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## **1. FLOODING DISASTER IN GUYANA**

Unprecedented rainfall in the last two months has caused serious flooding in large areas of Guyana's coastal regions. Rainfall for the first two weeks of January was five times the normal monthly average. 39% of the population of Guyana are estimated to have been affected. The worst affected area is along the East Coast from Mahaica to Georgetown, where 172,020 people have been severely affected. Reports indicate 27 deaths associated with the flooding to date, but there are no fully reliable figures at this time. It would be surprising if the figure remained this low - aside from the risk of more flooding we must be prepared for very serious health challenges as the waters recede.

The Government's civil defence/emergency stocks had been exhausted through Guyana's assistance to Grenada (following Hurricane Ivan) and not replenished. Given the scale of the disaster, the Government has responded as well as could be expected in the circumstances. Systematic assessments of the population's needs are underway by the UN and civil society. These should establish prioritised needs and a division of responsibility around who can fund and deliver relief against these needs. This process should also improve quality of information on the extent and impact of the disaster.

The Government has responded to the emergency by setting up temporary shelter in schools and other public buildings, as well as providing food and potable water. Currently, there are about 1,695 people living in 17 shelters. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that 3,200 families are in need of food. WFP's food supplies can provide food to 2,000 families for one month. The remaining 1,200 families are being covered from other sources, but supplies to these families are not as secure over the longer term. Evacuation points have been identified, and at least three, which are already established military camps, will not need much to get them operational. However, it is not clear how many people these camps could take.

DFID's immediate bilateral support was to provide £20,000 directly to the Government's relief effort. We also provided £80,000 to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for their delivery of emergency supplies, including water and environmental sanitation (WES) kits, and survival items such as blankets and treated mosquito nets.

The Pan American Health Organisation will also be tackling the problem of the disposal of human waste. On 8 February 2005, the United Nations launched a Flash Appeal for Guyana of approximately £1.6m. DFID will continue to assess whether there is a case for further support to the relief effort, specifically in the areas of water and sanitation, and public health. We have budgeted a small amount - £10,000 - for strengthening relief co-ordination.

The EU Delegation has announced the release of a total of €1.7million to the relief effort. €700,000 from European Development Fund resources; €500,000 to Oxfam for water and

sanitation work and €200,000 to the Pan American Health Organisation for medical supplies and emergency health assistance (the UK's share of EDF is calculated at 12.7% giving a total here of £61,163). €1million has been provided from the General Budget.: €650,000 for the International Federation of the Red Cross for food including the cost of transport; €350,000 yet to be allocated. (the UK's share of the EU's budget funds is calculated at 18% giving a total here of £123,839). In all, the UK has provided 185,002 to the emergency in Guyana through the EU.

In addition to our humanitarian relief, the President asked for DFID's help in re-orienting the Government's programmes with the International Financial Institutions to deal with long term needs for infrastructure rehabilitation and livelihood recovery schemes. Once the immediate emergency has passed, DFID will liaise with the Government of Guyana and its international partners on these matters. Flood-impact on rice and sugar crops will have implications for growth, debt and poverty reduction in Guyana. A team from the World Bank has just completed its initial assessment and expects to circulate a report on 15 February 2005. The UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), will provide a more detailed assessment of the socio-economic impact of the floods by early March.

## **2. AID & RELIEF**

*Aid has been given to the citizens of Guyana but there is still a lot to be done. There is great destruction and many families are still without a proper shelter and clean water. Food is indeed in shortage in some areas and children are out of school. So we urge you to please join in helping the citizens of Guyana to restore their way of life. Join these organizations in their move to lend aid to Guyana.*