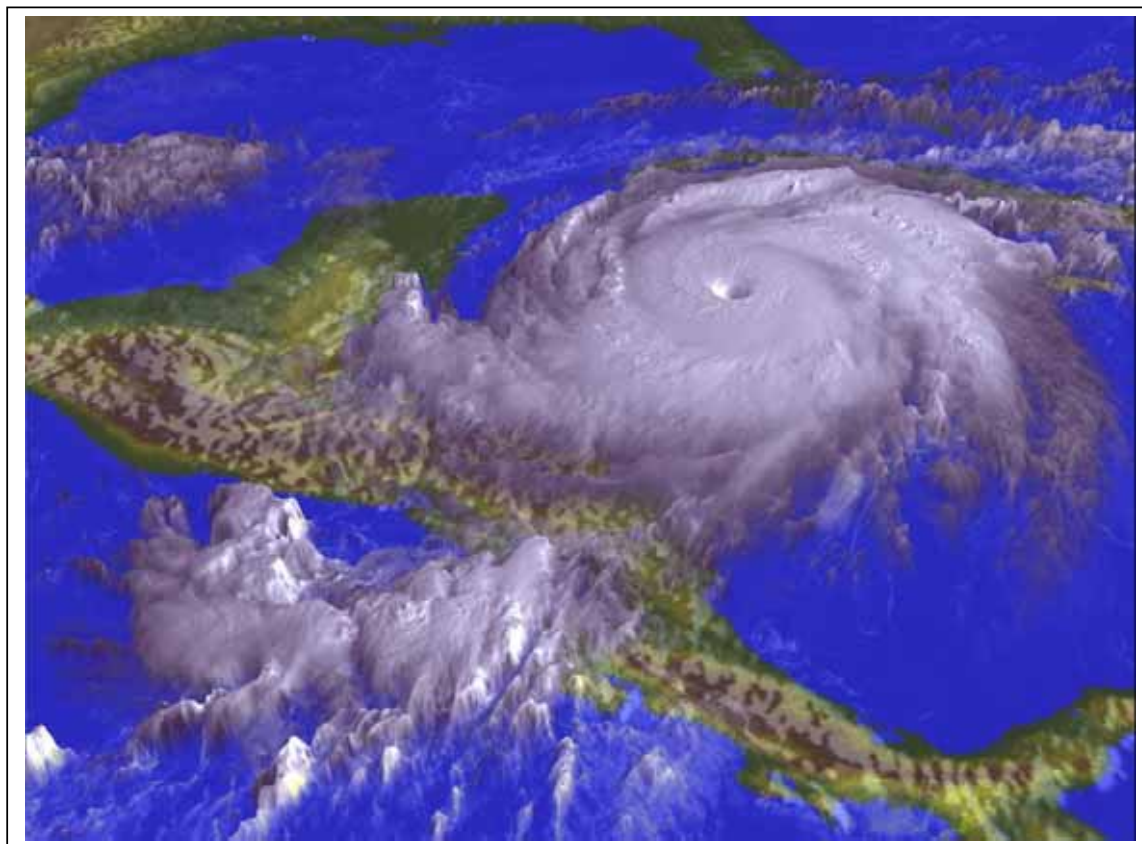


# Independent Evaluation of Expenditure of DEC Central America Hurricane Appeal Funds



## FINAL REPORT

**Espacios Consultores, S.A.**  
San José, Costa Rica

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# I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND

This report provides the main findings of the Independent Evaluation of expenditure of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) 'Central America Hurricane Appeal' funds. The appeal was launched on 12 November 1998 and raised more than £11 million in pooled funds towards humanitarian aid to some of the areas worst affected by Hurricane Mitch. The DEC - a UK-based umbrella charity disbursed the money raised among the 11 member agencies participating in the appeal to fund relief and rehabilitation programs in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. (Agencies were subject to an initial spending period of 6 months to mid-May, 1999). The evaluation - conducted by Espacios Consultores Asociados, S.A. - involved extensive interviews with all 11 DEC member agencies at their UK headquarters, and where applicable, in their Central American regional and national offices. The evaluating team also organised an extensive study of the impact of emergency assistance in the field, visiting over 40 project sites and conducting over 30 community-level workshops with beneficiaries of DEC appeal funded activities. The findings of the evaluation corroborate, with few exceptions, both the timeliness and effectiveness of the aid provided. The evaluation also combined direct information provided by beneficiaries at field workshops with elements derived from evaluation workshops with agencies and counterparts. The information gleaned from this broad spectrum of informants and sources constitutes the principal basis for this evaluation and was analysed by Espacios Consultores' multidisciplinary teams of consultants (ECATEAMS). The results shed light not only on the way the aid provided by the DEC Central America Hurricane Appeal had a direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of many disaster stricken communities, but also on the broader implications of vulnerability reduction policies and field practices, which could help reduce the impact of recurrent natural disasters in Central America.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team based its methodology on a series of questions formulated as part of the Terms of Reference proposed by DEC for the evaluation of the expenditure of Central America Appeal funds. These include the following criteria:

- ER 1: GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE: in the context of the overall response, the breadth and depth of presence in affected countries (member and partner agencies), how appropriate was the geographical coverage of relief and rehabilitation projects supported by DEC pooled funds?
- ER 2: IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS AND BENEFICIARIES: For the sample projects, how appropriate were the processes and criteria by which beneficiary needs were identified, and reached? Was there evidence throughout of vulnerability analysis?
- ER 3: BENEFICIARIES PARTICIPATION: In sample projects, what was the level of beneficiary involvement in project design, implementation and monitoring? How effective and appropriate were these processes in ensuring relevant and timely project delivery in support of the most needy and vulnerable?
- ER 4: EFFECTS ON EXISTING COPING MECHANISMS: How did agency action (in the sample projects) serve to strengthen or impede existing coping mechanisms?
- ER 5: IMPACT: How effective were the different interventions adopted by the sample projects in bringing humanitarian relief to the affected population? How appropriate was the duration of these interventions and what, if any, is the likely, longer-term socio-economic impact? Where possible, outline the groups that benefited most.
- ER 6: LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS SAVED: What was the likely overall effect of the sample projects supported by DEC pooled funds in terms of lives and livelihoods saved?
- ER 7: COMPARISON WITH OTHER INTERVENTIONS: What was the added value of the overall humanitarian response? Did DEC funds facilitate a quick response?

## Sources of Information

ECATEAMS used two major sources of information during the data gathering process: 1) Primary sources, based on interviews, local workshops and national SWOT workshops and field visits. 2) Secondary sources, based on a large array of documentation provided by the DEC, including final reports and preliminary proposals by agencies, financial reports and other official documents. Secondary sources also included disaster prevention and mitigation literature and qualified reports on the impact of Hurricane Mitch by country.

In order to access primary sources - which were by far the most important component of data collection of the evaluation process - ECATEAMS used several data gathering techniques:

a. *Interviews*

Topic guides were used in interviews with key DEC agency personnel both in the UK (11) and in Central America (12). ECATEAMS also interviewed personnel of local partner organisations (27). The topic guides were designed to: (i) focus on the questions in the ToR, considering the appropriateness, effectiveness and impact of the DEC-funded projects, and (ii) address sector and country-specific issues related to relief activities.

b. *Beneficiary Participatory Evaluation (BPE) Workshops*

ECATEAMS conducted 30 BPE workshops (all but Guatemalan BPEs had a facilitator and an assistant of different gender). ECATEAMS conducted all workshops in local languages, requiring the use of translators in one of the BPE workshops in Guatemala. By means of discussions and a voting technique using different coloured stickers to measure gender differences in beneficiary opinion, ECATEAMS appraised beneficiary perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the assistance provided through DEC funding.

c. *Observation*

In addition to the interviews and BPEs, the majority of field visits included visual verification of projects by ECATEAMS, enabling a direct appraisal of the quality of the interventions.

d. *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Workshops*

ECATEAMS conducted a SWOT workshop in each country to promote cross-fertilisation of ideas among the different parties involved in the sampled DEC-funded projects. In the SWOT workshops, these parties were initially separated in three different groups - the DEC member agency group, the local partner organisation group and the beneficiary group. Each group discussed the strengths and weaknesses of their experiences of DEC-funded projects in relation to the evaluation questions and made recommendations for further actions based on opportunities and threats discussed. All three groups shared and discussed their main findings in plenary session before going to the next group session. There was an overall discussion session to wrap up each workshop.

## Sampling Procedure

a. Interviews (see above).

b. ECATEAMS based their selection of projects to visit on the following factors:

- *Impact of the Hurricane.*
- *Distribution of DEC Funds.*
- *Practicality:* In terms of (1) apparent performance of projects, the aim being to include at least one of the most successful and most problematic projects, (2) representation of projects by sector or theme, and (3) feasibility in terms of access within the evaluation timeframe.

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

### 1. Breadth and Depth of Geographic Coverage

Overall, geographical coverage of aid response was adequate, that with agencies and counterparts working in some of the communities most devastated by Mitch (Choluteca, Matagalpa, Posoltega, Lower Lempa, Polochic Valley and Izabal regions, inter alia). There was a clear distinction between the humanitarian and rehabilitation phases of the aid response. Large international organisations such as the Red Cross channelled relief aid (water, blankets, cholera and WHO kits, etc.) through their existing networks and national societies. BRCS conducted three airlifts of relief supplies in the weeks following the tragedy. Many other organisations such as Christian Aid, The Save the Children Fund and Oxfam provided food aid and other emergency supplies. The majority of DEC funding supported the rehabilitation phase of the response, especially in the reconstruction of housing, water and sanitation infrastructures, and agricultural regeneration of food security. Honduras received over 60 per cent of DEC funds (reaching over 65 per cent of total beneficiaries) and Nicaragua received over 30 per cent of DEC funds (reaching 26 per cent of total beneficiaries). The balance of funds went to Guatemala and El Salvador (reaching nine per cent of beneficiaries).

The project sampling reflected this distribution of DEC funds; 14 of the 30 projects visited were in Honduras, eight in Nicaragua, five in Guatemala and four in El Salvador. Though greater coverage was achieved during the first emergency phase (Red Cross societies channelled aid to 450,000 people), the depth of involvement was most keenly felt in areas where agencies and their counterparts had worked prior to Mitch. Overall, the timeliness and geographic coverage of DEC Appeal funded aid were good in spite of the slow arrival of DEC money. (Much DEC-funded rehabilitation work was still underway after the mid-May, 1999, reporting date.)

### 2. Identification of needs

During the first days and weeks after Mitch, two main approaches to needs-assessment can be distinguished. The first used official sources and rapid appraisals by INGOs, carried out during the first few days of the emergency. The second involved many of the agencies' local counterparts in surveys, rapid rural appraisals, and some participatory rapid need appraisal techniques. Needs-assessments identified those communities hardest hit, and established priorities in providing food aid and relief items to evacuated and rescued families. Most of the DEC-funded emergency phase activities were initiated on the basis of information gathered at an aggregate national level, which lacked detail on local conditions and beneficiary coping strategies and demands. During the second phase of needs-assessments, agencies with field staff in place worked closely with local municipal committees and community-based organisations to draw up inventories of the damage and fix priorities for short-term relief, and longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction. These community-based needs assessments were highly effective in informing the design of rehabilitation and reconstruction projects. In some cases in the first weeks after Mitch, hired consultants conducted needs-assessments. These outside assessments did not usually involve community participation. The resulting relief package design was in some cases ill conceived and inadequately conducted. More troublesome perhaps was the absence in many sampled projects of a consistent and sound technical follow-up to rehabilitation projects.

### **3. Identification of Beneficiaries**

By and large, DEC funded projects served the neediest in affected communities. Where criteria were established by the agency or its counterpart, the trend was to prioritise assistance to those with the most damaged houses, farms, household goods and livelihoods. In their urgency to respond to emergency needs, few DEC agencies gave consideration to the problem of whether to differentiate between disaster-affected and structurally-disadvantaged families. Most DEC member agencies correctly recognised that communities were the most capable of identifying needy beneficiaries. Beneficiary selection criteria varied widely from project-to-project, and were not always clearly explained to affected communities.

### **4. Participation of Beneficiaries**

As a rule, DEC-funded projects succeeded in involving beneficiaries closely in project implementation and - to some extent - project management. In fact, ECATEAMS observed a high degree of community ownership of projects, in the sense that villages formed committees to run the projects, organised work brigades to carry out construction and, in some cases, created structures to continue monitoring community needs. It might be noted that the initial 6-month expenditure period does not facilitate full consultation and involvement of beneficiaries in all phases of projects. Sharing plans for a new village as early as possible with the community members who will live in it is vital to avoid costly mistakes in design which may cause future discomfort, social friction, economic hardship or health risks. Not all DEC-funded projects responded to the beneficiaries' perceived priorities, reflecting in some cases agencies' own perceptions of priority needs or what they could offer.

### **5. Existing Coping Strategies**

It is particularly important to evaluate the degree to which DEC-funded interventions supported rather than hindered survival strategies of target communities. One of the key decisions made by numerous rural farming families was to stay in their traditional areas rather than relocating, and to continue working their farms with whatever seeds and tools were at their disposal. As is common after disasters, many others migrated to seek wage labour to support their families. As such, a number of DEC agencies (e.g., ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, British Red Cross, World Vision, among others) and/or counterparts chose to prioritise agriculture for relief and rehabilitation. The provision of seeds, agricultural inputs and - in some cases - cash, helped farming families remain in their communities, despite massive harvest, soil, housing and livelihood losses. That so many agencies supported agricultural projects constitutes a remarkable and decisive step on the part of the DEC relief effort. Beneficiaries in virtually every community visited by ECATEAMS were overwhelmingly grateful for the agricultural assistance received.

Relocating communities after a disaster has always been a thorny issue, and so, it is praiseworthy that the DEC agencies that chose to relocate communities did so after careful consideration of circumstances. Despite the rigid time-table for expenditure of DEC funds, agencies such as CAFOD and CARE managed to purchase land, allocate plots, and in some cases, even provide titles for self-constructed housing within a year of Mitch. Nonetheless, the geographic placement of some new communities caused beneficiaries serious problems. The lack of economic activity in the newly constructed neighbourhoods threatens to turn once-productive farmers into passive recipients of assistance, fostering dependency and raising serious doubts about sustainability.



## **6. Impact - Lives and Livelihoods Saved**

Overall, Dec-funded projects had a strong and positive impact on the beneficiary communities. Feedback at SWOT workshops with beneficiaries, counterparts, and agencies in all four countries, as well as the regional SWOT workshop in Costa Rica (for ECATEAMs), supported this assertion. Among the most positive notes gleaned from interactions with beneficiaries, partners and agencies, were the rapid responses to the emergency situation through the effective distribution of relief items and food aid to stricken populations. Communities that had not had access to drinking water received a regular supply. Construction and reconstruction of lost and damaged houses, as well as relocation of vulnerable communities, were successful. Agricultural support projects (with components such as seed distribution and micro-financing) increased short-term and long-term food security. Many projects involved training beneficiaries in areas such as health, housing construction, agriculture and sanitation. All the projects sampled helped strengthen community organisations and increased solidarity among beneficiaries. Most sampled projects improved the status and roles of women and the young in the communities by creating and strengthening of their organisations.

Problems at several sampled projects warrant attention. While the impact of DEC-funded housing projects was positive in general, ECATEAMs did express concern at the financial mechanisms that in some cases involved beneficiaries funding part of their home reconstruction costs - increasing their already-heavy debt burdens. Furthermore, some housing construction was hastily designed with little or no consideration of the intrinsic needs of the beneficiaries. Ignorance of social and economic environments resulted in projects that increased the burden of debt on beneficiaries, through the provision of housing at cost, without the concurrent provision of the jobs and income necessary to meeting those costs. Finally, the social and economic vulnerability of livelihoods to future disasters like Mitch remains high in many of the target communities. In future agencies should rely on more comprehensive approaches involving detailed surveys and monitoring of the economic solvency of households, and on housing projects with income generating projects.

## **7. Valued Added and Timeliness**

UK agencies responded within days of the first reports of the tragedy, often using their own organisational resources under assurances that DEC would provide them funding once the appeal process got underway. Obviating the usual delay for project elaboration and approval proved especially useful to the larger agencies (British Red Cross, CARE, Oxfam, World Vision) and to a few very active smaller groups that correctly assessed the need to move quickly. The nature of DEC funding allowed the limits of what is normally considered emergency relief to be stretched, early in the six-month period, in response to the analysis of post-hurricane needs. Thus the emphasis on shelter and agriculture - and the acceptance of cash, credit, capacity building and even a communal tractor as vital relief needs - demonstrated a refreshing, sophisticated and open approach in the response to beneficiary-identified needs. Partly due to the lack of geo-political aspirations in the region, DEC agencies in general had an unbiased approach in relief and rehabilitation projects. By and large, the 11 DEC agencies wisely chose to support efficient local organisations in hard-to-access areas. The humanitarian assistance given by the British public through the DEC Appeal had a disproportionate impact on the region, particularly in areas where larger donors were underrepresented.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Independent Evaluation of the expenditure of DEC Central America Hurricane Appeal funds has based its conclusions on a rich array of primary sources, including local beneficiaries, NGO partners and DEC member agencies. The following provides a general overview of lessons learnt in this evaluation:

1. *Emergency Relief versus Rehabilitation Assistance.* The DEC has a clearly established funding mechanism geared to responding swiftly to emergency situations and humanitarian crises as they unfold throughout the world. In order to delimit the scope and range of activities undertaken by DEC member agencies, the Committee has defined a six-month time limit for expenditure and reporting of funds. This six-month period seems to provide an appropriate framework for emergency relief operations, and it has been applied systematically to all the appeals conducted by the DEC in the past two years. While several DEC agencies and especially local partners perceived the six-month limit as restrictive, some agencies have opted for an array of funding sources in order to respond both to immediate emergency relief and to provide support to longer term restoration and rehabilitation efforts. Notwithstanding the DEC's appeal management strategy, it is up to the agencies to link their relief activities with other rehabilitation and development initiatives on the field. This constitutes an ongoing task for most DEC member agencies that is likely to improve the chances of relief efforts to actually help communities to find a way out from what determines their suffering. The DEC mandate to facilitate relief assistance and humanitarian aid in the context of the Central America Appeal has clearly served to enable agencies to pool their resources and provide much needed emergency relief to stricken communities. Most of the larger DEC agencies also relied on other sources of funding to support mid-term activities such as agricultural and livelihood restoration and food security. The Evaluation Team did identify the need to link these two phases in terms of broad common goals and adequate monitoring of activities.

2. *Distinguishing immediate from long-term needs* - Some agencies had to limit their assessments to immediate needs, without taking more time to support and enhance existing capabilities and existing coping strategies within stricken communities. To put identified needs in an strategic planning context, would allow for a more efficient and effective approach. The dominant vision in many humanitarian organisations is that victims of major disasters are only passive recipients of aid, and are defined essentially by their needs. An approach including coping strategies would place greater emphasis on designing exit strategies for stricken families and communities, enhancing local capacities and organisational skills. Proper relief can only occur if emergency aid is combined with strategies to reduce households' long-term reliance on food aid, etc, by strengthening income generation capacities, as well as food production. While most DEC agencies have been conscious of the importance of strengthening local coping strategies and creating conditions for self-reliance, these are only possible through a long-term commitment to developing local capacities.

3. *Implementation and Monitoring capacities* - ECATEAMS observed both in the sampled projects and through workshops and interviews that agencies used an extraordinarily diverse array of implementation strategies. Larger and more complex organisations such as the International Federation of Red Cross Societies had the capacity to respond massively to the emergency phase, and continue follow-up activities well into the rehabilitation phase. Other smaller organisations, and those agencies more recently established in Central America, faced far greater challenges in harnessing the technical and organisational capacities necessary to respond to the emergency and rehabilitation phases of the disaster.

*Beyond the emergency phase* - The recurrent question is whether the needs identified during the first phase of the intervention were directly related to the impact of Mitch, or whether many of these needs in health, basic social services, access to livelihood security are perennial concerns in many of these marginal communities. To which degree the DEC Appeal has been able to

mitigate and alleviate the causes of structural poverty and indigence is difficult to assess. It is clear however that these issues cannot be solved overnight, nor can they be the sole responsibility of relief agencies.

## **II INTRODUCTION**

By the time Hurricane Mitch – one of the Western Hemisphere’s worst natural disaster in 200 years - finished its erratic path through the poorest countries and neighbourhoods of Central America in November 1998, almost 20,000 people would have died or disappeared. When its winds, torrents, mudslides and floods subsided, the storm’s after-effects - such as dehydration, hunger, disease and depression - plagued Mitch’s survivors. Over 6.5 million people were directly affected and at least 2.5 million people would be dependent on emergency relief supplies. The hurricane also wreaked inestimable damages on flora and fauna and destroyed infrastructures and economies – representing over US\$6 billion in direct damages - of already impoverished and deeply indebted countries.

This report provides the main findings of the Independent Evaluation of expenditure of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) ‘Central America Hurricane Appeal’ funds. The appeal was launched on 12 November 1998 and raised more than £11 million to fund humanitarian aid to some of the areas worst affected by Hurricane Mitch. The DEC - a UK-based umbrella charity - disbursed the money among the 11 member agencies participating in the appeal to fund relief and rehabilitation programs in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. The evaluation - conducted by Espacios Consultores Asociados, S.A. - involved extensive interviews with all 11 DEC member agencies at their UK headquarters, and where applicable, in their Central American regional and national offices. The evaluating team also organised an extensive study of the impact of emergency assistance in the field, visiting over 40 project sites and conducting over 30 community-level workshops with beneficiaries of DEC appeal funded activities. The findings of the evaluation corroborate, with few exceptions, both the timeliness and effectiveness of the aid provided. The evaluation also combined direct information provided by beneficiaries at field workshops with elements derived from evaluation workshops with agencies and counterparts. The information gleaned from this broad spectrum of informants and sources constitutes the principal basis for this evaluation and was analysed by Espacios Consultores’ multidisciplinary teams of consultants (ECATEAMS). The results shed light not only on the way the aid provided by the DEC Central American Appeal had a direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of many disaster stricken communities, but also on the broader implications of vulnerability reduction policies and field practices, which could help reduce the impact of recurrent natural disasters in Central America.

## **III EMERGENCY CONTEXT**

### **III.A PRE-EXISTING VULNERABILITIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA**

In order to understand the emergency context and response to the humanitarian crisis provoked by Hurricane Mitch, it is important to consider pre-existing vulnerabilities in Central America. The Central American isthmus, located at the crossroads of the Americas, has historically been shaped by disasters. It is one of the most geo-dynamic regions of the world, marked by recurrent seismic and volcanic activity, as well as hurricanes, forest fires and drought. Central American societies have co-existed in high-risk areas for centuries, even millennia. The history of disasters in the region is illustrative of this; practically all of the colonial capitals of Central America’s five nations (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua) were destroyed and relocated at some point in time.

The perennial nature of risk scenarios present in the region has also fostered a wide variety of natural and cultural responses. Many authors attribute the extraordinary bio-diversity present in the region to its intrinsic risk. Similarly, many societies in the region have developed, over time, coping mechanisms and mitigation measures to reduce risk and minimise the impact of disasters (e.g. housing on stilts in many Caribbean settlements of Central America). However, many of these traditional coping mechanisms have been profoundly modified over the past decades. Central America has undergone rapid demographic growth, coupled with a highly skewed access to

resources and land. Prior to the war-torn decade of the 1980s, concentration of land in the hands of the few caused massive migrations and subsequent expansion of agricultural and settlement frontiers into areas of higher rainfall. Much of the civil strife of the 1970s and 1980s originated from this unjust distribution of land.

By the end of the 1980s, civil war had profoundly changed the nature and spatial distribution of populations in Central America. Armed conflict between government and revolutionary forces occurred in many remote regions of Central America, where indigenous populations - such as the Miskito in Honduras and Nicaragua and the Quiché and Mam in Guatemala - suffered the brunt of these wars. These conflicts also produced large contingents of internally displaced population, out-migration and the swelling of urban shantytowns. Today, over 64 per cent of Nicaragua's population lives in cities, whereas a generation ago it was a predominantly rural society.

These processes have produced a corollary increase in risk. Most national governments emerged from the 80s with far greater external debts to service, and all adopted stringent structural adjustment policies during the 1990s. Already limited public expenditures on social programs were further curtailed to satisfy the conditions and mandates of international lending institutions, et alia. As a result, high levels of ill health, exclusion and indigence among both the rural and urban poor have increased vulnerability. Uncontrolled urban sprawl and speculative land markets have pushed many marginal settlements into high-risk areas, such as river canyons and flood-prone coastal areas. The continuous expansion of the agricultural frontier into more fragile ecosystems - eliminating stabilising forest cover from steeper and unstable terrain - has caused a clear increase in flash floods, mudflows and landslides.

A single disaster like Mitch cannot be properly understood without also accounting for the cumulative effects of many cyclical hazards. The ENOS phenomenon (commonly known as El Niño) produced months of drought in parts of Central Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Northern Nicaragua during 1997-1998. Massive forest fires destroyed over 1.5 million hectares of forests throughout the region (an area amounting to 3/4 the size of El Salvador) between May and December 1997. The peace process in both El Salvador and Guatemala has led to the resettlement of displaced, repatriated and other highly vulnerable populations in several rural areas, many of them in high-risk flood-prone areas. This is the case of the Lower Lempa Valley in El Salvador and Suchitepéque and Retalhuleu in Guatemala. The sociological intricacies of many of these recently established settlements are important to take into account, since many are comprised of former armed opponents to existing governments and in some cases have been systematically excluded from government programs (as in the Lower Lempa River Valley in El Salvador). Although most of these resettled communities can be considered highly vulnerable, they tended to respond to the emergency through innovative coping strategies such as local solidarity movements, community organisations and political lobbying.

These natural, historical, economic and sociological factors contributed to create conditions of social and environmental vulnerability that clearly existed prior to October 1998. The degree to which the impact of Hurricane Mitch was heightened by these conditions was difficult to assess in this evaluation. Notwithstanding, they all had a direct influence on the coping strategies adopted by the communities visited during this evaluation and on the overall impact of DEC-funded aid.

### **III.B HURRICANE MITCH'S FOOTPRINTS**

Hurricane Mitch emerged as a tropical depression 560 km east-northeast of Limon, Costa Rica, on the evening of October 21<sup>st</sup> 1998. High temperatures in the south-western Caribbean augmented the intensity of this weather system so that by the time it reached a point 360 km southeast of the Grand Caiman islands in the wee morning hours of the 25th, it had become a Category Four hurricane with winds of over 200 km per hour (the last hurricane of this intensity had been Hurricane Gilbert in 1988).

On the 26th in the Gulf of Mexico, a high-pressure system prevented Mitch from moving north along the path Caribbean hurricanes normally take. The storm brewed for four days just off the coast of Honduras, upgrading to Category Five with winds over 285 km per hour, becoming the fourth worst Atlantic hurricane on record. Meanwhile, Mitch's low-pressure system had begun to draw moisture-laden feeder bands from the Pacific toward Western Honduras, Northern Nicaragua and most of El Salvador. Many areas surrounding the Gulf of Fonseca (see Map 1) received more rain in these three days than they usually receive in a normal year. This caused massive flash floods and mudflows. The scale of the impact made Mitch the first regional disaster in Central American history. (Maps 2,3,4 and 5 describe the most severely impacted regions within Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala and the FDEC Agency presence in the field).

### **III.B.1 Honduras**

Mitch made a south-westward swing toward Central Honduras proper on October 28th. As it neared the continent, Mitch downgraded to Category Three and by the time it touched land near Trujillo, Honduras, it had slowed to a tropical storm. Experts say although the Honduran civil defence department, COPECO, had done its primary job by publishing warnings of the coming hurricane in national newspapers on and after October 26th. Like low-lying areas all along Central America's Caribbean Coast, north and north-east Honduras were accustomed to and better prepared for hurricanes. Nearby Belize, for example was able to move evacuate 75,000 people from disaster prone areas, a staggering 32 per cent of the country's population, including 40,000 from Belize City alone. Furthermore, these lowlands are covered in wetlands and palm swamps that in effect act as giant sponges capable of soaking up very heavy rainfalls. South-west Honduras was not nearly as prepared nor as fortunate. Beside being unaccustomed to hurricanes and ill-equipped to deal with their effects, this highly populated area is largely deforested and has a much drier climate, greatly accelerating surface runoff and exacerbating flooding conditions.

Mitch damaged in some way all 18 of Honduras' territorial departments. High winds battered the northern departments of Cortés and Colón. The north and eastern lowlands also experienced heavy flooding. Flooding in the northern Sula Valley turned the Ulúa and Chamelecon rivers into one great five-kilometre-wide river - and inundated the cities of El Progreso, Tela and San Pedro Sula. Mitch inched south at a 10kms per hour, and as it squeezed over the mountainous highlands, rains turned to deluges. Flooding and landslides were particularly severe in the Southern departments of Choluteca and Francisco Morazán. The storm flooded the Choluteca Valley and the cities of Comayagua and the Honduran capital, Tegucigalpa (in fact, the eye of the storm moved directly over the city). Mitch and the Pacific cloud system it had been attracting met over the Gulf of Fonseca to produce the heaviest rains yet, dumping up to up to 500mm of water per day in some places and submerging whole sections of the nearby city of Choluteca.

Feeder bands swirled around the hurricane's centre in patterns hundreds of kilometres wide, flooding Honduras' major population centres all at once, stretching COPECO well beyond the breaking point. The institution collapsed completely, such that only a few experienced outposts that had acquired some autonomy functioned at all during the early days of the disaster.

### **III.B.2 Nicaragua**

Mitch's heavy rains hit western and north-western Nicaragua with what the Nicaraguan Institute of Territorial Studies (INETER) coined "The Rains of the Century." Chinandega received an entire year's rainfall (1600mm) in five days. Mitch swamped the cities of Estelí, Madriz, Nueva Segovia,

and Matagalpa. About 2000 people died and 980 disappeared when the entire side of the Casitas Volcano near Chinandega collapsed into a mudslide three km. wide and 20 km. long that careened at speeds of up to 200 km. per hour and buried three entire villages of the Municipality of Posoltega. President Aleman, however, did not declare a state of emergency, economists say, in order to avoid discouraging international investors. The National Defence Organisation, still in military hands, was unable to reach many of the isolated areas of northern Nicaragua due to bad weather for helicopter flights in early November 1998.

### III.B.3 El Salvador

Mitch began to wane by October 31st and as it headed north towards Guatemala and Mexico it still produced unusually high rainfall, flash floods and tide surges in Coastal El Salvador. The civilian-run National Emergency Committee, working in usual closeness with local fire departments, sounded an effective early warning and successfully evacuated citizens from many high-risk areas. Hydro-electric plants in the Lower Lempa River Valley conducted several releases of excess, causing flash floods in many communities down river (affected communities say this was done intentionally for political reasons). Mitch hit the Gulf of Fonseca Region and the Lempa River Valley area hardest and Departments of La Unión, San Miguel, particularly in the Chilanguera River where most of the deaths in El Salvador occurred.

### III.B.4 Guatemala

Although Mitch's feeder bands had been dumping rain on northeastern Guatemala for days, the hurricane was nearly spent by the time its centre reached Guatemala and lost much of its destructive force. Guatemala received large amounts of rain that severely damaged infrastructures, but evacuations (such as those of Puerto Barrios and Punta Manabique) in general saved many lives. The exceptions were poor neighbourhoods settled on steep slopes in marginal areas of Guatemala City where most deaths occurred.

Hurricane Mitch downgraded to a tropical depression again by the time it reached the Guatemala-Mexico border November 1st. It regenerated while crossing the Yucatan Peninsula, travelled very quickly to Florida where it was absorbed by a cold front on November 5th and became an extra-tropical storm.

## III.C MITCH'S AFTERMATH - IMPACT AND DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

Mitch's first impacts were the immediate results of severe geomorphic actions such as sheet erosion, flash floods, landform collapses, landslides and mudslides (Satellite imagery by the U.S. Geological Service [USGS] indicated Mitch caused over one million landslides in the disaster's first days). Mud-and-debris-choked rivers raged down the streets and through neighbourhoods of towns and cities. Floods destroyed thousands of homes, damaged or obliterated hundreds of bridges and aqueducts and wiped out power and telecommunications systems and main highways (see Table No.1). The hurricane directly affected one in ten Central Americans, the majority of them the very poorest who had built on marginal lands - steep inclines, river canyons and watersheds. Mitch's impact was worst in coastal flood plains and near river courses.

**TABLE No.1: HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF HURRICANE MITCH, OCTOBER 1998<sup>1</sup>**

COUNTRY	Deaths	Missing	Wounded	Displaced	Evacuated	Destroyed and Damaged Housing	Destroyed and Damaged Bridges	Damaged Water Mains

<sup>1</sup> Source: CEPAL, 16 April 1999, Revista MASICA, february 1999, Special Edition on Mitch, p-9

<b>HONDURAS</b>	5,657	8,058	12,272	1,482,659	2,100,721	*	215	1,683
<b>NICARAGUA</b>	2,863	970	388	368,261	—	41,430	63	79
<b>GUATEMALA</b>	268	121	280	105,055	106,604	21,000	121	60
<b>EL SALVADOR</b>	240	29	—	28,452	49,000	10,372	10	155
<b>COSTA RICA</b>	5	4	—	3,007	5,500	965	69	12
<b>PANAMA</b>	2	—	—	8,408	602	1,933	1	—
<b>BELICE</b>	—	—	—	—	75,000	—	—	—
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,035</b>	<b>9,182</b>	<b>12,930</b>	<b>1,995,842</b>	<b>2,335,427</b>	<b>*75,490</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>1,989</b>

Winds, flooding and landslides killed almost 20,000 people (counting those still missing) and seriously injured 12,930 others. The storm left most of the population of Honduras and Nicaragua without dependable drinking water. (Flooding and particularly landslides wiped out over 2,000 potable water systems - chiefly in Honduras). Mitch destroyed or seriously damaged almost 80,000 homes, leaving up to 300,000 people homeless. Two million others had to abandon their homes and belongings. In the days and weeks following Mitch, thousands needed rescuing and immediate medical care, and millions needed humanitarian relief aid, in the form of water, food, shelter, clothing and other basics of life.

Mitch also destroyed or severely damaged 25 sewage and drainage systems and 130,000 latrines, and its floods and landslides left lakes of dirty water standing throughout Central America. (For example, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, damages to sewer systems by the Cerro del Berrinche landslide created a septic lake two km long, 72 metres wide and 2 metres deep in the centre of the city, with fecal coliform counts of 1,080,000). Floods also spread both animal and human cadavers and refuse across urban and rural areas, attracting rats. Large numbers of refugees had to co-exist in crowded shelters. These unsanitary conditions and a lack of clean water and food would contribute to the spread of diseases in the weeks after the storm (e.g., in the four weeks after the storm, over 55,000 Guatemalans became seriously ill). There were 3,217 recorded cases of cholera (usually spread by the improper handling and cooking of food) in Central America in the 10 months before Mitch and 2,359 cases in the four weeks after the storm (note: there were 2000 cases of cholera in October, so Mitch only exacerbated a pre-existing epidemic). Cases of acute respiratory infections (ARI) and diarrhoea also rose dramatically. Leptospirosis (spread by rodent urine), which had been virtually non-existent in the previous year, reappeared. There was no significant increase in malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases like dengue fever, but the high risk of these and health problems such as skin infections and conjunctivitis demanded vigilance and prevention measures. Some means and measures needed were mosquito nets and insecticides, water purifying tablets and chlorine, rat extermination, cleaning of roads and houses, clean water and sanitation supplies. Serious damages to 30 per cent of Central America's hospitals, health units and other social service units made responding to these secondary impacts even more difficult.

Other impacts demanding counteraction in the weeks and months after Mitch included the storm's psycho-traumatic effects on survivors and the possibility of famine. Mitch hit subsistence crop production hard, inflicting US\$155 billion in damages to this vital sector in Honduras alone (maize and bean stocks were already low in the region due to El Niño's effects). Mitch also inflicted substantial damages on livestock production by small and medium-scale producers and destroyed countless kitchen gardens and orchards. Agricultural inputs were also needed to prevent continued food shortages and further weakening of the agricultural sector (especially by continuing food handouts).

Farmers saw their crops devastated, livestock lost or drowned, and their land stripped of soil or covered in metres-thick layers of mud and silt. Artisans and owners of small businesses watched floodwaters sweep away their tools, workshops and market stands. Hurricane Mitch destroyed livelihoods of thousands in a matter of hours or days, but compounding the humanitarian impact of Mitch, were the later economic consequences of the chaos brought about by the wholesale destruction of crops, roads and cities.—The storm inflicted US\$4 billion in direct damages on Central America's productive sector (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, industry and commerce).



Damages to the productive capacity of these already debt-ridden, impoverished nations caused secondary catastrophes of unemployment, labour migrations, worsened levels of social services, public health and general poverty. These problems in turn further degraded productive capacity in negative feedback loops. Mitch's damages to some of the primary components of Central America's productive capacity included: two-thirds of Honduras and Nicaragua's precarious infrastructure destroyed; US\$1.2 billion in damages to physical infrastructure in Central America as a whole; over US\$800 million in damages to housing, health and education; US\$3 billion in losses of raw materials and plantation production (especially in Guatemala). Assistance was - and is yet - needed to rebuild or repair housing, make micro-loans to small businesses, replace tools, rehabilitate hospitals, clinics, and other areas of the social and productive sectors. Aggravating factors such as foreign debt also needed -and still need - addressing.

**(See Annexes 3 & 7 for descriptions and maps of affected areas by country).**

## **IV METHODOLOGY:**

### **IV.A THE QUESTIONS**

The evaluation strove to address the questions posed by the DEC in the Terms of Reference as Expected Results (ER):

- ER 1: GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE: in the context of the overall response, the breadth and depth of presence in affected countries (member and partner agencies), how appropriate was the geographical coverage of relief and rehabilitation projects supported by DEC pooled funds?
- ER 2: IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS AND BENEFICIARIES: For the sample projects, how appropriate were the processes and criteria by which beneficiary needs were identified, and reached? Was there evidence throughout of vulnerability analysis?
- ER 3: BENEFICIARIES PARTICIPATION: In sample projects, what was the level of beneficiary involvement in project design, implementation and monitoring? How effective and appropriate were these processes in ensuring relevant and timely project delivery in support of the most needy and vulnerable?
- ER 4: EFFECTS ON EXISTING COPING MECHANISMS: How did agency action (in the sample projects) serve to strengthen or impede existing coping mechanisms?
- ER 5: IMPACT: How effective were the different interventions adopted by the sample projects in bringing humanitarian relief to the affected population? How appropriate was the duration of these interventions and what, if any, is the likely, longer-term socio-economic impact? Where possible, outline the groups that benefited most.
- ER 6: LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS SAVED: What was the likely overall effect of the sample projects supported by DEC pooled funds in terms of lives and livelihoods saved?
- ER 7: COMPARISON WITH OTHER INTERVENTIONS: What was the added value of the overall humanitarian response? Did DEC funds facilitate a quick response?

### **IV.B SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

#### **IV.B.1 Primary Data**

There were five primary sources of data for the evaluation:

- a) DEC Members' UK Headquarters In September, two members of the Espacios Consultores Asociados Evaluation Teams (ECATEAMS) interviewed member agency representatives at all 11 headquarters in the UK in order to: (i) collect background information on the scope of the response to the emergency; and (ii) analyse the point of view of DEC member agencies on the implementation of DEC-supported projects. These interviews were carried out with the

Overseas Development Institute independent consultant commissioned by the DEC to carry out an add-on lesson learning study on ‘scaling up.’

- b) DEC Members’ Regional and National Offices in CA: ECATEAMS interviewed key DEC agency staff-members at 17 Central American Offices in the four primary countries in order to: (i) collect information on DEC-funded projects; and (ii) assess their points of view on the evaluation questions. ECATEAMS did not interview representatives of Christian Aid and Merlin in Honduras or Tearfund in Honduras and El Salvador because those agencies do not have offices in those countries. Field visits to sample projects were arranged during the meetings with these representatives.
- c) Local Partner Organisations: ECATEAMS held 53 interviews with local partner organisations responsible for the implementation of many DEC-funded projects, in order to assess the main factors operating at implementation level and to seek counterparts’ perspectives on the evaluation questions. ECATEAM interviewed key informants from 27 partner organisations in capital city offices and 26 in field offices.
- d) Beneficiaries: ECATEAMS consulted 876 members from the sample–DEC-funded projects’ target communities in 30 Beneficiary Participatory Evaluation (BPE) workshops. In the workshops, ECATEAMS collected valuable perspectives of beneficiaries, addressing the overall appropriateness, effectiveness and impacts of projects. Representation in these workshops was gender balanced in most instances.
- e) Visits to projects: ECATEAMS visited 32 projects in order to evaluate their designs and implementations and to get beneficiaries’ views on the projects.

#### **IV.B.2 Secondary Data:**

ECATEAMS had access to updated literature about Mitch, produced by international, regional and local government, and non-governmental organisations. ECATEAMS also reviewed literature on Mitch and documents furnished by DEC member agencies and local partner organisations to inform the evaluation’s background, approach and data analysis.

### **IV.C EVALUATION TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS**

#### **a) Interviews:**

Topic guides were used in interviews with key DEC agency personnel both in the UK and Central America and with local partner organisations. The topic guides were designed to: (i) focus on the questions of the DEC-funded projects, and (ii) address sector and country-specific issues related to relief activities.

#### **b) Beneficiary Participatory Evaluation (BPE) workshops:**

ECATEAMS conducted 30 BPE workshops (each had a facilitator and an assistant of different gender, except in Guatemala). ECATEAMS conducted all workshops in local languages, requiring the use of translators in one of the BPE workshops in Guatemala. By means of discussions and a voting technique using stickers of different colours to measure gender differences in beneficiary opinions, ECATEAMS appraised beneficiary perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the assistance provided through DEC funding. In order to avoid hindering candid expressions of participant opinions, representatives of the local partner organisations that assisted ECATEAM in identifying and contacting the beneficiary communities did not attend BPEs. On the few occasions in which it was not possible to organise BPE workshops with community members in general, participants were community leaders and local councils.

**c) Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Workshops:**

ECATEAMS conducted SWOT workshop in each country to promote cross-fertilisation of ideas among the different parties involved with the sampled DEC-funded projects. In the SWOT workshops, these parties were initially separated in three different groups - the DEC member agency group, the local partner organisation group and the beneficiary group. Each group discussed the strengths and weaknesses of their experiences with DEC-funded projects in relation to the evaluation questions and made recommendations for further actions based on opportunities and threats discussed. All three groups shared and discussed their main findings in plenary session before going to the next group session. There was an overall discussion session to wrap up each workshop.

ECATEAMS explained to participants the importance of their role in evaluations, and by maintaining transparency in the evaluation process, encouraged participants to confidently share information with the evaluation team at all levels.

**d) Participatory observation and flexible interviews:**

Every ECATEAM member took field notes and spoke to many people in informal meetings in order to cross check information and to broaden background information. Daily discussions among ECATEAM members helped the exchange of data. The different professional and cultural backgrounds of ECATEAM members significantly enriched this exercise.

**IV.D SAMPLING PROCEDURES**

**a) Interviews (see Evaluation Techniques and Tools, IV.C.a)**

**b) ECATEAMS based their selection of projects to visit on the following factors (see Table No.2):**

- MITCH footprints; prioritising the worst-affected areas.
- Distribution of DEC funds; projects in areas where more DEC funds were used.
- Practicality in terms of (i) apparent performance of projects, the aim being to include at least one of the most successful and one of the most problematic projects (ii) representation of projects per sector of intervention, (iii) feasibility in terms of access within the evaluation timeframe.

**c) The criterion for BPE workshop participant selection was to ensure participation of a maximum number of different beneficiary voices. Although an indicative number of 25 persons was given, BPE workshops were open to participation of all men and women in the visited communities. In several cases the workshops turned into a kind of general assembly.**

**d) ECATEAMS asked beneficiaries at BPE workshops to self-select those amongst them who would participate in the SWOT workshops. There were a few project beneficiaries that didn't participate in a BPE workshop. Each project had a quota of two persons, with the strict condition that at least one of them was a woman. Although ECATEAMS would not to accept two men as representatives, two women were welcome to attend.**

**e) ECATEAMS left DEC agencies and local partner organisations the responsibility of selecting their representatives for SWOT workshops. ECATEAMS allowed agencies and local partners one representative each.**

**TABLE No. 2 SAMPLING OF PROJECTS BY AGENCY**

AGENCY	Honduras	Nicaragua	El Salvador	Guatemala	Total
<b>Oxfam</b>	2	1	1	1	5
<b>BRCS</b>		1	1	(1)	2
<b>Action Aid</b>				3	3

Merlin					0
Tear Fund	1		1		2
Christian Aid	2	1	1		4
CCF		1			1
SCF	6				6
World Vision	2	1			3
CARE	1	2			3
CAFOD	1 (Trocaire)	1	1		3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>32</b>

**TABLE No. 3 SAMPLING OF PROJECTS BY SECTOR**

SECTOR	Honduras	Niacaragua	El Salvador	Guatemala
Relief items	X	X	X	
Health	X			X
Mental Health	X			
Food Aid	X	X	X	X
Food Security	X	X	X	X
Livestock	X	X	X	X
Infrastructure	X	X		
Water	X	X		
Sanitation	X	X	X	
Housing	X	X	X	
Economic Aid	X	X		
Training	X	X		
Environmental Management	X	X		
Tools and Productive Means	X	X	X	X

**N.B.** Projects are not tabulated in Table 3, above, since so many sectors overlap and make any numerical counting of them meaningless. The use of Xs is intended to provide an idea of the sectoral spread of projects sampled.

## V APPEAL MANAGEMENT

### V.A THE DEC APPEAL

Following major overseas disaster, the DEC Appeal mechanism acts as a means of streamlining the process of seeking charitable donations from the British public, on behalf of DEC agencies. By carrying out fund-raising and publicity functions collectively, the DEC saved advertising resources, avoided costly competition between agencies, and ensured a consensual distribution of funds to be used in Central America. Participation in the Central America Hurricane Appeal required the submission of 48-Hour and 4-Week Plans of Action and a 7th Month Declaration of Expenditure, using specific formats. A few of the DEC member agencies complained that the format and instructions for these submissions were not clearly provided ahead of time. On approval of the 48-Hour Plans, each agency was assured a predetermined portion of the Appeal's ultimate net. In reality, agencies did not know the full extent of their funding until well into the six-month period. Several agencies reported frustration at receiving a *tranche* of funding from DEC in April, which was to be spent by May 7<sup>th</sup> 1999, exactly six months after the launch of the Appeal or to be returned to the DEC for reallocation based on greatest need. Some agencies were obliged to return a portion of funds they could not spend. In practice, this Appeal netted over 11 million pounds in pooled funds and managed to pump vital resources into key sectors and geographical areas that might otherwise have been under-served.

It bears noting that some of the 11 DEC member British NGOs who chose to participate in the Central America Hurricane Appeal had no office in Central America, relying instead on sister

agencies based in the region. Another had never worked in the region before. An agency without a regional office or a history of work in Central America should by no means have been disqualified from participation in the DEC Appeal. However, a philosophical question might be raised about the comparative advantage held by an agency working in a new area without prior experience, or capacity on-the-ground. In some instances, the humanitarian response effort might be better served by a DEC member's voluntarily standing aside to allow more resources to go to a better-situated or prepared agency. In practice, virtually all DEC agencies funded or implemented valuable projects that brought tangible benefits to recipients. As shall be seen in the section on DEC's Added Value (Part VII.C), there are even benefits in some cases that accrue to agencies unfamiliar with the territory (e.g., the absence of a prior political agenda.) Nevertheless, the ability and willingness to monitor funded projects is a sine-qua-non. It would not be appropriate, for instance, for an agency to take DEC money and simply hand it over to a sister organisation without monitoring the expenditure and activities carried out. ECA is only aware that this happened in the case of one agency, and the project which was implemented ranked among the most effective of those sampled. DEC as an organisation might be well served by some soul-searching and debate on the issue of who participates in Appeals.

## **V.B DEC AGENCY RESPONSES**

(See Annex 4 for detailed agency-by-agency responses)

## **VI EVALUATION FINDINGS**

### **VI.A CRITERIA**

Overall, the identification of needs responded to the two distinct phases the aid response. The first phase provided a massive relief response. The second, far more complex phase, required a more careful needs assessment to ensure adequately designed exit strategies for populations now dependent on food aid, and the successful rehabilitation of livelihoods.

Just as the impacts of Mitch did not end one week or even six months after the hurricane's passage, so the effects of humanitarian interventions made with DEC funds cannot be measured at a neat chronological end-point. DEC assistance is part of a complex long-term process which, in the best of cases, will contribute to reducing structural vulnerability whilst responding to the most immediate emergency and rehabilitation needs.

The evaluation aimed to identify the priorities of the women and men who suffered the disaster and how appropriately and effectively the response managed to address their needs. The following section addresses each of the evaluation questions and criteria based on observations, analyses and discussions with project staff and beneficiaries. For the purpose of this evaluation, ECA addressed the impact of projects within the six-month expenditure period, but also beyond, to take into account the longer-term effect of DEC funded humanitarian assistance.

### **VI.B FINDINGS**

#### **VI.B.1 Geographic Distribution of Damages and DEC Member Agency Response**

As seen in "Emergency Context" (Section III), the impact of Hurricane Mitch was truly regional, affecting directly up to 3,000,000 people in Central America as a whole. The major damaging agents were waterborne in the form of flash floods, mudflows and landslides. Maps 2-5 illustrate the hardest hits departments in all four countries, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. They also show the distribution of DEC member agencies in the field. Overall, there was an adequate geographical coverage of aid response, since agencies and counterparts worked in some of the communities most devastated by Mitch: Choluteca, Matagalpa, Posoltega, the Lower Lempa, the Polochic Valley and Izabal regions, inter alia.

Some DEC agencies chose to intervene in both the humanitarian and rehabilitation phases of the aid response. Large international organisations such as the Red Cross channelled relief aid (water, blankets, cholera and WHO kits, etc.) through their existing networks and national societies. BRCS conducted three airlifts of aid relief supplies in the weeks following the tragedy. Christian Aid, The Save the Children Fund and Oxfam also provided food aid and other emergency supplies. Nearly all agencies and their partner organisations delivered some kind of relief aid, but not necessarily with DEC funds. Nevertheless, the prospect of DEC funding facilitated their decision to spend their own funds on relief items. All in all, most DEC funding went to support the rehabilitation phase, placing emphasis on rebuilding or repairing houses and water and sanitation infrastructure, as well as agricultural reactivation and food security. Though a greater breadth of aid coverage was obtained during the first emergency phase (Red Cross societies channelled aid to 450,000 people), the depth of involvement was most keenly felt in areas where agencies and counterparts had conducted work prior to Mitch.

Agencies chose a wide variety of strategies to reach and work with affected communities. Some of the better projects were in areas where either agencies or counterparts had previously worked, where relationships existed before Mitch. Other agencies ventured consciously into new areas,

covering populations that had received little or no aid from the government or other humanitarian organisations. They had to rely on new counterparts that had greater knowledge of targeted regions and communities (as in the case of CONIC, an indigenous organisation supported by Oxfam and Action Aid in Guatemala).

Recently settled former guerrillas and refugees from decades of war live in several of the communities that received DEC funded aid (e.g. Suchitepéque and Retalhuleu, Guatemala, and in many communities of the Lower Lempa Valley, El Salvador). Many of these displaced and resettled populations receive scant welfare or employment, and so, face a permanent state of dire poverty. This makes the prioritisation of need extremely difficult, since livelihoods are precarious and needs are many. As such, some counterparts faced major conceptual and operative challenges working in these communities, not adequately understanding the political and social underpinnings of these marginal agrarian societies.

A clear merit of the DEC-funded programs is that its agencies and counterparts reached many very marginal communities, often belonging to ethnic groups which have historically been outcast from national societies (Kekchis in Guatemala, Garifuna and Miskito in Honduras, Miskito in Nicaragua). Massive infrastructure damages made access to these remote communities extremely difficult. As a result, costs per unit of relief aid tended to increase dramatically in these more isolated regions (such as the Mosquito Coast between Nicaragua and Honduras). An example drawn from interviews was that flying relief items from London to San Pedro Sula was cheaper than from San Pedro Sula to the Mosquito Coast (Departamento Gracias a Dios, Honduras). This also signified considerable delays and problems in relief delivery.

Procurement, due to particular circumstances within the country, was another major problem faced by several agencies, especially in Honduras where part of the capital was destroyed and aid organisations competed to buy relief items and charter flights and transports. In the first months after Mitch, when Honduras faced a shortage of maize seeds and other agricultural inputs, the government took over several shipments of Red Cross maize seeds in order to cover demand. This obviously caused delays in getting the seeds and inputs to farmers before the end of the planting season.

Overall, the timeliness and geographic coverage of DEC-funded relief aid was good. However, since most agencies defined deadlines for reporting fund expenditures by mid-May 1999, much of the rehabilitation work was still underway and much more was yet to be done by the time the deadline had been reached. Most agencies worked with funding sources other than the DEC, which allowed them to follow up on longer-term rehabilitation programs. This was particularly the case of projects involved agricultural production, which due to seasonal requirements were slow to get started, and were still being followed up at the time of this independent evaluation. In general, the six-month timeframe was considered restrictive by most agencies, especially for the needs of the rehabilitation phase. Some agencies were tempted to spend money hastily on less important items - money that could have better spent within a middle term rehabilitation plan. Participation under time pressure is also a very delicate issue, since building trust in many stricken communities is difficult in so short a timeframe.

## **VI.B.2 Identification of Needs**

As the tragedy unfolded following the impact of Hurricane Mitch, a wide variety of information gathering and fact-finding processes were launched. From this process during the first days and weeks following the disaster, two main approaches to needs-identification can be distinguished.

The first used official sources and international humanitarian organisations' rapid appraisals carried out during the first few days of the emergency. In most countries, the Disaster Management Teams (DMT) of the United Nations System were activated and produced periodic reports on loss of life, wounded and missing persons, as well as infrastructure damage. Some of the larger DEC member organisations, such as the British Red Cross Society, affiliated to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and CARE conducted their own data-gathering activities through their national societies and local partners. This enabled identifying communities hardest hit, and establishing priorities in the provision of food aid and relief items to evacuated and rescued-families. Most of the DEC Appeal funded emergency phase activities were initiated on the basis of information gathered at an aggregate national level, with a limited amount of detail concerning local conditions, beneficiary coping strategies and demands.

The second type of needs identification methods involved many of the agencies' local counterparts and used surveys, rapid rural appraisal and some participatory rapid needs-appraisal techniques. Those agencies with field staff in place worked closely with local municipal committees and community-based organisations in establishing the inventory of damages and fixing priorities in terms of short-term relief, and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction. These community-based needs-assessments turned out to be most effective in informing the design of rehabilitation and reconstruction projects. For example, the Christian Aid funded Cooperativa F.P. Silva in Nicaragua turned out to be a creative partner in identifying needs beyond the emergency phase, which enabled a speedy recovery of food security conditions in the community through training, credit and the purchase of machinery and agricultural implements. CCD, another Christian Aid partner, effectively applied a gender-sensitive needs-assessment that enabled a differentiated aid response between men and women in Honduran communities. Some agencies, such as Action Aid in Guatemala, conducted surveys in the communities that enabled design of aid packages that responded to clearly expressed priorities by beneficiaries.

The need for reliable information on affected communities also led some agencies to spend a great deal of time compiling baseline data from the field, as was the case of CARE in Honduras. There is often a trade-off between the search for a thorough understanding of the communities to be served and the need for rapid implementation. The technical assistance packages chosen by the agencies and counterparts following the needs-assessment were questioned in certain communities. The distribution of aid packages to all families without regards to family size caused conflict. Agencies should consider adapting the design of aid packages, to take into account differences in family size, gender composition, and household income – even the use of two alternate size aid packages might have avoided some of the glaring discrepancies between single-child and multiple child families, for example. In El Salvador, the evaluation team identified a clear absence of psychological help in the most severely affected communities and distraught families in the Lower Lempa. In general, there was scant evidence that psychological and emotional needs were properly identified and considered in the responses. In conversations with beneficiaries, emotional issues were often mentioned as powerful factors in the aftermath of the hurricane, which is consistent with what the existing literature seems to indicate.

In some cases, such as ADEJUC-ActionAid Guatemala, needs-identification was conducted by external consultants contracted during the first weeks following the disaster, to gather data and establish priorities. These outside assessments generally did not involve community participation other than occasional consultations. The resulting aid package design was in some cases ill conceived and inadequately conducted. More troublesome perhaps was the absence in many sampled projects of a consistent and sound technical follow-up to rehabilitation projects. Once the seeds and poultry were distributed, few communities received technical training and monitoring. Where such productive activities were supported in the form of credit, families were left even more vulnerable than they were immediately after Mitch. This was due both to insufficient understanding of household livelihood systems and inadequate analysis of local markets. In other cases, timely distribution of seeds and implements was not complemented by a consistent technical follow-up. This led in many cases to crop failure and high livestock mortality (Oxfam, ActionAid).



### **VI.B.3 Identification of beneficiaries.**

By and large, DEC funded projects tended to serve the neediest in the communities affected. Where criteria were established by the agency or its counterpart, the trend was to prioritise aid to those whose houses, farms, household goods and livelihoods had been most affected by the disaster. Where criteria for “neediness” was left to the community, they sometimes held beneficiaries to even stricter standards than the aid organisations did. In their urgency to respond to emergency needs, few DEC agencies gave consideration to the problem of whether to differentiate between disaster-affected and structurally-disadvantaged families. While this is most understandable, the underlying question of structural vulnerability looms large in the minds of most Central Americans, particularly following the devastation of the hurricane. Oxfam’s 1998 exercise in the mapping of vulnerability, albeit still a work in progress at the time when Mitch hit, should serve as an example and inform future emergency and development efforts by DEC agencies.

#### **VI.B.3.a Identification by Communities and Local Leadership**

Most DEC member agencies correctly recognised that the actors most capable of identifying needy beneficiaries were the communities themselves. Thus the vast majority of projects visited by ECATEAMS reported that some form of community-level survey was carried out, usually by the local emergency committee or village leadership council. CCF counterpart CAPRI, for instance, quickly trained the women’s committees of two urban *barrios* of Managua in rapid participatory assessments, resulting in accurate, egalitarian surveys of family needs. In the best situations, the task of surveying and prioritising humanitarian needs in itself engenders a culture of solidarity and promotes spontaneous safety nets within the communities and on-going processes of community improvement. This was indeed observed by the mission evaluation team in numerous communities.

On the other hand, reliance on the existing leadership of a community to assess its own needy population provides ample opportunity for favouritism, political cronyism and other abuses of power. As might be expected, this was expressed by beneficiaries in several communities - although not systematically except in regards to food-for-work and money-for-work projects. In many instances, the counterpart agency accepted the leadership’s list of beneficiaries as final, although some (e.g., National Red Cross Societies) carried out follow-up investigations to ensure the validity of the names chosen for assistance. In practice, communities themselves tended to enforce fairness in the distribution of benefits. In two communities visited, for example, the emergency committee was replaced as a result of the populations’ dissatisfaction with the unfairness and inefficiency of their chosen leaders during Mitch’s aftermath.

#### **VI.B.3.b Criteria employed for beneficiary identification**

The criteria used for consideration as a beneficiary varied widely from project-to-project, and was not always clearly explained to affected communities. In the case of British Red Cross assistance, while the early distribution of relief and survival items went to the most needy families in the community, there were some oversights and miscommunications about criteria for participation in the Agricultural Support Program (ASP), resulting in the exclusion of the poorest people who had no access to land (e.g., in El Salvador). This error was subsequently corrected, but the operative criteria still caused confusion at the moment of community surveying. In the communities of La Quinta and San Pedro in Estelí, Nicaragua, wives of rural farmers were asked the number of *manzanas* (plots of about 7000 square meters) their husbands farmed, inducing some to exaggerate in the hopes of greater assistance, and others to report as entire *manzanas* plots which were actually share-cropped. This misunderstanding resulted in the exclusion of several poorer families. In effect, there is little real economic difference between a rural farmer of three *manzanas* (the arbitrary cut-off point chosen by Red Cross in some areas) and one who tills five. As many of the informants noted during the participatory evaluation workshops, “*We are all economically affected by Mitch.*”

One particularly creative strategy for identifying beneficiaries was adopted by Christian Aid counterpart Cooperativa Francisco Paz Silva in Achuapa, Nicaragua. The co-operative chose to make interest-free, dollar-value credit available to all community members for the purchase of vital agricultural inputs, thus allowing farmer-beneficiaries to self-select the extent to which they wished to risk short-term debt for the chance to increase agricultural yield. This technique is not applicable in all types of disaster situations, nor in all sectors, yet the notion of allowing community members to determine for themselves the degree to which they wish to be beneficiaries of a given rehabilitation project takes empowerment a step further, and merits replication. In another case, CAFOD's partner organisation in El Salvador left it to community members to choose a housing construction project for those people that actually lost their homes in the disaster or a housing repair program to benefit all the poor (with only some more provisory houses for those who lost their homes to Mitch). The community chose the latter.

### **VI.B.3.c The identification of different groups within communities**

DEC-funded projects tended, to a great extent, to favour women and children in the distribution of goods and services. The Red Cross ASP package's cash component in Guatemala and Nicaragua went directly to the female of each agricultural family, in the form of a cheque in her name. Beneficiaries of both sexes overwhelmingly approved this tactic, both as a security measure ["The cash didn't disappear into *guaro* (booze)..."] and as an empowering step for women (although some male farmers grumbled that the next Red Cross package ought to favour the men). Interestingly, beneficiaries reported that where the couple got along relatively well, the money was wisely spent. In Posoltega, CAFOD counterpart Instituto Juan XXIII and, in Marcovia/Honduras, CARE gave titles for the self-constructed housing to the women, rather than the men. Construction projects (roads, housing, bridges) welcomed the participation of women in the work brigades and served to break some hardened stereotypes about working capacity, as evinced by the respect with which road construction brigades recall the work of one female participant in a CARE project in San Diego/Playci, Nicaragua. A similar case occurred in Honduras, where CCD - a Christian Aid partner - conducted a Participatory Rapid Appraisal in order to incorporate gender issues into their emergency strategy.

Numerous DEC-funded projects took pain to include women in productive activities in order to reduce their vulnerability. Examples include the poultry raising components of agricultural projects in Achuapa, Nicaragua and Suchitepequez, Guatemala; cement block-making for construction in Guacamaya, Honduras and Posoltega, Nicaragua; and the Agricultural Support Programme of the Red Cross in Guatemala and Nicaragua, which included a cash component specifically for women. CARE has noted in subsequent discussion that traditional grain production is male dominated and such support does little to free women from oppressive power structures in the household and village. Nonetheless, female beneficiaries in Nicaragua indicated to ECA that receiving cash in support of grain production enhanced their own empowerment.

One of the common criticisms mentioned by beneficiaries during evaluation workshops involves the monitoring of work-teams. This task was generally left to community leaders, who are subject to pressures of family, friends and self-interest. Aside from the complaints of favouritism already mentioned, beneficiaries noted that such programs failed to include an incentive for extra hours of work or any compensation for sick-days. In practice, benefits-for-work projects sometimes had the unintended consequence of encouraging the labour of under-aged children (SEE PHOTO 1 IN ANNEXES), as large families required additional hands to generate sufficient rations.

Some programs did not provide differently sized benefits packages for differently sized families, causing further hardship to larger families. Several women noted the absence of milk in the humanitarian assistance packages distributed in the first weeks after Mitch, a vital need for the mothers of infants and young children. For the most part, however, the DEC agency projects did give priority to and special consideration for women (primarily single mothers), children and the elderly.

#### VI.B.4.a Participation of Beneficiaries.

*“Effective relief and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where the intended beneficiaries are involved in the design, management and implementation of the assistance programs” - The Code of Conduct, Red Cross Movement.*

As a rule, DEC-funded projects succeeded in involving beneficiaries closely in project implementation and, to some extent, management. The widespread use of self-construction techniques in rebuilding social infrastructure constitutes welcome evidence of DEC agencies' recognition of the importance of “sweat equity” in relief interventions. In fact, the mission observed a high degree of community ownership of projects, in the sense that villages formed committees to run the projects, organised work brigades to carry out construction and, in some cases, created on-going structures to continue monitoring needs of the community.

Beneficiary participation included a wide range of activities. As noted above, community leaders often led the first rapid appraisal exercises to assess damages and identify beneficiaries. CARE, World Vision, Oxfam, CAFOD's partners and several other agencies relied upon community members to carry out the basic technical activities of the project, usually under the guidance of a trained expert. Construction projects imparted valuable technical skills “on-site” to women as well as men, many through a “learning by doing” approach to masonry, carpentry, road-building, etc. Due to the rigidity of the DEC timeframe, most of the projects did not undertake a complete training program in their components. Many counterparts mentioned the lack of flexibility of funding to support training activities. In most cases, the organisation of work brigades as well as the tasks of accounting for persons and days worked fell to the community members themselves. In Honduras, a few beneficiaries got the opportunity to travel to Stockholm and participate in the donor-led, sixth-month evaluation of Mitch relief. It can be generalised that DEC agencies sincerely endeavoured to involve beneficiaries in carrying out relief projects as a means to encourage their sense of ownership in them. As mentioned above, the timeframe set by DEC funding limited this approach.

Much less commonly, however, did agencies or counterparts attempt to elicit the views and/or criticisms of the affected population before implementation, in the initial design of relief projects. Few of the housing construction projects solicited the participation of beneficiaries in the design of new homes (two exceptions were CAFOD counterpart Trocaire and CARE in Honduras) or in the planning of water and sanitation systems. Oxfam solicited beneficiary input on a housing and sanitation project in Nicaragua, but was then unable to act on the suggestions, due to the rigidity of its own program (the Oxfam plan involved spending less money per home in order to build more homes, a difficult cost-benefit decision to make). Several agencies attributed the absence of beneficiaries' participation in the initial design of the relief implementation to the restrictive timeframe imposed by DEC. It is clear, on the other hand, that most agencies have developed funding strategies that enable them to rely on emergency DEC funding for immediate response while drawing on other funds for longer term involvement in community participation and institutional strengthening.

Clearly, there are technical skills that only specialists can deal with. However, more involvement of beneficiary communities in the approval and format of basic social infrastructure could have avoided some of the problems that resulted from “top-down” project design. Thus, simple consultation of women's groups about housing design in El Cerro, Choluteca, Honduras, might have informed Oxfam, for example, about the need to include an outside *sumidero* (drainage system for common washing area), or about the type of roofing materials most appropriate to the climate. Had various agencies had the time to ponder consequences of the planned intervention with farmer families displaced by the mudslide of the Casitas Volcano near Posoltega, or by the risk of floods in

Siguatopeque, Honduras, it is doubtful whether either agency or community would have viewed with equanimity the prospect of living in a new urban environment without access to arable land. Sharing the plans for and probable consequences of a new village with the community members who will live in it as early as possible in the process is vital if agencies are to avoid costly mistakes in design which may cause discomfort, social friction, economic hardship or health dangers in the future.

#### **VI.B.4.b Project Design and Local Realities**

*“Disaster response assistance should never be imposed upon beneficiaries”* The Code of Conduct, Red Cross Movement.

Not all of the DEC-funded projects responded to the beneficiaries' own perceptions of their first priorities, reflecting in some cases rather what the agencies thought was most needed or what they were prepared to offer. One example of this involved CARE's road reconstruction project designed in response to three needs (according to NGO staff): to create employment, to open access roads and to further decentralisation by assisting local mayors of municipalities. The one road building project site visited by an ECATEAM (at the suggestion of CARE/Nicaragua) turned out to be a non-vital tertiary lane - chosen by the local mayor - which chiefly benefited a large land-holder at the end of the road rather than the handful of families scattered in the area. Community members reported to ECA that they were gratified by the chance to work and earn cash for a few months, but that the initiative was offered as a “take-it-or-leave-it” opportunity; if they did not accept the road-building project, the mayor would take it elsewhere. *“What we really wanted was latrines,”* recalled the wife of one the road workers. Eight months later, the 2.5 km section of dirt and rock roadway is again falling into disrepair and the community lacks the tools to reinitiate work brigades. It is probable that most CARE projects were not framed in this fashion, and the agency should be commended on its attempt to break away from traditional paternalistic assistance approaches. But this particular exception serves as an example to all DEC agencies of the dangers that arise when there are not close discussions with the local community being targeted. (N.B. CARE states that the community in question **was** consulted and closely involved in the decision-making process prior to the initiation of the road construction project. )

It should be recognised that in the first days and weeks after the tragedy, beneficiary involvement in decision-making may well have been difficult to elicit and even counterproductive. Many community members recall a state of shock and disbelief that would have precluded any serious effective participation in the humanitarian assistance programs that served them. This was particularly true in some hard-hit areas of southern Honduras and in north-western Nicaragua, for instance. In some cases, communities that had been historically excluded from development efforts evinced an understandable scepticism toward the agencies' good faith efforts, undermining attempts to involve them further in project design and implementation. Nonetheless, once agencies began to plan their second phase of assistance involving physical rehabilitation and agricultural production activities, an ounce of consultation might have saved a pound of reconstruction.

#### **VI.B.5 Existing Coping Strategies**

Specialists in humanitarian emergencies have long pointed out the importance of the immediate self-help actions and strategies adopted by affected populations themselves, as a key to their successful recovery and reduced losses following a disaster. These coping mechanisms may be individual or collective, short-term or long-term, conscious or unconscious, often reflecting the best efforts of ordinary people caught up in extraordinary situations to maximise their own survival. Particularly in the early days after the hurricane, before international organisations had access, personnel, or funding to assist affected communities, Central Americans were already making decisions about how to react to the risks and possibilities brought on by the hurricane. In light of

this phenomenon, it is particularly important to evaluate the degree to which DEC-funded interventions managed to support rather than hinder such survival strategies by the communities assailed by Mitch.

One of the key decisions made by numerous rural farming families was to remain in their traditional areas rather than to relocate, and to continue working their farms with whatever seeds and tools were at their disposal (migration is a common reaction to disaster throughout the world.). A number of DEC agencies (ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, British Red Cross and World Vision, among others) and/or counterparts chose to prioritise agriculture as a relief and rehabilitation response. The provision of seeds, agricultural inputs and (in some cases) cash, effectively supported farming families' strategies of staying in their communities despite massive losses in harvest, housing, fields and livelihood. That so many agencies supported agricultural projects constitutes a remarkable and decisive step on the part of the DEC funded relief effort.

The British Red Cross Society - normally associated with search-and-rescue operations, first aid and the distribution of relief and survival items - made a courageous and fairly risky decision to stray from its traditional area of expertise by planning an Agricultural Support Programme only weeks after the emergency relief phase. The Red Cross packages enabled struggling farmers - who in many cases had lost their entire harvest - to remain active and produce a third crop. Christian Aid counterpart Cooperativa F.P.Silva went even further, bringing to the community of Achuapa a Cuban agricultural extension specialist, familiar with *apante*<sup>2</sup> cultivation and other techniques, to make the most out of the post-flood conditions. The co-operative supplemented *apante* expertise later in the agricultural year with credit for inputs such as irrigation pumps, lengths of hose and a communal tractor, atypical assistance in response to an emergency. In the same way, CAFOD's partner, the Jesuit Development Service, taught people to sow white beans, watermelons and sesame as cash crops and to grow maize in the off season.

In fact, the agricultural yield was quite poor in some parts of the region (Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua) but for other reasons. The continuing rains, a plague of slugs and other unforeseeable conditions thwarted the calculations of DEC agencies that had bet on a post-hurricane agricultural boom. Nonetheless, the agricultural intervention may have had a positive impact on collective psycho-social recovery from the disaster, as farming families were able to return rapidly to a sort of normalcy through the practice of traditional activities with new inputs. It is beyond the capacity of this evaluation to calculate the numbers of potential migrants and emigrants who stayed put as a result of DEC-funded interventions, but the economic value to the region of a stabilised population is clearly very high. Beneficiaries were overwhelmingly grateful for the agricultural assistance received in virtually every community visited by the evaluation team.

There is a negative aspect to the agricultural intervention, however, in terms of long-term coping mechanisms. The Red Cross chose to introduce hybrid seeds, albeit with some trepidation, in Guatemala, a historic centre and origin of maize cultivation, as well as in southern Nicaragua. The deleterious impact of introducing improved seed has been well documented in other contexts, in terms of maintenance and replacement costs to the farmer, as well as in its effect on seed stock. The "planned obsolescence" of hybrid seeds constitutes a source of polemical debate for agronomists throughout the world. The deliberate choice to provide a resource to farmers that produces greater yield in the short-term but fosters dependency and decreases crop-diversity in the long-run should be analysed carefully. To its credit, the British Red Cross designed the cash component of its Agricultural Support Programme precisely to enable farmers to procure their own preferred seeds locally rather than imposing hybrids. In realistic terms, the move toward improved species may be

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<sup>2</sup> *Apante* is late season cultivation that makes use of residual ground moisture following a flood to raise another crop where neither rainfall nor irrigation is possible. Not all farming communities in Central America are accustomed to this technique nor possess the physical conditions which permit it; may rely solely on the first harvest (*primeras*) and second harvest (*postreras*) to get them through the 'hungry season' before the next rains.

unstoppable, in light of the fact that Agricultural Ministries of the region have been importing hybrids for some years. To the extent that some NGOs did push improved species in areas that had not been exposed to them, the DEC should be aware of the economic burden imposed on individual farmers and on the potential biological consequences for the region.

The impact of these agricultural interventions was also reduced because of farmers mounting debts. Interest from seed, land and housing credits, some incurred to fund crops destroyed by Mitch, had continued to rise resulting in harvests being sold at a very low price to meet repayments.

The issue of relocating communities following a disaster has always been a thorny one, and it is praiseworthy that the DEC agencies that chose to assist the homeless in this manner did so after some careful consideration of circumstances. Agencies such as CAFOD and CARE managed to purchase land, allocate plots, and in some cases, even provide titles for the self-constructed housing within a year of the hurricane. In a region so prone to land conflict, this constitutes no small feat, particularly over a limited period of time.

Nevertheless, the geographical emplacement of new communities has caused serious problems for the beneficiary population, in some cases (e.g., Fe y Esperanza, Nicaragua; Siguatepeque, Honduras). The lack of economic activity in the newly constructed neighbourhoods threatens to turn once-active farmers into passive recipients of assistance, fostering dependency and raising serious doubts about sustainability. Displaced farmers who continue to work their traditional plots, despite a government prohibition against residing in high-risk areas, must now make long overland trips to reach those fields. It is difficult to criticise the actions of well-intentioned NGOs which have been so successful in relocating those whose homes were destroyed or too risky to inhabit, yet post-emergency recovery projects need to take into account precisely those coping mechanisms most important to beneficiaries: where they work, how they get there, and whether providing a new house justifies complicating one's means of livelihood. As mentioned above, the relocation of a community of urban-dwellers to a rural hillside outside Tegucigalpa does little to support the economic coping mechanisms of the flood-affected.

In some of the new communities, lack of co-ordination between agencies has threatened another set of coping mechanisms. Potable water is possibly the most important component of a family's health and hygiene. In the newly constructed village of Fe y Esperanza, each of the 112 houses sports a private latrine in the backyard, yet there are no household spigots or nearby tap-stands. Because the water needs were to be taken care of by a different agency, the entire community is served by four deep wells at the corners of the settlement, as much as 400 meters away from the centre of town. Whatever the hygienic practices used in the original villages, the new community is likely to be more at risk from fecal-oral vectors when hand-washing following latrine use becomes a function of unsanitary household water storage or a 400 metre hike to the nearest well.

The lack of coordination between the different agencies that are constructing, together with CARE, about 2000 houses for homeless in Renacer, Marcovia, Choluteca, Honduras, has meant that the complementary water and sanitation infrastructure has not yet been constructed. Furthermore, these new settlements are composed of different communities that were set up with none of the initial community organisation work necessary to establish management arrangements for the future water and sanitation systems. There is also a necessity to evaluate in these areas the possibility of future negative environmental impacts caused by the overuse of water bodies and inadequate sanitation given the very large numbers of people in these new settlements.

Perhaps the hardest aspect of coping with Mitch involves the burden of debt. For many of the rural beneficiaries of DEC projects, the destruction of their crops represented not just a loss of future earnings but the disappearance of cash vital to pay off debts incurred in the past. In this respect, assisting income-generating activities would have been an excellent support to coping mechanisms had the harvest been successful.

The several projects which required substantial beneficiary contributions to “buy into” the assistance package - water connections, housing fees, agricultural credit - may have had the unanticipated consequence of plunging already vulnerable households further into debt. The additional burden of the operational and management costs of the new water supply systems might add to the weight of this debt in the future. For example, in a project in Versailles, Nicaragua, run by Oxfam/SCF Nicaragua, the community did not pay for water before Mitch because it received water from a gravity fed system, which incurred no operation and management costs. However, in the new settlement they will have to organise themselves to pay the operational costs for the well pump. They also require training in the operation and maintenance of the new pumps and wells. Another related issue is the need to foster the development and strengthening of community organisations before introducing these new debts and/or changes. In several of the communities visited by the evaluation team, project participants expressed real concerns about their ability to repay the goods and services provided them, both in the immediate short-term and in the future. There is a constant tension between avoiding handouts and imposing an untenable level of debt on beneficiaries, a problem that may not have been recognised by some of the agencies.

#### **VI.B.6 Impact on lives and livelihoods saved**

The overall intervention by DEC member agencies in Central America has had a very positive impact on the beneficiary communities. All SWOT workshops conducted in the four countries with beneficiaries, counterparts, and agencies, as well as the regional SWOT workshop in Costa Rica with the ECATEAMs concur to support this assertion. The most striking evidence, however, came from the many hundreds of voices of beneficiaries that ECATEAMs heard throughout Central America. From Nueva Armenia to Concepción de María in Honduras, from Posoltega in Nicaragua, from the mountains of El Salvador and the Polochic valley in Guatemala - just a few places that had been severely stricken by the hurricane - people testified of the help they received and firmly expressed their sincere, dignified gratitude. On their own initiative in some communities, beneficiaries had prepared hand-written notes offering detailed accounts of the assistance they received, along with deep expressions of gratitude. The many sheets of information gathered during the BPE and SWOT workshops are only incomplete records of the indisputable fact that, although often there were negative observations to different aspects of the aid, people in the beneficiary communities are genuinely thankful for the help received.

It is noteworthy that, in the first group session of the SWOT workshop at Tegucigalpa, the DEC agencies were rather sceptical about the impact they had had with DEC funds, until they witnessed the beneficiaries’ presentation on this regard. In all four SWOT workshops - one for each country - voting always favoured intervention strengths (on the ER 5 and 6 compounded: see section IV on Methodology, where the ER 5 is Impact and the ER 6 relates to Lives and Livelihoods saved)<sup>3</sup>.

Although it is difficult, if not impossible, to quantitatively assess the saving of lives as a result of the projects in the sample, it is apparent from the participatory evaluation with beneficiaries, counterparts, and agencies that there was a significant impact in this regard also. A similar affirmation can be made as regards livelihoods saved and created.

The weaknesses and strengths in the impact of the implementation were apparently much related to the comparative advantages of agencies and counterparts. The case of Oxfam in Honduras provides a clear illustration of this point; in the north of the country, Oxfam implemented a project with CASM, whereas in the south they had to directly implement their project because there were no suitable counterparts in the area. The CASM project was among the best in the sampling, while Oxfam’s direct implementation in El Cerro, Choluteca, was among the most problematic.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In the SWOT workshops, expected results 5 and 6 were compounded and presented together for analysis by the groups.

<sup>4</sup> Other examples: SCFUK’s direct implementation in Concepción de María (Choluteca, Honduras) was good, but not as good as the rest of the projects where SCFUK worked with a counterpart.

### VI.B.6.a Strengths

Some of the more worthwhile observations in respect of the positive impact of DEC funded interventions are the following:

- (a) Immediate response: Distribution of relief items and food aid by all agencies and counterparts in the four countries was effective.
- (b) Water: Communities that did not have access to drinking water received a regular supply. E.g, CEM-H in Nueva Esperanza, Francisco Morazán, Honduras.
- (c) Housing: Construction and reconstruction projects - as well as the relocation of whole communities whose vulnerability had increased or had become evident to the population - were successful. Outstanding examples are the projects implemented by Trocaire with PROFEHSAC and Tearfund with Aldea Global in Los Anises, Comayagua, (all three communities are in Honduras). Another salient example is the adoption of a new style of house construction for areas subject to frequent inundation, by OXFAM with CORDES in El Salvador (with the contribution of architects from the National University).<sup>5</sup>
- (d) Food security: There was increased short-term and long-term food security through agricultural projects or project components with seed distribution and micro-financing. Two good examples are the projects executed by SCFUK with ODECO in Nueva Armenia, Atlántida, Honduras, BRC in all four countries, and CAFOD with the Jesuit Development Service with a counter season production of crops.<sup>6</sup>
- (e) Capacity building. There was proper training of beneficiaries on a variety of themes, such as health, house construction, self-help, agriculture, sanitation. Salient examples are the projects of SCFUK with CSJB in Tela and OXFAM with CASM in Bajos de Choloma, Cortés, both in Honduras.<sup>7</sup>
- (f) Grass-roots organisation. Projects strengthened community organisations and increased solidarity among beneficiaries (in most of the projects in the sample).
- (g) Gender. Some of the projects in the sample had a long-lasting impact on the position of women in their communities. Their role was reinforced and they became more visible through training in a variety of themes, women-targeted cash aid, participation in new activities that are not traditionally assigned to women, their active involvement in the identification of both needs and beneficiaries, and registering the new houses in the name of the woman of the family. Noteworthy cases are those of TROCAIRE with PROFEHSAC; ChAID with CEM-H in Nueva Esperanza, Francisco Morazán, Honduras.<sup>8</sup>
- (h) Youth. Projects increased the role of children and teenagers in several communities through the creation and strengthening of their organisations. The best examples are those of SCFUK with CSJB in Tela, Honduras, and BRC in La Quinta and San Pedro, Estelí, Nicaragua.

### VI.B.6.b Weaknesses

The above presentation of strengths regarding the impact of the overall intervention, however, shows only one side of the coin. Several issues warrant attention when analysing individual projects in the sample, as follow:

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<sup>5</sup> Other examples: Oxfam with CASM in Bajos de Choloma, Cortés, Honduras; ChAID with CEM-H in Nueva Esperanza, Honduras; World Vision with PDA Valle in El Tular, Playa Grande and Agua Fría, Valle, Honduras; and Oxfam in El Cerro, Choluteca, Honduras.

<sup>6</sup> Other examples: Oxfam with CASM in Bajos de Choloma, Cortés, Honduras; Trocaire with PROFEHSAC; ChAID with CEM-H in Nueva Esperanza, Honduras; SCFUK with ACJ in Ocomán, Comayagua, Honduras.

<sup>7</sup> Other examples: SCFUK with ODECO in Nueva Armenia, Atlántida, Honduras; SCFUK with ACJ in Ocomán, Comayagua, Honduras; SCFUK in Concepción de María, Choluteca, Honduras; OXFAM in El Cerro, Choluteca, Honduras

<sup>8</sup> Other examples: BRC in Nicaragua and Guatemala; SCFUK with ODECO in Nueva Armenia, Atlántida, Honduras; BRC in La Quinta and San Pedro, Estelí, Nicaragua; among others from other countries.



- (a) Insufficient infrastructure. There were some house construction projects, such as CARE's direct implementation in Renacer Marcovia, Choluteca, Honduras, where there was not enough room for the patio activities, namely vegetable gardens and the raising of small livestock (CARE cites shortages of available land and land speculation limited the size of plots provided by the project). The project also lacked forethought with regards to rubbish, potable water and grey water problems.<sup>9</sup>
  - (b) More expenditure without more income. Some projects implemented 'Trojan gift' aid in the sense that they solved the problem they were aiming at, but at the same time introduced the need for the beneficiaries to incur painful additional expenses without a concurring increase of income through the generation of employment. The introduction of hybrid seeds by the Red Cross falls into this category, too.
  - (c) Increased Debt Burden: While the impact on housing was positive as a whole, ECATEAMs did express their concern at the financial mechanisms employed by some projects in Nicaragua/OXFAM to bind beneficiaries into funding part of the reconstruction costs of their home, thus increasing the already heavy debt burden on these families.
  - (d) Limited Reduction of Vulnerability - In answering the question as to 'whether the intrinsic vulnerability of livelihoods in many communities visited by the evaluation team has been reduced by the DEC Appeal', it is clear that in many cases social and economic vulnerability to future disasters like Mitch remains high.
  - (e) Distribution of non-essential drugs: In some projects, drugs were collected and distributed (Red Cross local societies, Christian Aid, Tearfund). Those drugs were often close to 'sell by date,' not adapted to local needs, without labels in local languages, or their use was unknown to local community health workers. DEC Agencies should respect and propagate WHO's essential drug policy and discourage such donations.
  - (g) Lack of interagency co-operation. The lack of NGO co-operation was stated by the agencies. There were facets of co-ordination, but more in the sense of distribution of territories instead of helpful exchanges of experience. Sarah Lister's 'Scaling-up Study' offers useful insights into these aspects of interagency co-operation.
- (g) Lack of "scaling up". In spite of admirable talents and creativity of the counterparts and community members that worked in areas not previously considered, the technical skills required to undertake such work should have been taking account of. CAFOD's partner in El Salvador, the Jesuit Development Service, evidently performed better in agriculture work than repairing houses. More aspects of this are covered in the aggregated Scaling Up Study.

### **VI.B.7 Cost Effectiveness**

Among the activities conducted by the ECA evaluation team was a review of agencies' financial reports to enable an analysis of the cost effectiveness of the DEC funded projects. Given the nature of this evaluation, the degree of detail revealed by this financial analysis was limited to consolidating agency reports to DEC, or interviews with national agency staff and counterparts involved in specific projects. Several assumptions were made concerning the objectives and measurable results of the expenditure of the DEC Central America Hurricane Appeal funds, particularly in terms of numbers of beneficiaries and fund allocations. Considering the intrinsic limitations of the financial information available in agency reports, the evaluation team proposes several recommendations which are aimed at improving the way the funds are accounted for, in terms of specific expenditures, exchange rates and the definition of beneficiaries.

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<sup>9</sup> Other examples: Tearfund with Programa Aldea Global in Los Anises, Comayagua, Honduras; ChAID with CEM-H in Nueva Esperanza, Francisco Morazán, Honduras.

**(Please refer to Annex 6 for Global Figures, Limitations and Recommendations Concerning Cost Effectiveness)**

## VII SUMMING UP: Opportunities and Threats; Lessons Learnt and Added Value

### VII.A Opportunities and Fears

**a. Opportunities:** Mitch revealed the tip of an iceberg of miserable social conditions of populations extremely vulnerable to disasters, but it also showed individuals, agencies and their counterparts opportunities for designing better ways of reducing vulnerabilities. The following are recommendations based on expressions of the hopes and fears gathered by ECATEAMS from participants in workshops throughout Central America:

#### Future poverty and social vulnerability reduction programs

In the Lower Lempa River Valley in El Salvador, OXFAM and Christian Aid recognised opportunities for integrated and micro-regional focus programs and better interagency co-operation. DEC agencies, in general, felt that communities had grown stronger and more confident working in projects with agencies and counterparts and were willing to participate in shaping their own futures. All groups - agencies, counterparts, communities - say they felt strengthened by Mitch.

People of the Lower Lempa River organised peaceful marches in the capital to force the Salvadoran Government to find a structural solution to the recurrent flooding of the Lempa River Valley. Indigenous organisations in Honduras participated in the Consultative Group Meeting in Stockholm and organised their own conferences to co-ordinate reconstruction plans. Individuals hoped to be able to further develop community organisations and respond to basic needs in housing, food security, production and work, access to credit, water and health, education and communication. *“We don’t want just to rebuild the country, but build a better one,”* was a slogan repeated in communities throughout the region.

Agencies saw Mitch as an opportunity to foster their organisations, the relationship to counterparts and agencies, and also to use the media to show the underlying causes of disaster. They said the disaster showed them weaknesses and increased their impetus to better their administrative and participatory skills.

#### The need for continuing, sustainable projects

Many DEC agencies have integrated projects begun because of Mitch into their regular programs. Agencies reiterated the necessity of running projects for longer than the 6 months phase to allow for more sustainable programs. Notwithstanding, the DEC’s expenditure marker does not prevent agencies from using other funding sources to sustain projects in the long term. Some continued supporting counterparts in projects beyond the six months after Mitch (for example, Tearfund granted the Salvation Army funds to continue helping a co-operative in Joselyne, El Salvador, rebuild its community). Some agencies are also looking for ways to become community-based rather than “relief” organisations.

#### Disaster prevention and mitigation programs

The British Red Cross, OXFAM, World Vision, The Save the Children Fund and CARE are conducting regional workshops to discuss and promote emergency contingency plans. Christian Aid’s partner CCD and the British Red Cross have developed participatory teaching materials to discuss disaster prevention in communities.

**b. Fears:**

### Community fears

“We fear that they will not listen to us,” beneficiaries at the SWOT workshop in El Salvador said. People of the Lower Lempa Valley worried that the government would continue to marginalise them and wage a psychological war to force them to leave their land. Indigenous Honduran organisations feared that they would be left alone with their fight for land rights. Many beneficiaries felt that they will be left alone with their problems when emergencies elsewhere arise and draw off the organisations now helping them.

### Agency fears

DEC agencies worried that it would be difficult to get funds for development work with communities, because lobbying for gradual work in development is more difficult than for emergency aid funding. Others feared that co-operation between NGOs and some government organisations would not last much longer than the present Mitch recovery phase.

Emergency funding seems to be easier to come by for agencies, and offers job-satisfaction, whereas working on longer-term, vulnerability-reduction programs can be frustrating. Furthermore, ongoing and intensifying economic and social crises worldwide make emergency aid increasingly necessary, inhibiting development of long-term participatory poverty and vulnerability reduction and disaster prevention and mitigation programs.

Finally, there is a general fear of the recurrence of disasters like Mitch in the region, and there may well be, given the conditions of structural poverty and exclusion present in the region.

## **VII.B Lessons Learnt and Recommendations**

The Independent Evaluation of the expenditure of DEC Central America Hurricane Appeal funds has based its conclusions on a rich array of primary sources, comprising local beneficiaries, NGO partners and DEC member agencies. While the previous sections provide insight into long-term concerns, fears and opportunities facing most agencies and partners in the region, these final considerations seek to address some of the major lessons that can be drawn from this episode in humanitarian assistance in Central America.

### **There should be a more flexible time frame to permit rehabilitation:**

Perhaps the first and foremost concern expressed in many interviews and workshops held during the course of the evaluation had to do with the timeframe imposed by the DEC Appeal. It is clear that a six-month period is more adapted to emergency relief operations than to activities geared to rehabilitation and restoration of livelihoods. Resources for emergency relief interventions are often more readily available than those for rehabilitation and restoration, both crucial in addressing even the most basic needs. Most DEC agencies have adopted a multiple funding strategy that allows them to attend particular crisis and sharp increases in needs, while working for longer term goals of local development and rehabilitation of livelihoods. Many local partners and some agencies, did voice their concern at what was perceived by them as a restrictive six-month timeframe for the management of the DEC appeal. This however is a clear aspect of the way in which DEC appeal funds are managed, and most of the larger agencies in the DEC have the institutional presence in the region and the financial capacities to redistribute resources beyond the six-month period. For instance, the British Red Cross, an institution by definition specialised in emergency relief work, obtained internal funding to continue monitoring their Agricultural Support Programme in Central America beyond the six-month period. This did not impair them from responding massively to the emergency phase during its initial stages. Much of the debate concerning the six-month timeframe ultimately refers to the scaling up capacities of DEC agencies. For some six-month is a limiting factor, while for others a stage which needs to be incorporated in to a longer-term framework.

### **Capacity building should be a major concern:**

Another major lesson derives from the former. Time constraints led many agencies to limit their assessments to immediate needs, without taking more time to support and enhance existing capabilities and existing coping strategies within stricken communities. If they are committed to a long-term presence then agencies should be carrying out ongoing long-term needs assessments and looking to complement DEC funding from other more appropriate sources. The dominant vision in many humanitarian organisations is that victims of major disasters are only passive recipients of aid, and are defined essentially by their needs. An approach including coping strategies would place greater emphasis on designing exit strategies for stricken families and communities involving and enhancing local capacities and organisational skills. This often requires a longer term commitment to local development and capacity strengthening.

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#### **Agencies need to scale up:**

A third lesson has to do with institutional capacities of many agencies and partners, and is linked to the Lessons-Learning Study conducted by Sarah Lister on the scaling-up capacities of DEC member agencies. The evaluation team observed both in the sampled projects and through workshops and interviews that agencies resorted to an extraordinarily diverse array of implementation strategies. Larger and more complex organisations such as the International Federation of Red Cross Societies had the capacity to respond massively to the emergency phase, and continue follow-up activities well into the rehabilitation phase. Other smaller organisations and those agencies of more recent implantation in Central America faced a far greater challenge in harnessing the technical and organisational capacities to respond to the emergency and rehabilitation phase of the disaster. In some cases, agencies relied heavily on national partners to conduct the initial needs assessments without closely verifying the information from the field. This led in some cases in ill-conceived aid package. In other cases, agencies conducted field operations themselves, with mixed results. While the more pressing implications for the DEC in terms of scaling will be addressed by Sarah Lister's Study, this evaluation has corroborated the need to give careful attention to these management and organisational issues in the future.

#### **Relief aid should be integrated in mid-term (one-to-two year), sustainable programs:**

Concerning the breadth and depth of the humanitarian response, there were clear differences in terms of the quality of the aid provided between the emergency phase and the ensuing rehabilitation phase. It is clear from the evaluation team's point of view that DEC-funded aid reached extremely needy communities in a timely fashion. The recurrent question is whether the needs identified during the first phase of the intervention were directly related to the impact of Mitch, or whether many of these needs in health, basic social services, access to livelihood security are perennial concerns in many of these marginal communities. To what degree the DEC Appeal has been able to mitigate and alleviate the causes of structural poverty is difficult to assess.

#### **Lobbying for structural change is necessary:**

It is clear however that these issues cannot be solved overnight, nor can they be the sole responsibility of aid agencies. The conspicuous absence of many government agencies, both in the emergency and rehabilitation phase, in most countries visited following Mitch is a matter of utmost concern to this evaluation team. External humanitarian aid cannot and should not replace the provision of basic public social services to disenfranchised populations. In times of emergency, when it has the public's attention, DEC should use the media to show the underlying structural causes of social and environmental vulnerability, and invite the public to contribute to solutions. Emphasising that there are no "natural" disasters could contribute to better understanding the problems faced by "developing countries."

## **VII.C DEC's Added Value**

In the overall context of the international community's response to Hurricane Mitch, the DEC Appeal constituted only a very small part of the picture. Larger bureaucratic entities with closer historical ties to the region, such as USAID and OFDA, the Spanish government and the United Nations agencies, rolled out their considerable resources and experienced relief machinery, which in many cases dwarfed the DEC agency interventions by comparison. Notwithstanding, the isolated intervention of British funds into the Central American disaster-affected area was characterised by certain specific advantages.

**Timeliness.** British agencies were able to respond within days of the first reports about the tragedy, often using their own organisational resources, based on the assurance that DEC would provide them with funding once the Appeal process got underway. This proved especially useful to the larger agencies (British Red Cross, CARE, Oxfam, World Vision) and to a few very active smaller groups that correctly assessed the need to move quickly, by obviating the usual delay for project elaboration and approval. The six-month initial expenditure period ~~despite concerns raised, did~~ contribute to the rapid-action nature of participating agencies' interventions.

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**Flexibility.** By and large, the 11 DEC agencies wisely chose to support efficient local organisations in hard-to-access areas. The humanitarian assistance given by the British public through the DEC Appeal had a disproportionate impact on the region, particularly in areas where larger donors were underrepresented. Thus the emphasis on shelter and agriculture, the acceptance of cash, credit, capacity building and even a communal tractor as vital relief needs, demonstrates a refreshing sophistication and openness toward new approaches in responding to beneficiary-identified needs. Those agencies capable of providing longer term rehabilitation assistance and institutional support beyond the six-month period also showed a great deal of flexibility in assigning resources to local innovative partners.

**Lack of political agenda.** Partly because of the lack of historical ties or geo-political aspirations in the region, DEC agencies were generally characterised by an unbiased approach in relief and rehabilitation projects. This cannot be said of all major actors in the Mitch disaster response. Sectors of the British public may have contributed especially to the DEC Appeal through familiarity with solidarity movements of the 70s and 80s, but in practice, the agencies working on the ground tended to eschew any overt political affiliation or bias. In a region as heavily politicised as Central America, where international donors and local governments themselves tend to use resources as carrots to reward partisan allies, the even-handedness of the British charitable agencies carried an important message to the beneficiaries. This aspect was especially true with regard to the smaller agencies who chose to work through local counterparts.

**Selection of counterparts.** The choice of counterparts had a tremendous impact on the success of the emergency and rehabilitation projects carried out. A few agencies, such as CAFOD, Christian Aid and ActionAid, turned to time-proven partners as the most reliable means to provide aid. Others, like MERLIN, accepted the recommendation of fellow agencies and initiated new partnerships. By and large, the 11 DEC agencies wisely chose to support efficient local organisations in hard-to-access areas. Despite its relatively small size, the humanitarian assistance offered by the British public through the DEC Appeal had a disproportionate impact, particularly in those areas where the larger donors were underrepresented.

## ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference

### **Independent Evaluation of Expenditure of DEC Central America Hurricane Appeal Funds**

## **1 Background**

The tropical storm that was to become Hurricane Mitch first struck the northern coast of Costa Rica on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1998. The storm moved along the Caribbean coast across Nicaragua and Honduras and intensified until, by 26<sup>th</sup> October, it was stationary over the Honduras islands of La Bahia and had reached the maximum hurricane force, level 5. Eight days of constant torrential rains followed during which Mitch unexpectedly turned south through Honduras, slowly passing across the mountains directly over the capital (Tegucigalpa) and the main Pacific city (Choluteca). The resulting floods and mudslides severely damaged buildings, rural and urban infrastructure and agriculture across Honduras and neighbouring areas of Nicaragua. The storm then went west along the coast of El Salvador before returning north, across Guatemala and into the Gulf of Honduras.

More than 6.5 million people were directly affected and at least 2.5 million were temporarily dependent on emergency relief supplies. A consultative group for reconstruction set up by the Inter American Development Bank estimated the cost of the destruction of infrastructure and economic production losses in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua at US\$ 5.4 billion, equivalent to a quarter of annual income for every man, woman and child.

Acknowledging that response to the emergency was beyond their capacity, a state of emergency was declared in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador and appeals made to the international community for assistance in the recovery process. In Nicaragua, though pressed by local government and civil society to declare a state of emergency, the President initially only called a state of “natural disaster”.

In Honduras, the authorities made every effort to co-ordinate with relief organisations from the beginning. The Honduran Red Cross Society launched a local media campaign for disaster preparedness as the alert began. The government established a Permanent Contingency Commission (COPECA) and an Agricultural Development Commission (CODA) with an emergency plan to supplement the basic food supply and control prices. With roads and bridges destroyed and basic services paralysed, entire regions and cities were isolated and rural communities were particularly badly affected. As elsewhere, local NGOs and other civil society organisations (many of which had had previous experience of responding to Hurricanes) played an important role in the emergency, relief and subsequent rehabilitation responses throughout the region, in conjunction with local emergency committees and authorities.

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) is an umbrella charitable organisation which launches and co-ordinates a National Appeal in the UK in response to a major disaster overseas. It brings together a unique alliance of aid, corporate, public and broadcasting services to rally compassion and ensure that funds raised go to those amongst the fifteen member aid agencies best placed to bring effective and timely relief.

The DEC Central America Hurricane Appeal was launched on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1998. To date, the appeal has generated some £11m plus pooled funds. These have been distributed amongst eleven participating aid agencies in support of humanitarian responses including:

- food aid
- medicine and health care
- water and sanitation
- shelter and housing
- clothing and household items
- medium term food security and agricultural rehabilitation
- infrastructure
- technical and logistical support
- working capital (in cash or in kind).

DEC pooled funds should be spent within six months and agencies' statements of expenditure submitted seven months after the launch of the appeal.

DEC rules require an independent evaluation of the expenditure of appeal funds to be initiated in the eighth month following an appeal launch. This provides an important mechanism for DEC transparency and accountability to fundraising partners and the British public. Evaluation also enables DEC agencies to extend individual and collective learning on good practice in response to humanitarian emergencies. The evaluation report will be made public within twelve months of the appeal launch.

## **2 Main purpose of the evaluation**

To assess overall appropriateness, effectiveness and impact of a sample of projects supported by DEC pooled funds and implemented by either member agencies and / or with local partner agencies.

## **3 Specific outputs of the Central America Hurricane Appeal evaluation**

- 3.1 In the context of the overall response, the breadth and depth of presence in affected countries (member and partner agencies), how appropriate was the geographical coverage of relief and rehabilitation projects supported by DEC pooled funds?
- 3.2 For sample projects, how appropriate were the processes and criteria by which beneficiary needs were defined, identified and reached? Was there evidence of thorough vulnerability analysis?
- 3.3 In sample projects, what was the level of beneficiary involvement in project design, implementation and monitoring? How effective and appropriate were these processes in ensuring relevant and timely project delivery in support of the most needy and vulnerable?
- 3.4 How did agency action (in the sample projects) serve to strengthen or impede existing coping strategies?
- 3.5 How effective were the different interventions adopted by the sample projects in bringing humanitarian relief to the affected population? How appropriate was the duration of these interventions and what, if any, is the likely, longer-term socio-economic impact? Where possible, outline the groups which benefited most?
- 3.6 What was the likely overall effect of the sample projects supported by DEC pooled funds in terms of lives and livelihoods saved?
- 3.7 What was the added value of DEC appeal funds in the context of the overall humanitarian response? Did DEC funds facilitate a quick response?

## **4 Method**

It is anticipated that the evaluation team will:

- undertake a brief literature review of humanitarian responses to natural disaster in Central America.
- develop a purposive sampling framework within the range and complexity of DEC-funded projects, member agencies and local partnerships in Central America.
- use gender-aware and participatory approaches to seek the views of beneficiaries and, where appropriate, non-beneficiaries.



- use inclusive techniques to seek active participation in the evaluation by members of local emergency committees, staff of implementing partner agencies and member agencies, representatives of local and central governments
- use agency and partner expenditure reports to assess direct and indirect project costs, and, in conjunction with beneficiary/team assessment of direct and indirect benefits, compare the cost-effectiveness of strategies and initiatives to identify most cost effective approaches.
- undertake the evaluation with due reference to the Red Cross/Red Crescent NGO Code of Conduct, which all agencies have signed.
- arrange for feedback to and validation by implementing agencies (including local partners) in situ.

The evaluation will be undertaken with due reference to the Red Cross/Red Crescent NGO Code of Conduct, which all agencies have signed. Reference should also be made to the Sphere Standards.

## **5 The Report**

The evaluation report should consist of:

- executive summary and recommendations (not more than six pages)
- main text, to include emergency context, evaluation methodology, appeal management, commentary and analysis addressing evaluation purpose and outputs, conclusions (not more than thirty pages)
- appendices, to include evaluation terms of reference, maps, sample framework, agency notes, sub-team report(s), end notes (where appropriate) and bibliography.

## **6 Evaluation team and timeframe**

Evaluation team members should contribute an appropriate balance of professional and analytical skills (eg health/nutrition, water/sanitation, agronomy, micro-enterprise, organisation development, project cycle management) and an understanding of Latin America. Field teams should include Central American nationals (men and women) and be proficient in Spanish as well as competent in written English (evidence may be requested). All team members should be gender aware, a gender balance within field teams is desirable.

Consultants or independent evaluation teams who are short-listed in the tendering process should seek DEC approval for any proposed changes to the composition of the team originally submitted.

As a guide it is envisaged that around 200 person-days will be required to carry out the evaluation.

The evaluation timeframe should allow for submission (early November) for comment by DEC agencies and presentation of the draft report to member agencies (late-November) for completion by 10<sup>th</sup> December 1999.

## **7 Tenders and Evaluation Management**

Tenders should be submitted to the DEC Secretariat by the **closing date of 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1999**. A maximum 5-page summary should be submitted with appendices of team member CVs and an indication of availability. The DEC may wish to see substantive pieces work or to take up references of short-listed consultants.

The final decision on tenders will be taken by the DEC Executive Committee, following short-listing and interviews. Key factors will include:

Provisional framework, methodology, team balance, local experiences, distinctive competences, timeframe and budget, an appreciation of key constraints and comments on the above terms of reference.

Professionalism of the bid, team experience (professional and analytical), degree of parity with the terms of reference, likelihood of achieving the DEC timetable, realism, not just competitiveness, in the cost submission.

Tenders will be accepted from “freelance” as well as from company, PVO or academic teams.

Administration and overall co-ordination, including monitoring progress, lies with the DEC Secretariat. The evaluation Team Leader must, from the commencement of the evaluation, submit a weekly report on actual against anticipated progress. The Steering Committee will via the Secretariat undertake to respond to weekly submissions as necessary. In addition, the Team Leader should alert the Secretariat immediately if serious problems or delays are encountered. Approval for any significant changes to the evaluation timetable will be referred to the DEC Operations Sub-Committee.

It is anticipated that the selection process will be completed by the second week of September.

## **ANNEX 2: Profiles of ECATEAM Members**

### **Assistants:**

**Ms. Maribel Sinfonte** (Costa Rican, based in San José, Costa Rica) lawyer.

**Mr. Gilbert López** (Costa Rican, based in San José, Costa Rica) economist.

**Ms. Maria Auxiliadora Elizondo** (Nicaraguan, based in Managua) teacher and social worker.

**Mr. Hernan Saín** (Argentine, based in San Jose) facilitator. E Mail address: hersain@racso.co.cr

### **Consultants:**

**Pascal Girot** –Team Leader –(UK/France, resident in Costa Rica): Geographer, MSc. Madison, 1984, DEA University of Paris III, Sorbonne Nouvelle (1985), Professor of Geography, University of Costa Rica, since 1987. Consulting work in Peru, Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama, recently Namibia. Recent work (1999) for IADB on post-Mitch Reconstruction Strategy in Central America, and for CEPREDENAC, Central American Emergency Commissions' Federation. Languages: French (maternal), English (maternal), Spanish (fluent). E Mail address: pgirot@sol.racsa.co.cr

**Hernan Alvarado** (Costa Rica): Social Scientist (economics, sociology and psychoanalysis), Masters, Mexico City, 1998. Consulting work for UNDP, PAHO, ILO, National Emergency Commission of Costa Rica, among others. Specific work experience in strategic planning, participatory evaluation, disaster prevention, design of gender-focused participatory strategies for disaster management and prevention. Languages: Spanish (maternal), English (working knowledge). E Mail address: [halvarad@una.ac.cr](mailto:halvarad@una.ac.cr)

**Sergio Meresman** (Argentina, resident in Uruguay): Psychologist, Masters in Community Health (University of Liverpool, 1995). Field experience in Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala). Coordinator of World Bank/PAHO Program for School Health and Nutrition in Latin America (1999). Coordinator of Mental Health Assistance Teams to quake-affected indigenous communities in Costa Rica (1991). Responsible for "Safe Communities" health education program in Argentina (1993). Languages: Spanish (maternal), English (fluent). E Mail address: sergiom@chasque.apc.org

**Frederick Spielberg** (USA, resident in Nicaragua): anthropologist, Masters in Public Policy, Berkeley, 1982. Fieldwork in Nicaragua pre- and post-Mitch, disaster relief consultant throughout Africa and the Americas on humanitarian aid and human displacement. Field experience in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Angola, Somalia, Mozambique, Sudan. Research on coping mechanisms of Liberian war-affected populations (1998). Languages: English (maternal), Spanish (fluent), Portuguese (fluent), French and Italian (conversational). E Mail address: fspiel@ibw.com.ni

**Laura Fernandes Kalodziej** (Costa Rica): Psychologist, Masters, Monterrey, Mexico. Extensive experience in group evaluation and diagnostics. Field work in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, involving quantitative and psycho-social assessments. Design and facilitation of community and institutional workshops on: Gender and Risk Management, Local Action Plans, Vulnerability Mapping. Languages: Spanish (maternal), English (fluent). E Mail address: leferman@cariari.ucr.ac.cr

**Norma Dixo** (Brazil, resident in the US): Civil Engineer, Masters in Public Health Engineering, London, 1990. Responsible for design and supervision of water supply, sanitation systems in Brazil (1987). Coordinator of water quality, sanitary education and cholera control programs in Brazil

(1991). Wat-sanitation experience in Dominican Republic and Cuba (1997). Oxfam Technical Coordinate in emergency water supply for indigenous and rural communities in Brazil (1998). World Bank evaluation consultant on wat-sanitation in Angola (1999). Languages: Portuguese (maternal), English (fluent) Spanish (working knowledge). E Mail address: [normadixo@erols.com](mailto:normadixo@erols.com)

**Mario Jauregui** (Argentina, based in Italy): PhD in soil science (University of California at Davis 1981), MS in agricultural economics (University of California at Davis 1984), MS in soil science (La Plata, Argentina 1973), BS in agronomy (Mendoza, Argentina 1970). Twelve years of fieldwork in Central America, particularly in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala, pre- and post-Mitch. Expertise in all phases of the project cycle, participatory methods, gender and environmental issues. Languages: Spanish (maternal), English (fluent). E mail address: [fundesco@ibw.com.ni](mailto:fundesco@ibw.com.ni)

**José Iván Dávalos** (Bolivia, resident in Nicaragua): Civil engineer, Masters in Road Construction, Dresden 1988. Acting Chief of Mission for IOM/Nicaragua, co-ordinator of post-Mitch activities. Experience in self-constructed housing, post-disaster reconstruction projects, basic infrastructure management. Fieldwork in Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica and Angola. Languages: Spanish (maternal), English (working knowledge), German (fluent), Portuguese (fluent). E Mail address: [fundesco@ibw.com.ni](mailto:fundesco@ibw.com.ni)

**Christiane Boecker** (German, based in Haiti). Doctorate in medicine. Master of Community Health (School of Trop. Med. Liverpool). Work experience in hospitals: of Tönnin, of Husum, Heidberg (in German), Albert Schweitzer (Haiti). Volunteer for: the German Development Service, MSF Holland, MDM France; with COBRISA (Health brigades) in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Consultant for the Haitian Health Ministry. Languages: German (maternal), English, French, Spanish, Haitian Creole (fluent). E Mail address: [chris@transglobal.org](mailto:chris@transglobal.org)

**Alejandro Ramos Martínez** (Costa Rica, based in Belize). Courses in Philosophy and Law -No degree obtained- 1975-77 (Universidad de Costa Rica); Economics -Degree obtained: Licenciatura (Summa Cum Laude), 1987. International Consultant for Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Chile), Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy (Costa Rica), International Fund for Agricultural Development (Italy), Ministry of Economy, External Financing Department (Argentina). Languages: Spanish (maternal), English, Italian, French (Fluent). German (working knowledge) E mail address: [aramos@btl.net](mailto:aramos@btl.net)

**Virgil Grandfield** (Canada, resident in the US): Writer, Storyteller. BA (cum laude) in Political Science (University of Lethbridge, Canada) Graduate Diploma in Journalism (University of Concordia, Montreal, 1993). Field experience in Quebec, Mexico, and Costa Rica. Hospital Spanish Interpreter in USA. Languages: English (maternal), Spanish (fluent), French (working knowledge). E Mail address: [virgilgrandfield@hotmail.com](mailto:virgilgrandfield@hotmail.com)

**Maria Luisa Vazquez** (Spain, resident in Barcelona): Physician. Masters in Health Policy, Planning and Financing (London School of Tropical Medicine). Lecturer in International Health (Liverpool School of Tropical medicine). Extensive research and consulting experience for the EC, GTZ and ODA. Field experience in Colombia, Nicaragua, Brazil, Ecuador, Uruguay, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Ghana, Spain, Germany, U.K. Languages: Spanish (maternal), English (fluent), Portuguese (fluent) French (working knowledge), German (working knowledge). E Mail address: [extern3@mx2.redestb.es](mailto:extern3@mx2.redestb.es)

### **ANNEX No.3: The Impact of Hurricane Mitch by Country**

#### **Short and Mid-Term Impacts in Honduras**

Nearly 7000 Hondurans died as a result of Mitch, 8058 disappeared (and can reasonably be counted as dead) and nearly 12,000 were injured overall in the country's 18 territorial departments. Over 700 died (1,300 disappeared, 3,207 were injured) in the northern department of Cortes, where flooding in the major city of San Pedro Sula submerged entire neighbourhoods and the international airport in mud. Over 1000 died (almost 1000 disappeared) in the northern departments of Atlántida and Colon. About 1,000 died in the department of Francisco Morazán, many of them when a large landslide in the El Berrinche neighbourhood in Tegucigalpa dammed the swollen Choluteca river causing it to overflow and flood much of the Honduran capital. (Flooding down the city's main street reached the third story of the Ministry of Education building). The hardest hit area, however, was the southern city of Choluteca near the Gulf of Fonseca, with 1,200 dead, 268 disappeared and almost 6,000 injured. Mitch also destroyed 1,683 of 3,929 aqueducts, leaving 75 per cent (4.5 million) of the population without potable water (\$58 million direct damages, \$196 million replacement cost). Up to 700,000 Hondurans lost or had to abandon their homes. (In total, 35,000 homes were destroyed completely and another 50,000 partially destroyed). The disaster left 38 per cent of Choluteca's 403,577 people and 30 per cent of the northern departments of Colon and Cortés' 300,000 residents homeless. (There are no figures for numbers of migratory workers left without shelter). Infrastructure damages were so extensive, difficulties in relief organizations getting anywhere in the country could not be underestimated. Many areas were only accessible by helicopter, of which very few were available.

The hurricane also destroyed 29 hospitals and over 1000 health units in Honduras, severely handicapping the country's ability to tend the sick and wounded and prevent epidemics (the total cost of direct and indirect damages to the health sector topped \$62 million). The storm also destroyed sewage systems and 85,000 latrines (\$182 million damages), adding to the risk of the spread of diseases. In some areas, domestic sewage flowed out into the streets. In Tegucigalpa, damages to sewer systems by the Cerro del Berrinche landslide created a septic lake two kms long, 72 metres wide and 2 metres deep in the centre of the city (with fecal coliform counts of 1,080,000). Honduras did not experience serious epidemics as in Guatemala, but diseases like Leptospirosis and cholera would reappear after once having been eradicated from the country.

#### **Short and Mid-Term Impacts in Nicaragua**

Mitch killed over 3000 Nicaraguans (over 1000 missing, almost 600 injured), most of them in the western departments of Leon and Chinandega. About 2000 of these died when the entire side of the Casita Volcano near Chinandega city collapsed into a mudslide three km. wide and 20 km. long that careened at speeds of up to 200 km. per hour and buried three entire villages of the Municipality of Posoltega. The region of Jinotega, Rio San Juan and Matagalpa also suffered high casualties, also (over 120 dead, nearly 100 missing). Mitch directly affected 867,752 people in 72 of Nicaragua's 143 municipalities, including 50 of poorest 60 municipalities. The storm destroyed 25,000 homes and 79 potable water systems, leaving 288,000 homes without water for drinking or sanitation. Infrastructure damages in Western Nicaragua would cause the same transportation and communication problems for relief workers as in Honduras. Nicaragua's violent past would also add to the dangers facing victims and relief workers. Heavy flooding unearthed anti-personnel mines from transport routes laid during the country's civil wars and washed the mines into safe areas (eg. Muy Muy near the city of Matagalpa).

The storm also destroyed nine sewer and drainage systems and 37,000 latrines in Nicaragua, principally in the areas of Matagalpa, Jinotega, Leon, Chinandega, Rivas, Esteli and Nueva Segovia. Mitch also destroyed 250 health centres (\$53 million damages). The original number of 900,000 refugees reduced to just under 400,000 shortly after the emergency stage of the disaster. There were 675 cases of cholera in the entire year before Mitch, and almost 400 new cases in the

four weeks after. There were 540 cases of Leptospirosis (at least seven of them deadly) – most in the departments of Chinandega and Esteli - whereas none were recorded in Nicaragua in the year before the hurricane.

### **Short and Mid-Term Impacts in El Salvador**

Well-organised civil defence measures contributed to the relatively low death toll in El Salvador (240 dead, 20 disappeared). Nonetheless, Mitch destroyed or damaged 155 potable water systems, and 7,622 wells (\$60,000 in damages), mainly in the departments of San Miguel, La Unión, Usulután, La Paz and Sonsonante. The storm made refugees of 50,000 Salvadorans, destroying the houses of 30,000 of them. Mitch also damaged or destroyed over 9,000 latrines and 14 sewage and drainage systems in El Salvador (\$7.2 million damages) and 16 health units. El Salvador had almost no outbreaks of disease. There were no reported cases of cholera in the year before Mitch, and the seven cases reported afterwards were persons previously infected in Guatemala before coming to El Salvador. There were only slight increases in levels of diarrhoea and ARIs. \*In fact, there would be a decline in cases of classic dengue, typhoid fever, Hepatitis A, conjunctivitis and malaria in the weeks and months after Mitch.

### **Short and Mid-Term Impacts in Guatemala**

Guatemalan casualties were 268 dead, 121 missing and 280 seriously injured. Most of these casualties occurred in Guatemala City in poor neighbourhoods built in high-risk areas (riverbanks, denuded hillsides, floodplains). Mitch directly affected 2,626,183 Guatemalans (25.1 per cent of the population). The storm damaged potable water systems supplying over 50,000 people in more than 300 communities. The hurricane also severely affected migrant communities of hundreds of thousands of coffee and sugar cane workers along the south coast. The most damaged zones were Alta Verapaz, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Jutiapa, Quiché, Peten and Izabal. Mitch damaged or destroyed 10 sewage systems and 21,000 latrines in Guatemala. There were no significant damages to health unit or hospital infrastructures. Nonetheless, epidemic control would be very costly, as Guatemala received the brunt of Mitch's secondary impact of illnesses. The areas hardest hit by the hurricane were also of the poorest in the country, many of their residents living in precarious, unsanitary conditions even before Mitch. There were 38 serious outbreaks of cholera in Guatemala, almost 2000 sick and 33 dead in four weeks (a 110 per cent increase from the entire previous year). In total at least 55,000 Guatemalans were seriously ill in the four weeks after Mitch: 11,000 cases of diarrhoea, 4,200 malaria, 30,000 IRAs, 10,000 pneumonia, and various cases of dengue, etc, all primarily in the areas of Escuintla, Sacatepequez, Retalhuleu, Izabal, Santa Rosa, Zacapa, Bajo Verapaz, Peten, Jutiapa, and Chimaltenango

#### **ANNEX No.4: DEC Member Agencies' Response to Hurricane Mitch**

**ActionAid** was founded in 1972 to help children living in poverty. The agency operates in Central America through its regional office in Guatemala, with a variety of partners. ActionAid received £377,254 (3.62%) of DEC funds for relief aid projects in Guatemala. Action Aid used DEC monies to deliver the following outputs to Suchitepequez, Solola, Polochic Valley and the Southern Coast, Izabal, through its partners CONIC, IDEAS, SMD, ADEJUC, ASDENA: 30 days food supplies to 2641 families; four medical days attending 1551 patients in 36 communities, 36 community medical kits set up and two refrigerators provided to health posts for a state-funded vaccination campaign (1284 children vaccinated); 11 water systems repaired benefiting 800 families; 395 latrines built; 118 houses built in 14 communities, cooking pans and buckets distributed to 33 families; 74 agricultural demonstration plots set up, inputs and tools provided to 1492 families to restart production of grains and vegetables (locals had grown cash crops almost exclusively until then), 46 irrigation systems set up, 63.7 hectares of land rehabilitated (in some cases rented land to grow crops because deep layers of sand prevented rehabilitation of 21.7 hectares of targeted land), 14 poultry farms set up; and 100 workshops conducted to educate in areas of agriculture, livestock, latrines, local management, women's and children's rights.

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**British Red Cross** worked in Central America through the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's regional office in Guatemala before Mitch, but did not have its own offices in the region. The Red Cross has national societies in all Central American countries. BRC received £1,904,000 (18.29%) of DEC funds for aid projects in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. The BCRS reported DEC assistance met the medical needs of a third of a million people, supplied cholera kits for a million people and gave the means to purify over a million gallons of water throughout Central America. The BCRS also organised three relief flights from the UK providing material urgently needed in the region. The agency used DEC funds to distribute agricultural aid packages to vulnerable families not already receiving aid, farming less than five manzanas. Agricultural Inputs Packages (AIPs) included 30 to 50lbs of seeds (usually modified), 200 to 400lbs of fertilisers and 30 USD cash (with the exception of Honduras and El Salvador). Package supplies would be enough to plant 1-2 *manzanas* (7,000-14,000m sq.) of land and cash would allow families to buy more seeds (regenerating local informal seed banks) and other items necessary for successful harvests. BCRS distributed AIPs to 10,516 families in the departments of Choluteca, Valle and El Paraiso. (BCRS substituted additional seeds and fertilizers for cash in Honduras and El Salvador); to 11,765 families in the Nicaraguan departments of Esteli, Madriz, Managua, Nueva Segovia, Granada, Rivas, Leon and Matagalpa; to 3000 families in the departments of La Paz, La Libertad, Sonsonate and Ahuachapan, El Salvador; and to 5,150 families in the Guatemalan departments of Suchitepequez, Retalhuleu, Zacapa and Santa Rosa.

**CAFOD** was started by small groups of Catholic women to help the poor and has worked in Latin America since 1962 (prioritising Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico). CAFOD received £526,400 (5.06%) of DEC funds, which it used for relief and rehabilitation projects in Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador, with three in-country partners: Jesuit Development Service, the Institute for Social Action and Development Juan XXIII and Trocaire. CAFOD-Trocaire provided food aid, medical support and other relief benefiting 66 communities in El Triunfo and Concepcion de Maria, Honduras. CAFOD-Juan XXIII provided relief aid to 1,860 families in Regions I and II of Nicaragua. CAFOD-Jesuit Development Service helped with rescue services in the Lower Lempa River area of El Salvador. In the six months after Mitch, CAFOD-Trocaire used DEC funds to rebuild or repair 538 houses (creating 176 stable jobs and 18 micro-enterprises) in the Southern Honduran departments of Choluteca and Valle and the northern departments of Cortes and Yoro. CAFOD-JuanXXIII trained 350 families in the preparation and feeding of livestock, established seed banks and provided 633 farmers with seeds and tools, strengthened 20 health clinics and built or repaired 1310 houses in Region I and II, Matagalpa, Managua, Tipitapa and San Francisco Libre, Nicaragua. CAFOD-Jesuit Development Service used DEC funds to: assist 174 families in agriculturally reactivating 348 acres of land; repair 58 houses; provide provisional

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housing for 31 families; build latrines for 49 families and provide latrine components for 63 families in the Lower Lempa River area of El Salvador.

**CARE International UK** has worked in Nicaragua since 1966 and Honduras since 1955. Before Mitch it had 130 staff in Nicaragua, and 220 people working on 10 projects in Honduras. CARE £655,200 (6.29%) of DEC Mitch funds for aid projects in Honduras and Nicaragua. In the first weeks after the disaster, CARE tapped its own funds to start providing water, food, various emergency and medical supplies and dry shelter to various areas in Honduras, and conducted airlifts of food to La Ceiba, Trujillo and the Bay Islands. In Nicaragua, CARE distributed relief items and conducted assessments and began programs of water system and latrine reconstruction; anti-epidemic campaigns; seeds, fertiliser and livestock distribution in its prioritised areas. CARE used DEC funding in Honduras to purchase low-cost housing materials for approximately 240 homes in Marcovia, Choluteca (estimated completion date for all 240 homes is Jan, 2000). In Nicaragua, CARE used DEC funds to construct 543 latrines in the Department of Esteli and to construct 10 gravity-fed mini-water systems and one electric water system to benefit 5,300 people. CARE also decided to use some DEC funds for road rehabilitation to enhance water system repair project's impact (in form of food for work, then cash for work). About 20kms were done by June 1999 with the participation of 1,500 families.

**Christian Aid** - the official agency of 40 UK and Irish Churches - has worked through partners in Central America since the early 1970s and has a regional field office in Guatemala City. Christian Aid received £913,500 (8.77%) for aid projects in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. In the first days after Mitch, Christian Aid's strongest and only operational partner in Honduras was the Christian Council for Development (CCD). In Nicaragua, Christian Aid's partners CEPAD and Movimiento Communal acquired funding from donors and mobilised volunteers to help in rescue efforts. Christian Aid made eight relief aid project grants to various partners in the first weeks after Mitch, and CAID-CCD teams co-ordinated collection of emergency supplies through churches and supported the distribution of "Banana Boat" material aid from the UK and Ireland (CAID noted the 3,000 MT of Banana Boat material aid was valued at £1.5 million - over 20 times the £65,845 cost of the DEC funded project). In the six months after Mitch, DEC funded projects carried out with 20 Christian Aid partners (18 of them local) gave 33,000 families emergency food, 44,000 families medical attention, 118,000 families clean water and gave household items to over 107,000 families. With DEC funds (and the help of 4,000 FFW families), CAID partners also repaired 167 kilometres of roads, 23 wells, eight fords, six schools, community water systems (for 8,000 people), and coffee processing plants; gave 350 families small livestock; rehabilitated kitchen gardens and orchards (for 2000 families); provided credits and other agricultural rehabilitation supports (to 4,850 producers) in the following areas: ASONOG, CCD, ADROH, CEM-H, COLECTIVO, ICD HONDURAS, Agua Para el Pueblo and ICD-H in the Honduran departments of Cortes, Santa Barbara, Copan, Choluteca, Santa Barbara, La Mosquitia, La Esperanza, Atlantida, Colon, Fransisco Morazan (and the capital city Tegucigalpa), La Paz, and El Paraiso; Salud Sin Limites, NITLAPAN, PRODECOOP, ACHUAPA, MCM, NAG-ESTELI, CEPAD, SOPPEXCCA and ICD-NyES in the Nicaraguan departments of Matagalpa and Leon; and CORDES in 22 communities of Tecoluca and Zacatecoluca, El Salvador; ASECSA in San Martin Farm and Peten, Guatemala.

**Christian Children's Fund GB (CCF)** has no offices in Central America and so passed 95 per cent of its share of DEC funding on to its sister agency in Nicaragua, CCF-Canada. (The agency had planned to give CCF-USA in Honduras and Guatemala part of the money, but CCF-USA was slower to respond to the crisis and did not urgently need the funds) CCF received £63,000 (0.61%) of DEC fund for aid projects in Nicaragua. In the first weeks after the disaster, CCF-Canada used DEC funds to help distribute relief items shipped from Canada to 3,600 families (19,000 people) in nine communities in Nicaragua. In the first months after Mitch, CCF-Canada worked closely with its strongest partner, CAPRI, in severely affected areas of Managua to repair and improve 85 homes (to benefit approximately 400 people) and 160 latrines (to benefit 160 families). The agencies also conducted environmental health and reforestation campaigns and constructed grey-water drainage

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systems to benefit 600 families and gave first-aid kits to 11 clinics. CCF-Canada also installed a water purifying plant to benefit about 1,000 people in a rural community 160km north of Managua. (DEC funds covered about 66 per cent of the above projects costs).

**MERLIN** is a relatively new (1990s) humanitarian organisation that provides medical aid in the rescue and relief stages of international emergencies, focussing on short-term programs. MERLIN received £156,800 (1.51%) of DEC funds for relief aid projects in Honduras. MERLIN used the DEC monies for health and water projects with two local partners (Enlace de Mujeres Negras de Honduras and MOPAWI) to benefit over 35,000 people in Garifuna communities near San Pedro Sula and an area called Gracias a Dios in the department of Mosquitia. These communities - historically excluded for cultural and logistical reasons - were new areas of operation for MERLIN.

**OXFAM** started working in Central America in the 1970s and has country offices all four target countries as well as a regional office in Nicaragua. OXFAM received £3,378,991 (32.46%, the largest agency share) for aid projects in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. In the first days after Mitch, OXFAM made immediate grants of its own funds to provide food, water, provisions, shelter, medicine and logistics to thousands of families in Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. In the first weeks and months after Mitch, OXFAM used DEC monies in the Department of Cortés in Northern Honduras, Choluteca and Valle in the south and the Western region of the country for the purposes of: continued relief aid (food, medicines, etc) to benefit 40,410 people; cleaning 897, perforating 29 and rehabilitating 26 wells, repairing 87 and building 1472 latrines to benefit 21,589 people; distribution of eight WHO health kits 8; organising 89 health education workshops, and training 10,531 health educator volunteers to benefit 99,491 people. Except in the department of Choluteca, OXFAM worked with local partners (ADROH, ASONOG, CASM, CCCH, CODEMUH, CPR and OCDIH). OXFAM also used DEC aid in the target areas of Cortes, Choluteca, Valle, and Western Honduras for building 472 homes and improving family based food security (basic grains and tools, horticulture, small farm animals and reforestation). In Nicaragua, DEC funds were applied in later stages of relief work (water, food and medicine) epidemic control in RAAN (North Atlantic Autonomous Region) with partners AMC, OPHDESCA and FADCANIC; and in Region II (Leon and Chinandega) with CIS, CISAS, CIPRES, Save the Children-Nic and AYAMAT. OXFAM began housing rehabilitation and food security programmes, especially to prepare for *Apante* (Dec.-Mar) crop cycles. In El Salvador, Oxfam continued to supply relief support (12 refuge centres, food, domestic items, medicine, water and sanitation supplies) to Lower Lempa River communities in the departments of La Paz, San Vicente and Usulután in conjunction with its partner CORDES. In Guatemala, OXFAM designated DEC funds primarily for food aid to 36 communities in the Polochic Valley (a new area of operation) and Alta Verapaz. In the Departments of Retalhuleu and Alta Verapaz OXFAM supported a community health care program executed by partner CCSS. In the Altiplano Occidental OXFAM spent £6,394.50 on cholera control and prevention programs with the help of its partners AP and CEDEPEM. OXFAM began rehabilitation of agriculture and water systems in the Polochic Valley and Alta Verapaz, and agriculture in Retalhuleu. OXFAM also used part of its DEC funds to lobby for debt forgiveness on behalf of all of Central America.

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**The Save the Children Fund GB (SCF)** is a part of a large family of agencies which work in emergency and development projects, especially where the interests of children are concerned. SCF-GB usually works closely with local governments and agencies. SCF-GB received £1,890,000 (18.15%) of DEC funds for aid projects in Honduras. In the first days and weeks after Mitch, SCF-GB decided to focus its energies on relief projects in Honduras because sister agencies already covered the other affected areas. (The agency used its own funds in the early stages of the disaster, counting on receiving a share of DEC funds). In the six months after Mitch, SCF-GB used DEC funds for relief and rehabilitation projects in the Honduran departments of Cortes, Yoro, Atlantida, Francisco Morazán and Choluteca. These projects included: WHO medicines and physical rehabilitation of nine local health centres to benefit 200,000 people; food aid to benefit 37,000 people; rehabilitation of potable water systems and latrines to benefit 200,000 people; agricultural inputs to benefit 65,000 people; micro-credits and seed capital to benefit 16,000 people; playground

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rehabilitation and repair of 54 educational centres to benefit 49,000 little people; emergency shelters to benefit 6,000 people; and infrastructure rehabilitation to benefit 60,000 people.

**Tearfund** - part of the UK Evangelical Alliance – worked through Salvation Army Costa Rica (SACR), Salvation Army El Salvador (SAES), Proyecto Aldea Global (PAG) and MOPAWI – who in turn worked with their own in-country partners. Tearfund used £259,885 (2.50%) of DEC funds for aid projects in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Costa Rica. In the first days after Mitch, Tearfund committed financial and personnel support to partners and asked DEC in the 48-Hour Plan for funds to cover immediate needs, thereby freeing resources to respond to specific proposals. TEAR-PAG mobilised doctors and nurses, and distributed medicine, soap, chlorine tabs, personal items to Comayagua, Cortes, Yoro (central Honduran areas that Tearfund says ignored by governments) to the benefit 314,000 in 280 communities. TEAR-Mopawi activated a Regional Emergency Committee, and distributed food in the Mosquitia zone. TEAR-SACR distributed blankets, medicine, water in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. TEAR-SAES distributed water, blankets, clothes, food, medicines, kitchen, hygiene and relief items - in El Salvador's Western Zone (departments of Ahuachapan, Sonsonate, La Libertad); Eastern Zone (departments of San Miguel, La Paz, Usulután. In the first weeks and months after Mitch, TEAR-PAG distributed food and inputs to 350 projects in 17 municipalities of Comayagua, Yoro, Cortes and provided metal sheeting for housing rehabilitation to benefit 359 families, and rebuilt small bridges and 17 village health centres. TEAR-MOPAWI distributed food and clothing, transported medical brigades of 25 Cuban doctors (55,000 beneficiaries) and provided freight and transport of food, seeds and reconstruct material to Mosquitia. TEAR-MOPAWI also contracted and trained 17 agricultural facilitators for 11 communities and rehabilitated basic hygiene infrastructure (50 manual pumps), with help from Agua Para El Pueblo. In El Salvador, TEAR-SAES constructed four emergency shelters and provided emotional and spiritual support to victims and/or their families.

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**World Vision** - a Christian international relief agency that focuses on community development – has worked in Central America since the early 1970s. World Vision received £285,825 (2.75%) of DEC funds for projects in Honduras and Nicaragua. The agency is well positioned in Central America, and so in the first days after Mitch, carried out rescue and relief operations throughout the region using its own programme funds. In the first weeks and months after the storm, World Vision used DEC funds to: conduct epidemic control campaigns benefiting 450 families; train and equip 96 community health workers; provide cooking utensils to 120 families, blankets to 120 families and plastic water barrels to 165 families; give agricultural supplies to 231 homeless farmers; and repair or rebuild 130 homes in the severely affected Posoltega, Chinandega, area of Nicaragua. World Vision also used DEC funds to repair 44 and rebuild 104 houses in the departments of Choluteca and Valle, Honduras.

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## **ANNEX No.5 : Persons, Agencies and Institutions Interviewed**

### **1. UK – DEC Agency Headquarter Personnel**

#### **ActionAid**

Fiona Hale, Desk Officer, Latin America & Caribbean  
Jo Johnson, Administrator for the Emergency Unit

#### **BRCS**

Paul Anticoni, Head of International Aid Dept.  
Mike Goodhand, Head of Logistics  
Julian Gore-Booth, Desk Officer  
Jenny Williams, Desk Administrator

#### **CAFOD**

Clare Dixon, Head of Latin America Desk  
Maria Jackson, Latin America Assistant  
Jo Wells, Emergencies Officer

#### **CARE Int. UK**

Jay Goulden, Programme Officer  
Jo Craig, Programme Officer

#### **CCF GB**

Jane Belton, Assistant Regional Officer LAC  
Bob Edwards, Chief Executive  
Maurice Lab, Programme Officer, LAC

#### **Christian Aid**

Cynthia Lavandera, Administrator Latin America Dept.  
Carolyn Williams, Team Leader Latin America & Caribbean  
June Wyer, Head of Emergencies  
Jay Goulden, ex. Christian Aid

#### **Merlin**

Alex Brans, Desk Officer,  
Hester Monaghan, Desk Assistant

#### **Oxfam**

Andy Bastable, Technical Advisor  
Maurice Herson, Emergencies Coordinator  
Lucy Stone, Programme Development Assistant, Latin America

#### **Save the Children**

Christine Archer, Regional Coordinator LAC  
Peter Hawkins, Emergencies Coordinator  
Stephen Lewis, Programme Officer LAC

#### **Tearfund**

Aminta Ferrufino Coates, Projects Officer for Rehab. Prog., Central America

#### **World Vision**

Sue Birchmore, Manager Middle East, Latin America and Easter Europe

### **2. Regional Interviews**

## **EL SALVADOR**

### **Oxfam**

Yanci Urbina, Programme Officer

### **Jesuit Dev. Services (CAFOD)**

David Lopez, Director

Michael Campbell, Sub-Director

### **Red Cross**

Roy Venegas, National Red Cross Society Officer

### **Salvation Army**

Esteban Calvo Mora, Programme Officer

### **Cordes**

Hugo Flores, National Programme Director

Jorge Argueta, Programme Officer

### **Christian Aid**

Beatriz Aguilar, Programme Officer

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## **GUATEMALA**

### **ActionAid**

Adolfo Herrera, National Director

Hugo Milian, Programme Officer

### **Oxfam**

Beate Thorensen, Regional Coordinator

Rogelia Soto, Programme Officer

[Luis Cruz, Programme Officer](#)

### **Red Cross**

Ian Hogan, IFRC Regional Delegate

Carolina Jules, Programme Officer

Luz Marina Lopez, Regional Financial Officer

### **Christian Aid**

James Marchand, Regional Director

Veronica Sagastume, Programme Officer

### **Servicios Maya**

Maria Pascual

Sergio Mendizabal

### **Guatemalan Red Cross** (Evaluation Workshop for Agricultural Support Progs. In Guatemala)

#### **Participants:**

- IFRC Leon Prop, Carolina Jules, Pär Ivarsson
- ARC Jorge B.M. Yodile
- GRC Sergio Cordoni, Byron Alvarez, Faraon Rubio Coy, Carlos Palacios, Miguel Angel Samayoa, Efrain Muralles.
- SERCATE Marco A. Ramirez
- CODECA Obispo Vicente Choj, Mauro Vay Garon, Juan Tzep, Juana Marisol Lucas, Francisca Quejnay Cortez
- ECA Pascal Girot

### **Guatemala Field Visits**

- **Tactic** ActionAid & Oxfam
- **Chelema** CONIC - Juan Tiney, National Coordinator, Juan Tzib, Tucuru National Coordinator & Otto Vargas, Agronomist  
Community Evaluation Workshop
- **San Sebastian** Community Evaluation Workshop
- **Sepacay** Beneficiary meeting re CONIC Project
- **Tucuru** Meeting with CONIC and Agency Staff  
Community Evaluation Workshop (participants from 12 communities: Pancajche, San Jorge, Cucanja, Las Palmas, Lomas de Chama, Los Pinos, Raxquix, Sepacay, San Juan Las Flores, Montealegre, San Sebastian and Las Minas)
- **Panzos** Meeting with Rigoberto Cac, IDEAS Coordinator
- **El Estor** Aborted visit to Rancho Grande, Pataxte and Limin Zarco
- **Sepur Limite** Community Evaluation Workshop
- **El Bongo** Meeting with community leaders re ADEJUC activities
- **Guatemala City** - Meetings with:  
ADEJUC, Cesar Diaz, Coord. & Manfred Villatoro, Prog. Official  
Servicios Maya - Maria Pascual, Programme Officer  
Former Agriculture Minister, Fernando Vargas  
National SWOT Workshop

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## NICARAGUA

**CCF** Jorge Luis Hernandez, Regional Director

**Los Pipitos/CCF** (Diriamba, Nandaime, Jinotepe)  
Dr Guillermo Gosnbruch, Project Officer

**CAPRI/CCF** (Centro de Apoyo a Programmas y Proyectos, Barrio Carlos Nunez)  
Lic Socorro Carvajal, Project Officer.

**Oxfam** M G Lacayo, Regional Programme Officer  
Simon Ticehurst, Manager  
Ana Elisa Martinez, Regional Manager

**Red Cross** Fabian Arellano, National Society Officer  
Karla Morizzo, IFRC Officer

**Inst. Juan XXIII /CAFOD**  
Lucila Cuadra, Programme Officer

**World Vision** Roger Araica, Bayardo Figuero, Eduardo Morales

**CARE**, John Verkamp, Jose Toruño, Oscar Chavarria, Dr. Ezekiel Provedor,  
Nhuyen Baca Navarro

**Christian Aid**

**COOP. ACHUAPA** Nicholas Hoskyns, Brigido Sosa, Steve Hensen

## HONDURAS

**Agua Para El Pueblo** Jacobo Nunez, Programme Director  
(*Christian Aid*) Noemi Espinoza, Project Officer

	Norma Elisa Mejia, Project Officer Daniel, Project Officer
<b><u>CARE</u></b>	Carolina Gamero, Programme Officer Mike Giles, Programme Officer
<b><u>MOPAWI</u></b> <i>(Tearfund)</i>	Osvaldo Munguia, National Director Adalberto Padilla, Programme Officer
<b><u>Merlin</u></b>	Gregoria Flores, Programme Officer
<b><u>OFRANEH</u></b> <i>(Merlin)</i>	Miriam Miranda, Project Officer Teofilo Lacayo, Project Officer Dominga Alvarez, Project Officer
<b><u>Oxfam</u></b>	Sonia Cano, Programme Officer Francis Araiaca, Programme Officer Virgilo Braun, Programme Officer
<b><u>Red Cross</u></b>	John Carver, IFRC Officer Marco Honorato, National Society Officer
<b><u>Save the Children</u></b>	David Throp, Programme Officer
<b><u>Trocaire</u></b> <i>(CAFOD)</i>	Sally O'Neil, Country Officer Laura Guzman, Housing Programme Officer
<b><u>Tearfund</u></b>	Nicole Wanner, County Officer Chet Thomas, Programme Officer
<b><u>World Vision</u></b>	Ralph Merriam, Programme Officer

**ANNEX No.6: DEC Appeal Financial Analysis Tables**

**Annex 6a. Expenditure Report on Funding During the Initial 6 Month Period**

AGENCY	COUNTRY of Operation	ACTIVITIES	BENEFICIARIES (Approx. No. of People)	A	B	A+B
				SUM RECEIVED £	REPORTED EXPENDITURE £	VARIATIONS £
ActionAid	Guatemala	Food Health WatSan Housing Agric. Inputs Shelter	45,534	(377,254)	377,302	48
BRCS	Honduras Nicaragua Guatemala El Salvador	Food Ag. aid Kitchen sets Hygiene sets Clothes	420,000	(1,904,000)	1,785,000	(119,000)
CAFOD	Honduras Nicaragua Guatemala El Salvador	Housing Latrines Agriculture Food Security	25,000	(526,400)	493,500	(32,900)
CARE	Honduras Nicaragua	Housing Infrastructure Water	Hon.1,200 Nic. 5,300	(655,200)	634,277	(20,923)
Christian Aid	Honduras Nicaragua Guatemala El Salvador	Health Food Housing Infrastructure Shelter WatSan	991,796	(913,500)	913,500	0
CCF GB	Nicaragua	Food Medicine Clothing Water	19,000	(63,000)	60,257	(2,743)
Merlin	Honduras	Health Water	35,600	(156,800)	147,000	(9,800)
Oxfam	Honduras Nicaragua Guatemala El Salvador	Health Food Shelter WatSan Training Housing	319,021	(3,378,991)	3,397,612	18,621
SCF	Honduras	Health Food Water Security	663,000	(1,890,000)	1,890,647	647
Tearfund	El Salvador Honduras	Water Health Food Hsehold items Transport Agriculture Shelter Clothing	314,000	(259,885)	262,040	2,155
World Vision	Nicaragua Honduras	Health Housing	Nic. 7,000 Hond. 450	(285,825)	279,305	(6,520)

\* Agencies have been notified by the DEC Secretariat of where there has been under or over reporting in respect of the initial 6 month expenditure period. They have been asked to account for any discrepancies in their second 'Declaration of Expenditure' due in mid March 2000. Under reporting generally relates to the fifth disbursement which happened too late to allow it to be included in some of the agencies first 6 month expenditure period.

## Annex 6b: Cost Effectiveness

### **i. Global Figures**

1. The Agencies provided with the largest shares of the total DEC Central American Appeal funds were Oxfam (32.46%), The Save the Children Fund (18.15%) British Red Cross (18.29%), and Christian Aid (8.77%). These agencies accounted for nearly 78 per cent of DEC funding. CAFOD and CARE each spent around five per cent of the total funds, while the remaining five agencies accounted for just under 11%. Deleted: 8.34
2. Of the four agencies receiving the largest share of DEC funding only British Red Cross reported additional sources of funding, through an international appeal of the IFRC during which they raised £19,773,350. DEC contributed to approximately nine per cent of the Red Cross movement's effort in Central America.
3. The distribution of expenditures of these four agencies was as follows:
  - Oxfam covered 11.21% of the total beneficiaries with 33.18% of total DEC funded expenditure in the initial six months.
  - Save the Children aided 23.29% of the total beneficiaries with 18.46% of total DEC funded expenditure in the initial six months.
  - British Red Cross provided aid to 14.75% of the total beneficiaries with 17.43% of total DEC funded expenditure in the initial six months.
  - Christian Aid provided aid to 34.84% of the total number of beneficiaries with 8.92% of total DEC funded expenditure in the initial six months. Strictly speaking these yields are not truly comparable, and they reflect not only different accounting methods but also different intervention strategies. Often the breadth of coverage is a trade-off in terms of the depth and quality of attention given to beneficiaries.
  - Information provided by Oxfam, broken down by country determines the following: Honduras received 48% of Oxfam's total expenditure, followed by Nicaragua with 36%, El Salvador with 3.5% and Guatemala 3%. The remaining 10% was distributed between other countries in the region.Deleted: 2
4. If one were to assume an average of five members per family, the total estimated number of beneficiaries aided by DEC funds would be 2,846,910. This would imply that each received close to £4 based on the funds received in the initial six months of £10,240,440. This figure is comparable to the yearly expenditure in health assistance by most governments in Central America (considered low). However, given the timeframe, one could reach the conclusion that DEC funded agencies reached the total number of beneficiaries over a six-month period, thus duplicating the average expenditures on health. This cost effectiveness is clearly more relevant during the emergency humanitarian aid phase of the DEC appeal, than for the ensuing rehabilitation, reconstruction and restoration of livelihood phase. Deleted: 11,200,000
5. Among the least cost-effective agencies during the DEC Appeal we find CARE which reported the highest cost per beneficiary (£97.58), but considering they focussed on high-cost interventions such as housing, micro-credit and infrastructure, it is understandable. World Vision was the next least cost-effective agency during the DEC Appeal (£37.49/beneficiary), and was also involved in housing projects. In third place, we find CAFOD (£19.74/beneficiary) involved in similar activities as well as job creation. As a whole these three agencies spent only 13.74% of the total DEC funded expenditure in the initial six months. A more refined analysis would possible with more detailed and uniform accounting formats.

### **ii. The limitation of Available Information**



1. With the exception of BRCS, agencies tend to provide aggregated data on total expenditures, without clear indications as to what proportion was utilised and what was returned by the end of the appeal period.
2. Wide-ranging differences in expenditures from one agency to the other are most probably due to: variations in the exchange rate (seldom accounted for), different accounting techniques and reporting formats. These do not necessarily indicate problems in terms of accountability but rather illustrate the degree of uncertainty and the variety of accounting methods used.
2. The financial information made available in the agency reports is usually found in a highly aggregate form, which does not lend itself easily to an analysis by country, phase or topic. Whilst expenditures by country can be easily extracted from these reports, the analysis by topic, activity sector or by phase is made difficult by the way figures are grouped. This constitutes a serious limitation for determining the cost effectiveness of the DEC funded activities.
3. The estimates of numbers of beneficiaries do not distinguish between direct and indirect beneficiaries of the channelled aid, nor do they allow for comparisons between its effect on women and men, elderly and young. There does not seem to be a uniform criterion between agencies in terms of defining what constitutes a beneficiary, a crucial indicator for any evaluation.
4. Overall, the ECA evaluation team found that there were no common criteria or similar formats in the financial reporting between different agencies. This makes comparisons tenuous at best, and does not allow for a reliable analysis of different aid costing from one agency to the next, from one country to the next. A similar figure could be construed differently when considered by one agency or another.
5. The ECA evaluation team generated a table providing total costs by agency per beneficiary (see table below). The figures can only be considered as indicative, due to major differences in accounting procedures. It is also important to remember that funding in itself did not save lives, and the quality of the aid received was not necessarily a function of the amount of funds disbursed. The Evaluation Team based its impact assessment on both local workshops with beneficiaries and field visits to verify DEC funded infrastructure. Overall, it is clear that the expenditures had a direct effect, in the field, although longer term cost effectiveness are still unfathomable.
6. The information processed was compiled on the basis of major assumptions in order to allow for some significant analysis. Improved and more uniform reporting would no doubt go a long way in improving future cost effectiveness analysis of DEC funded initiatives.

### **iii. Recommendations for Future Accounting**

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In sum, the ECA evaluation team proposes the following steps for improving the agencies' financial and cost reports in future DEC funded projects. In order to take into account the effects described above, the agencies' financial and cost reports should provide:

- The total DEC funds spent at the end of the 6 month expenditure period to be evaluated.
- The currency in which these funds were nominated. Presumably, DEC funds were nominated in £ but we do not know if DEC had also accounts in US\$ for these operations.
- The overhead charged by the DEC Secretariat in such a way that we can know the funds in hard currency effectively received by the agencies operating in the field.
- A brief description of the money transfer mechanisms used between London and the agencies. A brief description of the money transfer mechanisms used between the agencies and the partners.
- Explicit information about the exchange rates applied in each case.
- Explicit information about currency in which the agencies maintained the funds received, and the currency in which the partners actually spent the money, presumably local currency.
- Information regarding the unit prices of key inputs purchased by the partners.
- Information regarding the physical quantities of key inputs purchased.

#### SUMS SPENT & BENEFICIARIES ASSISTED IN INITIAL SIX MONTH PERIOD

AGENCY	AGENCY EXPENDITURE		BENEFICIARIES	£/BENEFICIARY
	% of total	£		
ActionAid	3.68%	377,302	45,534	£ 8.28
British Red Cross	17.43%	1,785,000	420,000	£ 4.25
CAFOD	4.82%	493,500	25,000	£ 19.74
CARE International UK	6.19%	634,277	6,500	£ 97.58
Christian Aid	8.92%	913,500	991,796	£ 0.92
Christian Children's Fund of GB	0.59%	60,257	19,000	£ 3.17
Merlin	1.44%	147,000	35,600	£ 4.13
Oxfam	33.18%	3,397,612	319,021	£ 10.65
Save the Children	18.46%	1,890,647	663,000	£ 2.85
Tearfund	2.56%	262,040	314,000	£ 0.83
World Vision	2.73%	279,305	7,450	£ 37.49
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10,240,440</b>	<b>2,846,901</b>	<b>£ 3.60</b>

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SOURCE: DEC agencies' "7<sup>th</sup> Month Declarations of Expenditure"

## List of Acronyms

ACTIONAID	ActionAid UK
ADEJUC	Alianza para el Desarrollo Juvenil Comunitario
ASP	Agriculture Support Program of the Red Cross
ARI	Acute respiratory infections
BPE	Beneficiary Participatory Evaluation
BRCs	The British Red Cross Society
CA	Central America
CAFOD	CAFOD UK
CAPRI	Centre for Supporting Programmes and Projects
CASM	Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (Honduras)
CEM-H	Women's Study Centre (Honduras)
CARE	Care International UK
CCD	Christian Commission for Development (Honduras)
CCF	Christian Children's Fund of GB
ChAID	Christian Aid
CEPAL	Comisión Económica para América Latina
COPECO	Comité Permanente de Contingencias (Honduran Civil Defense Committee)
CONIC	Indigenous and Peasant National Coordination (Guatemala)
CORDES	Foundation for Cooperation & Community Development of El Salvador.
CSJB	Centro San Juan Bosco, Honduras
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DMT	Disaster Management Teams of the United Nations System
ECA	Espacios Consultores Asociados
ECATEAM	Multidisciplinary teams of consultants (ECA)
ER	Expected Results (Terms of Reference)
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INETER	Nicaraguan Institute of Territorial Studies
MERLIN	Medical Emergency Relief International
PROFEHSAC	Community Women's Health Group
ODECO	Organización de Desarrollo Étnico Comunitaria
OFDA	Office for Foreign Disasters Assistance, USA
OXFAM	OXFAM UK
SCF	The Save the Children Fund
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TEARFUND	Tearfund UK
TROCAIRE	Irish Catholic Agency for World Development
USAID	U.S. Agency International Development
USGS	U.S. Geological Service
WV	World Vision UK

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