



## SITUATION REPORT No. 3

**Country:** Guatemala  
**Date:** 09 September, 2009  
**Event:** Guatemala Declares a State of National Calamity

### 1. BACKGROUND

- On September 8<sup>th</sup>, the Guatemalan Government declared a State of National Calamity in the local media, citing concerns that the food crisis will extend beyond the area known as the Dry Corridor.
- UN Agencies and WFP have been providing assistance for the last three weeks (See under 2. *Operations*).
- The number of children affected by severe acute undernutrition, arriving at the national hospital of Jalapa, has increased to 91 since beginning of August 2009 - three times higher compared with the same months of previous years (2007-08).
- These are not isolated incidents, and cases of severe acute malnourished children – many under six months of age are also reported in the provinces of Jutiapa, Santa Rosa, Zacapa, Chiquimula, El Progreso and Baja Verapaz, (known as the dry corridor of Guatemala). Reportedly 25 children have died so far, but information is still being compiled at the Ministry of Health.
- Previous crop losses (as a result of the Tropical Depression No 16 in October 2008) in the grain-surplus provinces of Peten, Izabal and Alta Verapaz have reduced staple foods in the market and increased prices in local food markets. Prices for grain and black beans are at the same high levels of 2008.
- This situation is likely to deteriorate, because the effects of El Niño have extended the dry spell (more than 27 days now). Furthermore, during this lean season, food stocks at the household level have been reduced considerably.
- This is all happening in a context in which the global economic crisis has reduced remittances, exports, foreign investment, tourism revenues, access to credit, increased the government's budget deficit and unemployment. The combination of these factors is pushing the working poor into the ranks of the hungry poor, in a context of large income disparities and marginalization of the indigenous populations.

## 2. OPERATIONS

### 2.1 Food distribution and monitoring

- WFP, in coordination with other partners, is delivering, 20 mt of High Energy Biscuits (HEB) as follows: Jalapa: 123 communities (8,392 families), Jutiapa 41 Communities (2,296 families). **Total:** 2 Departments, 15 Municipalities, 164 communities and 10,688 families.
- 200 mt of a basic food ration (corn soy blended food, black beans and corn) has been distributed to the beneficiaries in the most affected areas. WFP is monitoring the timely distribution of food. The last 100 mt dispatched were distributed as follows:

2nd Dispatch						Kgs		
Department	Municipalities	Communities	Families	Days	Total Rations	Maize	Beans	CSB
Santa Rosa	11	79	3990	23	90.500		18.100	
			4001	9	36.300			18.150
Chiquimula	6	102	3726	23	84.500		16.900	
			4001	9	36.300			18.150
Baja Verapaz	1	37	1653	5	7.500	15.000		
			2298	9	20.850			10.425
Jutiapa	8	41	722	9	6.550			3.275
		259	20391			15000	35000	50000

- WFP is helping the GoG with the implementation of the Upper-Arm-Circumference (MUAC) methodology to detect children with severe and acute malnutrition.

## 3. PIPELINE

- Vitacereal distribution will stop as of October because of a severe funding shortfall. Donations are urgently needed in order to respond adequately to the current crisis and to overcome the pipeline break of Vitacereal, a fortified food that is provided to 100,000 children under 3 years of age and 50,000 pregnant-lactating women, who are living in 136 communities classified as highly food insecure. WFP estimates \$7 million is required to cover the next 12 months of Vitacereal distribution and an estimated \$10 million are required to cover a Food for Work, blanket distribution program.

## 4. COORDINATION

- UNETE Agencies met to coordinate actions. WFP and UN Agencies are preparing a Flash Appeal while we wait for the official request from the government.