**THE DANISH EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND**

**ALERT NOTE**

**Section A: Basic information**

| Organisation: | DIB (Dansk International Bosætningsservice), Denmark  Fundación Teko Kavi, Bolivia |
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| Title of alert: | Forest fires and humanitarian needs in Bolivia |
| Type of crisis: | * *spike in protracted humanitarian crisis (Section D)* |

**Section D: Spike in a protracted humanitarian crisis**

| d.1 Bolivia, forest fires in the lowlands and smoke severely affecting the departments of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando, and La Paz, where 28 municipalities are in a declared disaster situation.  This specific Alert Note will only include information on Bolivia, but other Amazon basin countries such as Peru and Brazil are facing similar problems.  d.2 Forest fires are destroying homes and livelihoods of people and animals alike. In Bolivia, as per September 11th, 3,872,498 hectares (nearly the size of Denmark) have been affected, of which 59.4% correspond to Santa Cruz Department and 37.7% to Beni Department, according to official numbers. However, non-governmental organisations estimate that more than 5 million hectares have been affected in the departments of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando and the north of La Paz.  On September 19th, the Forest Monitoring System (SIMB) reported 16,769 heat sources, with more than 80% in the department of Santa Cruz, while the database from FAN estimates 33,759 as of September 23rd (see h)). According to the Vice Ministry of Civil Defence, on September 17th, 64 municipalities are affected; 28 have been declared in disaster and 4 in emergency.  The populations of these areas are very exposed to the dangers of the fire itself, but also the loss of livelihood, burn and smoke-induced health issues. Especially rural and indigenous populations are facing these risks while also lacking access to first aid, health services, food items, etc.  d.3 The Bolivian government officially on 8th of September declared National Emergency, asking the international community for assistance regarding firefighting. The government has been supported volunteer firefighters and given some humanitarian assistance, reaching roughly 27,000 persons. Official numbers state that roughly 250,000 people have been affected, losing their homes, subsistence farms, having to evacuate or by smoke-induced health issues. It is estimated that at least 10 million animals have died and 400 million trees have burned.  Smoke from the fires is affecting the air quality, causing respiratory problems and other health issues in the local population, especially children, young women and elderly. Fx in the town of Cobija, Pando, air quality scored 435 on a scale where >300 is “extremely bad”, according to the Bolivian Ministry of Health (see e)). Bolivia, with a population of approx. 12 mio., is the poorest country in South America, and is also facing an economic and political crisis. The loss of livelihoods for vulnerable populations such as indigenous people and other rural populations is felt even more during this economic crisis, not to mention the lack of access to goods and services.  UNICEF, UNCHOA, UNDP, Red Cross, Save the Children, World Vision are assisting with firefighting, water tanks, drones for monitoring, first aid, and shelter.  a)<https://www.mindef.gob.bo/node/1027>  b)<https://reliefweb.int/report/bolivia-plurinational-state/estado-plurinacional-de-bolivia-informe-de-situacion-no2-incendios-forestales-al-19-de-septiembre-de-2024>  c)<https://www.paho.org/es/documentos/informe-situacion-2-incendios-forestales-bolivia-septiembre-2024>  d)<https://www.minsalud.gob.bo/8300-gobierno-nacional-emite-alerta-sanitaria-nacional-para-precautelar-la-salud-de-la-poblacion-ante-la-contaminacion-ambiental>  e)Alerta Sanitaria, Ministerio de Salud (pdf)  f)<https://elmundo.com.bo/situacion-critica-en-pando-la-calidad-de-aire-es-extremadamente-mala/>  g)<https://sissa.crc-sas.org/blog/2024/05/14/el-nino-en-bolivia-un-fenomeno-cada-vez-mas-impredecible/>  h)<https://incendios.fan-bo.org/Satrifo/plataforma/>  d.3.1 El Niño brought record-breaking temperatures for the first four months of 2024, and according to Servicio Nacional de Meteorología e Hidrología (SENAMHI) in Bolivia, the rain during these months could not overcome the drought from this El Niño (see g)), The dry conditions built over this period of time has made the wildfires in the lowlands of Bolivia intensify since around July, and the destructive effects of these have only increased since, with no real response from the government until September 8th.  d.3.2. On 8th of September, the Bolivian government - through the Ministry of Defence - declared national emergency, opening up for regional and international assistance to combat the fires (see a)), while on September 7th declaring sanitary alert - through the Ministry of Health - as the smoke from the fires is affecting people’s health in many areas (see d)).  d.3.3. DERF support is crucial in saving lives and livelihoods of affected and vulnerable communities, providing affected communities with the resources and support necessary to survive and recover.  **Shelter**: Communication channels and evacuation alerts + follow-up with displaced persons.  **WASH**: Drinking water supply and repair of water pumps for municipalities in disaster situation.  **Health**: Water supply for health posts, medicine for IRAs, lung diseases, eye infections, etc.  **Early recovery**: As fires are still active, the needs of families should be monitored and those who have lost homes and livelihoods helped.  **Food Security**: Seeds and fodder for subsistence farming and livelihood recuperation.  d.4 Near San Antonio de Lomerío, in Concepción and Monte Verde, fires are out of control. The Indigenous Central of Native Communities of Lomerío (CICOL) monitors the fires in the 29 indigenous communities, while the Municipal Government of Lomerío receives government support. Health problems are increasing for the families, and water supply is insufficient as the rivers have dried out due to drought. FTK already supports the organisation of women in Lomerío in subsistence farming and provision of water tanks, which are now needed more than ever. |
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