

13 November 2009

Dear Mr. Holmes,

First of all, I would like to thank you for the invaluable support we have already received from OCHA during the humanitarian emergency in El Salvador caused by heavy rains and landslides due to Hurricane Ida, in particular through a cash grant and the dispatch of a UNDAC Team. Since the onset of this emergency, I have been consulting closely with national authorities and humanitarian partners regarding needs, in order to develop an effective, strategic and coordinated response.

While assessments are still ongoing, hampered by difficult access and limited information flow, the international community considers that the number of affected people varies between 15,000 to 20,000 families, or some 75000 to 100000 people. Out of those, some 14,500 people, currently in 130 temporary shelters, have lost everything. Damages to infrastructure and housing are considerable, as shown in the attached pictures and the latest Situation Report.

As a first step in organizing the response, I have convened an expanded UN Country Team, hereby denominated Humanitarian Country Team, with representation of all UN agencies in the country, the International Organization for Migration, the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations. This now constitutes the main forum for strategic and policy discussions among international actors on how to support and complement the government's efforts to respond to the emergency. I have also convened a donors meeting. The Humanitarian Country Team will ensure that cross-cutting issues, such as gender, are fully incorporated into our strategic response planning and activities

In consultation with the Humanitarian Country Team, I am pleased to inform you of the following arrangements for the coordination of the humanitarian operation, in support of the response led by the recently appointed Salvadoran Government's leadership of the response:

Mr. John Holmes

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
and Emergency Relief Coordinator
OCHA
New York



| Sector | Sector/Cluster Lead (UN and partners) |
|---------------------------|---|
| Agriculture | FAO |
| Camp Management | IOM |
| Coordination | UNDP |
| Early Recovery | UNDP |
| Education | UNICEF |
| Emergency Shelter | IFRC (with UNDP as implementing partners for CERF / Flash Appeal) |
| Food Assistance | WFP |
| Health - Mental Health | PAHO UNICEF |
| Logistics | WFP |
| Protection | UNICEF |
| Water/Sanitation/Hygiene | PAHO |

All sector leaders have met and discussed priorities with humanitarian partners. The Humanitarian Country Team, with the support of the UNDAC Team, will work to ensure inter-cluster coordination in El Salvador. Also, any international response is being carefully planned in support of and consultation with the National Authorities leading the effort. As such, all sectors defined above are closely linked to the seven national sectoral commissions (Emergency services; Health; Shelter; Security; Logistics; Infrastructure and Technical-scientific).

So far, we have identified two critical priorities in which the Cluster Leads will require global support: 1) Water & Sanitation (PAHO), given the severe damage to water systems and sewage infrastructure; and 2) Shelter (IFRC), given the particularly difficult situation in collective centers/camps and lost and damaged housing.

As a second step, the Humanitarian Country Team in the country has agreed to request immediately a CERF grant in order to commence emergency operations. Please find attached the proposed CERF request.

Finally, based on consultations with some key donors and the Government, the United Nations and its partners have decided to launch a Flash Appeal to attend affected populations in the next six months.

I would be grateful if you could consult with the IASC Principals to ensure that the Global Cluster Lead Agencies and other partners are prepared to support these proposed arrangements, in particular in the Shelter sector.

Many thanks again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Jessica Faieta
Resident Coordinator

