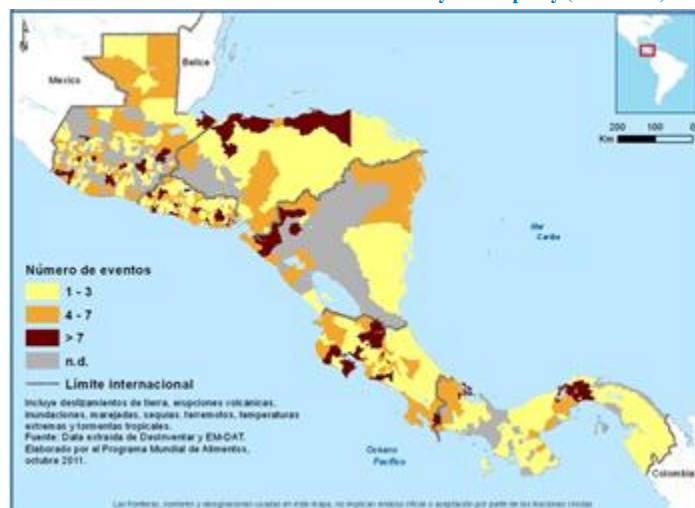


WFP PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATIONS Summary

Food insecurity in Central America – particularly in **El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras** and **Nicaragua** – is closely related to natural disasters and poverty. The region is exposed to recurrent natural disasters and the poorest communities suffer from the consequences of successive shocks. In recent years, high food prices, the global economic crisis, droughts caused by El Niño phenomenon, excessive rainfall and flooding have further compromised the already precarious food security in these four countries.

Central America: recurrence of natural disasters by municipality (2000-2010)



Following the devastating Hurricane Mitch that hit the Central America region in 1998, WFP's response to the recurrent natural disasters has been based on a series of Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO). The PRROs have proven to be an effective operational tool to quickly respond to a variety of natural shocks in Central America while enabling WFP to work closely with governments and other key partners to strengthen their emergency preparedness and response capacities. The PRROs are WFP's operational

instrument to effectively respond to small and medium scale emergencies such as earthquakes, droughts, landslides, floods, tropical storms and hurricanes. Between 2002 and 2009, WFP has responded to the urgent needs of food insecure populations with General Food Distributions (GFD) in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua - with an average of nearly 300.000 beneficiaries per year. Blanket supplementary feeding has benefitted children under 2, who are the most vulnerable to acute malnutrition. Early recovery activities, such as food-for-work and food-for-training (FFW/FFT) followed up to assist affected populations to recover their livelihoods and build resilience to future events.

Taking into consideration the lessons learned from previous experiences, the current PRRO 200043 (2011-2012) is directed at providing a fast and efficient response, utilizing prepositioned contingency stocks in order to:



- Provide immediate relief and stabilization of acute malnutrition below emergency levels among the most vulnerable people affected by climatic shocks and natural disasters as well as protect livelihoods in emergencies and early recovery stages;
- Support the rehabilitation of livelihoods and food and nutrition security of communities affected by shocks.

In October 2011, Tropical Depression 12E (TD-12E) affected all four PRRO countries with heavy and prolonged rains which resulted in destructive floods and mud slides. In El Salvador the accumulation of rain surpassed the levels reached under Hurricane Mitch in 1998. In Guatemala, an already vulnerable population was struck by simultaneous natural disasters: earthquakes between August and December in the province of Santa Rosa and the devastating effects of TD-12E. In Nicaragua, TD-12E severely affected the agriculture of people in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) who lost



approximately 50 percent of their harvest. In Honduras, TD-12E caused heavy floods affecting thousands of people in the southern region that is usually affected by droughts. Emergency preparation procedures between WFP and its partners together with contingency food stocks that had been generously contributed by donors enabled an immediate response to governments' requests in all four countries, making it possible to deliver urgently needed food to affected populations in isolated communities and in shelters.

In the aftermath of TD-12E in 2011, GFD activities were prioritized due to the widespread effects of the storm, assisting approximately 300 communities. In close coordination with partners, WFP provided food rations at distribution points to women for their households.

As soon as possible after an emergency, WFP transitions from GFD activities to FFW/FFT which focus on rebuilding livelihoods. WFP began to assist around 200 communities through improved physical infrastructure to mitigate the impact of future shocks. FFW activities include soil conservation, agriculture and forestry training, rehabilitation of roads, bridges and drinking water systems. Due to the long lasting effects of TD-12E and the massive destruction of agricultural plots, all four countries continue with recovery activities. WFP is presently actively preparing for the 2012 hurricane season: all staff has been trained in



emergency preparedness and response, with participation of Government, UN and other humanitarian partners. Once again, efforts have been made to preposition food in all four countries.

In Central America, WFP's main partners for emergency food assistance response as well as for recovery activities are national government institutions. WFP also maintains a close partnership with other UN agencies, such as FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, IOM, UNFPA and UNAIDS, as well as with local and international NGOs such as World Vision, Oxfam America, World Lutheran Federation, Plan International and Catholic Relief Service and CARE.

Lessons learned and way forward

The evolution of the Central America PRRO has been an important experience that WFP is building on. The availability of contingency stocks allowed for a prompt response to the immediate needs of the affected population. Established partnerships with the regional and national bodies for disaster prevention and response enabled WFP to quickly align its interventions with government priorities and strengthen coordination at the municipal level. This is particularly important in the affected areas outside of WFP's regular scope of work where relationships with local actors were previously weak. Likewise, training of government partners



in emergency food security assessments proved to be effective in strengthening coordination with different institutions as well as enabling quick field data collection.

It is expected that for the next biennium, WFP will continue this approach in Central America while building on the lessons learned to also develop a new PRRO for the island of Hispaniola – the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The approach of prepositioning of commodities and conducting preparedness activities with national governments and communities will increase WFP's ability to respond efficiently on the island.

Additionally, strong links will be made with the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) strategies that WFP is developing in the region in partnership with governments. Starting in the Andean region with Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, WFP is closely working with government counterparts to analyze key climate related risks and their effect on food security. WFP is now working on defining the regional and country specific strategies for the Andean region. In Central America, the analysis is currently underway based on the experience in the Andean countries. Strong linkages will be made, with emphasis on strengthening small holder agriculture in order to increase resilience at the community level.