

For public distribution Friday, 12 March 2010

Situation Report #8 Earthquake in Chile

1. General situation

- On Thursday the 11th, strong aftershocks hit the south-central region of Chile. The largest, measuring 6.9 on the Richter Scale and whose epicenter was on the coast of the O' Higgins region, occurred during the inauguration of the country's new president.
- Thousands of people evacuated the coastal areas of six coastal regions following the tsunami alert issued by the Office of Emergencies.
- The new government assessed the situation and declared the O' Higgins region to be in a "state of catastrophe," adding it to Maule and Biobío as regions in a "state of exception" to speed up the response and recovery.
- The latest data furnished by the Ministry of the Interior show that some 299,000 people are sleeping in camps (protected by tents or plastic sheeting) or outdoors and that only 15,000 are in shelters (environments constructed of noble materials with basic services). See Table.

Ministry of the Interior data on victims (published 9 March 2010)	
Dead	421
Missing	237
Population without water	758,044
Population in shelters	15,033
People in camps (tents or plastic sheeting)	238,271
People outdoors	61,117
Number of dwellings damaged	223,538
People without primary regular health care	255,489

2. Health situation and network of services

- At least 26 hospitals suffered damage, and 14 of them will need to be rebuilt. The infrastructure and equipment of another 70 health facilities, doctor's offices and health posts included, have also been damaged. According to the Ministry of Health, the estimated cost of rebuilding health facilities is <u>US\$ 3,600 million</u>.
- Although services are gradually being restored, at least <u>a quarter of a million people are still not receiving primary health care</u> on a regular basis in the affected areas.
- The Hospital Félix Bulnes' neonatology service was transferred to the Metropolitan Hospital after the necessary adaptations were made.
- A <u>field hospital</u> from the United States was added to those sent by Argentina, Peru, Cuba, and Brazil. The facility currently has two wings, 10 in-patient beds, a laboratory, and x-ray equipment. This hospital will be set up in Angol, in La Araucanía, where the local hospital is nonfunctional and no care is being provided.



3. Intervention Areas

- The Ministry of Health regularly assesses and analyzes the health situation and network of services in the most affected regions to determine intervention priorities.
- At present, at least nine areas of intervention are considered a priority: vaccination; public health measures; shelters; water management; basic sanitation and excreta and refuse disposal; epidemiological surveillance; food and nutrition; mental health; and the restoration of health services.
- Vaccination campaigns are targeted primarily to children in shelters, those who spend the night in camps, and those in places reporting more cases of enteric disease.
- The regional health agencies are conducting public health operations, including the delivery of chlorine, drugs, and health care in all affected areas.
- Six water treatment systems were transferred to the affected areas to meet the needs of the population lacking a solution for the medium term. Another five will be distributed in Maule, Lebu, and Biobío. Latrines have been set up for use until water services are back to normal, and refuse disposal is being coordinated with the municipios.
- A sentinel surveillance system is in place for early detection of outbreaks and other effects of the earthquake. It was confirmed that there is no health crisis or risk of disease transmission from cadavers.

4. PAHO/WHO Response

- In addition to PAHO activities in connection with the donation of 195,000 doses of hepatitis A vaccine from the Sanofi Pasteur and Glaxo Smith Kline laboratories, a loan of 50,000 doses from Panama (40,000) and Argentina (10,000) has been confirmed.
- Some 300,000 doses of H1N1 vaccine donated to PAHO by Spain will be sent to Chile.
- PAHO, as part of the United Nations technical team (UNETE), recommended working mainly in the geographical areas of Biobío and Maule: Dichato, Talcahuano, Llico, Tubul, Constitución, Tirua, Cobquecura, Tregualemu, Curanipe, Pelluhue, Chanco, Loanco, and Pellines.
- PAHO also recommended giving priority to action in: health sector strengthening, access to drinking water, basic sanitation, temporary housing, resumption of educational activities, restoration of livelihoods, and guaranteeing food security for the affected population.
- Following the UNETE team's assessment of the areas of Constitución and Concepción, PAHO is considering the following specific activities: restoration of the health services (including hospital equipment), the inspection of radiation therapy equipment, ensuring the supply of hepatitis A and A (H1N1) vaccine, and completing the assessment of the health services infrastructure.
- In regard to water and sanitation, the priorities identified are: strengthening the monitoring of water quality in communities, shelters, and health facilities; adopting appropriate technologies for adequate excreta disposal; developing a comprehensive system for the surveillance of risk factors; comprehensive solid waste management (including hospital waste), vector control, and promoting good hygiene.
- PAHO/WHO will continue coordinating with the Ministry of Health on activities that mitigate the earthquake's impact on the health of affected communities and populations.