

# Humanitarian Bulletin

## Ecuador : Earthquake 16 April



24 November 2016

### Key figures



**7.8 magnitude**  
earthquake 16 April (IGEPN)



**387,202 persons**  
registered as  
affected  
(RUD, 28 October)



**5,808 persons**  
living in 23 government run  
camps (Ministry Coordinator  
of Security (MICS)  
November 23)



**4,620 persons**  
living in 63 spontaneous  
displacement sites (DTM5)



43% are children or  
adolescents



52% are women



**36,149 houses**  
labelled as unsafe or of  
restricted use  
(MIDUVI, 30 September)



Photo: Lopez/OCHA

### Current Situation

Seven months after the earthquake, there are still challenges to ensure the minimum conditions of dignity for the affected people living in spontaneous displacement sites and rural areas. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that Esmeraldas province has received less aid than Manabí province. The State and humanitarian partners have increased their efforts to achieve greater equity in aid distribution.

The State continues to deliver rent (2,872) and host family (17,762) grants (Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES), 27 October, 2016). It is possible that the delivery of these grants will end in February or March, they were only programmed to cover a six month period. On the other hand, a total of 37,772 families (151,088 beneficiaries) have received their first food voucher and more than 35,000 families have already claimed two out of three food vouchers (MIES/World Food Programme (WFP), November 24). The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MIDUVI) has delivered 45,455 reconstruction, relocation and housing repair incentives.

In addition, the Humanitarian Country Team partners have begun revising lessons learned from the emergency and continue planning on how to deliver assistance to affected people with persistent humanitarian needs during the recovery phase. Currently, there are three coordination hubs at a local level, one in Manta/Portoviejo canton led by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), another in Pedernales canton led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and a third coordination hub in Esmeraldas led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Approximately 40 organizations continue to coordinate activities with national institutions to deliver humanitarian assistance and offer support to early recovery initiatives.

### Content

- Current situation
- People and Resilient Institutions: the post earthquake challenge
- Empowerment and participation of women in emergency contexts
- Working together for the people most in need
- Fighting Zika with prevention and health promotion

This bulletin presents articles about early recovery, women empowerment, income generation, successful interventions carried out in displacement sites and the Zika virus transmission prevention efforts.

### SOLE REGISTRY OF AFFECTED

#### PERSONS (RUD)

(MCDS, 28 October)



387,202 registered  
in the RUD



84% Manabí,  
12% Esmeraldas  
4% rest of the country



15,715 persons  
with disabilities



2,899 pregnant  
women registered



7% older than 65  
years



11% younger than 5  
years



52% women  
48% men

## People and resilient institutions: the post-earthquake challenge

Nobody is sufficiently prepared for an emergency until one has had the experience to overcome one. The way that people and institutions respond in an emergency depends on their preparedness, circumstances and location to the disaster, amongst other factors. The 16 April earthquake tested Ecuador's preparedness for disasters. Currently the humanitarian assistance being delivered to affected people is progressively decreasing, leaving the remains of the emergency. This reflects the future challenges the country faces. When one visits the affected areas, there are clues that show how the recovery process will take place. If the complex cases are removed, one can identify the resilience of affected people.

Even though there is a risk of romanticizing the capacity of those affected to recover after an emergency, one cannot deny that the affected population has the ability in greater or lesser degree to overcome hardships. After the earthquake, whether it was survival strategy or an urgent need to return to a daily routine, men and women started to support each other by cooking together and playing sports. In Pedernales, one of the most affected towns, kitchens were installed and food was sold. "Ecuavolley" matches were played in the streets where debris had just been removed.

After the earthquake, whether it was survival strategy or an urgent need to return to a daily routine, men and women started to support each other by cooking together and playing sports.

**Impoverished people are affected the most in disasters.** For this reason, it is important to remember that the recovery of livelihoods should be incorporated early in the response, affected people that earn an income can become psychologically stronger and are able to overcome adversity faster. This has been a key factor in the post-earthquake process in Ecuador.

**The institutional structure will influence the rapidness of the recovery process.** If the country has a response system that includes mechanisms for early and strategic identification of needs this would make recovery and reconstruction efforts more effective. A strong institutional factor is key. The Muisne canton in the Esmeraldas province, is one of the most affected and before the earthquake it had already suffered from institutional weakness, poverty and insecurity. Now the vulnerability of the population is exacerbated due to the decreased presence of local authorities and the power that they have, for example making sure that construction standards and ground conditions are met.

At a national level, the institutional strength and the clarity of responsibilities have been an asset and a starting point that has allowed timely and adequate delivery of assistance. This, without a doubt, will influence how quickly the country recovers its levels of human development and will design mechanisms to mitigate and eradicate the exacerbated poverty due to the earthquake.

**Moreover, there are lessons to be learned from the organizations and intuitions in charge of delivering humanitarian assistance.** The objectivity in a response is a challenge, it is important to reflect on importance of preparedness of each institution to face an emergency and coordination. An effective response and recovery happens when the organizations and institutions in charge of delivering aid implement activities in a coordinated orderly and technical manner. Coordination and protocols exist to support the immediate response, save lives and recover livelihoods.



Photo: Carrera/OCHA

The coordination in the identification of needs and assistance delivery is vital for the recovery and reconstruction processes. This emergency has drawn attention to the need of strengthening and supporting local governments in their role as planners with the jurisdiction concerning the use of land and as inspectors in charge of construction quality control.

Currently a total of 533 families have reactivated their businesses in Manta, Portoviejo and Calceta cantons located in the Manabí province, and 120 women have received entrepreneurship workshops to reopen their businesses. Approximately 500 people in affected communities have participated in the demolition and debris removal programme under a Cash for Work methodology. A total of 300 rice producers and their families have benefited from the rehabilitation of an irrigation channel and 1,200 families will return to agriculture, fishing and tourism activities. In the same line of work, 160 shopkeepers in the Manta canton will strengthen their businesses with programmes of economic reactivation.

Mr. Bolívar Aragundi, president of the community of Las Gilces in Manabí province referring to the interventions states:

*“Today we start to see the results of our persistent and constant work, we have hope and we are convinced that our project will succeed.”*

**In this context, the Early Recovery Sector has developed a livelihoods recovery strategy. It proposes complementary activities to national efforts under the criteria of building back better and in a sustainable manner. The objective is to improve local development efforts prioritizing vulnerable groups in the most affected cantons.**

People in conditions of poverty that have suffered from the effects of an earthquake are in fragile situation where certain factors may lead them to give up or barely survive. This is why it is crucial that recovery activities are well thought out and rapidly implemented. Social actors need to offer support to poor populations affected by disasters. Resilience is a social phenomenon that goes from one generation to another in individuals and communities. It is not something that can be established, it is constructed. The strengthening of resilience must be one of the objectives and responsibilities, especially in a country like Ecuador in where it is susceptible to constant natural threats and risks.

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Photo:UNDP



Photo:Carrera/OCHA

## Empowerment and participation of women in emergency contexts: Ecuador's experience

In Manabí and Esmeraldas provinces, around 48 per cent of women before the disaster had experienced Gender Based Violence.

The participation of women is not only necessary, it is fundamental.

The earthquake damaged infrastructure and affected thousands of people. In any humanitarian emergency, whether these are caused by natural disasters or because of human intervention (armed conflict), there is an increase in gender-based violence (GBV) especially against women, adolescents and girls. In the provinces most affected by the earthquake, Manabí and Esmeraldas, around 48 per cent of women before the disaster had experienced GBV. Consequently, in the emergency context it was necessary for an intervention with a gender approach in order to deliver an effective response and reconstruction of social fabric. UN Women and UNFPA have led the GBV Sub-Sector and have implemented programs to strengthen the protection, leadership and economic entrepreneurship abilities of affected women.

One of the most interesting initiatives has been the programme “Participation of women in governance structures in government- run camps” which has been headed by the IOM and UN Women in coordination with government institutions that are part of camp management teams. The main objective is to promote the inclusion and participation of women in camp governance through the strengthening of their leadership capacities and the establishment of small entrepreneurship programmes. The participation of women is not only necessary, it is fundamental since it promotes the preservation of human dignity, reduces vulnerabilities in situations of risk and it enables the development of local capacities by enhancing survival strategies in times of crisis.

The process started with the development of a baseline study in government-run camps of Pedernales I “Divino Nino” and Pedernales II “Llanos”. A total of 19 focus groups and 14 interviews were carried out, reaching 149 women and adolescents to talk about their security and participation perceptions. The results have shown that women and adolescent participation and security is limited and that decision-making spaces are masculinized.

**“Women help more than men, but men have the authority, they decide everything.”  
Women’s testimony in the Pedernales government-run camp.**

From the baseline results, two programs were implemented in the government-run camps previously mentioned: 1) theoretical training focused on gender equality and empowerment of women through the promotion of self-esteem, development of leadership skills, teamwork, gender-based violence among other subjects, and 2) workshops for the production of artisanal soap. The soap production programme is contributing to the economy of these women. More than half of women in the affected provinces do not earn an income.

Both initiatives were born from “women’s clubs”, participatory spaces that were formed from the previous work of the Sub-Sector. This participatory spaces initially started as place to deliver workshops concerning risks and prevention of GBV.

Once these programs are finished, women will not only have developed their productive capacities, but have improved their self-esteem, self-image, understand their rights and empowered. The fact that there is an emergency response strategy that is coordinated between the Protection Sector, Early Recovery Sector and empowerment has been crucial. Response activities like the one mentioned show the importance of women’s roles and participation in emergencies.



Photo:IOM



Photo:IOM

## Working together for the well-being of the people most in need

In response to the disaster caused by April's earthquake in Ecuador, some of the people affected searched for shelter in the form of spontaneous displacement sites (unplanned places that shelter more than 5 families).

Through the five rounds of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), the IOM has warned about humanitarian needs of displaced persons in spontaneous displacement sites. Six months after the earthquake, 63 spontaneous displacement sites where 4,620 persons live have been identified. More than 50 per cent do not have access to water services and approximately 60 per cent do not have access to health services. On the other hand, more than 90 per cent of the families in spontaneous sites live under improvised roofs (IOM-DTM5).

With the nearing rainy season brings the risk of floods and an increase of vector borne diseases, the Committee of Emergency Operations (COE) of Pedernales canton through the working group four has promoted the design and implementation of a comprehensive response plan directed towards families living in spontaneous sites. The initiative has a comprehensive approach which promotes a coordinated intervention between: national government institutions (Ministry Coordinator of Security, MIES, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Interior, MIDUVI, Risk Management Secretariat, and Armed Forces- FFAA), local authorities (Municipality of Pedernales), international organizations (UNICEF, IOM, UN Women, OCHA and UNHCR) and Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and Shelter Sectors. The intervention has five lines of action: 1) protection, 2) health, education, water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH), 3) MIES grants, 4) shelter, and 5) risk management.

Between the IOM and MIES 20 spontaneous sites were identified in peri-urban areas of Pedernales canton. IOM in coordination and collaboration with the Municipality, MSP, MIDUVI, MIES and Ministry of Interior carried out an assessment involving 415 families in 15 spontaneous sites. From these families 35 per cent have not been registered in the RUD and 80 per cent have not received grants from the Government. For the first implementation phase of the programme, following 13 vulnerability criteria, 16 families were categorized as in need of immediate intervention, 208 families were categorized in need of an intervention in the short-term and 191 families in need of a medium-term intervention. From this assessment, durable solutions will be proposed for the affected population in spontaneous sites.

Until 15 November the comprehensive intervention of the involved institutions focused on identified vulnerable families. MIDUVI has registered those whose houses have not been yet assessed and delivered reconstruction, repair and relocation incentives to 30 vulnerable families. Moreover, MIES with the Protection Sector has followed up with the situation of 40 families and 16 who have received food, rent and host family grants. At the same time, the MSP attended all the people in need of health services in the spontaneous sites visited. The Municipality of Pedernales has programmed debris removal activities in 15 prioritized plots of land and is producing 2 reports, 1 about a risk areas and another about the legal tenure of land for possible construction of temporary shelters. The IOM in coordination with MIES and the Municipality will hire staff to support 1) follow up of families in displacement sites and 2) the regularization of land respectively. UNICEF is monitoring the situation of children with protection cases. In addition, Camp managers, IOM and UNICEF track the mobility of families in camps and spontaneous displacement sites.

There have been positive results from the pilot experience. It has articulated response efforts towards the most vulnerable families identified. In the future, the initiative will expand to other areas in coordination with the Early Recovery Sector. Through coordinated work between all institutions the most vulnerable families in need of humanitarian assistance can be reached.



Photo: Carrera/OCHA

### What information does the DTM collect?

*“The DTM collects information concerning the location, number of persons in shelters, needs and vulnerabilities of the displaced population”.*

## Fighting Zika with prevention and health promotion



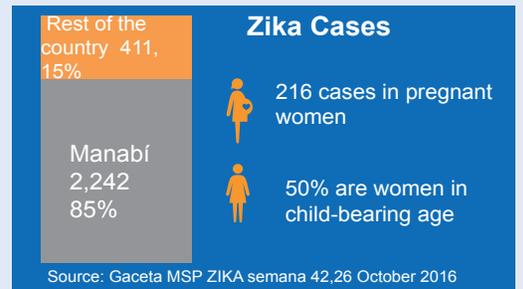
Photo:UNFPA

Vector borne diseases like Zika are far from disappearing from Ecuador's morbidity profile, the conditions that allow the presence and persistence of these diseases still exist in geographic areas such as tropical and subtropical regions. Also the presence of weather phenomena such as El Niño and La Niña, as well as the reduction in the supply and access to health services and deficient basic sanitary services contribute to the presence of vector borne diseases.

Natural events such as the earthquake of 16 April produced social and environmental changes. These favored the increase of vector borne diseases especially in Manabí and Esmeraldas provinces where favorable conditions are present such as overcrowding, lack of sanitation structures, human behavior, lack of proper housing infrastructure, water mirrors, presence of vectors and susceptible population. The disease control will depend on the capacity of local governments and social and sanitary services. They must be able to implement prevention and health promotion activities in combination with a strong epidemiological monitoring system and response capacity.

Government run camps and spontaneous displacement sites present adequate scenarios for the existence of Zika and there is a high risk of transmission for people living there. Consequently, it is necessary to increase monitoring efforts and organize a response to the situation with the engagement of the community working and living in these sites.

An exponential increase of Zika cases has been detected in the areas affected by the earthquake. Therefore, a comprehensive prevention strategy has been implemented to control the transmission of Zika. Work has been carried out with pregnant women to prevent the congenic syndrome associated with the virus, as well as the prevention of unplanned pregnancies for women of child-bearing age through the access to information and long-term birth control methods. Moreover, condom use has been promoted as means of double protection, prevention of pregnancies and sexual transmission of Zika.



Complementary, UNFPA supported MSP in the comprehensive strategy between the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and UNICEF in the components previously described through the delivery of 173 kits of sexual and reproductive health which benefited 42,000 people. These kits included birth control methods including condoms. Moreover, through the dignity kits delivered, women in government run camps received workshops in medical centers about the risks associated with Zika and the different prevention methods.

The main challenges to prevent Zika and its transmission are to ensure that all people have access to information and that services of sexual and reproductive health are sensitive to the culture. Women of child-bearing ages and particularly those looking to get pregnant must have access to information concerning the risks of Zika. All adolescents should receive information on how to avoid the transmission of Zika.

In order to ensure the well-being of the population it is necessary to join efforts in order to achieve sustainable and planned interventions that help control and eliminate not only Zika but other vector borne diseases.



Photo:UNFPA