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## HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)

### SOUTH AMERICA

AMOUNT: EUR 25 000 000

#### 0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

Prolonged drought exacerbated by El Niño has caused a critical situation for around 200 000 Wayúu indigenous people living in the northern part of Guajira peninsula in Colombia. Closure of the border with Venezuela has compounded the situation by cutting off a vital source of basic foodstuffs. In view of the current situation and the fact that local and national institutions are unable to cover the needs, assistance is needed to support access to drinking water, short term emergency food distribution, detection and management of malnutrition, emergency livelihood recovery and protection. It is therefore appropriate to increase the allocation under the present HIP by EUR 1 500 000.

Mandated international organisations as well as international non-governmental organisations (INGO) already present in the areas of response would be the obvious partners for ECHO to implement the necessary assistance.

#### 1. CONTEXT

This HIP covers response to humanitarian needs as well as disaster preparedness, risk reduction and resilience activities, supporting actions at country level as well as regional thematic initiatives in South America. Regarding response to disasters, this HIP focuses largely on the armed conflict in Colombia and its spill over in Ecuador and Venezuela. It has also the potential for response to new natural disasters in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela. These countries have been included because of their high exposure and vulnerability to natural disasters and limited capacity to cope<sup>1</sup>. As regards disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and resilience, the focus will be on a specific targeted action in Bolivia as well as country-specific or regional thematic initiatives in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

#### Man-made disasters

##### Colombia

Colombia continues to be a Forgotten Crisis, reflected in the limited international attention to its humanitarian crisis and low funding for humanitarian actions. ECHO<sup>2</sup>'s Integrated Analysis Framework for 2014-2015 identified high humanitarian needs in the country.

Despite the ongoing negotiations in Colombia between the government of Colombia and the main guerrilla group<sup>3</sup>, the armed conflict continues to cause a major, evolving

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<sup>1</sup> The European Commission's Integrated Analysis Framework identified the following ranking for the 2014 Global Vulnerability and Crisis Assessment (GVCA): Bolivia (GVCA Vulnerability Index 2, Crisis Index 2); Colombia (Vulnerability 2, Crisis 3); Ecuador (Vulnerability 2, Crisis 2); Paraguay (Vulnerability 1, Crisis 1); Peru (Vulnerability 2, Crisis 2); Venezuela (GVCA Vulnerability 2, Crisis 2)

<sup>2</sup> Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection.

<sup>3</sup> FARC – Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces

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humanitarian crisis. The main consequences include for instance forced displacement (internal displaced people - IDPs - and refugees), restrictions on mobility of people, goods and services, forced recruitment of children and young people and sexual and gender-based violence. In 2014, Colombia ranked as the country with the largest IDP population<sup>4</sup>, estimated at 5 700 000. In 2013, 158 116 people were registered as new IDPs. Pressure and threats to civilians from emerging illegal armed groups (so-called "BACRIM") continue to be of great concern. The internal armed conflict is particularly acute in remote rural areas of peripheral departments, including Nariño, Cauca, Valle, Chocó, Norte de Santander, Córdoba, Putumayo, Caquetá, Guaviare, Meta and Arauca. There has been a continuous government effort to address the registration, recognition and assistance of conflict victims and provide assistance – since a Constitutional Court ruling of 2013 also to victims of BACRIM. Nevertheless, relief assistance to the victims remains insufficient in the parts of the territory where there is lack of access by the state, particularly in rural zones.

Many Colombians seek protection in neighbouring countries, especially in Ecuador and Venezuela. There is concern about a possible more restrictive approach in the refugee policy in both countries, resulting in low recognition rates of Colombians in need of international assistance.

### **Venezuela**

In Venezuela, apart from the spill-over of the Colombia conflict, high levels of violence are recorded. Over 24 700 people were murdered in 2013 alone, making Venezuela one of the most violent countries in the world. Over the last few years, there has been a sharp deterioration in the social and economic situation of the country, with potential impact on the provision of basic services, notably health.

### **Natural disasters**

South America is highly exposed to disasters linked to natural hazards. The occurrence of geological events such as earthquakes, tsunamis and landslides is extremely high. Hydro meteorological events (including massive floods, extreme droughts and cold waves) are the most significant cause of life and property losses. In **Bolivia**, for instance, the 2014 abnormal climate variation and the recurrence of natural hazards have increased existing vulnerabilities, with the El Niño phenomenon likely to cause further deterioration in 2015. The 2014 floods severely impacted large areas of the country, affecting the highlands with flash floods and the lowlands with slow onset floods. Flooding covered thousands of square kilometres for weeks, severely eroding the livelihoods of the most vulnerable, in particular those living close to the Mamore and Beni River watersheds.

Medium-scale disasters are on the rise. This increase is due to different factors, for instance climate change and acute climate variation, increased vulnerability of the population triggered by unplanned urban expansion (over 80% of the population live in urban areas), and the uprooting of indigenous populations who are forced to abandon their traditional livelihoods due to the destruction of their environment and increasingly unpredictable climate patterns.

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<sup>4</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimate as at December 2013  
ECHO/-SM/BUD/2015/91000

Vulnerability to natural hazards is exacerbated by significant inequality. Relatively good macroeconomic data and increased levels of human development mask large pockets of extreme poverty leading to exclusion, vulnerability and low local capacities.

Given the socio-economic conditions and vulnerabilities described above, the losses and destruction generated by natural hazards entail significant negative consequences for the populations concerned, whose resilience is low.

## **2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS**

### *1. Affected people/potential beneficiaries*

#### **Man-made disasters**

##### **Colombia**

Those most in need of humanitarian assistance are conflict-affected populations, i.e. recently displaced people without access to sufficient government assistance and confined populations/populations at risk of displacement as well as asylum seekers and refugees in neighbouring countries, with protection being the overarching element of intervention. In case conditions are conducive for a voluntary return in line with international principles, support can be envisaged. Basic humanitarian assistance may also be required for the victims of natural disasters if national response capacity is exceeded or hampered by access issues.

Under this HIP, emergency assistance is expected to be provided to 60 000 people in Colombia (IDPs displaced for less than six months); early recovery and protection assistance to 40 000 people who are confined or at risk of displacement; and protection and basic assistance to 50 000 victims of the Colombia conflict in Ecuador and Venezuela.

#### **Natural Disasters**

All the countries mentioned in section 1 are disaster-prone. The number of disasters, their location, magnitude, and humanitarian impact (affected people/potential beneficiaries) in 2015 are unpredictable. ECHO could adapt this HIP and increase its total amount in order to respond to natural disasters which may happen in the region in 2015/2016 (with previous and due consideration to the humanitarian impact and needs, national/local capacities to respond and the international humanitarian response).

#### **Disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction, resilience**

Actions will target communities vulnerable to adverse events and local institutions in order to increase their resilience and enhance their preparedness. Where local/national response capacity is overwhelmed or significant gaps exist in the coverage of emergency humanitarian needs, the provision of relief assistance to the most vulnerable could be envisaged. ECHO will advocate to the extent possible for sustainable solutions, promoting disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience building with national and local authorities as well as with EU Delegations and other development actors. It is estimated that around 1 000 000 direct beneficiaries will be targeted in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela as well as beneficiaries of regional thematic initiatives in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay.

Disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and resilience activities will focus on rural, urban and peri-urban communities in disaster prone areas and on institutions involved in disaster risk reduction/disaster risk management (DRM)<sup>5</sup>. Priority will be given to those

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<sup>5</sup> Both at National and Local levels, with focus depending on the degree of decentralization of each country, and not only focusing on Response Institutions, but also supporting efforts of other sector ministries and institutions forming part of the National System, which have DRM priorities and responsibilities.

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communities with the highest risk indicators and the lowest coping capacities, which are most exposed to natural events and to institutions responsible for DRM in need of technical support. New areas and populations will be targeted, although in some cases consolidation of previous actions may be considered.

Vulnerable populations living in the vicinity of the Mamore and Beni River watersheds will benefit from a targeted action in Bolivia that builds on previous disaster risk reduction efforts.

## *2. Description of the most acute humanitarian needs*

### **Colombia**

In Colombia, protection is the most acute humanitarian need. The most recent IDPs and asylum seekers also need basic emergency assistance during the first months of displacement.

Short-term institutional capacity building actions could be also considered for funding, particularly those aimed to strengthen the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance by UARIV<sup>6</sup> or municipalities. The following sectors will be considered in Colombia:

Protection: Threats, violence (including sexual violence), restriction of free movement, and forced recruitment continues threatening civilians and are the main causes of the forced displacement phenomenon. The conflict-affected population in rural zones has greater protection needs as the presence of the Colombian state institutions is weaker than in major urban centres. Protection, in this context, is to be understood also as continued international humanitarian presence in remote conflict affected zones, with a practical impact on the communities' life (for instance, through mobile health units, small community infrastructure works or livelihood support projects); and protection for People in Need of International Protection (PNIP), i.e. asylum seekers and refugees in Ecuador and Venezuela.

Food assistance and livelihood: Due to displacement as well as restrictions of movement, affected populations can no longer ensure access to or availability of sufficient food. Some pockets of high Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) are found, mainly among indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations.

Shelter, non-food items, water and sanitation: Basic temporary shelter and provision of sufficient water for domestic use to meet the needs of the victims are key priorities, particularly following forced displacement. IDPs lack essential items such as basic household items (hygiene or kitchen sets, mosquito nets...). Household and community sanitation need attention as overcrowded spaces and lack of sanitation require a comprehensive approach.

Health: Access to health care services is limited for rural conflict-affected populations, mostly because primary health care does not function due to prevailing and absence of permanent health structures.

Psychosocial support: This support is required for recent victims of the conflict as an integral part of the humanitarian response.

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<sup>6</sup> *Unidad de Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas* – government unit in charge of providing assistance and reparation to victims

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Support to returnees: If a voluntary return takes place in line with international principles, returnees may be provided with support to meet their basic emergency and livelihood needs.

### **Disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction, resilience**

In 2014, an assessment of needs in terms of disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and resilience was done jointly by ECHO, its partners and national DRM systems. For each country, as well as for the region, a document has been developed which analyses the situation in terms of hazards, vulnerabilities, capacities and priorities at geographical and thematic level. They are available on the ISDR Wiki site<sup>7</sup>.

Lessons learned from the repeated and recurrent disasters in South America and from the implementation of previous DIPECHO Action Plans in the region have confirmed the need to put in place effective and efficient early warning systems, enforce building codes, prepare communities to react in the first hours of a disaster, train people, organise awareness campaigns, mitigate the impact of disasters and carry out advocacy towards all relevant stakeholders. In most of the countries where DRM is being decentralised to municipalities and sub-national institutions, institutional capacities need to be strengthened at these levels to enable them to design appropriate emergency and DRR plans as well as to access public resources to make them feasible and sustainable.

Regarding **Bolivia** (Mamore and Beni riversheds), the assessment of needs in DRM and resilience has been done jointly by ECHO, partners, the EU Delegation and national civil defence authorities in Bolivia. Major problems detected during the 2014 floods include lack of preparedness and resilience of communities living in rural areas and vulnerable urban areas; lack of protocols to determine the magnitude of the event; lack of coordination mechanisms. Activities should aim to increase preparedness and resilience at local and national levels by improving resilience to floods of the most vulnerable; consolidating response protocols and coordination mechanisms; improving information sharing and early warning of events, and standardized first needs assessment including all sectors; and increasing coordination with development actors for more coordinated longer term rehabilitation and reconstruction planning.

### **3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

#### *1) National/local response and involvement*

#### **Colombia**

In Colombia, there has been a continuous government effort to register conflict-victims and provide assistance. Notably, the June 2011 Victim's and Land Restitution Law recognizes the victims' right to emergency aid, including restoration rights. Furthermore, in a landmark resolution that fundamentally modifies the previous legal understanding of the Colombian armed conflict framework, in May 2013 the Constitutional Court ruled that the victims of BACRIMs are also legally and morally entitled to the recognition, protection and assistance provided to the victims of the classical armed conflict by the state.

### **Disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction, resilience**

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<sup>7</sup> For further information please refer to Technical Annex.

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There is increasing awareness of the importance of DRR in the region, with new policies as well as DRR laws and regulations being developed in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Paraguay. However, local communities in disaster prone areas are still exposed to risk, and often lack comprehensive support after emergencies. Institutions involved in disaster risk reduction/disaster management have insufficient technical capacities (know-how) and/or resources, as they do not receive adequate support from their government. Although in some cases economic resources are made available to local authorities to tackle DRM issues, these funds are often misused or not allocated to DRM due to the lack of local capacities/mechanisms. As a consequence, many areas are in a situation of permanent potential but foreseeable disaster. Achievement of DRR goals requires international support to communities and institutions also to trigger, accompany and complement national DRM processes.

## 2) *International Humanitarian Response*

### **Colombia**

The Union is the main<sup>8</sup> humanitarian donor in Colombia, with a contribution that accounted annually to 35-40% of the international humanitarian aid over the last few years. There is a small group of countries actively involved in humanitarian aid: Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, Norway and USA. ECHO was elected as the leader of the Humanitarian Donor Group in Colombia in 2014.

### **Disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction, resilience**

The main donors funding DRR initiatives in the region are OFDA/USAID, COSUDE (Swiss Cooperation), AECID (Spanish Cooperation), GIZ (German Cooperation), World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), JICA (Japanese Cooperation) and Belgian Cooperation. The funds are often channelled directly through governments and public institutions, but also through NGOs and UN agencies. There are also private initiatives, such as the one funded by Zurich Alliance to improve the Early Warning Systems in the region.

## 3) *Constraints and ECHO response capacity*

In **Colombia**, security problems are an issue in some areas affected by the conflict, where access is frequently problematic as well as along borders between countries. Access/humanitarian space is limited due to prevailing insecurity in part of the rural conflict areas and marginal urban zones. Nonetheless, humanitarian organizations financed by the Union enjoy an appropriate level of acceptance and respect by the parties of the conflict. Access to the civilian population in areas in which the conflict is most acute may become difficult and usually depends on local commanders.

Throughout **South America**, social conflicts, political instability as well as criminal violence are also of concern, limiting access. In some areas, frequent heavy rainfall, floods and other hazards may result in the isolation of some remote communities for relatively long periods of time, affecting the normal development of activities.

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<sup>8</sup> The percentage of ECHO's funding has increased over the past few years due to the reduction in humanitarian funding from other donors.

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4) *Envisaged ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions.*

## **Colombia**

ECHO's operational strategy aims to provide timely humanitarian assistance to **recently displaced and otherwise conflict-affected vulnerable people in rural or urban settings** (e.g. restrictions of access to basic goods and services, forced recruitment, SGBV) as well as to victims of the conflict who have fled to neighbouring countries and populations affected by **natural disasters**.

The main criteria in terms of beneficiaries will be: 1. IDPs (displaced for less than six months); 2. residents of conflict-affected areas, including confined population and intra-urban displacement; 3. People in Need of International Protection (asylum seekers and refugees) in Ecuador and Venezuela; 4. vulnerable population affected by natural disasters.

Colombia is a highly disaster-prone country. Despite a comprehensive emergency response legal framework, local and national response capacity is sometimes overwhelmed and populations affected by the conflict might also be hit by natural hazards, as they usually settle in zones at high risk. Disaster risk reduction measures should be integrated when possible in all ECHO operations.

In addition to financing projects addressing protection needs, ECHO will continue its advocacy efforts, seeking to enhance official assistance levels towards populations affected. In this regard ECHO will continue its active engagement in the Humanitarian Donor Group in 2015 as well as in working with its partners to raise awareness about the assistance route to the services and benefits that are being implemented by the government of Colombia.

### **Disaster Preparedness, disaster risk reduction, resilience**

Priority will be given to:

- Hydro-meteorological hazards: Floods, drought and extreme temperatures principally in Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, and in some measure in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela.
- Geologic/seismic hazards: volcanic eruption, earthquakes and landslides will be also considered as a priority in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and in some measure in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Venezuela
- Target action in Bolivia to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations living in the vicinity of the Mamore and Beni watersheds and foster institutionalization of flood resilience

The expected results of the interventions are:

- Better prepared communities and strengthened local, regional and national institutions to face disasters; thus reducing the vulnerability of the most vulnerable population.
- Wider awareness and advocacy regarding the benefits of adopting risk reduction approaches to disaster management.



Effective coordination is essential. ECHO supports the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Transformative Agenda (ITA) and encourages partners to demonstrate their engagement in implementing its objectives, to take part in coordination mechanisms (e.g. Humanitarian Country Team/Clusters) and to allocate resources to foster the ITA roll-out.

Partners will be expected to ensure full compliance with visibility requirements and to acknowledge the funding role of the EU/ECHO, as set out in the applicable contractual arrangements.

Partners will also be encouraged to improve and apply comprehensive approaches towards improving resilience and LRRD using other EU Delegation and Member States' financing mechanisms and opportunities, as in Bolivia and Paraguay where ECHO/EU Delegation dialogues have started to produce joint needs analysis and has foreseen potential thematic or geographical areas mutually prioritized.

#### **4. LRRD, COORDINATION AND TRANSITION**

##### *1) Other ECHO interventions*

##### **Strengthening resilience to drought:**

- Bolivia and Paraguay (Chaco region): May 2013, 18 months, EUR 2 490 000

##### **Bolivia:**

- Floods (Supported under Small Scale Response - SSR - HIP): February 2014 - duration six months, amount EUR 250 000. Implementation area: El Beni and La Paz departments
- IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) – Floods: February 2014 – duration 3 months, amount EUR 175 130. Implementation area: Beni department
- Floods (Supported under the Epidemics HIP): May 2014 – duration 6 months, amount EUR 300 000. Implementation area: El Beni and La Paz departments

##### **Paraguay:**

- Floods (SSR): July 2014 - duration 6 months, amount EUR 250 000. Implementation area: Alto Paraguay, Boquerón and Central departments

##### **Chile:**

- IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) - Chile Valparaiso fires: April 2014 – duration 3 months, amount EUR 119 549. Implementation area: Valparaiso city

##### **Venezuela:**

- IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) – Civil unrest: February 2014 – duration 3 months, amount EUR 23 267. Implementation area: Caracas metropolitan area

##### *2) Other services/donors availability (such as for LRRD and transition)*

Although EU bi-lateral funding is being phased out in most South American countries with the exception of Bolivia, Colombia and Paraguay, thematic lines and sector programmes can be used to increase the sustainability of ECHO initiatives. In several countries, the Non-State Actors Budget Line has started to integrate DRR as one of the

priority axes. Regional programmes on Climate Change and Environment can also be a vehicle to upscale good practices set up by ECHO projects.

Amount foreseen for **Colombia** 2014-2017: EUR 67 million - EUR 53.6 million local economic developments and institutional strengthening, EUR 10 million sustainable trades and investment and EUR 3.4 million for support measures. ECHO is currently actively engaged in a process of reflexion, along with the EEAS, the EU Delegation in Bogota and other Commission services, on EU support to the implementation of the peace process as negotiations are ongoing between the government of Colombia and the FARC.

In the case of **Bolivia**, the EU Delegation and ECHO will work together to increase the resilience of communities and institutions of Mamore and Beni River watersheds, with a joint analysis of needs, definition of objectives and planning of activities. Given that the EU budgetary support has components on river shed management, food security and support to migrant-sending areas, there is some room for complementarity to increase resilience to natural events.

In the case of **Venezuela**, it is important to articulate any DRR action with an intervention funded by the EU Delegation on Disaster Risk Management and Strengthening of Local Capacities which will be implemented during 30 months (starting on August 2014).

### 3) *Exit scenarios*

#### **Colombia**

An exit from Colombia is likely to be feasible in the medium-term as peace negotiations progress. However, in the immediate future it is expected that humanitarian needs will persist due to the actions of illegal armed actors and that limited international assistance will continue to be required to meet gaps that cannot be met through government assistance.

#### **Disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction, resilience**

Since its creation, the DIPECHO programme in South America has been evolving from community activities towards a more institutional approach in order to create appropriate conditions for the institutionalization of the promoted practices and consequently, for their replication. This evolution is more advanced in certain countries than in others. In the case of Chile and Argentina, the national level has been reached, with local and community experiences being scaled up. In the other countries, the existing vulnerability to disasters together with the existing gaps in DRM capacities makes it advisable to continue the process and consolidate the efforts done in the past. In other words, LRRD in this case is done directly through national institutions and institutional preparedness and response capacities need to be strengthened at all levels (national and local), taking advantage of the different degrees of decentralization of each country

At regional level it is not feasible to plan for an early exit strategy due to the geographical diversity of South America, which means that there is a great variety of hazards and risks which have not been properly addressed at local, provincial or national level. International support remains necessary to accompany this process. DIPECHO and other ECHO disaster risk reduction and resilience actions - despite their small size - have a significant triggering impact on the process of developing DRR and resilience at national and regional level, and provide an important forum for interchange of lessons learned and best practices.