



UNITED NATIONS

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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNITED NATIONS MOBILIZING EMERGENCY TEAM FOR URUGUAY

(New York: 11 May 2007): The United Nations is mobilizing a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team for deployment to Uruguay early next week in the wake of the worst floods to hit the country in half a century.

The UNDAC team is being mobilized following an official request for support from the Government. The flooding has already driven some 12,000 people from their homes, and has affected more than 110,000 people overall. The Uruguayan Parliament has declared a State of Disaster. Displaced people are being housed in shelters, including stadiums and sport institutions, and basic supplies are being delivered. However, the high number of affected people and harsh weather conditions mean that additional assistance is needed.

With the flooding affecting seven of the country's 19 departments, the central Uruguayan departments of Durazno, Soriano and Treinta y Tres report the worst effects. Thousands of houses have been damaged, as has much of the public infrastructure, including the water supply, sewer and drainage systems, power and telephone lines, roads, agricultural land and municipal buildings. The majority of the affected population includes the poor and vulnerable groups such as women, children and the elderly. The situation is expected to worsen when the flood waters reach low-lying areas.

In Durazno, the Yi River has flooded the greatest part of the provincial capital, with the river running 14 meters above its average level at present. The city is facing a serious shortage of running water as state supply pumps have also been flooded.

The Government has allocated \$45 million to assist the population affected by the floods. Additionally, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) has announced that it will allocate \$15 million for this emergency, with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) yesterday made an emergency cash grant of \$30,000 available for relief activities. The UN system remains in contact with the national emergency service to identify possible areas to assist.

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