

**COMMISSION DECISION**  
**of**  
**on the financing of emergency humanitarian operations from the general budget of the**  
**European Communities in**  
**Ecuador**

**THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,**

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,  
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 2 (a) and Article 13 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Since January 2008, unusually heavy and continuing rains have been affecting Ecuador, resulting in floods which have directly affected at least 360,000 people, approximately 100,000 of whom are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.
- (2) According to the latest estimates, more than 271,000 hectares of crops have been destroyed. According to government estimates, 35,000 people have been evacuated to temporary shelters, with the figure on the rise. Water and sanitation facilities have been severely affected.
- (3) Meteorological forecasts indicate that rains will continue in the coming weeks and affected areas will remain flooded until April at least, leaving a large number of people in a precarious humanitarian situation.
- (4) Given the scope of the disaster, local and national response capacity is overwhelmed.
- (5) On 21 February 2008, the Ecuadorian President officially declared a state of national emergency in the country and called for international solidarity.
- (6) Humanitarian aid operations financed by this Decision should be of a maximum duration of 6 months.
- (7) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 1,500,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Communities is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to approximately 75,000 people taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors.
- (8) The present Decision constitutes a financing Decision within the meaning of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002<sup>2</sup>, Article 90 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation determined by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002<sup>3</sup>, and Article 15 of the Internal Rules on the Implementation of the general budget of the European Communities<sup>4</sup>.

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1- OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6

2- OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1995/2006, OJ L 390, 30.12.2006, p.1 and by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1525/2007 of 17 December 2007, OJ L 343 of 27.12.2007, p. 9.

3- OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p.1 Regulation as last amended by Commission Regulation (EC Euratom) No. 478/2007, OJ L 111 of 28.4.2007, P. 13

4- Commission Decision of 05.03.2008, C/2008/773

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 1,500,000 for emergency humanitarian aid operations to provide the necessary assistance and relief to people in Ecuador by using line 23 02 01 of the 2008 general budget of the European Communities.
2. In accordance with Article 2(a) of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:  
To assist the victims of floods with integrated relief and immediate recovery support  
The total amount of this Decision is allocated to this objective.

*Article 2*

1. The implementation of humanitarian aid operations funded by this Decision shall have a maximum duration of 6 months from their starting date.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 21 February 2008.
3. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to force majeure or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

*Article 3*

1. The Commission shall implement the budget by direct centralised management or by joint management with international organisations.
2. The actions supported by this Decision will be implemented by humanitarian aid organisations that are signatories to the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) or the EC/UN Financial Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA).
3. Taking account of the specificities of humanitarian aid, the nature of the activities to be undertaken, the specific location constraints and the level of urgency, the activities covered by this Decision may be financed in full in accordance with Article 253 (1) (a) of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation.

*Article 4*

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission



**Emergency Humanitarian Aid Decision**

**23 02 01**

Title: Emergency humanitarian assistance in favour of the victims of floods in Ecuador

Location of operation: Ecuador

Amount of Decision: EUR 1,500,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/ECU/BUD/2008/01000

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**Explanatory Memorandum**

**1 - Rationale needs and target population**

1.1. - Rationale:

The annual rainy season in Ecuador, which starts in December and continues until the end of May, has caused flooding in the past. However, the "La Niña" phenomenon<sup>5</sup> has a profound impact on the climate in the southern hemisphere and, hence, has seriously worsened the effects of the rainy season this year.

Ecuador has been experiencing heavy and continuous rainfall since January 2008. Over the past weeks, floods have increased in intensity affecting 14 provinces<sup>6</sup> which represents more than 50% of the territory. An emergency has been declared for 13 of these provinces.

It is important to note that the precipitation during the period of reference<sup>7</sup> was marked by its intensity, causing torrential rainfall registering 355 mm/m2, when the normal average in this period is 79mm/m2 according to the National Meteorology Service (INAHMI).

The coastal region is now fully affected as well as some Andean provinces. The highest level of affectation is reported in the provinces of Los Rios, Guayas, El Oro, Manabi and Cañar, where the floods have had a serious impact in terms of houses, crops, basic services and key infrastructure.

According to latest estimates available<sup>8</sup>, at least 360,000 people have been directly affected, close to 100,000 of whom are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance. Floods and mudslides triggered by heavy rains have left 24 confirmed deaths. The government declared

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<sup>5</sup> Periodic cooling of water in the Pacific Ocean

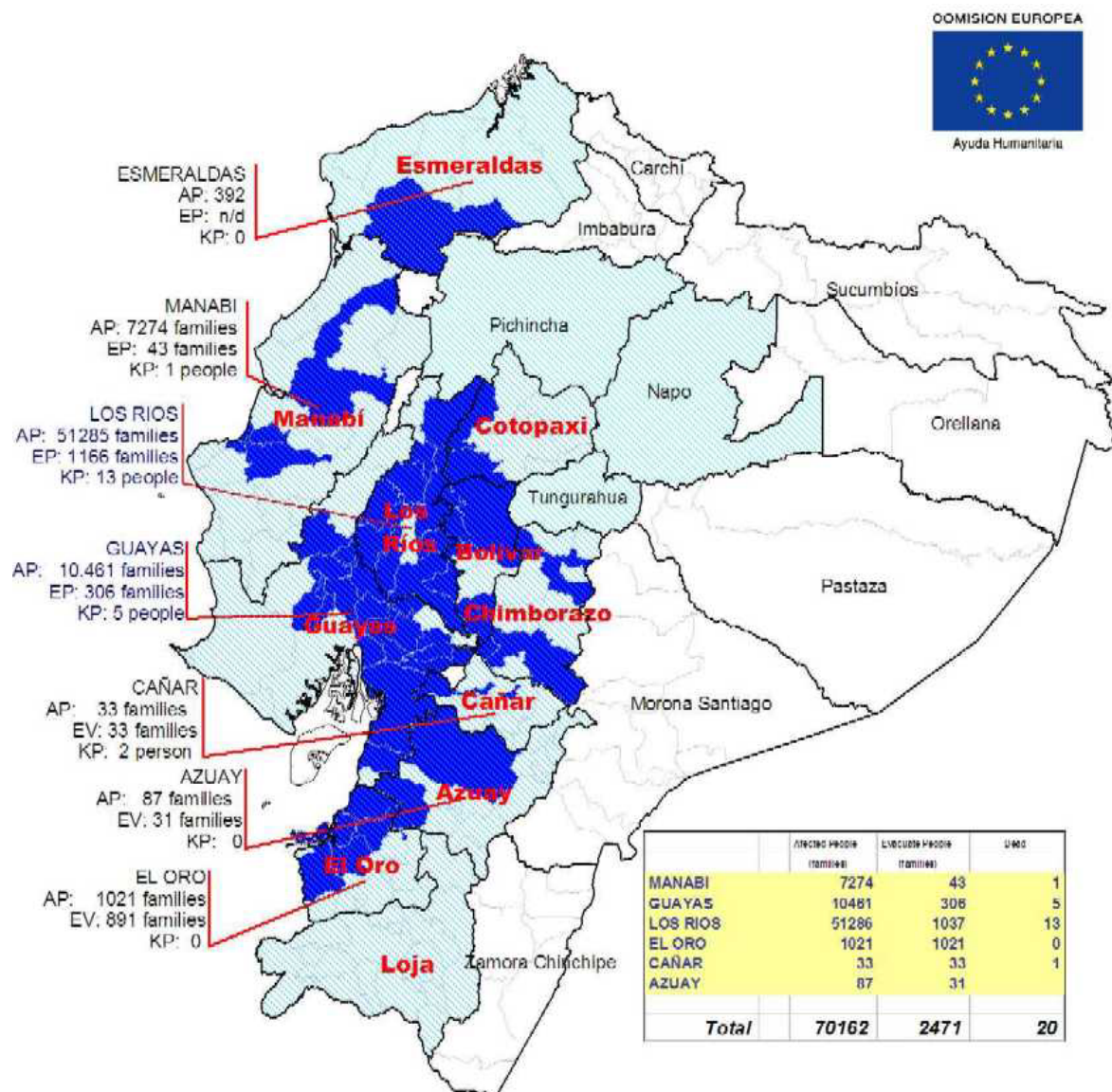
<sup>6</sup> Source : UNETE report of 22/2/2008

<sup>7</sup> 1-19 February 2008

<sup>8</sup> Source : Emergency Operational Centres of each province, data received on 28/02/09  
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publicly<sup>9</sup> that around 3,500,000 people are indirectly affected by the floods in a country of 13,800,000 inhabitants. Economic losses are estimated to be USD 1,000,000.

Up to now, the number of displaced people is provisional. Official data report 13,000 people<sup>10</sup> but due to the inaccessibility of several affected areas, preliminary figures provided report that about 35,000 people may have been evacuated to temporary shelters<sup>11</sup>.



Given the slow onset type of disaster which characterizes floods, the number of families in need is likely to rise on a daily basis, with a progressive increase in flooded areas. Many rivers have overflowed, which has led to the collapse of the drainage systems in various cities in the lower areas, causing even more flooding<sup>12</sup>.

All affected provinces have reported losses in rice, cocoa, bananas, sugar and corn crops. According to preliminary information from the Ministry of Agriculture<sup>13</sup>, the initial agricultural losses total 271,000 hectares, which represents some USD 200,000,000 in

<sup>9</sup> Source : El Universo of 22/2/2008

<sup>10</sup> Source: Emergency Operational Centres of each province

<sup>11</sup> Source : ECHO Sitrep of 29/2/2008

<sup>12</sup> Source : DREF (Disaster Relief Emergency Fund of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) bulletin of 26/2/2008

<sup>13</sup> Source : DREF bulletin of 26/2/2008

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economic losses in this sector alone. This figure will increase when the evaluation of the crops in the more remote areas is available. This time of the year is critical for the upcoming harvest and it is likely that already vulnerable families are going to suffer significant losses in terms of food and income. The implications for agriculture could be extremely serious. The farm ministry estimates that 30% of crops have been damaged. It has warned of possible food shortages as a result. There are reports in the coastal areas that prices of agricultural products have already increased dramatically in local markets<sup>14</sup>.

Some of the affected communities have experienced damage to major roads and bridges, causing difficulties in accessing affected areas. This was also witnessed during the recent DG ECHO<sup>15</sup> assessment mission<sup>16</sup>. According to the Ministry of Health 567 cases of dengue fever have been confirmed and 802 cases reported so far<sup>17</sup>, with this figure expected to rise.

Key stakeholders (communities, Civil Defence, UNETE<sup>18</sup>) share the view that the phenomenon is utterly atypical, because of its intensity and its impact on the population. Scientists explain that it is mainly due to a climatic anomaly resulting in a move down to the south of the area of the inter-tropical convergence, directly hitting Ecuador. It is very similar to what happened in the country during the "El Niño" disaster in winter 1997-1998 and in certain areas even surpasses its effects. According to CIIFEN<sup>19</sup>, the current above normal rainfall trend will continue until April.

Given the situation in the country, on 31 January 2008 the Ecuadorian government declared a state of emergency in nine provinces<sup>20</sup>, enabling the release of USD 10,000,000 to respond to the emergency. Subsequently, and as a result of a severe deterioration of the situation, a state of national disaster was declared on 21 February 2008<sup>21</sup>. The President ordered the deployment of all available armed forces and national police<sup>22</sup> to facilitate logistics, while the Regional Emergency Operation Centre (COE) established in Guayaquil, under the auspices of the Coastal Ministry is coordinating the emergency response<sup>23</sup>.

However, given the magnitude of the disaster and the deterioration of the situation, national response capacity was exceeded and the government appealed for international assistance on 21 February 2008. The number of affected families currently receiving humanitarian assistance does not cover the full range of needs<sup>24</sup>.

DG ECHO field office in Quito was following the situation from the beginning of the floods. A DG ECHO mission was deployed to the provinces of Los Rios and Manabi from 22 to 28 February 2008 in order to assess the humanitarian situation in the disaster-affected areas, and to help to design DG ECHO's intervention. The main conclusions reached are that the negative impact of the floods is far more significant than the floods in 2006, that the sanitary conditions in temporary shelters are critical and that an aggravation of the situation is highly probable because the rainy season will not end before May. It also became evident that the

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<sup>14</sup> Source: El Universo 22/02/2008

<sup>15</sup> Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid – ECHO

<sup>16</sup> Undertaken by DG ECHO field staff based in Quito from 23 to 27/02/2008

<sup>17</sup> OCHA Situation Report 1 of 22/02/2008

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Emergency Team

<sup>19</sup> Centro Internacional para la investigación del fenómeno de El Niño (Internacional Centre for the Investigation of the "El Niño" Phenomenon)

<sup>20</sup> Decree n° 900

<sup>21</sup> As a result, USD 25,000,000 is to be allocated to the Coastal Ministry

<sup>22</sup> 4,400 staff are deployed to affected areas

<sup>23</sup> Civil Defence is under the responsibility of the Ministry for Internal and External Security at national level and under the responsibility of the Coastal Ministry in Guayaquil.

<sup>24</sup> The President of Ecuador declared on 23/02/2008 to the press that "This is not an emergency; this is a disaster, because when it is an emergency, it means that we have the resources to respond. In this disaster, we do not have enough resources to respond to the needs of all the victims".

affected families are especially vulnerable people from rural and urban areas, with extremely limited coping capacities and with significant needs in terms of water and sanitation and crop recovery.

## 1.2. - Identified needs:

Following the Government request, an UNDAC<sup>25</sup> team was also deployed to the affected areas on 27 February 2008 and is still conducting needs assessment.

The main findings of the DG ECHO field assessment in the coastal areas are the following:

- The principal impact of the floods seems to be on cultivated areas. The subsistence crops have been severely affected (corn, rice, vegetables, watermelons, cocoa, maracuya), and in particular short-cycle crops such as rice and corn.
- Extensive losses to livestock and poultry have also been reported, causing significant economic losses and putting at risk the farmers' main sources of subsistence. However, no official estimate is available.
- The most affected populations in rural areas are small farmers with less than 10 hectares of land and *arrendatarios* (landless peasants renting the land). This sector of the population is usually quite vulnerable economically (e.g. because of loans from banks or private agents). In urban areas, the most vulnerable are mostly living in poorly planned neighborhoods and have been evacuated to provisional shelters.
- Dwellings have been submerged, sanitary systems and wells have been damaged and filled with garbage.
- The sediment made of mud mixed with garbage and sand is a potential vector of pathogens which can cause losses to non-submerged crops through the exacerbation of common diseases and creation of new ones.
- One of the greatest concerns is for public health. Stagnant waters could lead to outbreaks of tropical diseases such as waterborne illnesses, respiratory infections, diarrhea, dengue and leptospirosis as well as human skin diseases. The Ministry of Health has warned that due to the current hygiene conditions, the malaria falciparum cases could again become a public health problem in the country, while since 2001 the related morbidity rate had decreased drastically.
- There are a number of cases of flooded health posts and schools.

Three UNETE missions were deployed to the affected areas between 7 and 22 February 2008. According to their initial assessments, there is a need for sanitation activities, psychological support, improvement of shelters, tents and water quality control.

Thus, the resulting needs can be summarized as follows:

- Immediate *distribution of safe drinking water* to affected people, as well as the provision of non-food items such as hygiene, disinfectants.
- *Safe sanitation, initially prioritizing environmental sanitation*: drainage of stagnant waters, removal of dead animals, vector control (mosquitoes, rats, snakes and other reptiles), latrine rehabilitation, solid waste management. It is important to underline the significance of the sanitary conditions, mainly due to the fact that latrines and septic tanks have been flooded and water has been contaminated. Victims are exposed to the threat of diseases from being in contact with infected water or danger related to snake bites. The local health system reported an increase in morbidity of patients suffering from diarrhea and vomiting. In this context, children, women and the elderly are especially vulnerable

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<sup>25</sup> United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination  
ECHO/ECU/BUD/2008/01000

groups whose special needs must be taken into account.

- *Emergency cleaning and disinfection of affected health centres and schools:* in order to maintain a minimum quality assistance of basic services, priority should be given to the resumption of their functioning, including emergency rehabilitation of water systems.
- *Food aid/food security:* provision of food rations is important not only for the population housed in public shelters but also for those who will be returning to their homes once the water levels descend or once the levels of soil saturation by rainfall drop to normal. Most vulnerable communities have lost their main source of food and income due to heavy rains and floods. Due to the loss of harvest in the rural areas, in a period of two to three months from now, this lack of food production will generate a deficit in the food security situation and have a potential negative impact on coping mechanisms at household level. Furthermore, agricultural activities have been severely affected by the floods. It is therefore important to help restore livelihoods through the promotion of short-term emergency agricultural activities (distribution of seeds/plants, agricultural inputs and livestock). In the medium-term, food distribution will need to be complemented by food security activities.
- *Temporary shelters for displaced people:* People have been evacuated to temporary shelters; however there is still a lack of information about numbers. The first estimation mentioned more than 7,000 families approximately 35,000 people in shelters (24 February 2008). The Pan American Health Organisation (UN-PAHO) mentioned approximately 21,500 people in 306 temporary shelters. It is expected that the evacuated families will return to their homes in the following days/weeks.
- *Disaster risk reduction* should be mainstreamed in humanitarian operations to the extent possible. The adoption of risk reduction activities in the humanitarian response will be considered<sup>26</sup>.

### 1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

The Decision will target a population of approximately 75,000 people living in the most severely affected provinces of Ecuador.

Operations will need to take into account the special needs of vulnerable groups such as children, women, elderly, disabled and indigenous minorities.

To the extent possible, priority will be given to communities in the most remote areas. Children under five will be given special attention. Women heads of family should also be preferential beneficiaries of the humanitarian assistance.

Priority will also be given to operations that mainstream disaster risk reduction in their relief activities as the population targeted by this Decision will most probably continue to live in disaster-prone areas.

### 1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

Weather conditions in the forthcoming weeks constitute the main risk if rain continues and forecasts by INAHMI do not foresee any improvement. The risk of further rainfall or landslides could worsen the sanitary and household food security situation and, hence, increase the humanitarian needs to be covered.

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<sup>26</sup> This component will complement the five ongoing DIPECHO (Disaster Preparedness ECHO) projects currently being implemented in El Oro, Manabi, Esmeraldas, Bolivar Los Rios and Loja provinces.

Worsening climatic conditions may hamper the resumption of basic activities, thus causing a further deterioration of the overall situation, impeding access to beneficiaries for the distribution of food rations, or preventing a reasonable level of food security production.

## **2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:**

### **2.1. - Objectives :**

Principal objective: To save and preserve the lives of the populations affected by the floods in Ecuador.

Specific objective: To assist the victims of floods with both integrated relief and immediate recovery support.

### **2.2. - Components:**

The components funded under this Decision mainly include the following:

- Water and Sanitation: water supply, cleaning of stagnant waters and polluted sources, waste disposal and latrines, basic rehabilitation of water systems, water treatment.
- Food Aid/Security: Food aid distribution, short-term emergency agricultural activities (seeds, tools, agricultural inputs, small cattle and livestock).
- Health: health education campaigns, basic preventive and curative health care, drugs supply.
- Non-Food Items: provision of hygiene and domestic kits, mosquito net distribution, etc.
- Emergency repairs to health centres and schools. Repair of water and sanitation systems in the affected buildings; cleaning of and basic equipment for schools used as temporary shelters.
- Disaster preparedness: Strengthening of local capacities in risk management and disaster preparedness, contingency plans revision, strengthening COE equipment for disaster response, mitigation works to protect vital infrastructures, etc.

## **3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:**

The duration of humanitarian aid operations shall be 6 months.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from **21 February 2008**.

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this Decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. In this respect, the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.



#### 4 - Previous interventions/Decisions of the Commission within the context of the current crisis

List of previous DG ECHO operations in ECUADOR				
Decision Number	Decision Type	2006	2007	2008
ECHO/ECU/BUD/2006/01000	Emergency	EUR 1,000,000	EUR	EUR
	Subtotal	1,000,000	0	0
	Grand Total	1,000,000		

Dated : 28 February 2008  
Source : HOPE

DG ECHO has adopted a two-fold strategy in Ecuador. On the one hand, DG ECHO responds to emergencies where the national response capacity cannot adequately cope with the scope of the disaster or when national authorities are unwilling to respond (For example, in 2006 where EUR 1,000,000 was allocated in response to flooding). On the other hand, efforts have been made to identify the geographical areas most vulnerable to natural hazards (and with the poorest population with the least coping capacity) and, subsequently, to prioritize the implementation of disaster preparedness projects in those areas. This process is carried out in a participatory way with key national and international actors, both governmental and non-governmental, in the framework of the DIPECHO<sup>27</sup> programme. In Ecuador, DG ECHO has invested more than EUR 6,500,000 since 1999 to help the country and the vulnerable communities to prepare themselves to face natural disasters. Training/awareness-raising on disaster risk reduction of targeted families and authorities as well as operational strengthening support to Local Emergency Committees will be carried out in the framework of this Decision. These actions will complement the five ongoing disaster preparedness projects currently being implemented in Los Rios, Bolivar, Manabi, Loja, Zamora Chinchipe, Esmeraldas and El Oro Provinces<sup>28</sup> through the DIPECHO<sup>29</sup> programme.

<sup>27</sup> Disaster Preparedness ECHO

<sup>28</sup> DIPECHO projects currently being implemented by COOPI, CRIC, Caritas, Red Cross and UNDP

<sup>29</sup> Disaster Preparedness ECHO- DIPECHO V Action Plan for South America (ECHO/DIP/BUD/2007/03000, EUR 6,500,000, budget line 23.02.03)

## 5 - Overview of donors' contributions

Donors in ECUADOR the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria		DG ECHO			
Belgium		Other services			
Bulgaria					
Cyprus					
Czech republic					
Denmark					
Estonia					
Finland					
France					
Germany					
Greece					
Hungary					
Ireland					
Italy	100,000				
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Luxemburg					
Malta					
Netherlands					
Poland					
Portugal					
Romania					
Slovakia					
Slovenia					
Spain					
Sweden					
United kingdom					
Subtotal	100,000	Subtotal	1,200,000	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	1,300,000		

Dated : 03 March 2008

(\*) Source : DG ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/hac>

Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

An amount of EUR 68,323 has been allocated from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to support the Ecuadorian National Red Cross Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 15,220 beneficiaries. The Spanish cooperation sent an airlift of 8.5 MT of humanitarian aid.

The Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) is assisting in strengthening the emergency response coordination of the Ministry of Health. The total contribution of the United States announced is USD 650,000.

## 6 - Amount of Decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the Decision: EUR 1,500,000.

## 6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

<b>Principal objective:</b> <i>To save and preserve the lives of the populations affected by the floods in Ecuador</i>			
<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)</b>	<b>Geographical area of operation</b>	<b>Potential partners<sup>30</sup></b>
Specific objective 1: To assist the victims of floods with both integrated relief and immediate recovery support	1,500,000	Provinces affected by the floods	- DCV - COOPI - CRIC - CR-E - IO - PAHO - WFP
TOTAL: 1,500,000			

<sup>30</sup> CENTRO REGIONALE D INTERVENTO PER LA COOPERAZIONE (ITA), COOPERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE (ITA), CRUZ ROJA ESPAÑOLA, (E), DEUTSCHER CARITASVERBAND e.V, (DEU), INTERMON OXFAM, (E), UNITED NATIONS - PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION, WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (UN)

## 7 - Evaluation

Under article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of DG ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/evaluation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm).

## 8 – Budget Impact article 23 02 01

-	EC (EUR)
Initial Available Appropriations for	486, 095,000
Supplementary Budgets	-
Transfers	-
<b>Total Available Credits</b>	486, 095,000
Total executed to date (by 29.02.2008)	308, 350,000
Available remaining	177, 745,000
<b>Total amount of the Decision</b>	1, 500,000

## 9. Management issues

Humanitarian aid actions funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs, Specialised Agencies of the Member States, and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) and by United Nations agencies based on the EC/UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. These Framework agreements define the criteria for attributing grant agreements and financing agreements in accordance with Article 90 of the Implementing Rules and may be found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partners/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partners/index_en.htm).

Individual grants are awarded on the basis of the criteria enumerated in Article 7.2 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, such as the technical and financial capacity, readiness and experience, and results of previous interventions.