

Alert

Ecuador

Earthquake in Ecuador

Geneva, 18 April 2016

1. Brief description of the emergency and impact

An earthquake of magnitude 7.8 on the Richter scale struck on Saturday night, on the northern coast of Ecuador, with the epicentre 27 kilometres southeast of the coastal town of Muisne and 170 kilometres northwest of Quito the capital city (U.S. Geological Survey). The earthquake occurred as the result of shallow thrust faulting on or near the plate boundary between the Nazca and Pacific plates.

It is the most powerful earthquake to hit the region in 36 years. The death toll from the quake has risen to more than 246, Ecuador's Vice President Jorge Glas said Sunday evening on Ecuador TV. At least 2,527 people were injured, he said.

The quakes flattened houses, buildings and bridges. Massive damage to property and infrastructure has been reported. A state of emergency is in effect for six provinces -- Guayas, Manabi, Santo Domingo, Los Rios, Esmeraldas and Galapagos.

There is little information coming from the remote areas, but according to the government at least half a million people will be affected directly by the earthquake.

2. Why is an ACT response needed?

This is an earthquake of massive proportions affecting small cities and regions that are vulnerable and in need of external assistance to cope with the huge emergency response to address immediate needs. Taking into account the severity of the quake, the damage, the level of capacity of the communities and the government, assistance from the ACT Alliance is needed to help in saving lives and support the affected communities for their recovery.

3. National and international response

The government has appealed to the international community for emergency assistance as the scale of the disaster is beyond the capacities of the national authorities. About 4,600 members from the National Police and 10,400 members of the armed forces were mobilized as part of the state's emergency response. Hundreds of doctors, health professionals and rescue workers were heading toward the hardest-hit areas. The president's emergency decree gives the government expanded authority and a state of emergency in six of the country's 24 provinces. Rescue teams from Colombia and Mexico are already in the country.

4. ACT Alliance response

The only ACT member in Ecuador is the Latin America Council of Churches, CLAI, which is gathering information from the affected areas and establishing coordination with government and UN agencies. Due to CLAI's limited humanitarian experience, the ACT Alliance regional office deployed on 17 April, the Program Officer from El Salvador to support the coordination for an eventual appeal, and to guide and ensure compliance with ACT policies and guidelines. ACT Member LWF's Regional Emergency Hub and PDA coordinator in Latin America will be deployed on Monday to support the response with the regional office, to be based in Quito. ACT Member DKH, based in Colombia, will also deploy staff this week, to be based in Guayaquil. ACT Members LWR and NCA in Latin America are ready to join the deployed team, as.

5. Planned activities

A more detailed report will be developed and shared with the Alliance on 20 April 2016 (CET). A preliminary appeal will be developed by the team deployed, detailing the sectors and geographical areas of the ACT response. According to a number of preliminary sources, major needs will be food, water, psycho-social support, NFIs, medical supplies and shelter.

6. Constraints

Will be some challenges to access the most remote affected communities due to the collapse of roads.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to the Head of Finance and Administration, Line Hempel (Line.Hempel@actalliance.org).

For further information please contact:

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