

EL SALVADOR 2001 EARTHQUAKE

General Background 1

- With only 19,000km² and 6.2 millions inhabitants El Salvador is the most densely populated country of America (292.5/km² / 5 times the Central America average).
- Close to 2 millions Salvadorians live abroad
- In the last two hundred years it lost 98% of its original forestry .
- Host 28 volcanoes, half considered active.
- Several geodesic failures produce frequent earthquakes.
- Share the hurricane basin of the east pacific and the Caribbean.
- Poor in natural resources, is a net importer of food
- Salvadorians are recognized as a hard worker, self sufficient and stubborn.

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General Background 2



- 1978-92 a cruel civil war killed more than 125,000 people and ravaged the economy and major infrastructures.

- 1986 a severe Earthquake hit San Salvador, more than 40 thousand houses destroyed.



- 1998 hurricane Mitch produced serious floods, killing 250 people and affecting the most successful experiences of the post conflict reintegration process.

- 2001 in 30 days two major earthquakes (7.9 & 6.6 Richter), affected 85% of the national territory



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Institutional Setup on the Response

- UN Humanitarian Coordinator and UNCT, efficiently managed relief response efforts.
- ECLAC & IFIs led assessment processes.
- UN Country Team developed its Reconstruction Strategy after Donors conference.
- Governmental structures adjusted their reconstruction strategies to expected donors funding. Strong advisory role from IFIs and some donors.
- UN specialized Agencies, develop closed linkages with local structures and civil society.
- Donor community become strategic partner of the UN, to address missing gaps of the recovery and reconstruction.

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Addressing Risks and Vulnerabilities

- **Social Vulnerabilities:** vulnerable groups are more exposed to the risks, i.e. children, women head households, youth, unemployed, recovery and reconstruction could revert this processes.
- Economic damages are not self-evident. Informal economic activities are both the origin of major vulnerabilities as well as one of the most affected compartments, yet “less visible”.
- Reconstruction should contribute to enable local economic environment for livelihood recovery
- Quick impact responses, could contribute to convince reconstruction actors and mainstream strategic recommendations.

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Lessons Learns

- Impacts assessment led by ECLAC, with other UN agencies and IFIs, heavily concentrated on physical losses and macroeconomic impacts.
- UN Country Team Response Strategy, formulated too late to influence the process of the reconstruction conference.
- Donors Community defined their support strategies on the basis of proposals submitted in the Reconstruction Conference.
- Lack of operational coordination in recovery and reconstruction, reduced efficiency and effectiveness, principally with regard to major vulnerabilities.
- **RE**-construction many times led to reproduce factors of vulnerability, increasing risks, principally not addressing the informal world .
- Employment recovery was not directly targeted. Vulnerability reduction and the employment dimension of the recovery process should be addressed simultaneously.



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