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The EC sends help to South Africa

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) is going to help the countries : Madagascar, Mozambique, Malawi and The Coromos, because the new statement released on 23 July said the EC had extended the scope of its disaster preparedness programme (DIPECHO) with a new allocation of €5 million (US\$7.8 million) for the four southern African countries.

"This is an important step in supporting communities that are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. Experience shows that many lives can be saved if people know what precautions to take and how to react when the disaster strikes," Louis Michel, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, said in the statement.

"The number of extreme weather events has increased sharply in recent years. Climate change already seems to be having a serious humanitarian impact," John Clancy, spokesman for Commissioner Michel. "The decision to extend it [DIPECHO] to the southwest Indian Ocean reflects an unfortunate reality: more cyclones are occurring in that area, causing ever more structural damage and serious flooding," Clancy said.

In Mozambique, catastrophic flooding in 2000 left up to 800 dead; in 2007 dozens of people were killed, and the country is yet to recover from floods in January 2008.

Over 100 people died when Madagascar was hit by cyclones Fame, Jokwe and Ivan earlier in 2008. The powerful winds, heavy rains and flooding affected over 340,000 people, of whom 190,000 lost their homes.

Cyclone Indhala, which hit Madagascar in 2007, caused over \$240 million worth of destruction, according to CRED statistics. Altogether, there were six cyclones in 2007 - the worst year on record - while drought in the parched south has persisted for several years.

Malawi, also hit by floods earlier this year, has turned a corner since 2005, when drought

left close to five million people in need of food aid, but the country remains particularly exposed to dry spells and food insecurity.

According to The Climate Change Risk Report by Maplecroft, a UK-based firm that specializes in risk mapping, at the beginning of July, Comoros was the country most vulnerable to the future impacts of global warming, such as increased storms, rising sea levels and agricultural failure.

According to the EC statement, various types of programmes would be supported, "including practical training in disaster response for community groups and institutions, early warning systems, public information campaigns and small-scale infrastructure works. In Madagascar, it has been calculated that a child living in a disaster-prone area loses on average one full school year due to lack of access to or destruction of their schools," Clancy said.

The new funds would assist communities by establishing cyclone- and flood-resistant schools and clinics, "which can also serve as shelters for the community, and by funding the acquisition of small boats, for example, which allow children to continue to access their schools even in heavily flooded areas."

The statement also said implementation of these projects should begin in October 2008, before the onset of the next cyclone season around December.



Communities affected by strong storms. Over 200,000 people were displaced in 2007.

Floods will bring sadness to Sierra Leona

This sad episode is what people face day by day in Kroo Bay, located in the centre of Sierra Leona and is one of the poorest areas in the poorest country. It has 6,000 people who have their paths made by toothpaste tubes and compressed plastic. Children play with animals in some mounds where there are also dead animals, and also they wash their clothes in those mounds, everything at the same time. Water is kind of slimy and its color is green, something that is not healthy and the ground is rare with its orange color.

People are always suffering diseases like diarrhea, vomiting, cholera, respiratory infections. Save the Children, a British non-governmental aid organization, started work in Kroo Bay in 2007 to help address health, child protection and education needs.

Country director Dineke van der Wijk said when it came to health, tackling the causes as well as the symptoms of disease is needed.

“We quickly found that this was a flood-prone area and that a lot of people were at risk because this is a place where two rivers merge,” Dineke said.

It rains six months of the year in Freetown and the city is one of the wettest places in the world. Kroo Bay lies at the bottom of the steep hill on which the city was built.

It also funded the Blue Cross Volunteers – young people who administer first aid, re-hydration salts for diarrhea, and identify and treat cholera cases.

The work the NGO is doing is not a long term solution to Kroo Bay’s problem. “We’re not going to be there every year to do the same thing,” Dineke said.

“It’s complex, but bigger donors looking at water and sanitation need to find a solution to problems in marginalized communities like this.”



The life expectancy is around 45 years in Sierra Leona. Many diseases affect people living in the poorest country.

Madagascar and its early plan

This country lost almost 100 people when the cyclones Fame, Jokwe and Ivan hit the island on the beginning of this year. This country is often eroded by floods and cyclones. There were 6 of them in 2007 when at least 200,000 people lost their homes.

After visiting the cyclone-hit areas on the Indian Ocean Island in early July, Walter Kälin, the UN Secretary-General's Representative on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, said humanitarian assistance alone was not enough. "The populations affected by the natural disasters in Madagascar need dedicated and continuous support in order to rebuild their lives."

A Joint Damages, Losses and Needs Assessment (JDLNA), conducted after this year's cyclone season by the government, UN agencies and the World Bank to assure efficient transition from emergency to development, estimated cyclone-related losses at US\$334.9 million.

A paper on the 2008 Cyclones in Madagascar - Early Recovery Consolidated Strategy and Financial Needs, presented to UN agencies, government officials and humanitarian and development partners in the capital, Antananarivo, on 18 July by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, estimated financial needs at \$32.7 million.

"The international community needs to mobilize urgently to fulfill these needs," a statement accompanying the paper said. Securing the necessary funds will be far from easy. A Flash Appeal, launched after the cyclones hit, is still heavily under funded: of the \$36 million requested, \$17 million (48 percent) has been financed while another \$1.8 million has been pledged. Although the first appeal made some provisions for ER (Early Recovery), most donors opted to finance life-saving activities as a priority, and the timing did not allow for the necessary assessments to make the case for ER. "Donors are supportive of ER," Legrand said, but international competition for donor dollars meant budgets might be tight.



Early help to people living in dangerous areas.

Source. www.irinnews.org



Comments: I feel so sad because of Sierra Leone people, how can life be so bad? It is incredible the pain that people feel everyday, for me it is too much. I wish my best to the organizations which are in charge of the situation, because that people are human, like all of us, so dignity is what they look for, and hope all of them find it. I believe Madagascar is doing things well, they are preparing everything for future bad times, and that is a good example to follow. Training citizens and building strong structures are really marvelous ideas. I think that South Africa's citizens have this time a chance to prepare and train for the next season, so I hope they learn and teach about natural disasters so all of them can make it better this time.

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