

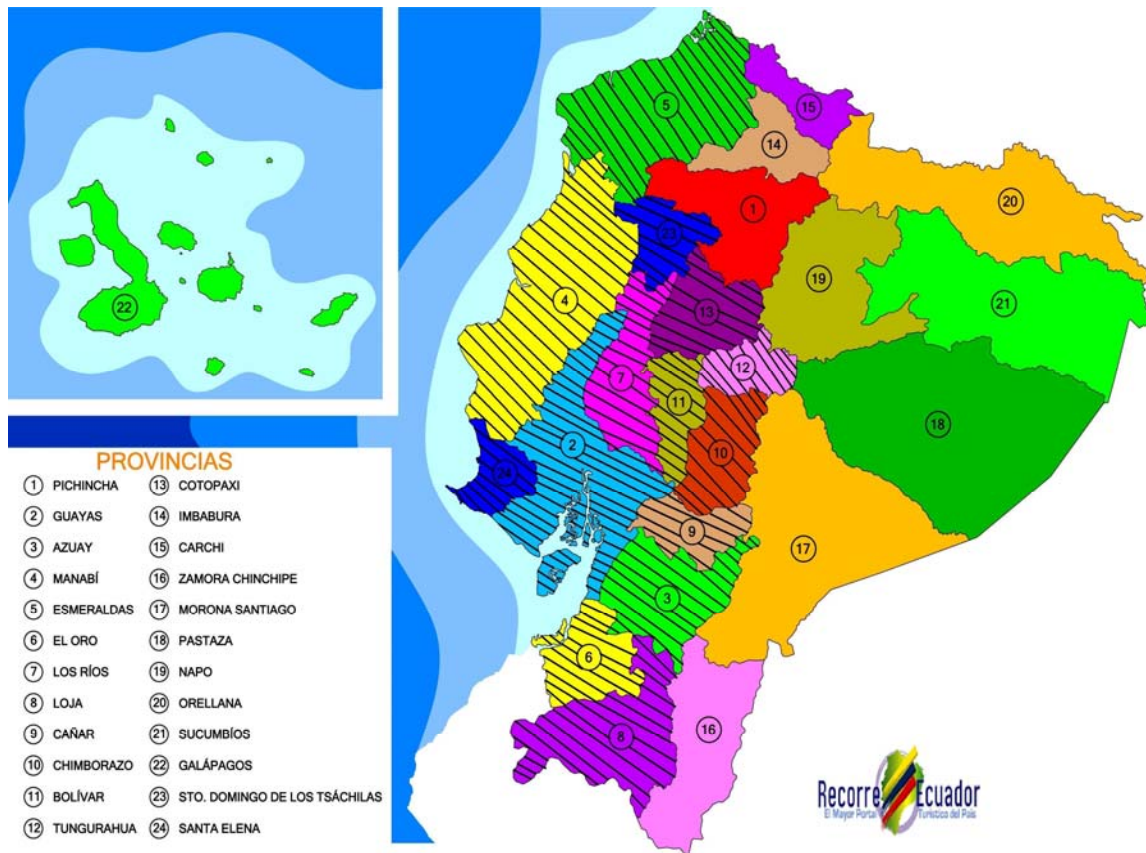
# ECUADOR

## Immediate Needs for Children and Women Affected by Floods



3 March 2008

## Affected provinces in Ecuador Coastal Region



### 1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

The worst flooding in more than 20 years has affected 14 out of the 23 provinces of Ecuador. On January 31 the Government declared the emergency situation for 9 provinces; on February 20, the emergency decree was extended to national level, stating the “Exceptional Situation” and facilitating the army to intervene. To date, the Government has officially declared the deaths of 19 persons due to the floods. 5 of them are children under 18, 2 children are under the age of 1. The country has suffered heavy damages in the productive area (around 114,400 hectares have been affected and US\$ 82 million were lost in crops), and infrastructure. The total population affected by the floods is around 3.5 million which represents 27% of the total population. 315,000 persons have been directly affected, and 16,000 persons have been displaced to shelters. Among the displaced are 8,000 children and adolescents who are at risk of exposure to diseases, abuse or exploitation, and have limited access to food, safe drinking water and essential medicines.

To date, the Government has allocated US\$ 45 million to the emergency response. Five national institutions are in charge of responding to the emergency: Coordinating Ministry of Internal and External Security, the Ministry of the Coastal Region, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Social and Economic Inclusion, and the AGECI, Agency for International Cooperation. Their main actions involve relocating affected people to temporary shelters and providing them with food, medicines and water supplies. So far, 305 shelters have been set up. National army personnel are helping to evacuate victims.

According to the National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology, rains will continue and in some provinces even increase. It is expected that the situation will extend until May. The greatest risks are yet to come, as the country lacks a risk management plan and the resources required to cope with the situation. Following the immediate distribution of relief, affected families (mostly peasants and small farmers), are often left to themselves despite having lost critical household assets and stocks, social infrastructure and access to public services (including education).

Almost half of the affected population consists of children and adolescents who require urgent assistance and protection to survive and recover from physical and emotional trauma.

UNICEF, together with other humanitarian partners on the ground, is working closely with the Government of Ecuador to respond to the emergency. An UNDAC mission is currently evaluating the situation and helping to reinforce governmental coordination. In order to respond to the most urgent needs of children and women in the areas of health, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, child protection and psychosocial support, UNICEF is requesting US\$ 800,000.

## 2. UNICEF'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE: ISSUES & ACTIONS

### HEALTH

#### Issues

Children and families have less access to food and their shelter conditions are deficient. There are serious risks of spread of dengue, malaria, leptospirosis, respiratory infections, skin problems, diarrhoea and snake bites, particularly among children. There are limitations in access to health services due to damages to hospitals and health centres, particularly the emergency units which are located on the ground floor and have been mostly affected by the floods. In addition, roads are severely affected, which also hampers access to health services.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has responded with measures like food, water, medical care for the population in shelters, including children. UNICEF will support national efforts to strengthen local capacities to restore health services.

#### Urgent Actions

- Support the Ministry of the Coast, The Ministry of Social and Economic Inclusion – INNFA, the MOH and other local actors for ensuring access of children and families to health services.
- Provision of 100,000 ORS to the MOH to control diarrheal diseases.
- Procurement and distribution of treated mosquito nets, life-saving and critical relief supplies such as Vitamin A together with the UNICEF counterparts in the field.
- Production and dissemination of communication material to prevent and control dengue, malaria, leptospirosis, yellow fever, snakes bites and other related diseases.

### WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

#### Issues

The water and sanitation sector has been seriously affected. Water supplies have been damaged and/or contaminated, and some wells and water systems have been flooded. Some riverside communities have been obliged to drink water directly from the rivers. Most latrines have been damaged and their contents have overflowed, contaminating villages and homes.

With these difficult sanitary conditions it is quite possible that associated diseases will appear – especially in the under-5 population – and that health care and treatment will be lacking because the beneficiaries live far from the health centers, which are already insufficient and currently overburdened by the emergency, and since the access routes are interrupted due to flooding and landslides. As such, access to safe drinking water and proper disposal of excreta, together with hygiene promotion, will be absolutely essential for saving lives.

UNICEF will contribute with supplies for access to safe water as well as communication material with essential information aimed at reducing vulnerability to diseases deriving from environmental conditions in the population most affected by the flood emergency. Activities will include the following actions:

#### Urgent Actions

- Provision of supplies (water purification tablets, collapsible water containers, chloride equipments)
- Production and dissemination of communication material regarding good hygiene practises.

## EDUCATION

### Issues

UNICEF's long experience in disasters has demonstrated that returning children to school as quickly as possible is one of the most valuable emergency interventions that can take place. Education is key to children's long-term opportunities and must not be interrupted. In addition, schools provide children with a sense of normalcy, which is crucial to their psychological well-being.

The beginning of the school year for the Coastal Region was originally expected to take place on 1 April. However, local authorities are using educational facilities as temporary shelters, and many schools have been totally or partially damaged by the floods. As a result of the emergency, the Departmental Secretariat of Education has instructed to delay the start of the school year for this region. According to official information, around 120 schools are currently being used as shelters. Local authorities are carrying out an assessment of the conditions of public schools. The Government has the capacity in the long term to reconstruct schools but in the immediate term there is a need for alternative measures to start classes as soon as possible, especially for those schools that are being used as shelters. UNICEF support is required to locally procure and distribute education kits as well as to train teachers to provide education in emergency situations.

### Urgent Actions

- Provision of technical tools and methodologies for teachers working in emergencies
- Provision of 200 school in a box kits and recreational kits
- Provision of 200 cleaning kits for schools
- 200 Tents to establish temporary classrooms
- Teacher mobilization support

## CHILD PROTECTION

### Issues

The loss of safe environments, economic difficulties and crowded conditions in shelters are elements that can contribute to the increment of violence amongst the displaced population. Violence can express itself in different forms ranging from violence within the family to violence and conflicts within the community. Children and women are normally most vulnerable to these types of violence.

Community and institutional capacities to respond to these situations are weak. Therefore it is necessary to support the local capacities in order to support child protection activities to prevent violence and abuse.

The UNICEF country office in coordination with the National Institute for Children and Family (INNFA) and the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion will provide psychosocial recovery support through technical assistance to train 600 community agents and volunteers on rapid response methodology with emphasis on emotional support and recreation. This action is accompanied with the delivery of 600 back packs.

### Urgent Actions

- Raise awareness in communities on the importance of psychosocial support activities, and advocate for child protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect.
- Provision of psycho social supporting material
- Apply monitoring systems regarding violence in shelters
- Provision of basic Back to Home cleaning kits
- Communication material to prevent violence against children and adolescents and for self protection

## COORDINATION AND LOGISTICS

### Issues

In any disaster coordination and logistics form a critical component of the overall response. UNICEF has assumed sector leadership especially in child protection and is providing key support in health and education. UNICEF is actively participating within the United Nations Emergency Team (UNETE) and supporting the UNDAC team which is working directly with the Ministry of the Coastal Region. The cluster approach has not been activated so far.

### Urgent Actions

- Coordination, monitoring and/or support for the implementation of activities as stated above
- Advocacy and communication on the situation and needs of children affected by the emergency.

UNICEF will continue collaborating closely with UNETE and the UNDAC mission to keep abreast of needs and plan sector response.

## 3. ESTIMATED FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNED ACTIONS

Under the framework of UNETE and the activities foreseen in this proposal, and to respond quickly, UNICEF is requesting an initial **US \$ 800,000** to meet the immediate needs of children and women throughout the affected areas for the coming 3 months.

Early funding will contribute not only to saving the lives of many children affected by the emergency but also to supporting their psychosocial recovery, protection from violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse. In addition, there is an urgent need to ensure that educational services are restored in time for the beginning of the school year and that teachers are trained to respond and adapt to the emergency appropriately.

Funds will be oriented to effectively respond to the changing necessities of children affected by the flood emergency, with the estimation that the rainy season will continue throughout the coming 3 months.

**Table 1: Estimated funding requirements from March - May 2008**

| Sector                        | US\$           |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Health and Nutrition          | 180,000        |
| Water, Sanitation and Hygiene | 105,000        |
| Education                     | 320,000        |
| Child Protection              | 100,000        |
| Coordination and Logistics    | 95,000         |
| <b>Total*</b>                 | <b>800,000</b> |

\*Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and the medium-term needs of children and women as outlined above. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use these funds to support other, under-funded emergencies.

\*\* The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7%. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF's Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

### **Further information on the UNICEF emergency programme in Ecuador can be obtained from:**

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