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APPEAL: Ecuador

Assessment trip for future deployment in Ecuador

Editor: Katherine Carver DA UK/Ireland



The earthquake that hit Ecuador on 16 April resulted in 660 deaths and injured approximately 4,600 people. The most severe damage was concentrated in the North west; in Manabí Province and the canton of Muisne in neighboring Esmeraldas Province. Ecuador has appealed to the international community for help for the estimated 720,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance; 72,000 of whom have been displaced.

First response aid has been provided and is still being provided. However, many of the displaced are in emergency camps and many of these are reported to be of very low standard. Unicef have identified an urgent need to facilitate the relocation of those displaced back to the vicinity of their original communities so that they can start to rebuild their original homes. Those familiar with International Disaster Aid will know that this is just the type of work we specialise in.



Accordingly, Steve Lister and Craig Roberts, both from the UK, have been sent by Disaster Aid International to undertake the assessment visit. They arrived on 6 June with the objective of understanding the socio-political environment, developing partnerships on the ground, identifying communities that can be supported effectively, identifying the precise requirements for those communities and then drawing up a delivery plan that is acceptable to all the relevant stakeholders.



It is important in any deployment to ensure, where possible, that any support provided is compatible with the host government's own short and long term plans to manage the disaster. In Ecuador, the government has responded by offering grants for household repairs for target groups but only if they have not obtained aid from elsewhere. Reports on the ground indicate that some families have thus been reluctant to receive shelter aid even though they are unlikely to qualify for the government grants. There are also requirements in place for the quality of any rebuild that may not be within the reach of the poorest affected. This sort of issues can take time to resolve but need to be managed carefully to ensure that the aid is deployed to best effect.



The assessment visit will include extensive meetings with those coordinating the aid effort and potential partners, including a number of Rotary Clubs. On the 8th June, Steve and Craig spent a long day on the first of several field trips, with this one being to Manta to see affected sites and refugee camps. In addition to the need for shelter, they also identified that many areas did not have access to clean water.

The assessment is still ongoing but it is clear that Disaster Aid will be able to play a part in the recovery and will be looking for support from donors to fund this work. If you feel you can help us with this, please consider making a donation. www.disasteraidusa.org, click on the donate button and specify (Ecuador Appeal)