) is distributing food and non-food items in Ayutthaya and Chai Nat Provinces of Thailand to over 1,200 households. Further distribution of emergency items is also planned for next week.

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.

For further information please contact:

ACT Regional Programme Officer, Sudhanshu S. Singh (phone +41 22 791 6035 or mobile phone +41 79 285 2916)

or

ACT Deputy General Secretary, Rebecca Larson (phone +41 22 791 6069 or mobile phone +41 79 376 1711)