

Alert

Nicaragua and Costa Rica

Hurricane Otto

San Salvador, 28 November 2016

1. Brief description of the emergency and impact

Hurricane Otto, category 2, hit the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican territory on Thursday, November 24, as the latest hurricane of the season with winds of 175 Kms Per hour from the Caribbean Sea. It is the first hurricane in 50 years to hit Costa Rica, where 9 deaths were reported but none in Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua, 2,000 persons were evacuated in the Caribbean coast, and in San Carlos, Rio San Juan, near to the Costa Rican border. No significant damages had been reported in Nicaragua.

In Costa Rica, more than 50,000 people have lost houses, livelihoods, and the crops. So far, 5,502 persons remain in 50 shelters. The most affected region are the central and northern regions. The country remains with red alert due the heavy rains in the western coasts leaving several communities isolated.

2. Why is an ACT response needed?

In Nicaragua, the Council of Evangelical Churches (CEPAD) staff is assessing damage in the communities where crops have been affected and emotional support is needed.

In Costa Rica, the national emergency system is not prepared to deal with the impact of hurricanes and the support of specialized organizations is needed, due the extended damages in remote and poorest communities, including those made up by migrants.

3. National and international response

In Nicaragua, the government has provided food and blankets to the shelters.

In Costa Rica, the government has set up shelters, evacuated affected population and repaired electrical system and roads. Support from US government is expected in the next days. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Organization for Migration are preparing responses for the affected areas.

4. ACT Alliance response

An assessment and coordination with organizations are conducted in both countries. The Lutheran Church of Costa Rica (ILCO) has requested support to the regional forum and the secretariat, in the frame of the regional emergency preparedness plan, to have experienced people to guide in the early phases of the response.

5. Planned activities

CEPAD is assessing if an RRF will be needed in the affected areas, in Nicaragua.

ILCO is preparing their staff to request a RRF to support affected people in the northern region of Costa Rica, with food, water, NFI and WASH.

6. Constraints

The impacted areas are distant from the capital cities, the risk could be the logistics, safety and possible political interference. To reduce the risks, coordination with the local authorities will be made.

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

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