ECUADOR SITUATION REPORT

March 31st, 2022

SITUATION REPORT

Highlights

- On March 26th an earthquake took place at 11:28 p.m. with an epicenter 11.79 km from Esmeraldas on the coastal profile, with a magnitude of 6.0 MLv (Local Magnitude calculated in the vertical component) and a depth of 10 km. After this event, at 11:39 p.m., the Geophysical Institute of the National Polytechnic School (IGEPN) confirmed another earthquake again in the province of Esmeraldas, this one being of magnitude 3.3 MLv and at a depth of 4.0 km. At 00:53 a new earthquake of 5.1 MLv originates.

- The last aftershock was recorded on March 28th at 08:24 a.m. with a magnitude of 3.3 MLv at a depth of 6 km. The possibility of new aftershocks is not ruled out.

- The Decentralized Autonomous Government of the canton of Esmeraldas indicated that the effects of the earthquake exceed their local capacity to respond to the emergency. The provincial Emergency Operations Committee (COE) has taken leadership and action for the immediate activation of technical work groups.

- The national risk and emergency management service is carrying out the implementation of temporary accommodation with a capacity of 140 people. Currently 116 people and 36 families are in the temporary accommodation. This number is expected to grow as evaluation of infrastructure damage is ongoing. Indeed, the evaluation of damages to houses and other infrastructure is still ongoing, and it is expected that the number of people in need for temporary shelter will increase as more houses are declared uninhabitable. So far, the estimate is that at least 20,000 houses would be affected.

- Power outages, telecommunication disruption and roads interrupted.

- Current psycho-social situation of affected families and children requires support.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

As of March 30th, 2022:

- 248 affected families
- 1260 affected people
- 62 children, 17 adolescents, 2 pregnant women
- 222 houses damaged, and 20,000 under evaluation for potential severe damages
- 84 houses severely damaged
- 15 health centres damaged
Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The province of Esmeraldas occupies a territory of about 14,893 km², being the seventh largest province of the country by extension. 643,654 people live in the province, according to the demographic projection of the INEC for 2020. Esmeraldas is among poorest in the country: 45.6% of people living below the income poverty line compared while the national average is 32.4%¹, its maternal mortality ratio exceeds in almost 50 percent the national ratio (85.3 vs 57.6 per 100,000 live births)². The challenges the province face: lack of drinking water and sewage, few medical centers, unemployment, underemployment, and high cost of services. There is a high risk of mosquito-borne disease such as Chikungunya and Dengue fever, posing a public health threat, which may increase due to the earthquake and its consequences.

Since 2021 the levels of violence have grown, now in several neighbourhoods such as the Rivera del Río neighbourhoods and the upper neighbourhoods of the city, which are submerged by violent acts and common crime, with adolescent men being the most vulnerable to this type of activities, causing a school dropout of adolescents, women and girls from educational institution due to the violent acts that occurred in the city.

The earthquake has increased the vulnerabilities and urgent needs of the population of Esmeraldas, in particular children and their families. Affected communities have greater need to receive psycho-social and emotional support, safe water, sanitation and hygiene, emergency shelter solutions, health, protection, food assistance and education support. It is noteworthy Esmeraldas has received people seeking refugees and migrants from Colombia for decades. The city of Esmeraldas, capital of the province, is one of the cities that receives people on the move from Venezuela as well.

Humanitarian leadership and Coordination

UNICEF has an office in the city of Esmeraldas and currently is present in the cantonal Emergency Operations Committee (COE). UNICEF maintains permanent coordination both with the UN agencies in Esmeraldas (UNHCR, UNFPA, UNDP, WFP, UNWOMEN), and with national and international organizations such as Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio (FEPP), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Jesuit Refugee Service (SJR). UNICEF is also coordinating with the Humanitarian Country Team both nationally and at local level.

UNICEF, through the Esmeraldas focal point, participates in the working groups in charge of protection and Water and sanitation.

¹ CNII based on INEC – ENEMDU 2020.
² INEC 2020
With the available information, UNICEF has identified WASH and Child protection as the priority areas. However, the education cycle is scheduled to begin in April 2022, which may require UNICEF intervention.

**Humanitarian Strategy**

UNICEF in Ecuador is deploying a rapid response team to better assess the needs on the ground. The following Situation Report will include the response strategy. So far it is estimated that the financial needs of the initial response will be around USD $500,000.00

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