

CRS launches \$11 million appeal

As roads are repaired and communications restored, Baltimore-based Catholic Relief Services (CRS), in coordination with its local Church partner, Caritas Peru, continues to deliver life-saving supplies to families affected by the worst earthquake to hit Peru in 30 years.

The agency has already committed an initial \$100,000 and is seeking an additional \$1.4 million to support Caritas Peru's response and reconstruction efforts. The appeal is part of a larger Caritas Confederation effort to raise \$11 million for immediate relief and long-term recovery, which would ultimately help some 50,000 people.

The powerful 8.0-magnitude earthquake that hit Peru on Aug. 15 toppled homes, churches and buildings and was felt from the earthquake's epicenter in the Department of Ica to the capital city Lima, more than 100 miles away.

More than 85,000 people are now homeless and 35,000 homes have been destroyed or damaged.

CRS immediately responded by providing food, water, shelter, blankets, and cooking and hygiene kits to some 10,000 people in Ica, the region in Peru's southern desert that was hardest hit by the quake. Many of CRS staff members in Peru and across South America have supported this effort.

"The people most affected by the earthquake are some of the poorest to begin with," said Aaron Skrocki, CRS Emergency Coordinator in South America. "The earthquake has taken what was already a difficult situation and made it worse. That is where Catholic Relief Services comes in. We are there to support the local Church helping people get back on their feet and regain their lives as quickly as possible."

Traveling through Chincha, Ica, and Pisco, the three cities nearest the quake's epicenter, Skrocki and a CRS - Caritas assessment team found widespread destruction in the poorer rural areas where homes are made of adobe. Initial relief efforts were hampered due to the condition of the roads. In addition, already fragile potable water and irrigation systems were destroyed by the tremor. Restoring the

systems over the next several months will be critical in allowing people to return to farming the land and watering their livestock.

Caritas has set up its main centers of operations in Pisco, Cañete, Ica and Chinca, where hundreds of volunteers are helping with aid distributions and other activities.