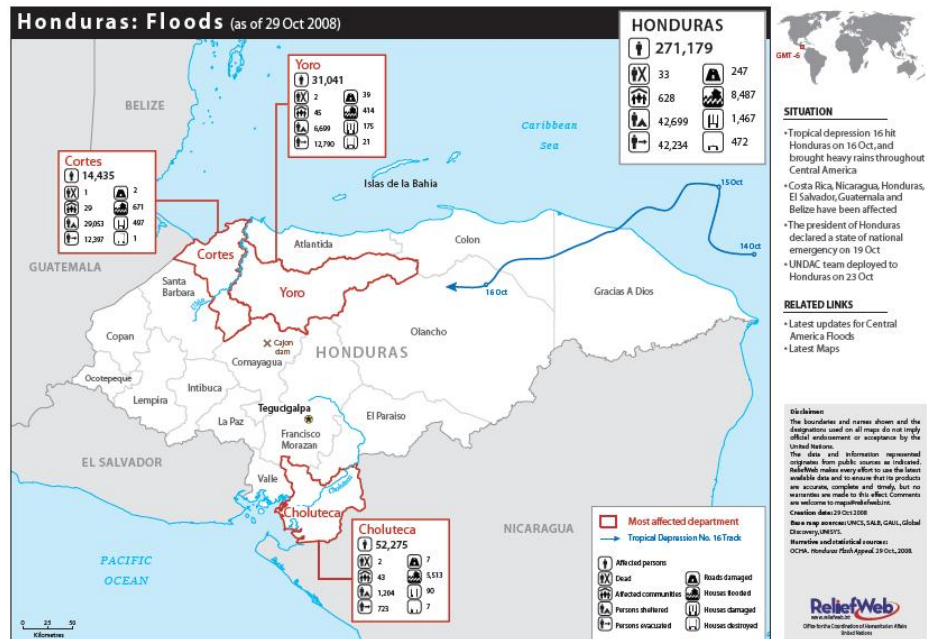




WHO Floods in Honduras

31 October 2008

Health Action in Crises



Since 16 October, prolonged heavy rains have caused floods and landslides in Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. The state of emergency was declared in Honduras where, according to the Permanent Contingencies Commission, 33 people died and over 270 000 were affected. All but one of the 18 departments are flooded and several thousands have found refuge in shelters. Some areas are accessible only by boat.

The main health concerns are gastrointestinal diseases, acute respiratory infections and communicable diseases. Primary needs include portable latrines, drugs and health supplies, water purification kits and items for household hygiene.

The United Nations is launching a Flash Appeal for the response to the crisis. PAHO/WHO is appealing for US\$ 1 240 937 to support the health sector in the areas of:

- Epidemiological surveillance and disease control
- Access and availability of drugs and health supplies
- Control and surveillance of water quality
- Coordination with health partners
- Mental health care at local level

Health Sector Flash Appeal Summary

Introduction

Given the impact of the floods on infrastructure, particularly roads and bridges, the population is facing obstacles in accessing health care. The health infrastructure has also suffered, though there are no reports of serious damage to the physical infrastructure to date. Given the increased demand for health care and the interruption of health services, health personnel, emergency health and reproductive health kits and medical supplies are urgently needed to provide immediate care to the affected populations. It should be noted that

pregnant women need additional assistance to access public health facilities, and to deliver in a clean and safe environment.

Preliminary information indicates that priority needs to be given to approximately 300 000 people for the health sector.

PAHO/WHO and its partners UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS and Ministry of Health identified several priority areas for the implementation of critical interventions which will address the effects on health caused by the floods. The current assessment indicates that the primary needs in the health sector

are related to epidemiological surveillance and vector transmitted disease control, access and availability of drugs and medical supplies, mental health, control and surveillance of water quality as well as health sector coordination and logistic support to the Ministry of Health.

Epidemiological Surveillance and Vector Transmitted Disease Control

- With flooding and stagnant water resulting from the heavy rains, epidemic outbreaks are an increased concern. The objective of this area of intervention is to prevent the increase of communicable diseases due to a raise of the vector population (both mosquitoes and rodents) and a lack of clean water.
- This area of work includes the establishment of sentinel health units and ongoing monitoring of the affected population to track communicable disease patterns and vector control. The recently flooded areas are already suffering from seasonal picks especially of dengue, malaria and leptospirosis. Surveillance is the key approach.

Access and Availability of Prescription Drugs and Medical Supplies in the Health Services in Period of Post Emergency

- Taking into consideration the increase demand for medical attention and the difficulties to access some of the most affected areas, an emergency health kit will include medicines, disposables and instruments to meet the needs of 10,000 people for three months. This basic unit is intended for use by primary health care workers with limited training and located in remote areas. The kits, developed by WHO, are used for initial supply of primary health care facilities where the normal system of provision has broken down.
- In addition, UNFPA will procure and distribute emergency reproductive health kits and commodities to hospitals and health facilities, in order to provide reproductive health services

such as clean and assisted deliveries, emergency obstetric care, training of health care providers on reproductive health issues in the affected areas, particularly focusing on women and young girls.

Mental Health Care

- In disaster and emergency situations the psychological suffering, which can be manifested in grief, anxiety, fear, and other psychosocial problems, not always results so evident and some can be described as normal reactions. However, a portion of this population can need an attention in this order, up to for a prolonged time.
- Previous experiences in the country, for example during and after Hurricane Mitch, demonstrated the desirability and importance of having trainers of mental health that perform actions related the psychosocial problems with the population directly affected by the disaster.

Control and Surveillance of Water Quality

- The excess of precipitation caused severe pollution in the water sources. The assessment indicates that more than 900,000 people have their water and sanitation systems affected. PAHO/WHO and its partners Ministry of Health, SANAA and local water committees will work on the provision of supplies and materials as well as mobilization of specialized environmental health officers for the monitoring of water quality and the improvement of affected sources

Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance

- In emergency situations good coordination among health partners and the relevant authorities is essential to avoid gaps in the response or overlapping of activities.

For more information:

PAHO/WHO
Dr. Jean Luc Poncelet
Area on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief
Tel: +202-974-3528 | Fax: +202-775-4578 | poncelej@paho.org

Geneva
Jukka Sailas, External Relations
Health Action in Crises
Tel: +41 22 791 1887 | Fax: +41 22 791 4844 | sailasj@who.int

<http://www.who.int/disasters>

Summary of PAHO/WHO Projects in Honduras

Floods Flash Appeal

Agency			Amount (in US\$)
	Project Title	Epidemiological Surveillance and disease control and critical repairs to public health laboratories	
PAHO/WHO	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure an effective disease surveillance and control of emerging diseases with special focus on vector borne diseases 	630 000
HON-08/H01	Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 300,000 people from Olancho, Cortés, Francisco Morazán, Gracias A Dios, Atlántida regions 	
	Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Secretary 	
	Project Title	Access and availability of drugs	
PAHO/WHO	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the availability of medicines and basic medical supplies in the health services network in order to guarantee medical care to the affected population 	300 000
HON-08/H02	Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 220,000 affected persons in the most affected areas 	
	Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Secretary, Inter institutional Commission of medicines (CIM) 	
	Project Title	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance	
PAHO/WHO	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring an efficient and effective coordination of response activities within the health sector. 	100 000
HON-08/H03	Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> approximately 300,000 people. 	
	Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Secretary, NGOs, COPECO 	
	Project Title	Mental Health	
PAHO/WHO	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To address the psychosocial problems derived from the emergency in selected municipalities of the departments of Valley, Copán, Choluteca, Francisco Morazán, and El Progreso. 	30 000
HON-08/S02	Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 trained psychosocial promoters who will work with population in shelters of five municipalities in different affected regions. 	
	Partner	Health Secretary, departmental health Regions, National Autonomous University, women's NGOs..	
	Project Title	Control and surveillance of water quality	
PAHO/WHO	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent water and sanitation related diseases by the monitoring of water quality and the implementation disinfection, turbidity reduction activities. 	180 937
HON-08/WS02	Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 120,000 people who have their water and sanitation systems affected 	
	Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Secretary, SANAA, local water committees 	

Total Requested: US\$ 1 240 937