



World Food Programme

Decision Memorandum

To:	Mr. Jim Harvey Chief of Staff, OED	Date: 04 February 2016
Through:	Mr. Ramiro Lopes da Silva Assistant Executive Director, OS	
	Mr. Finbarr Curran Director Budget and Programming Division, RMB	
From:	Stefano Porretti Director of Emergencies, OSE	

Subject:	Colombia Country Office request for funds allocation from the Immediate Response Account (IRA) for Specific Preparedness Activities.
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Issue

The purpose of this memorandum is to request your approval for an allocation of US\$ 211,111 to support the Colombia Country Office specific preparedness activities in relation to El Niño and the crisis at the northern border to Venezuela.

Background

In Colombia El Niño and the crisis on the northern border with Venezuela are currently presenting Colombia with two humanitarian challenges. El Niño has led to water shortages, drought and forest fires. This is of particular concern in rural communities with access constraints and high poverty rates, being compounded by armed violence, means increase vulnerabilities to large portions of Colombia's population. Additionally the crisis on the northern border with Venezuela has resulted in returnees coming back from Venezuela, which is straining government capacity.

El Niño presents a direct threat and challenge to food security in the South America region as it has been forecasted to be the strongest of its kind in over 35 years. El Niño is expected to reach its maximum intensity between January and May 2016, causing various effects throughout the region.

El Niño is impacting national rainfall and water availability. On January 7th 2016, President Juan Manuel Santos cautioned the country about water shortages and confirmed that forecasts estimate the drought will continue for the next two months. Nationwide Colombia is experiencing 70% less rainfall compared to the historical average. Low rainfall and low water levels are affecting livelihoods, commerce and in regions that rely heavily on rivers effective transportation is being impacted. According to the UNGRD (Colombia's national department for disaster risk management) El Niño has, to date, exacerbated by poor land-use practices in the wake of these conditions, caused 474,194 ha of agricultural land to have diminished production due to dry conditions and 156,081 ha have been directly impacted by forest fires.

The northern border crises with Venezuela can be strongly felt in the Norte de Santander and La Guajira regions. The influx of 22,000 returnees to date is



causing a strain on local resources and response capacities. WFP is leading the coordination of the local humanitarian team to address this crisis.

Activities proposed under this IR-Prep are aimed to enhance government and institutional preparedness to El Niño and the northern border crisis. These activities, agreed upon with the Government of Colombia, are:

1. Enhance government capacity to assess needs in affected territories: WFP Colombia will train local partners in the targeted departments to build their capacity to conduct emergency needs assessments (including EFSA) and market needs assessments. The goal is to empower local actors to enhance the knowledge of needs in affected areas to inform risk management by learning mechanisms to compile and analyze data.
2. Support institutions in the creation of Early Warning Systems: WFP Colombia will train the local disaster management authorities and jointly develop and implement effective early warning systems tailored to El Niño and its impacts on food security. A platform will be developed and will include a monthly coordinated working group at the department level.
3. Strengthen government capacity to conduct contingency plans and risk analyses: Using the knowledge on local risk from the needs assessments and from the implemented EWS, WFP will assess and strengthen government capacity to develop risk analyses and contingency planning and budgets at the departmental and local levels for El Niño and the crisis on the northern border with Venezuela.
4. Develop systems to share knowledge on effective preparedness actions: To develop a strong knowledge sharing network on preparedness, WFP will lead the coordination and provide technical support to the local humanitarian response team. Technical support includes providing IT and logistics assistance to local partners and linking returnees to governmental social protection programmes and resettlement programmes.

The duration of this project will be for 3 months (February 8th 2016 to May 8th 2016). The detailed request from the Colombia Country Office and the budget for preparedness activities are attached.

Recommendation

Having verified that the request conforms to relevant rules and expectations, it is recommended that an IRA allocation of US\$ 211,111, including ISC, be approved to support these specific preparedness activities. Currently there is a balance of US\$ 1,337,634 in the IRA account for Specific Disaster Preparedness Activities.

Decision by the Chief of Staff, OED:

Approve: _____
Disapprove: _____
Discuss with me: _____
Date: _____