

Humanitarian Bulletin

Ecuador : Earthquake



15 September 2016

Key Figures

 **7.8 magnitude** earthquake 16 april

 **45 aftershocks** greater than 5 on the Richter scale (IGEPN, 14 sept)

 **383,090 persons** registered as affected (RUD, 6 sept)

 **7,886 persons** are still living in 24 government run camps (MICS, 14 sept)

 **8,842 persons** are still living on 105 spontaneous sites identified on DTM4

 **35,274 houses** registered as unsafe or uninhabitable (MIDUVI, 31 august)

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Foto: Lopez/OCHA

Situation Analysis

Five months have passed since the 7.8 earthquake magnitude affected the north coast of the Republic of Ecuador. Since then, the National Government established several immediate assistance and recovery programs that are still ongoing and the international community continues to support these efforts. Despite the achievements of the humanitarian operation, assistance is still needed to reach the most vulnerable populations until durable recovery solutions are implemented.

The earthquake caused more than 2,490 aftershocks as of 14 September, of which 45 were over 5 on the Richter scale according to Ecuador's Geophysical Institute (IGEPN). On 14 September, the President extended the State of Exception in Manabí and Esmeraldas provinces until 12 October due to the continuous aftershocks and persistent needs. With each aftershock anxiety resurfaces in the population and new needs assessments and strategies are required.

After a data validation process the number of people officially recognized as "affected" has surpassed 383,000 in the Sole Registry of Affected Persons (RUD). The registration period ended on 31 July. However, new cases are received on an exceptional basis and the government continues to validate new data.

The number of people living in government-run displacement camps has modestly decreased. According to the Ministry Coordinator of Security (MICS) approximately 7,900 people are living in 24 camps compared to 8,700 persons reported in July, which indicates that families are searching for other options through the government's assistance or on their own in order to leave the camps. At the same time, the government has closed two small camps relocating people to other sites. The government run camps will reportedly continue operational until 31 December.

Services in government Services in government-run camps must be maintained and improved as long as the camps are needed. Overall camp conditions are generally adequate; nonetheless, some concerns have been raised concerning protection issues and specialized care. Some of the main recommendations are to implement recreational activities for children and adolescents; segregate latrines by gender to mitigate the risk of violence; and provide supplementary food for infants and nursing mothers.

The number of people living in identified spontaneous sites has decreased but remains significant with more than 8,800 people living in inadequate conditions and receiving irregular assistance. Humanitarian partners have managed to provide some basic emergency assistance in some spontaneous sites while the government has prioritized service provision in camps.

SOLE REGISTRY OF AFFECTED PERSONS (MCDS, 06 sept)



383,090 registered en el RUD



76% Manabí
19% Esmeraldas
5% other



15,580 persons with disabilities



2,881 registered pregnant women



8% older than 65 years old



10% younger than 5 years old



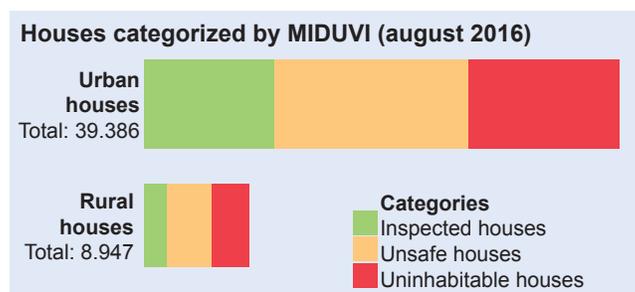
51% women
49% men

The most updated data of government run camps can be found on MICS website: <http://cifras.seguridad.gob.ec/albergues>

The Humanitarian Country Team will continue advocating for aid for affected persons regardless of their location. The fourth round of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports few improvements in spontaneous sites. Of the 105 identified sites, only 28% had received temporary housing materials, 24% met the minimum standard of 20 persons per latrine or toilet, and 2% benefited from regular food distribution. Concerning protection issues, only 28% of spontaneous sites reported having electricity and lighting in common areas, 13% had gender-segregated latrines or toilets with internal locks, and 23% had reported some sort of security incident.

More attention has been given to matters of protection and several state institutions have become more involved with the topic. However, concrete solutions to prevent and mitigate risks are lacking. The present conditions on camps and spontaneous sites increase the vulnerability and risk to violence and abuse, particularly sexual violence towards women, children and adolescents. Acknowledging the need for a comprehensive strategy, the Ministry of Social and Economic Inclusion (MIES) and protection sector partners worked in partnership to develop a "Strategic framework of post disaster reconstruction recovery with a comprehensive protection approach". Likewise, the government and the international community, with recently received funding, have increased psychosocial support activities.

The number of houses categorized as unsafe and uninhabitable has increased demonstrating the earthquake's serious impact and the urgent need of durable solutions. As of 31 August, the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MIDUVI) had assessed 48,333 houses in the affected areas of which 73 per cent were categorized "insecure" or "for restricted use" (red and yellow). MIDUVI needs more time to evaluate housing, acknowledging that more than 69,500 of the 110,481 registered families in the RUD reported serious damage to their homes.



Temporary housing solutions are reaching more communities thanks to better collaboration between government actors and humanitarian organizations. Conversations between MIDUVI, MICS and the humanitarian community have advanced resulting in better mapping of needs and planning of activities in the housing sector.

Confirmed cases of Zika have increased 50 per cent since July 2016. The Ministry of Public Health (MSP) confirmed 1,739 cases in Manabí and 171 in Esmeraldas which represents 91 per cent of all cases in the country. Moreover, MSP reported some 200 pregnant women with Zika. MSP, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and UNICEF launched a national campaign entitled "Para que tu bebé nazca sanito que no te pique el mosquito" (Avoid the mosquito bite for a healthy newborn) to prevent the proliferation of mosquito borne diseases and protect the health of the population.

Comprehensive recovery will require both the rehabilitation of infrastructure and livelihoods, as well as the repair of the social fabric and reestablishment of public institutions. Repairing schools and re-equipping health facilities are not enough, there has to be capable staff to provide services. Likewise, the autonomous decentralized governments (GADs) must strengthen their capacity for planning, governance and socio-economic reactivation.

Several international organizations have begun addressing their efforts towards early recovery actions linked with long-term development strategies and will require close coordination with the government. Involvement of national and local authorities is critical in the transition out of the immediate humanitarian phase in which the response has been led by national actors even at a local level. International organizations and State institutions must transfer knowledge and capacity to local governments and communities.



Foto: Galarza/OCHA

An emergency characterized by the loss of housing

According to the RUD, more than 69,000 families reported that their houses had been destroyed or had collapsed. Additionally, some 40,000 families reported housing minor damage. All together this represents more than 300,000 persons in need of short- and long-term housing needs (MCDS-RUD, 06 sept). MIDUVI is in charge of permanent housing solutions in the affected areas and is undertaking individual housing assessments. To date, approximately 48,000 houses have been assessed.

MIDUVI has announced plan to construct 10,000 new houses and repair of 11,000 damaged houses by the end of 2016 and an additional 24,000 houses will be repaired or constructed by July 2017. As of 15 September, MIDUVI had 467 contractors on hire repairing and rebuilding houses. MIDUVI has launched bidding processes for the seismic microzoning of Pedernales, Portoviejo and Manta. However, the assessment, demolition, debris removal, reparation and construction will take time, especially in rural areas. Five months after the earthquake, several thousand affected persons continue to live in insecure conditions. More than 8,800 people live in spontaneous displacement sites (OIM-DTM4), 7,800 people are in camps, and many others reside next to or inside their damaged homes.

To provide greater immediate safety to those affected persons living under tarps or “huts” on their properties, MICS approved four models for emergency temporary shelters proposed by different organizations of the shelter sector. The approved models adhere to Sphere Standards and incorporate MICS’s improvements to adapt to local the shelter conditions. The provision of WASH facilities is another key component of this intervention. The WASH sector, including the Secretary of Water (SENAGUA), will support the efforts of partners working on temporary shelters and housing with technical assistance to identify the best available options in terms of the provision of safe water and sanitation services.

Shelter sector partners currently have the capacity to build between 3,000 to 4,000 emergency temporary shelters. MICS, in coordination with the local and provincial Emergency Operations Committee (COEs), and shelter sector are consolidating a list of beneficiary families in rural areas where access to long-term housing solutions will take at least six months or more.

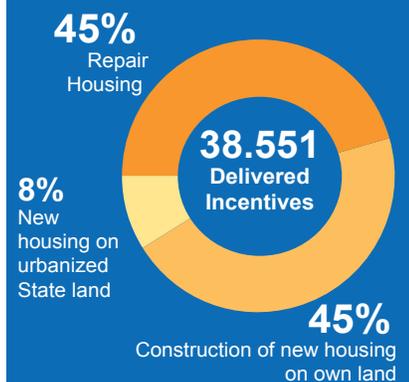
What is a temporary shelter? ¹

A temporary shelter is a provisional installation, more solid than a tarp aimed to provide a rapid response to shelter needs of affected persons while permanent housing solutions are implemented.

In parallel, the shelter sector has the capacity to build approximately 1,000 permanent housing solutions, for which they are working in close coordination with MIDUVI. Additionally, the sector has developed a series of technical tools with key safe construction messages for affected communities and a housing typology evaluation tool to help MIDUVI select the most appropriate design for permanent housing. Furthermore, with the joint efforts of shelter cluster with Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (ULEAM), a network has been established between the organizations working on housing solutions and a network of suppliers of local materials origins boosting the economy without compromising the local ecosystem.

Emergency Housing Incentives

delivered by MIDUVI
(MIDUVI, 15 sept)



Source: MIDUVI 15 sept
<http://www.habitatyvivienda.gob.ec/>

At least 8,390 persons are still relying on water trucks for their basic needs five months after the earthquake.

Other recent achievements include approving the use of local materials and advocating for solutions for people without property titles. On 18 August, the Ecuadorean Executive Committee of Construction Norms (NEC) approved three chapters concerning the construction of structures using “caña Guadua” (bamboo cane). MIDUVI, with the support of the Housing, Land and Property Working Group (HLP) established by international organizations, included good faith owners as possible beneficiaries of housing repair or construction incentives (Ministry Agreement No. 022-016). Thus, the majority of the population that did not have documents of land tenure will not be excluded from the incentives. The challenge now is to offer sustainable legal security in the long term. Other ongoing challenges involve the relocation processes, for which the HLP Working Group has identified certain protocols and guidelines to be followed by authorities in the process.

Through the joint work between the government and the humanitarian community, the response has been ongoing in matters of housing and access to water and sanitation. However, there are still challenges to overcome together. With the end of the State of Exception in Manabí and Esmeraldas on 12 October, the Autonomous Decentralized Governments (GADs) will have the responsibility to continue with the demolitions, debris management, regularization of land property documents, and other key competences regarding the response and recovery stages. It is crucial to strengthen the municipal GADs and their institutional capacity so they will reach the affected communities where there are no economic or technical resources to prepare the land for the reconstruction phase.



Illustration: Key messages and recommendations for auto construction of Shelter Sector.
www.sheltercluster.org

At the same time, the WASH sector is carrying out an assessment in affected rural communities. The preliminary results have highlighted the limited access to basic services of water and sanitation in the majority of rural communities. WASH activities must be well coordinated with temporary or definitive shelter programs in order to deliver a comprehensive response to the affected population. With the winter season just around the corner, there is a high chance of an increase of mosquito borne diseases. Drainage systems in new urbanization projects and housing construction must be provided or reinforced. Hence, the importance of the provision of housing solutions, strengthening the coordination between MIDUVI, SENAGUA and humanitarian partners working in WASH and shelter is required.

Alongside the government, shelter and WASH sectors have collaborated from the start in response to the urgent needs caused by the earthquake. After the first months, the response has become more complex and requires greater planning and joint efforts. Consequently, the exchange of information between the government, humanitarian actors and construction companies is critical, above all for affected families involved in their own recovery process. Likewise, the promotion of constructive techniques with local materials that boost the local economy and do not damage the natural richness of the affected region must be ensured. These joint efforts can reduce prejudice towards the affected populations and help avoid the gaps in the access to water or a temporary shelter.

Participation and Community Engagement to improve protection

Interview with Vincent Briard of UNHCR

Over the last 10 to 15 years, the methods to respond to the needs of affected or displaced populations have gradually changed. The traditional emphasis on the individual has been slowly replaced by an approach where the community is placed at the center of the intervention. This approach contributes to the development of skills and knowledge of affected or displaced individuals or communities.

This approach is born from the idea that people will be better protected if they are part of the decision making process in the response and the design of protection strategies. The main objective is to develop the capacity of affected population to identify, produce and sustain solutions and, at the same time, this will allow them to make efficient use of available resources. Experience through the years and in diverse humanitarian emergency contexts have proven that the community approach towards response is the most efficient and recognizes the affected population's strength and capacity to overcome hardship ensuring their dignity. However, humanitarian engagement is not always a reality.

Does this approach include the right to information?

From a human rights and community engagement perspective, the affected population has the right to participate in the decision making process that affects their lives as well as have access to information that allows them to make decisions. Furthermore, they have the right to demand transparency from the United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, national and local government bodies, and others working in the response. Clear accountability mechanisms for the affected communities are a fundamental right during the emergency and the recovery processes. There is still space for improvement in the response to the earthquake concerning information and accountability.

Do you consider that there is a lack of community engagement in the response to the earthquake? What would be the ideal level of community engagement?

Community engagement has to be a profound matter (not a "cosmetic" one that only comes up when donors are visiting). It requires that members of the community are involved in the decision making process and activities that will affect their lives. Their engagement has to be comprehensive and with equality in the private and public spheres. Moreover, the level of community engagement will depend on the level of satisfaction with the process and if they see advantages from being involved. Community engagement demands that instead of deciding in name of the population and informing them, it is important to listen to them. Our role as humanitarian actors involved in the response to the earthquake is to enable conversations with affected persons so that they can identify their own priorities and the results they would like to reach. This implies that the affected population cannot be seen as dependent beneficiaries that must be "saved or helped" but as partners with an active role in their own protection and in the fulfillment of their own basic needs.

Do you have one last message?

This community engagement approach is not limited to one specific area of humanitarian work. It must guide the work of humanitarian actors in both the response and recovery stages. The approach requires an understanding of the political context, the affected population, neighborhoods, gender roles, the community dynamics, protection risks, concerns and priorities. Secondly, it is crucial that we recognize our roles as facilitators not only as activity implementers. It is fundamental, to keep in mind the question of how we implement not only how much. Thirdly, one must assume the importance of strengthening installed capacities and avoid long-term harm because most of our actions will be temporary.

Affected persons are not passive objects or victims



Foto: Lopez/OCHA

The priority is to strengthen the dignity and self-esteem of affected persons and to enable empowering conditions where all actors can work together to support community members to exercise their human rights.

Reassemble the sum of all parts beyond the cement

Alexandra Benalcázar, MCYP¹

Esmeraldas and Manabí provinces are the expression of a country with deep ancient cultural roots and identities, elements that among others compose our social fabric. The social fabric is the interweaving where day-to-day life occurs, where we share knowledge, traditions and values that compose a society's character.

After the earthquake, we saw how the afroesmeraldeño people and their wisdom to process grief celebrated the “chigualo”, the “arrullo”, “alabado” and “novena”, funerary rites where they sing couplets to the divine and human as a form of farewell of loved ones. At the same time, “curanderas” (healers) produce medicine and prayers to cure the “espanto” (fright). We saw people from Manabí activate protection and solidarity networks through godmothers and godfathers going beyond family limits to take care of children and the elderly to ensure their livelihoods. This is how the social fabric works when facing a disaster: it takes care of the individual and collective healing because we are the sum of all parts. We are not alone.

Now that we find ourselves in the task of rebuilding infrastructure, services and houses in affected areas, it is of great importance that the dynamic relationships of the social fabric address the long-term challenges, such as the creation of spaces where the daily life develops. With each cement bag resilience must be built, each kilometer of network services must carry strengthened capacities to face new obstacles with solidarity.

To overcome the long-term challenge, we will continue to offer collective psycho-social support in social spaces for coping with post-traumatic stress amongst families living in camps. This collective healing will allow the affected communities to take on responsibilities and be part of the reconstruction phase with a sense of belonging especially in the coming months with the relocation processes that may occur.

We know that the name of our country was born in Pedernales. There the first Geodesic Mission in 1736 left behind a rock carved “Equateur” representing the line of the equator. This historical event can be an interesting starting point to symbolize a new beginning as the sum of all parts that constitute our society fills with solidarity and is capable of learning about preparedness and resilience, and that it can recover when facing another crisis.

*The social fabric is the interweaving where day to day life occurs, where knowledge, traditions and values **compose a society's character.***

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MADURO
con
SALPUESTA
QUESO
Y CHONERO
para
AHUYENTAR
los MIEDOS

¹ The Ministry of Culture and Heritage of Ecuador (MCYP), participates on the Early Recovery Sector to articulate with other humanitarian actors. Its mandate post earthquake is focus on the recovery of social fabric with intercultural emphasis, the reconstruction of heritage sites and museums and the economic recovery of cultural enterprises base on local knowledge. To support, collaborate or obtain more information please contact: mbenalcazar@culturaypatrimonio.gob.ec

² Source: Gabriela Valarezo (MCYP).