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Coordinating Office

Alert

Nepal – No. 38/2008

Floods - Western region

Geneva, 22 September 2008

Brief description of the emergency

As reported by ACT member, The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), floods and landslides triggered by incessant rain since Friday (19th September 2008) have left more than 33 people dead in mid- and far-western regions of Nepal. Kailali, Kanchanpur and Doti districts (far-west Nepal) have been severely affected. Flooding has affected 42 Village Development Committees (VDCs) and two municipalities of Kailali district, and four VDCs and one municipality of Kanchanpur district. Out of 42 inundated VDCs in Kailali district more than one dozen VDCs of south-east Kailali have been badly affected. Similarly, flood and landslide incidents are also recorded in Doti, Dadeldhura, Dang, Bardiya, Salyan and Gulmi districts. These floods follow severe flooding in the eastern part of the country in August when the Koshi River embankment was breached (ACT Alert 32 and RRF21/2008)

Impact

The floods have caused significant damage to lives, livelihoods and infrastructure. The far-western region of the country is cut off from the rest of the country due to damage of the east-west national highway in many places. Many of the feeder roads and embankments were also swept away. Drinking water and electricity supplies, schools and public buildings have collapsed. Many private houses, property, domestic animals and standing crops have been washed away. According to the national news media reports, thousands of people have been directly affected and displaced.

ACT is a global alliance of churches and related agencies working to save lives and support communities in emergencies worldwide.

The ACT Coordinating Office is based with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Switzerland.

National response

The Ministry of Home Affairs, through a press release, made a commitment to carrying out an immediate and coordinated rescue and relief operation in the flood and landslide-affected areas.

The Meteorology Department of the Government of Nepal has made a forecast that the far-western region will receive heavy rainfall on 22 September. Another system from the Bay of Bengal is likely to trigger floods and landslides in the mid-western region, according to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

ACTIONS TO DATE AND EMERGENCY NEEDS

LWF Nepal mobilized its rapid assessment team in the affected area, including the Kailali district where LWF has long-term development programmes. Most of the inundated area is still inaccessible. District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC) Chair, Kshetra Bahadur Bhandari, reported that rescue attempts have failed because of continuous rain and hostile weather. Helicopters sent by the government for rescue operations and to drop relief materials were not able to land due to the lack of dry ground. Most of the people were seen on the roofs of their houses.

Local organizations, international non-governmental organizations, UN agencies and government officials have started to organize their relief operations. Because of bad weather and inaccessibility to the affected locations, rescue and relief could not be started until yesterday, 21 September. In the coordination meeting called by the Kailali District Disaster Relief Committee, attended by LWF Nepal, it was confirmed that locally available resources could not meet the immediate needs of the flood survivors. The coordination meeting requested ACT-LWF Nepal assistance in the provision of food and non-food items.

The ACT Coordinating Office in Geneva has received a request for ACT Rapid Response funding of up to US \$60,000 from LWF which will be transferred within the next 48 hours for life-saving assistance in the form of food and basic non-food items, with priority to be given to women, children, disabled persons, and pregnant and lactating mothers.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Jessie Kgoroadira, ACT Finance Officer (jkg@act-intl.org).

Thank you for your attention.

For further information please contact:

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