

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)

CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO

The activities proposed hereafter are still subject to the adoption of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2016/01000

AMOUNT: EUR 8 300 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2016/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annex is to serve as a communication tool for ECHO's partners and to assist in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

1. CONTEXT

This HIP covers disaster preparedness interventions integrating specific actions to promote resilience in food security and disaster risk reduction (DRR) actions adapted to violent contexts. This HIP focuses on Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, because of their level of exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards combined with their limited resources to face these events. It also includes support to regional thematic initiatives which build on past experience and can bring a robust added value for the region when actions can be expected to be scaled up.

The combination of high exposure to hazards, high levels of poverty, and high levels of violence are eroding the coping capacities of the local population as well as local administrations, consequently leading to recurrent emergency situations. As climate change and booming urbanization leave more and more people exposed to hazards, making communities and national systems more resilient and reducing their dependence on humanitarian assistance is a priority.

Furthermore, in the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA) and Mexico, rapid expansion of non-political organized armed groups has increased the level and intensity of violence. Collective violence in these countries increasingly leads to forced displacement, confinement, migration and limited access to basic services (in particular health care), and shrinking humanitarian access in areas under the control of non-political organized armed groups, consequently increasing the risk factors and the number of people living in disaster prone areas.

The Human Development ranking¹ for the countries of the region clearly masks very significant regional and socio-economic disparities in countries that are among the most unequal in the world in terms of income and access to basic services².

Successive shocks over the last years (droughts and coffee rust) have seriously deteriorated the food security of day labourers and small-scale producers and their families living at subsistence

¹ UNDP, Human Development Index 2013: El Salvador 115, Guatemala 125, Honduras 129 and Nicaragua 132. Costa Rica, Panama and Mexico are situated in the high income group of countries, ranking 68, 65 and 71 respectively (<http://www.datosmacro.com/idh>)

² With the recent economic downturn, UNDP estimates that about 1.5 million more people will fall into poverty by the end of 2015, adding to the 1.7 million people in the region who already fell into poverty in 2014. Economic growth alone will not reduce poverty and inequality in LAC; one of UNDP's key messages for its upcoming Human Development Report for LAC, to be launched early 2016.

level. The 2014 drought further aggravated the food security situation of 2.5 million people in the region. In 2015 delays in the start of the rainy season and below normal rainfalls are already affecting small producers' and subsistence farmers' crops: losses are reported in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. WFP estimates that at least 1.6 million people are food insecure in Central America with an estimated 300 000 severely food insecure. The situation is expected to worsen with the high probability of the presence of El Niño conditions extending until the first quarter of 2016. ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2015-16 identified high humanitarian needs in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. It recommended consolidation of DRR processes, drought preparedness and addressing context-specific issues linked to insecurity due to collective violence, as the vulnerability of the affected population is assessed to be high/very high.

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

1) *Affected people/potential beneficiaries*

The population in the region is highly exposed to the impact of hydro-meteorological and geophysical natural hazards. Based on registered data an estimated 1.7 million³ people per year require temporary evacuation and/or emergency assistance due to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, floods, droughts and/or directly affected during the hurricane season. The impact of hazards is under-reported particularly in the case of small or medium scale events and/or climate related events and the deficits generated by these events are underestimated

At global level, Honduras (1), Nicaragua (5) Guatemala (9) El Salvador (12) are among the twelve most affected countries of the last two decades according to the last Global Climate Risk Index 2015 report⁴. Current estimates from studies⁵ carried out indicate that around 1.6 million people are identified as being moderately or severely food insecure due to the combined impact of the persisting drought and coffee rust plague as well as previous shocks in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. The number of people is expected to increase as the ongoing food assistance interventions will end in August/ September 2015, and with the affectations due to irregular and insufficient rains in 2015. There will be a need for external support during 2015 and early 2016, particularly to people affected by both the effects of the coffee rust on their livelihoods and the development of the drought in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

The impact of collective violence, leading to forced displacement or disruption of basic services and confined population makes it difficult to quantify the numbers affected by high levels of violence in need of external and humanitarian assistance. Available information indicates that in May 2015 the NTCA had 566 700 internally displaced people (IDPs), many of them forcibly displaced by organized crime and gang violence⁶. In the case of El Salvador, as many as 288 900 people were internally displaced because of criminal violence and threats in 2014⁷.

Actions under this HIP target population of the NTCA with the overall aim of contributing to building the resilience of the most vulnerable focusing on food insecure populations and those

³ Data from CRED-EMDAT 2015 (1995-2015)

⁴ The Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) developed by Germanwatch analyzes the quantified impacts of extreme weather events – both in terms of fatalities as well as economic losses that occurred – based on data from the Munich Re NatCatSERVICE

⁵ Field surveys by WFP and humanitarian actors undertaken in the context of the emergency response to vulnerable people affected by food insecurity in Central America.

⁶ NRC and IDMC: “People internally displaced by conflict and violence”, Global Overview 2015; May 2015.

⁷ Ibid.

living at subsistence level, exposed to recurrent natural hazards and threats, affected by the impact of high levels of organized violence, whether displaced or not.

2) *Description of the most acute humanitarian needs*

High exposure and limited coping capacities of the most vulnerable populations means that there is a critical need to better anticipate the potential impact of any negative event in order to limit its consequences⁸. Access to safe water and shelter as well as to emergency relief items in the early stages of an emergency needs to be integrated into contingency plans. Recovery for the most vulnerable people affected by events is difficult and slow without external support. Integrating DRR is still a matter of concern in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process⁹.

Availability and access to staple food as well as income opportunities have seriously decreased for families living at subsistence levels. This is the result of the combined impact of natural disasters, the worst drought in the last ten years in 2014 and the continued expansion of the coffee rust¹⁰.

Solutions should be envisaged to allow these families to access sufficient food for consumption and be more resilient and prepared for shocks. Preparedness capacities of institutions and humanitarian partners to analyse the situation and respond need to be strengthened. Adequate attention also needs to be given to the humanitarian impact of collective violence in the region. The high levels of organized violence have a clear impact on the population, whether direct (such as physical and sexual violence, forced recruitment, restriction of free movement, forced displacement...) or indirect (lack of adequate services at community level in terms of availability and access, lack of adequate assistance by national institutions...).

Access to most basic services, and in particular health, is hindered in areas affected by violence because of insecurity¹¹, and is often inexistent in certain vulnerable areas where health and other staff and facilities are harassed and targeted by violent groups and become themselves victims of violence.. Health service protocols need therefore to be adapted to be able to provide adequate assistance.

Integration of basic protection principles into the humanitarian approach and in traditional assistance programmes is of paramount importance in a context of widespread high levels of violence in the region. This approach is closely linked to the principle of "do no harm", but should go beyond it. It also extends to providing safe and equal access to assistance as well as special measures to ensure access for particularly vulnerable groups. All humanitarian actions envisaged in the NTCA must integrate these principles.

Technical support by experienced humanitarian institutions for an adequate implementation of these principles may also be required as well as dissemination of findings and good practices to both humanitarian and development stakeholders.

⁸ Early-warning systems are among the most cost-effective solutions to reducing the worst effects of disasters.

⁹ Recovery and reconstruction after a disaster presents a golden opportunity to make shelters, water supply systems, and vital infrastructure mores resilient to future events.

¹⁰ The situation is expected to deteriorate further from August 2015 onwards if the response does not match the level of needs, as the current food security situation exceeds local coping capacities and may well entail an increase in the number of children under five suffering from Global Acute Malnutrition.

¹¹ In 2013, ECHO funded a dengue intervention within a context of violence in Guerrero, Mexico in order to ensure diagnosis and treatment of new cases of dengue and achieve an epidemiological control to prevent an outbreak during the rainy season, in an area where violence made it difficult for state officers to implement prevention programmes.

Faced with the various needs, their variety and magnitude, humanitarian actors alone cannot provide a solution. In line with the Resilience Action Plan¹² and in addition to joint planning exercises, an evidence-based advocacy strategy needs to be designed and implemented so that lessons learnt from humanitarian operations, adequate assistance to the population most in need and intervention protocols adapted to the circumstances could be shared, with the aim of replication at scale for a positive impact.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1) National / local response and involvement

Disaster risk reduction and resilience: The situation is highly diverse depending on the country. National and local authorities are increasingly aware of the importance of resilience, particularly disaster preparedness, and many have laws, procedures, studies, and mechanisms in place. However, the focus is mostly on the response phase, while in terms of DRR, capacities remain weak and limited, mainly due to lack of political will, lack of resources and know-how. Support is needed to further promote effective implementation of DRR policies and strategies and to strengthen existing capacities as well as the functioning in all circumstances of basic services such as health at local level.

The gap in the DRR strategy should be addressed by complementing the multi-hazard bottom-up approaches with support to an adequate institutionalization process of DRR tools by regional and national systems, as well as monitoring of the use/replication of existing DRR tools.

Recent programmes and initiatives supported by international grants in the region have put the issue of drought risk management and resilience to drought on the agenda of the national institutions, municipalities and regional organisations. The national DRR systems of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua have the basis for the establishment of drought EWS, however these processes still need to be institutionalized and strengthened.

Overall, local and national authorities are willing to address needs in terms of response to disasters caused by natural hazards, but there is a lack of models and adequate means to consider the humanitarian consequences of collective violence both in preparation and response. While progress is being made in terms of recognition of the issue, the impact of organized and collective violence is hampering access to the population as well as effective delivery of services and response to disasters that has yet to be addressed adequately in the region. Existing protection mechanisms for most vulnerable populations at national and international levels are clearly insufficient and there is a lack of resources for their implementation. Decisive institutional strengthening is needed. At regional level, the Security Strategy of the Central American Integration System (SICA) is being developed and implemented, aiming at integral attention in terms of security, development and prevention. DRR tools and protocols to address context specific security issues must be adapted to ensure adequate preparedness of populations rendered increasingly more vulnerable to natural events in such a context, and at the same time to fostering (1) reduction of the confinement of populations affected by the presence of non-political armed groups, (2) maintenance of humanitarian access to this population and (3) advocacy to relevant stakeholders for adapted design of essential services at local level, including protection of victims of violence.

¹² COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT: Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013-2020

2) *International Humanitarian Response*

Food Insecurity:

In Guatemala, a USD 14 million emergency plan was elaborated by the UN system and the CERF was activated with a planned amount of USD 2.5 million. The Spanish Agency for Cooperation and Development (AECID) has allocated EUR 318 000, Italy EUR 200 000 and Brazil provided in-kind donation valued at USD 4.9 million. For Honduras, a USD 13.2 million emergency response plan was launched by the Humanitarian Network with national authorities for a total of USD 2.6 million allocated by the CERF for response. The Red Cross Movement launched an emergency appeal to respond to the drought in the country for a total of CHF 1.2 million. For El Salvador, a CERF request is being drafted, combining coffee rust and drought response by FAO, UNICEF, PAHO and WFP, for an approximate amount of USD 2.5 million. Humanitarian stakeholders continue looking for funds but without confirmed positive response at this stage.

USAID/OFDA planned to support the region with USD 3.6 million as well as research on coffee rust resistant plants (USD 5 million). Furthermore, USAID/Food for Peace funding, through WFP, allocated an initial USD 10 million and an additional USD 5 million in March and USD 5 million in May 2015.

Germany has allocated USD 375 000 to WFP to support response in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. Switzerland provided USD 260 000 for Guatemala and Honduras.

Disaster risk reduction and resilience:

In Honduras the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is financing a USD 19 million Disaster Risk Prevention and Mitigation Project implemented by COPECO.

In Nicaragua, IDB is supporting a USD 0.75 million technical assistance project for analysis and inclusion of disaster risk management as part of the municipal planning process in Nicaragua as well as the design of infrastructure; a USD 3.16 million Environmental Program for Disaster Risk and Climate Change Management (including conservation of natural resources in watersheds prioritized on the basis of their vulnerability); a loan of USD 10 million to finance infrastructure and small farmers activities in the upper part of the watershed, who will receive training and production incentives to adopt viable technologies that will expand or maintain soil protection. At regional level IDB is also financing a USD 0.75 million project to apply the Index of Governance and Public Policy for DRM (iGOPP) in six countries in Latin America including Nicaragua and El Salvador.

The World Bank is providing funds for technical assistance of a total amount of USD 4.1 million mainly for the improvement of the information mechanism on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and EWS in Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and at regional level as well as loans for Disaster Risk Management Policy Development for a total amount of USD 227 million mainly with Panama and Costa Rica as main beneficiaries.

Swiss Cooperation in Central America has allocated CHF 3.5 million for 2015 to the Disaster Risk Reduction/Humanitarian Aid programme and will allocate CHF 3 million for the 2016 implementation of the programme.

3) *Constraints and ECHO response capacity in terms of: i.) access/humanitarian space; ii) partners; iii) absorption capacity on the ground and efficiency of operations.*

Access is usually possible through specific humanitarian partners in the most vulnerable areas. However, the evolution of the security context might disrupt or complicate access for humanitarian partners. Some areas remain off limits, such as ultra-violent urban neighbourhoods, cities or provinces controlled by armed groups. In these areas, local partners may experience difficulties to work; this HIP will support actions to ensure access by humanitarian actors.

Social and/or political instability in some countries could disrupt projects and result in suspensions. The security situation in the Central American region is a growing concern and strict security protocols are necessary for partners' staff and visitors. The likelihood of occurrence of disasters is high and this might affect the normal development of activities at local level.

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

During the implementation of this HIP, special attention will be given to relevant aspects related to migration and displacement, advocacy, international humanitarian law and humanitarian access.

Disaster risk reduction and resilience:

Actions will target communities vulnerable to adverse events and local institutions in order to increase their resilience and enhance their preparedness, focusing on rural, urban and peri-urban communities in disaster prone areas and on institutions involved in disaster risk reduction (DRR)/disaster risk management (DRM), as well as support to regional thematic initiatives. Priority will be given to those 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. As the urban population in the region continues to grow, the number of urban people living at risk is increasing, making it necessary to include urban risk in DRR activities. Advocacy efforts will continue with donors, authorities and partners to build upon experience in disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and resilience and for long-term involvement.

DRR targeted actions aim to create better prepared communities and local institutions to face disasters caused by natural phenomena, thus reducing mortality and protecting to the extent possible the assets and livelihoods of the most vulnerable population, notably those affected by high levels of food insecurity and organized violence. Multi-sectoral approaches will be envisaged as appropriate, either through one intervention or through strategic coordination with other interventions. In contexts where the size of the response required is relatively small in terms of budget allocation, support may be envisaged for designing and advocating for innovative responses which could be replicated by local authorities and communities, triggering and accompanying local and national actions.

Improving food security and strengthening the livelihoods of the most vulnerable rural and urban communities affected by recurrent shocks is crucial. Thereby, a practical resilience approach¹³ will be applied. It will combine protection/strengthening of livelihoods, a

¹³ Nutrition-sensitive activities will be considered to further promote resilience-building. Support may also be envisaged to reinforce capacities to collect reliable and comparable data, improve food security and nutrition analysis and promote the dissemination of relevant tools to improve targeting. Synergies with on-going development initiatives will be further developed.

contribution to improving food security and reducing vulnerability to shocks through supporting capacities for preparedness and coping in case of crisis. Nutrition-sensitive activities will be considered to further promote resilience-building. This includes undernutrition detection, (both micro and macro nutrient deficiencies) and adequate referral, implementation of Infant and Young Children Feeding IYCF (good feeding and care practices), as well as WASH activities included in interventions when the where nutrition needs are identified, particularly where the prevalence of acute under-nutrition is higher than international thresholds, but also where justified by the analysis of the risks, vulnerabilities, and potential caseload. Support may also be envisaged to reinforce capacities to collect reliable and comparable data, improve food security and nutrition analysis, including nutrition causal analysis and promote the dissemination of relevant tools to improve targeting. Synergies with on-going development initiatives will be further developed.¹⁴

Actions should aim to increase the knowledge and visibility of the humanitarian situation in the region as well as to promote the knowledge and respect of the humanitarian principles and facilitate the provision of necessary assistance in an effective way by the relevant actors.

A protection-sensitive approach is essential and special attention should be paid to vulnerable groups such as children, female headed households, elderly, disabled and people with specific needs. In an environment with high levels of violence, specific protection activities addressing the different components of gender-based violence are needed. The inclusion of appropriate protection considerations when implementing Food Assistance activities is encouraged¹⁵. Innovative approaches for integrated protection programming with the aim of building a body of best practice could be supported.

ECHO will provide further support to meet the mounting needs of children in conflict affected contexts that are out of school or risk education disruption. Within this HIP project addressing education and child protection will be funded. ECHO will favour education in emergency projects in areas where the % of out-of-school children is particularly high, there are grave child protection concerns and where other sources of funding available are limited. Complementarity and synergies with other EU services and funding instruments will be sought. In addition, complementarity and synergies with funding provided by the Global Partnership for Education is encouraged.

Incorporate contingencies: "Crisis modifiers" should be considered in DRR activities to allow a shift to more "emergency-type" interventions in case of need, where it can be effective and bring an added value.

All DRR must be inclusive, accountable and result in tangible risk reduction for vulnerable people and communities documented within the action's report and possibly by other source of verification.

Civil Protection: DRR stand-alone and integrated projects are encouraged to use EU Civil Protection expertise.

¹⁴ ECHO action should continue advocating for further linkages between food assistance interventions and nutrition outcomes and programmes. In the case of a food assistance distribution (using any modality) the partner should ensure that appropriate complementary/ supplementary foods assistance is in place as part of a nutrition programme to treat or prevent under-nutrition of vulnerable groups

¹⁵ See Technical Annex

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.

Visibility: Partners will be expected to ensure full compliance with visibility requirements in accordance with the applicable contractual arrangement as well as with specific visibility requirements agreed-upon in the Single Form, forming an integral part of individual agreements. In particular, this includes prominent display of the EU humanitarian aid visual identity on EU funded project sites, relief items and equipment and the acknowledgement of the funding role of and the partnership with the EU/ECHO through activities such as media outreach and digital communication. Further explanation of visibility requirements can be consulted on the dedicated visibility site: <http://www.echo-visibility.eu/>

4. LRRD, COORDINATION AND TRANSITION

1) Other DG ECHO interventions

In 2014-2015, disaster preparedness activities were implemented through the Disaster Preparedness Programme DIPECHO (EUR 11 040 377), focusing on a multi hazard approach and integration of protection in disaster preparedness activities at local and institutional levels.

At regional level three small-scale response projects were supported for the region during 2014 for a total of EUR 750 000 covering 3 230 families (representing nearly 1% of the severely food insecure families in the region).

In addition, in 2015 food and nutrition assistance was provided to the most affected vulnerable populations, and contributed to building resilience in the region to address the acute food insecurity of some 20 200 families (EUR 4 million) in Guatemala and Honduras. Complementarities between the 2015 HIP for Central America and Mexico and the current existing actions will be sought, looking at better integrating lessons learned and models. Operational exchanges between partners and national systems will be promoted.

In the framework of the Children of Peace Initiative, EUR 500 000 was granted for a project in 2015 to improve access to education and protection for unaccompanied or separated children and adolescents from Central America who have fled insecurity and violence in their countries. In 2015, EUR 800 000 from the Children of Peace was allocated to respond to the protection needs of children and adolescents affected by conflict and other situations of violence in Colombia and Honduras, by promoting access to formal education and safe and secure learning environments.

2) Other services/donors availability

The main donors in the region interested in investing in resilience are Spain (AECID), Switzerland (SDC), IADB, USAID/OFDA, WB and Japan (JICA) with which ECHO is in regular contact. Furthermore, support is provided to the donor coordination roundtables and efforts in all countries of the region and at regional level in order to create additional opportunities for LRRD. Coordination and synergies with these donors is required to articulate and complement efforts for a longer term impact.

3) *Other concomitant EU interventions*

In 2014, the European Union adopted, through the Multiannual indicative programme for sub-regional cooperation with Central America, EUR 120 million for the 2014-2020 period which includes EUR 40 million dedicated to security and rule of law and EUR 35 million to climate change and risk management; of this latter amount 15 million has already been allocated to reinforce capacities for better adaptation and resilience of the most vulnerable population to the impact of the coffee rust (PROCAGICA). In addition, EUR 30 million has been adopted in Honduras to improve food security under the framework of the Dry Corridor alliance. Several regional programmes are funded from the thematic budget line Food Security, like PRESENCA II (Food Security Programme for Central America for EUR 13M) or INFORMED (Information for Nutrition Food Security Resilience Decision Making for EUR 5M).

Joint work with other EU services continues to ensure links between assistance and development (e.g. Instrument for Stability, Thematic Budget lines and sector programmes).

Disaster risk reduction and resilience:

EUR 7.5 million has been allocated to the Building Capacities for increased Public Investment in climate change adaptation and DRR programme led by UNISDR (2012-2015)¹⁶.

Joint analysis of needs will be promoted to the extent possible, as well definition of objectives and planning of activities to increase resilience.

4) *Exit scenarios*

Medium to long-term livelihood and food security recovery is needed for affected day labourers and small producers, support to safety net measures for the population affected by the coffee rust plague as well as the on-going drought. Actions should be implemented in close coordination with the EU Delegations and development actors including authorities to ensure links and sustainability.

Disaster risk reduction and resilience

Exit scenarios must integrate a progressive hand over and advocacy towards longer-term actors. ECHO will continue to explore exit scenarios based on analysis of risk and coping capacities and DRR actions by other development actors/EU services. Fostering resilience will help in implementing exit scenarios. Support to the development of Country Documents should help to define conditions for exit and effective handover of DIPECHO projects and targeted DRR actions.

The exit strategy from the DRR multi-hazard and bottom-up approach is already underway, with the support to the institutionalization of DRR tools by regional and national systems. Since there is positive involvement by the national DRR systems, this approach should be consolidated. It is part of the exit strategy (support to the system for institutionalization and replication of priority DRR tools). For the next DRR action plan the national systems should be encouraged to fulfil their responsibilities before envisaging an exit. This process still needs to be accompanied in order to create appropriate conditions to scale up tools, outputs, and

¹⁶ EU support under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI): Building Capacities for increased Public Investment in CCA and DRR 2012-2015 (EUR 7 500 000), entrusted to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), supporting the systematic accounting of disaster losses and the development of probabilistic estimations of future risks.

outcomes. The achievements acquired during the past 15 years need to be captured and measured, and communication on DRR needs to be enhanced for optimum impact.