

# Situation Report

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## **Guatemala - No. 01/2010**

**Geneva, 14 September 2010**

### **Heavy Rains following Tropical Storm Agatha in Guatemala (ACT Appeal GTM 101)**

#### **New rains bring further destruction and increase risks for people in Guatemala**

Since September 4, continuous heavy rains have fallen in Guatemala, exacerbating heavy damage caused by Tropical Storm Agatha which hit the region on May 29, causing 174 deaths and an estimated US \$975 million of damage.

#### **Destruction and loss of life**

The rains have been reported as higher than the last 40 years' average and are expected to continue into October. They have caused rivers to overflow, resulting in floods and landslides. Roads and bridges have been buried or collapsed and communications with some communities have been lost.

On 6 September, National Coordination for the Reduction of Disaster (CONRED) estimated 43,043 people were at risk from the rains, of which 11,495 have been evacuated. So far, 48 people have lost their lives, 16 have disappeared, and 14,291 have moved to shelters.

#### **Locations most affected and priority needs**

The highest concentration of deaths was in the western regions of the country. In Chimaltenango, on the Inter-American Highway between kilometres 81 and 171, mudslides buried a bus and several vehicles, as well as hitting homes and land in nearby villages.

Guatemalan President Alvaro Colom has declared a national emergency, with damage estimated between US\$ 375million to US \$ 500million. Because the rains have followed Tropical Storm Agatha, the need for emergency funds in Guatemala has increased.

Communities have lost homes or had their homes damaged. The loss of crops and livelihoods risks increasing food insecurity. People also lack food and clean drinking water, and need blankets, medicines for respiratory and infectious diseases, and diarrhea prevention and treatment.

#### **Action so far**

CONRED has issued both an orange alert and anti-flood recommendations to the people. UN OCHA's regional Emergency Risk Disaster Working Group for Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC) said in a 13 September update that a red alert was issued for Retalhuleu, Suchitepéquez, Escuintla, and Sololá departments. It said the humanitarian community, with national authorities, continues evaluating the

situation and working on future actions. Rescue groups have been searching and rescuing landslides victims, and clearing and repairing streets and roads to restore access to affected communities.

### **ACT Response**

The ACT Guatemala Forum has been constantly monitoring the situation in the six departments it has a presence: Petén (Santo Domingo, Roto Nuevo, Caribe and Santa Elena, municipality of Sayaxché), Huehuetenango (Cuilco), Sololá (Palestina, San Juan La Laguna and Santa Clara La Laguna) Chimaltenango (Panabajal and Poacorral in San Juan Comalapa), Zacapa (Trementina, Zacapa) and Suchitepéquez (Santo Domingo).

The forum is analysing the specific aid needs of the communities more closely. It has issued calls for speeding up the arrival of aid.

ACT Guatemala Forum members in Guatemala include: Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Christian Aid (CAid), DanChurchAid (DCA) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Conference of Evangelical Churches in Guatemala (CIEDEG). Their partners include: Collective Power and Local Development (CPDL), Association of Research and Development Maya-Mam (AMMID), Association of Integral Development Nimal Tnam (ADINT) and Committee of Development for the Empowerment of Farmers (CODECA/CIEDEG).

### **ACT Appeal underfunded**

The ACT Guatemala Forum is seeking funds to respond to communities' needs. Following Tropical Storm Agatha, ACT launched an emergency appeal (GTM101), with activities targeting the departments of San Marcos in the west and Suchitepéquez and Santa Rosa in the southwest and southern regions. These regions have been further affected by the rains. The original appeal was to provide food rations, hygiene kits and water filters for families in 41 communities. The appeal has had a very low financial support. Funding is urgently needed to meet the new and increasing needs caused by the rains.

**Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to ACT Finance Officer Roshan Rajaratne ([rra@actalliance.org](mailto:rra@actalliance.org)).**

**Thank you for your attention.**

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