



**United Nations System - Panama**

- DATE AND TIME:** 30 November 2008, 11:00 H
- PREPARED BY:** The Office of the UN Resident Coordinator and the UNETE, based on reports received from the COE and UN Agencies, local and regional as well as other international agencies in Panama.
- CURRENT SITUATION:** Flooding and landslides due to constant rain, overflowing of rivers, and high tides caused the collapse of main and secondary roads, bridges, power and communication towers, as well as loss of life and property, livestock and crops, in the provinces of Bocas del Toro, Chiriqui, and Colon, mainly, but other areas of the country are also seriously affected. The province of Darien has been placed in high alert since all the rivers there are at their highest levels.
- DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPACT:** 190 homes + two camps destroyed  
1,143 homes affected + one camp  
23,547 individuals affected  
852 individuals suffered loss or damage to their properties  
11,670 persons in 44 shelters  
Victims: 5 injured, 8 deceased, 6 missing  
Affected infrastructure: 15 including main highways, bridges, suspension bridges, access roads and 3 warehouses to store vegetables destroyed. Several communities remain isolated. Loss of coffee growing land and vegetable farming areas, as well as dairy farms. Including damages to the Panamerican and Centennial roads, damages are estimated at US\$6 million.  
Telecommunications: System of communications of Bocas del Toro, out of service.  
Education: 61 schools affected.
- PROJECTED EVOLUTION:** Secondary threats: The affected population is at risk of infections of the skin, intestinal and of the respiratory tract. Pollution of superficial waters by drag of refuse material. Those isolated lack food and water. Possible increase of prices of foods and fresh vegetable provision.  
  
Climatic situation: Clouds and bad weather build-up appear on the satellite radar and the electric activity detector. Moderate rainfall and storms are expected for most of the country to continue beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> of December and further floodings should not be overruled.
- IN COUNTRY RESPONSE:** Organization: The National System of Civil Protection (Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil) – SINAPROC, is activated with good coordination. All Governmental institutions as well as Embassies and the civil society are involved in the relief efforts.  
  
Forty-eight rescue operations have rescued 158 persons.  
  
Administrative measures: The President declared “state of emergency” for the sectors of Bocas del Toro, Chiriquí Highlands and in the coasts of the Province of Colon, members of the Cabinet deployed to the areas. Governmental permit has been granted for flight to participate in the airlift of aid.  
  
Operations: Search, rescue and evacuation operations continue. Eleven shelters have been deactivated as the return of many people previously stranded is observed. The Ministry of Health has mobilized personnel, medicine, water and chlorine transportation, and strengthening of community health centers.

**IN SITE LEVEL INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE:**

UNETE deployed a seven persons team of national local and regional experts to two critical sites: Changuinola (in Bocas del Toro) and David (Chiriqui), for assessment of damages and needs on the ground, with a view to provide effective humanitarian assistance as well as the best means to deliver this aid.

Efforts are organized following a cluster for an effective coordination and national counterparts identified, as follows:

No.	Cluster	Government	Agency
1.	Nutrition	MINSA	UNICEF
2.	Water	IDAAN/MINSA	UNICEF
3.	Health	MINSA/CSS	PAHO/WHO
4.	Shelters	MIVI/MINDES/MUNICIPIOS	IFRC
5.	Camps		IMO
6.	Education	MEDUCA	UNICEF
7.	Agriculture	MIDA	FAO
8.	Environment	ANAM	UNEP
9.	Food		WFP
10.	Logistic and communication	SINAPROC/MOP	WFP
11.	Protection	MINGOB/MINDES	UNICEF/OHCHR/UNHCR
12.	Early recovery	MOP/MINDES/MIVI	UNDP

Obstacles: The team was not granted priority to board the aircraft, as agreed with the commercial air companies. Problem was later on solved.

**SUMMARY OF REPORTS BY AGENCIES (INCLUDING DAMAGE AND NEED ASSESSMENT, CHALLENGES AND DELIVERY OF AID):**

OCHA

In David, capital city of Chiriqui, all seems to be under control. David serves as reception point and dispatch center of all goods and donated for Bocas del Toro; stocks reports still not generated. Logistics capacity in David is expressly required since the main problem now is the transportation of goods and warehousing, especially at the airport; There are two warehouses: 2 in David and 1 in Boas del Toro. 200 persons are helping to handle the goods in David. Two (2) planes on loan by Colombia are doing 6 flights/day. 11 container trucks are waiting for dispatch from David to Changuinola.

In Panama and Bocas del Toro, UNDAC teams arrive to Bocas: Marco Antonio Rodriguez, Natalia de Avila, Alejandro Buzo, and Benoit Chabrier of Telecom san Frontiers, along with UNETT and REDLAC team composed of UNICEF, IOM, PAHO, and WFP. They met with SINAPROC, Minister Health, Vice-president of Panama, and other officials. The situation seems to be generally under control. Of 36 shelters, approximately 20 remain open; people are returning home People are receiving cleaning kits, but there seems to be a shortage of kits. There continues to be a need for food, water, and blankets; but the main problems are transport and distribution.

The Director of SINAPROC requested assistance in the analysis, evaluation, and information management; a great amount of gathered information remains to be processed

The team is currently visiting shelters in Bocas del Toro and will participate in a general planning meeting this evening with the national and local authorities. The two helicopter from USAID are arriving tomorrow and will be available; however, two Colombian planes that have been operating are scheduled to leave; Panamanian authorities are reportedly requesting an extension. COE in Panama reports minor flooding in Arraijan, San Miguelito, Burunga, and Veracruz. In Colon has received little information and are still assessing. COE reports no worsening of the situation in Panama East, Darien, or Colon.

Red Cross

Provided a chart of the floods and a list of donations sent to the area, these reports are attached.