

## RECENT FLOODS

This list was extracted from United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs situation reports and disaster assessment team reports for the first six months of 1997. DHA reports on disasters only if the government requests assistance from the United Nations system, so this list concerns mainly developing countries. Even so, the list of eleven flood incidents in just six months gives a graphic account of the frequency with which floods strike. The reports are prepared during the event when reliable information is still hard to come by and very patchy, but they report that about 300 people died from floods and 4.3 million were affected by them.

### Malawi, January-February 1997

Flooding following heavy rains in the Lower Shire Valley. 102,500 people in need of immediate food assistance. This storm also appears to have struck Mozambique, see next entry.

### Mozambique, January-February 1997

Heavy rain from mid-January caused severe floods in central and north-western Mozambique. 35 deaths, 400,000 affected. Appeal for food, medicine, seeds and funds for transport of emergency items and rehabilitation of roads and bridges.

### Bolivia, February 1997

Torrential rains affected a large part of the country with several rivers above bank level, damaging houses, roads, crops and cattle. 80,000 people affected. Food and medicine requested.

### Ecuador, March 1997

Abnormal rains causing serious flooding in a large part of the country. 80 per cent of Guayaquil (pop. 2 million) flooded to depths of 0.6 m to 1.5 m. Sixteen dead and 11 missing, 136 houses destroyed. Approx. 100 km of road damaged, 1,000 ha of crops damaged.

### Afghanistan, April & May 1997

Flooding in the Northern Region, 300 km north-east of Kabul, with several rivers over their banks. World Food Programme provided 500 t of wheat and other food.

### Bangladesh, May 1997

Tropical cyclone with winds up to 200 km/h. The storm surge hit at low tide, which reduced the damage. Many lives saved by use of cyclone shelters. Preliminary estimates of damage: 95 dead, over 2 million affected, 500,000 houses damaged.

### China, May 1997

Heavy rainfall (500-year return period) on 8 and 9 May in Guangdong Province. 110 deaths, 21 missing, 77,000 people evacuated, 19,000 houses destroyed. Total direct economic loss US\$ 160 million.