

**Brief January 2016**

The effects of El Nino which has caused extreme rainfall or severe drought over the past year across central and South America continues to impact the region causing damage and increased vulnerability to the housing stock and resulting in loss of life and livelihoods.

**Current response situation**

1. **Extreme flooding in Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay**

South American countries are preparing for above average rainfall that is set to extend through the month of May. The resulting flooding has already displaced 130,000 people in Paraguay and around 20,000 in Argentina and 11,357 in Uruguay .

**Paraguay Shelter response**: IOM, IFRC and the national societies of the Red Cross are involved in the response.

Shelter Cluster Americas has facilitated the deployment of a team from Shelter Box to help will emergency shelter gaps.

ShelterBox has partnered with Red Cross Paraguay to operate in Asunción, San Pedro and in Ñeembucú. Currently shelter equipment to be distributed to these specific areas is as follows: Ñeembucú (Pilar) ~500 Shelter Kits; San Pedro 100 ShelterBoxes; Asunción 3,000 Shelter kits out of a requested 7,000 kits. (Contents of kits and Shelter boxes attached.)

IFRC is launching an appeal that will cover immediate as well as longer term needs to recover this will include shelter inputs. Currently planned is the distribution of at least 1000 shelter kits.

**Argentina Shelter Response:** IFRC is finalising its appeal with shelter inputs. TECHO is providing temporary shelter made from wood and CGI. IOM is planning to support the response through CCCM training, for instance.

So far there has not been a call for deployment of coordination or information management support but support is likely in the coming months.

1. **Humanitarian needs of migrant Cubans**

The flow of migration in the region has been disrupted due to Nicaragua closing its borders to around an estimated 30,000 Cubans who are travelling from Uruguay by land to the United States. This has resulted in thousands of Cubans being trapped predominantly in Panama (3000 people) and Costa Rica. The shelter and protection needs of this caseload are significant. In Costa Rica 5000 people of the caseload of 7802 people, are housed in 38 collective centres managed by the government. IOM has been assisting government by coordinating on behalf of the Humanitarian Country Team, developing a database of collective centres and providing CCCM training. Shelter cluster Americas has been helping to provide assistance to fill gaps. Space in collective centres is limited and most shelter agencies have been restricted by their mandates to provide assistance as the caseload are not victims of violence or affected by natural disaster. Shelter cluster Americas is advocating for formalising the status of this caseload to be able to provide assistance not only to the migrant caseload but to the often very poor hosting communities. The possible response strategy needs to be a regional one to avoid providing the same shelter needs in each country for the same caseload.

1. **Drought in Central America, Haiti and Colombia**

In the Central American Dry Corridor at **least 4.2 million people are affected with 2.8 in need of immediate food assistance**, health care, livelihoods recovery and resilience building activities. Though the drought has not so far been a primary shelter emergency it is likely to develop into one as increasing numbers of people are displaced.

On 13 January a **sub-regional global response plan for 101 million USD** will be launched for Guatemala where 10% of its population is severely affected and Honduras where 15% of the population is impacted by the ongoing drought.

In Colombia the prolonged drought is impacting 200,000 Wayuu indigenous people in the northern part of Guajira peninsula

Haiti has lost 60% of its seasonal production which has left 30% of the population food insecure and in need of assistance.

**Key issues in 2016**

* Humanitarian needs in response to the effects of **El Nino.** Loss of livelihood due to drought, agricultural plagues and unseasonal flooding does not only have major implications for food security but will also cause displacement which will impact urban and semi-urban areas.
* Loss of livelihood and displacement will exacerbate urban **violence and impact existing settlements and basic service provision.**
* **Migration and deportations**: continued disruptions to the natural flow of migration, forced repatriation and deportations in the region are likely to result in significant humanitarian needs across the region.
* **Hurricane season** during the latter half of the year is likely to impact an already vulnerable housing stock**.**

**Shelter Cluster Americas Priorities for 2016**

The current work plan for 2016 is under revision and will circulated. Some key issues for the cluster are:

* Revision of number and physical state of collective centres at country level in the region.
* Improve baseline data necessary for the housing/shelter sector across the Caribbean.
* Provide country level support to coordination, contingency planning and sectoral response in emergencies due to the effects of el Nino.
* Complete mapping of shelter typologies according to climate
* **Blue urbanism**: a greater focus on the connections of the oceans to urban areas in Island states particularly issues related to land, affordable housing and disaster preparedness. Increase sharing of experience between the Caribbean and South Pacific Islands.
* Focus on Haiti post- election
* Contribute to the development, implementation, peer review and monitoring of country level response plans (ERPs).
* Capacity building on tenure issues, coordination and the use of shelter kits
* Support to OCHA and REDLAC