



SDC's Rapid Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador

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Context

On March 11 WHO declares COVID-19 a Global Pandemic. As COVID-19 cases increased, countries proceeded to declare a state of emergency with measures to control (internally and at borders) people, to contain its spread. Initially for several weeks, and then increasing for additional weeks, which in some cases lasting until June.

In the Andean Region, the health crisis highlighted the lack of biosecurity protocols, as well as deficiencies in health systems, which in certain regions collapsed. On the other hand, the COVID-19 eroded countries with fragile policies and economies; the restrictive containment measures implemented had a direct impact on their economies, especially on the informal sector, to which Venezuelan migrants are added, exacerbating the situation of vulnerability.

Despite the health, financial and social support actions focused on the most vulnerable populations and the gradual economic reactivation measures implemented by the governments of the region, unmet humanitarian needs have been identified in aspects of food security, water and sanitation, health prevention, shelter and protection.

Against this background, SDC's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Rapid Response (RR) Hub in Lima, in consultation with its networks and partners in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, mapped out the priority demands of these countries, in order to design a humanitarian assistance programme that would help save lives and alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable. This action is being carried out through four interventions in the areas of i) food security, ii) biosecurity in shelters, iii) hospital care, iv) water and sanitation, and capacity building in water and sanitation in municipal technical areas.

Swiss Government Support for the international response

In a spirit of solidarity, Switzerland responded quickly and effectively, making strategic adjustments to its ongoing programmes and taking measures - in several countries - to alleviate the economic and social effects of the pandemic.

To date, the SDC has contributed CHF 101.42 million to the fight against COVID-19 from the existing budgets of its Humanitarian Aid, Bilateral Development Cooperation and Global Cooperation programmes.

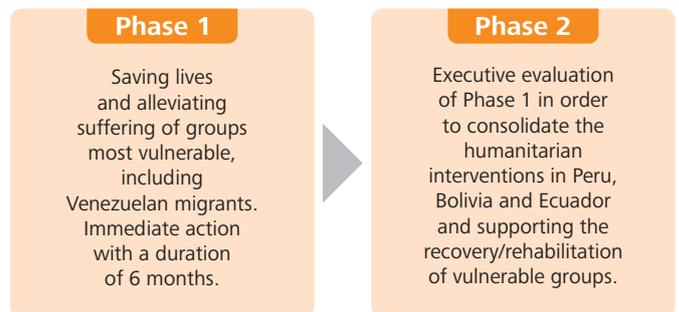
On 29 April, the Federal Council approved an additional CHF 400 million to support international action against the pandemic by distributing an interest-free loan of CHF 200 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross, CHF 25 million to a rapid credit line of the International Monetary Fund, and CHF 175 million for humanitarian aid, the development and production of diagnostics, therapies and vaccines, and for efforts to ensure equitable access to these medical solutions at the global level.



SDC support in the Andean region

Switzerland focuses its support on three countries in the region, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, with which it has been working for more than four decades. It makes financial contributions to leading organisations active in the humanitarian field, which have a contractual relationship with the SDC in Lima, strengthening institutional relations and expressing the commitment and solidarity of the Swiss Confederation. It is worth noting the strategic role that the Swiss Embassies in the region will play in supporting the Lima Hub for the implementation of the response actions, in particular in Ecuador and Bolivia.

The actions of the Lima Hub, within the framework of COVID-19, are articulated in two phases:



For Phase 1, the SDC contribution was CHF 180,000 (50,000 for Bolivia, 50,000 for Ecuador and 79,000 for Peru). The interventions responded to priority and urgent demands in these countries; and resource mobilization was carried out through reorientation and realignment of the project portfolio, and its approach was subsidiary to SDC's overall multilateral HA contribution in response to the pandemic.

For Phase 2, SDC has provided new support to the National Civil Defense Institute - INDECI, with a donation of humanitarian material. In addition, a complementary phase of consolidation of the ongoing actions is being evaluated for Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.

PERU

Intervention axis Strengthening the logistics and humanitarian supply chain of INDECI

The food security of 10,000 families (50% Venezuelan migrants) will benefit from logistical support to INDECI to strengthen its response to the COVID-19 Emergency in Peru. The action will last six months and the SDC's contribution is 70,000 Swiss francs. It will be implemented through the World Food Programme in Peru.



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Intervention axis Training MTA personal in water and sanitation in the context of COVID-19

Municipal Technical Areas, Water Boards and rural households at the national level will be strengthened on water and sanitation issues with emphasis on response to COVID-19. The action will last 3 months and will be implemented by the Condon de Plata Foundation. The SDC contribution is 9,000 Swiss francs.



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Intervention axis Support for purchasing protection and hygiene materials and equipment for INDECI staff

In addition to SDC's support for the humanitarian response actions of the Civil Defence Institute (INDECI), for strengthening the supply chain of humanitarian goods in Peru, the Swiss government donated protection and hygiene materials and equipment to INDECI, to reinforce the protection of its personnel and to guarantee that they can continue their activities in response to COVID-19 safely. The materials and equipment were purchased in Switzerland through the SDC's Humanitarian Aid team.

The donation consists of a list of supplies to cover the priority protection needs of INDECI personnel working in Air Group No. 8, in charge of government flights and land transport, and for personnel who prepare humanitarian kits and distribute food to people affected by COVID-19. The materials also include tents, stretchers and other supplies for the sanitation and disinfection of work places and for chlorinating water.

It is important to mention that the donation of this humanitarian material is part of a strategic operation of Swiss Humanitarian Aid, which took advantage of a fourth humanitarian flight for repatriating Swiss citizens stranded in Peru by the Edelweiss carrier.



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The materials and equipment donated include masks, protective gloves, disposable safety suits, safety glasses, spraying equipment – manual (Type RPD 15 PB1) and electric (Type REB 15 Ac1), and tents, stretchers and WATA (Standard, Plus and Midi). This was a donation of USD 89'000 with a weight of 5 tons

The materials and equipment that were donated to INDECI were brought over on this flight, which arrived in Peru on 1 July.

The success of this humanitarian aid operation was made possible by the swift and effective collaboration between the headquarters in Berne, the Hub in Lima and INDECI. They organised and coordinated the operation in record time, overcoming the logistical and administrative challenges posed by the COVID-19 health emergency.

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