



AMERICA/ECUADOR - Thirty victims and thousands displaced because of heavy rains, severe damage to crops

Quito (Agenzia Fides) - Since the beginning of the year, the torrential rains that are hitting Ecuador has devastated 84 000 people, causing the death of 30 people so far, in addition to 4,700 displaced. The statistics of the National Secretariat for Risk Management (Civil Defense) also report the loss of 34 000 hectares of crops, mainly rice and corn, and other damage to 9 000 hectares of land. The worst damage was recorded in the coastal provinces of Guayas and Los Ríos, which along with 4 other provinces are in a total state of emergency because of flooding caused by a strong storm. According to local authorities every 15 days a calculation is carried out to quantify the damage in the six provinces affected by the southern winter rains: El Oro, Manabí, Guayas, Los Ríos, Esmeraldas and Loja. At the same time, once the rain decreases, one tries to coordinate aid for farmers who have lost crops, providing agricultural kits comprising seeds, fertilizers and everything necessary for them to return to sow their fields. In addition, the Civil Defense Service continues to deliver, in the worst affected areas at a national level, food rations and supplies for hygiene and cleanliness. According to the National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (Inamhi) rainfall will continue until next April. Over a hundred homes have been completely destroyed, and the rains have caused landslides and mudslides in most vulnerable areas. The latest weather phenomena, in the Andean province of Cotopaxi, have caused 2 deaths, 10 people injured and 100 others injured. In 2010, deaths due to floods during the winter season were 32 and 34,415 people suffered damage. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 28/3/2012)