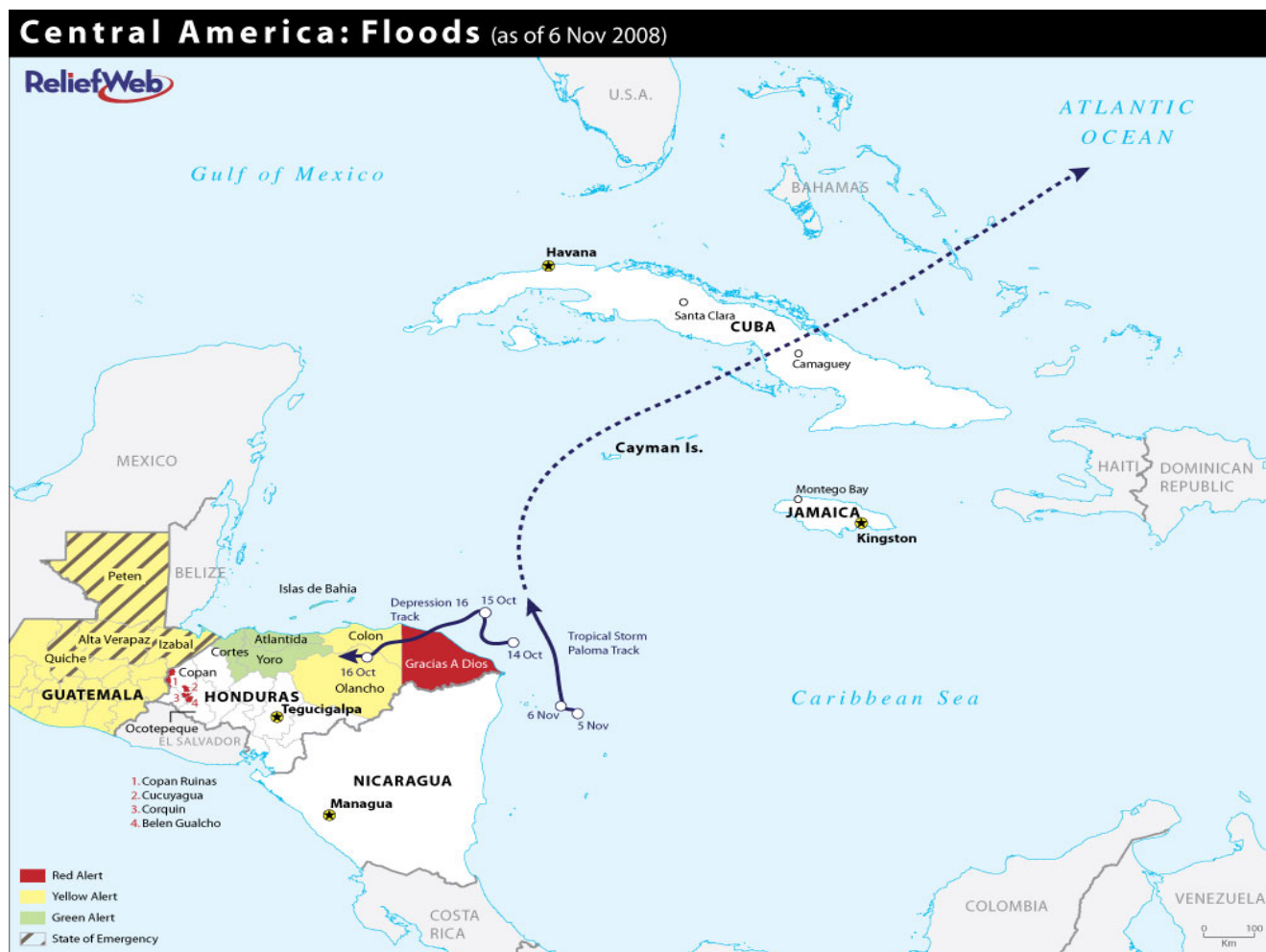


**Situation Report 10 – Honduras and Central America Floods  
17 November 2008**

This situation report is based on information received from, the UN Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) in the affected countries, the OCHA Regional Office in Panama and the National Hurricane Centre.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- **The Flash Appeal for Honduras is only 10% funded. It is estimated that 110,000 children are in need of psychosocial support.**
- **In Guatemala, concerns exist over the magnitude of the disaster in El Peten following a mission to this departamento.**
- **Overall, in Guatemala and Honduras, more assistance is needed, notably in the food sector. Access remains difficult in view of the roads conditions and many communities remain isolated.**



**SITUATION**

1. Tropical Depression No. 16 made landfall in northern Honduras on 16 October and has been slowly crossing over Central America causing heavy rains from northern Costa Rica to south-eastern Mexico. The system affected the countries of Costa Rica, Belize, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala with heavy rains which led to

flooding and mudslides. In addition to a cold front over the region, tropical depression 17, Paloma, brought additional rains.

## **HONDURAS**

2. A series of meteorological events (Tropical Depression 16, low depression and swell) caused severe floods and landslides especially in the central and western parts of the country. The Government of Honduras declared a state of emergency through an Executive Decree on 19 October and formally requested humanitarian assistance on 20 October. The decree ordered Ministries and specialized institutions under the coordination of the Permanent Commission for Contingencies, COPECO, to take immediate necessary actions using funds from the national budget and the international community. To respond to the situation, the United Nations and partners implemented an Inter-Agency Emergency Response Plan and sectoral working groups were activated for Water and Sanitation, Shelter, Health, Food Security and Nutrition, Early Recovery and Telecommunication and Logistics. A Flash Appeal, requesting USD 17 million is 10% funded, including USD 1.5 million from the CERF.

3. The floods and landslides have affected 313,350 persons, claimed 49 deaths and injured 7. Some 50,600 persons were evacuated and 43,350 persons are living in shelters. The most vulnerable communities have lost their livelihoods and income. Their living conditions will remain precarious for several months. Seventeen out of 18 departments are affected. Agricultural land and crops ready for the harvest were lost; water systems were either contaminated or destroyed. In the Southern part of the country, 1,100 houses were flooded due to a combination of heavy rains, high tides and strong waves. It is estimated that Tegucigalpa experienced twice as much rain than the annual average during the month of October alone. In addition, the country was affected by a cold front that brought more rains, flooding and landslides.

4. Persons in shelters are slowly returning to their homes, as they do not wish to leave their property for a long time and as houses are starting to dry off. While the school year has now ended, most of the schools that were used as shelters will need to be refurbished and repaired. UNICEF is providing cleaning equipment and material to the families that were sheltered in school buildings in order for them to leave such premises clean. It is estimated that 110,000 children are in need of psychosocial support; the lack of educational activities and psychological support reduces their chances of improving their living conditions. In addition, their families have lost their crops and livelihoods, remaining in extreme poverty and without means to send their children back to school.

5. Heavy rains have seriously damaged the water supply and sanitation systems in the most affected areas, including the Valley of Sula in the Departments of Cortés and Yoro, and the Departments of Atlántida and Colón. Some 324 water supply systems are reported damaged in the rural zones of the municipalities of El Progreso, Yoro, Yorito, Santa Rita, El Negrito, Morazán and Victoria (Department of Yoro), San Manuel, Omoa, Villanueva, Potrerillos, La Lima, Pimienta and Puerto Cortés (Department of Cortés) and Tela (Department of Atlántida), leaving approximately 50,000 people, of which 25,000 children, with no access to safe water. The Association of Municipalities of Honduras reports damage in water systems of 49 municipalities. Sanitation facilities in the flooded areas, mainly latrines, have collapsed and contaminated the wells, exposing communities to epidemics outbreaks (cholera, malaria and dengue which are endemic to the area). Rural communities in the western part of the country, including the departments of Santa Barbara and Copán, and the Department of Olanchito in the Eastern part of the Department, are without access to safe drinking water. Municipalities have been distributing drinking water through water tank trucks; however their financial resources are diminishing.

6. Through its seven regional offices, COPECO coordinated rescue, evacuations and aid distribution with the Municipal Emergency Committees (CODEMs) and NGOs. Some 27,313 NFIs were distributed. In addition, COPECO has distributed USD 92,377 to 37 municipalities to be used for the procurement of humanitarian assistance and for rehabilitation and reconstruction. Moreover the Government, through the National Bank, has allocated USD 1,588,142 to be used for agriculture. In turn, the National Congress approved USD 6,881,948 as a technological bonus, USD 42,350,450 for rehabilitation and reconstruction of the main roads and USD 3,705,664 for rehabilitation of houses and housing projects. The Municipality of the Capital City, Tegucigalpa, has provided a cash bonus of USD 79 to families

---

living in shelters to be used to rent a house in a safer place. The President of the Republic of Honduras has also designated the Minister of the Presidency to elaborate a National Plan for rehabilitation and early recovery and will reallocate the Strategy for Poverty Reduction funds to this purpose.

7. WHO/PAHO is purchasing medicine and the necessary medical items for the Health Ministry. PAHO has deployed from its Regional Office two SUMA experts to provide support to COPECO and the CCHI in San Pedro Sula and Choluteca. White Helmets from Argentina have deployed another two SUMA specialists to support the COPECO in Atlántida and will be moving in la Ceiba and Tela. PAH/WHO continues to provide health assistance and is monitoring the sanitary situation in the affected zones. There are not reports of outbreaks or medicine shortage. WHO is also working with UNDP on the procurement of medicine and equipment to be used for water disinfection and cleaning of wells. Negotiations are on-going with potential donors to obtain funds for health monitoring. This request is included in the Flash Appeal. PAHO/WHO inform that local authorities have the health situation under control.

8. More than 5,000 people are isolated in the provinces of Colon, increasing food insecurity in the area. So far, 18 airlifts have been already carried out in coordination with COPECO and the Honduran Air Force. However, about an additional 15 MT of food (i.e. some 25 airlifts) need to be delivered in order to assist 20 isolated communities in the Colon province. Food requirements are increasing due to high vulnerability and little coping mechanisms. The situation is expected to worsen in the medium term due to the damage in the agricultural sector. WFP urgently needs at least 2,000 MT of food through the regional PRRO 10444 in order to start recovery activities. Those requirements had been included in the Flash Appeal. ACT has approved USD 60,000 out of its Rapid Response Funds to support food and NFIs distribution. The implementation of this assistance will be carried out jointly by the ACT members, under the coordination and responsibility of Christian Aid.

9. BCPR is sending a mission to support the Government on mitigation, reconstruction and risk reduction activities. This mission will also carry out an assessment on the institutionalization of rehabilitation and response planning. WFP, in coordination with partners (ASONOG, CRS, World Vision and others) is starting the rehabilitation and reconstruction process through food-for-work and the provision of non-food-items. UNFPA, following the Technical Cooperation's Secretary's (SETCO) request, is programming assistance to indigenous communities affected by the disaster.

10. Through the water and sanitation working group, UNICEF has developed a work plan to restore the provision of safe water in the affected areas. Out of its the Regular Programs, UNICEF has re-allocated USD 66,000 for the procurement of 1,000 hygienic kits and 400 mattresses. Out the Emergency Funds, some USD 150,000 was reallocated for water and sanitation, health and education.

11. Mercy Corps is helping restart agricultural production by distributing corn and bean seeds to 1,300 farmers to plant food crops. Mercy Corps has also hired additional staff and is distributing seven tractor-trailer loads of fertilizers. There is still a small window of opportunity for replanting to harvest in February and March. PAG and Mercy Corps are also beginning to work to repair more than 70 community water systems and deliver clean water to more than 50,000 people. Mercy Corps is an ITT Watermark emergency response partner, which includes a three-year, USD1 million commitment from ITT to help provide safe water during water-related emergencies such as floods, hurricanes and cyclones. OXFAM, through local NGOs, has distributed food aid and hygiene kits to 192 families sheltered in Corquin, Department of Copan, Lepaera, and in the Department of Lempira. OXFAM is also programming funds to support the community of El Suctal in the next months.

12. The Honduran Red Cross distributed all the relief aid collected through Televiscentro (national television network). The HRC continues assessments in the following sectors: food security, water and sanitation, agricultural sector, livelihoods and psycho-social support. IFRC provided assistance to 1,400 families in the Departments of Choluteca, Valle and El Paraiso and to 1,000 families in the rural areas of El Progreso, Yoro. The Swiss Red Cross provided assistance to 1,000 families in the Departments of Valle and Choluteca and to 600 families in the Department



of Olancho. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), in coordination with CARITAS and the CODEMs, has provided assistance amounting to USD 120,000 in the departments of Colon, Cortes, Olancho, Copan, Yoro, Choluteca y Valle.

## **GUATEMALA**

13. In Guatemala, according to the CONRED, more than 15 days of consecutive rains as a result of Tropical Depression 16 have claimed the lives of 3 persons, affected 30,000 families, destroyed 67,000 hectares of land, contaminated many wells and inflicted serious damage to the infrastructure. Some 8,781 families are currently in shelter; 9,375 houses, 38 schools, 73 bridges, 70 roads and 6 health centres have been affected. Tropical Depression 16 affected the whole country, with Alta Verapaz, El Peten, Izabal, and Quiche, the most directly impacted. Some 27 municipalities in these departments are declared under a state of emergency. Rains are expected until the end of the month. The Yellow alert is still maintained at the national level and coordination mechanisms remain activated for relief, assessments and rehabilitation.

14. The President Alvaro Colom has assigned approximately USD 6.5 million to respond to the crisis and, through the Vice President, has requested international assistance on 3 November. Damages are estimated by the Government to amount to approximately Quetzals 1,000 million. In addition to a CERF allocation of USD 1.5 million, donors such as AECDI, IDB, OFDA, KOICA and Japan, contributed approximately USD 2.9 million to respond to this emergency.

15. The CONRED is coordinating the response. The ministries of Health, Public Works and Agriculture continue to assess the damages and the financial costs in the affected areas. The humanitarian partners are closely coordinating with the Government at the central and local levels. Agencies visiting El Peten raised concern over the magnitude of the disaster in this department. UNICEF and WFP are in El Peten planning further interventions. WHO/PAHO is closely working with the ministry of health on assessments, analysis and monitoring of the situation. UNFPA is distributing 2,000 hygiene kits. UNICEF is assisting with water and sanitation in El Peten notably. WFP has already delivered 137,42 MT of food covering 28,398 persons, however in Poptun and Carcha, respectively 11 and 3 communities remain isolated. Many distributions need to be carried out by air as roads are impassible. More food assistance will be required. Sectoral tables are working well according to the Humanitarian Network Contingency Plan (Health, WASH, Food security and nutrition, Protection). The Humanitarian network, including NGOs such as Mercy Corps, CARE, CRS, OXFAM, Save the children as well as the Red Cross are distributing relief items in the affected areas while carrying out additional damage assessments. Regular coordination meetings are held with all partners and donors.

## **REGIONAL RESPONSE**

16. Some CHF 271,000 (USD 247,715 or EUR 172,611) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the National Societies of Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua in delivering immediate assistance to 1,500 families. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged. The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation for Central America and Mexico are communicating with and providing support to the National Societies. Three PADRU disaster management delegates have been deployed to Honduras, Costa Rica and Nicaragua to coordinate initial relief actions with the National Societies.

17. ECHO has allocated USD 2.8 million to support the emergency operation in Honduras and Guatemala through NGOs, UN agencies and the Red Cross Movement.

18. The OCHA Regional Office in Panama is closely monitoring the situation and is in contact with the Resident Coordinators and UNETTs in the affected countries. More information can be found on Reliefweb at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int) and REDHUM at [www.redhum.org](http://www.redhum.org). Humanitarian organizations and donors are encouraged to report all contributions (cash and in-kind) to OCHA's Financial Tracking Service at [fts@reliefweb.int](mailto:fts@reliefweb.int) or through the on-line contribution form at [www.reliefweb.int/fts](http://www.reliefweb.int/fts), where a list of already made contributions is available.



Contact Details

Desk Officer (New York)	Ms. Heidi Kuttab	Office Tel: +1 917 367-3365 Office Fax: +1 212 963-36 30 E-mail: <a href="mailto:kuttab@un.org">kuttab@un.org</a>
GCMS (Geneva)	Mr. Peter Neussl	Office Tel: +41 22 917 1511 E-mail: <a href="mailto:neussl@un.org">neussl@un.org</a>
OCHA Regional Office for America and the Caribbean	Mr. Douglas Reimer Regional Disaster Response Adviser	Office Tel. +507 317-1748 Office Fax +507 317-1744 Mobile: +507 6676-1689 E-mail: <a href="mailto:reimer@un.org">reimer@un.org</a>
Press Contact: (NY)	Ms. Stephanie Bunker	Office Tel : + 1 917-367-5126 Office Fax: + 1 212-963-1312 Email: <a href="mailto:bunker@un.org">bunker@un.org</a>
(GVA)	Ms. Elizabeth Byrs	Office Tel + 41 22 917 26 53 Office Fax + 41 22 917 00 20 E-mail: <a href="mailto:byrs@un.org">byrs@un.org</a>