

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

*Thanks to more than 40 years in emergency management on the global level, WFP has extensive experience that benefits the most vulnerable populations in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, helping them mitigate and adapt to climate change.*

Latin America and the Caribbean is a region prone to natural disasters, and annually faces recurring threats of droughts, floods, frosts, earthquakes, high tides, and hurricanes. In the last 10 years, natural disasters have left a toll of 45,000 dead, 40 million affected, and damages exceeding 32 billion dollars.

Global climate change implies that in the next 30 years the frequency and intensity of these natural phenomena will increase. This trend will leave various parts of Latin America and the Caribbean extremely vulnerable to natural disasters.

Additionally, the reduction in rainfall in some areas, a product of climate change, will affect the availability of water sources, agriculture, and forestry in the region. The lack of water resources will impact productivity and food security in some regions and consequently threaten the livelihoods of the most vulnerable. In view of the consequences of these recurrent threats, it is necessary that all actors involved in responding to emergency situations prepare in the most coordinated, timely, and efficient way possible.

For these reasons, the World Food Programme (WFP) created the Latin American and Caribbean Emergency Response Network (LACERN) in 2006 with the support of governments. LACERN has become part of the foundation of an organized structure of emergency preparedness and response in the region, bringing together United Nations agencies, governmental entities, and non-governmental organizations as contributing partners. Thanks to the level of preparation and coordination among partnership facilitated through LACERN, WFP was able to effectively respond to almost 4 million people in emergency situations in the region in 2008.



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# What Resources Do We Have?

WFP's response team is comprised of professionals from our Regional Office and an emergency roster of more than 100 professionals located in 11 WFP National Offices in the region. This network has a facility in Panama, where equipment is stored as well as two sub-regional response centers located in Ecuador and El Salvador. These centers maintain stocks of non-perishable foods, with supplies ready to be transported and distributed to any location in the region in the least time possible.

WFP's Humanitarian Response Depot, located in Panama, also allows us to deploy equipment and other essential supplies from other United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations with which we coordinate.

We have an extensive knowledge of food supply chains and have made exhaustive analyses of input purchase capacity in the region. During recent years, we have trained more than 120 governmental institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean in the management and storage of large quantities of food and we have worked closely with different governments in the region to develop analytical maps of food vulnerability.

We know preparation is the best strategic defense against natural disasters. Because of this, we constantly monitor all natural events occurring in the region on a daily basis, with the objective of analyzing and sharing this information with our partners and designing strategies for risk and impact mitigation. We have also designed instruments that allow us to plan and prepare for necessary steps in reducing emergency risks, such as the Early Alert System for Central America ([www.satcaweb.org](http://www.satcaweb.org)), created by El Salvador Country Office of the World Food Programme in collaboration with national, regional, and international scientific institutions and other partners.

Today, all of these tools, added to more than 40 years of experience in the management of humanitarian responses to emergencies caused by natural disasters or human actions, allow WFP to ensure that we can respond to urgent situations within a period no greater than 72 hours after a disaster occurs. This response includes the provision of food and non-food articles as well as coordination of services with partners in the humanitarian field.

## LACERN: Humanitarian Response Centers



The Centers of Humanitarian Response, located in Ecuador and El Salvador, have been established by WFP with governments to strengthen capacity for rapid humanitarian response to emergencies that may arise in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The strategic location of these centers allows WFP to coordinate with the governments to provide efficient assistance to populations affected by emergencies, whether they be the floods or hurricanes that commonly impact Central America and the Caribbean or the frosts, landslides, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions that are more prevalent in Andean countries.

The logistics services offered by Regional Centers of Emergency Response in Ecuador and El Salvador are:

- A physical space for secure storage.
- Storage services.
- Reception/delivery acceptance, inspection, maintenance, management, and load consolidation services.
- Customs services for importing and exporting goods.
- Preparation for transport (by land, air, and sea).
- Execution of rapid response logistics operations in all of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Training centers.



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