



4 June 2014. A United Nations team of experts says that a massive reconstruction, recovery and clean-up effort is needed in response to the unprecedented [floods](#) that hit Serbia in mid-May.

In a [report](#) delivered to the government of Serbia today, the experts warn of health risks from stagnant water, potential risk to the environment and damage to agriculture, in addition to destruction of houses and infrastructure.

The experts from [UNDAC](#) (UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination) arrived in Serbia within 36 hours of the floods to assess the damage done by the floods, the biggest natural disaster in the region in 120 years, which cost 34 persons their lives and displaced 30,000 people in Serbia alone.

The report reflects the situation, as it was during their visits on the ground in Serbia, 18-31 May, but the condition of houses and road and energy infrastructure will have to be assessed further once the water has receded completely.

Ms. Irena Vojackova-Sollorano, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Serbia, handed the expert's report today over to the Government of Serbia.

"This report is a starting point," says Ms. Vojackova-Sollorano. "I am looking forward to work

with the Government of Serbia, the European Union and the World Bank on a more thorough assessment of the longer term needs of Serbia. which will be done in the so called [PDNA](#) (Post Disaster Needs Assessment). The report we handed over today is an important contribution to the recovery efforts.”



The Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNA) commits the government of Serbia and the international institutions to develop a common approach to recovery planning and will give a clearer picture of the financial costs of the recovery effort.

The French government has offered to host a Donor Conference for the three Balkan countries hit by the floods, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia More than 70,000 people had to be evacuated in the three countries and more than 50 lost their lives.

According to the [Red Cross](#) 1.2 million people or 22% of the population of Serbia have been affected by the floods. It estimates the cost of recovery efforts to be \$1.2 billion.

In their report on the situation in Serbia the UN team of experts warns of potential health problems associated with stagnant water and blocked sewage systems.

”It is a problem, which will remain until the Sava river goes further down,” explains UNDAC team leader Michael Elmquist. ”The underground water level has risen as a consequence of the floods and that takes long time to go down again. The sewage systems can’t be operational until you get rid of the water, so unfortunately it is going very slowly now. It will take some time.”

The experts are also worried about sanitary and septic waste that has washed out of containment and has potentially entered downstream water sources.

The report says that potential dangers to the environment, have been identified, including danger of leakage of chemical waste, which need further assessment and monitoring.

Agriculture is seriously affected and small-scale farmers need support with seed, fertilizer and production equipment for next year.

Landslides have to be further assessed and attention needs to be given to more landslides that can potentially bring lives at risk by destroying houses.

Affected [populations](#) are exposed to the adversities and stress of the situation and are suffering from the adverse conditions in collective accommodation centers. Industries and

businesses have had to close due to the flooding and as a consequence tens of thousands of people have lost their jobs, at least temporarily.

"Serbia is confronted, with serious challenges," says Michael Elmquist, the UNDAC team leader. "Infrastructure has been seriously damaged so just restoring transportation throughout the country is going to be a major financial problem. But in addition to that there is a lot of people, who are personally affected by the disaster; people whose houses have been flooded; people whose houses have been destroyed by landslides or by the flash floods and farmers who have lost all of this year's harvest."

For the full UNDAC Report, please follow the link: <http://bit.ly/1o9pqaK>