



Humanitarian Action for Children



Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin America and the Caribbean region is characterized by high rates of inequality. The gaps between growth rates and institutional capacities often mean that institutions serving the most vulnerable populations are poorly resourced, and that child poverty rates are falling more slowly than for the general population. The region was affected by various crises in 2016. More than 12.5 million people¹ were affected by natural disasters,² including the earthquake in Ecuador³ and two hurricanes.⁴ In Haiti and Cuba, 1.4 million people⁵ and 660,000 people,⁶ respectively, are in urgent need of assistance. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, more than 700,000 people have been affected by drought.⁷ The region is the epicentre of the Zika outbreak, with more than 2,160 confirmed cases of congenital Zika syndrome in 13 countries.⁸ Economic crises and violence remain integral to the regional picture, with both the economic and political crises in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and violence and forced migration in the northern triangle of Central America and Mexico continuing to generate humanitarian consequences. Across the region, climate change and its impacts represent both immediate and long-term threats to regional prosperity.

Regional humanitarian strategy

In 2017, the UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO) will continue to strengthen regional capacities for preparedness and humanitarian response and promote resilient communities through disaster risk reduction and risk-informed programming. Cooperation among countries will be supported to build capacity and promote the dissemination and use of common tools such as the Protocol for People with Disabilities in Emergencies and the Protocol for the Protection of Children in Emergencies. LACRO will consolidate and expand its ability to respond by investing in field capacity, reinforcing the regional response roster and expanding training and simulation activities. The logistics and supply capacity assessment initiated in 2016 will also be used to reinforce regional response capacity. LACRO will work with partners to align its regional strategy with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and support the implementation of the World Humanitarian Summit commitments and the Grand Bargain framework. National preparedness and responses to the effects of climate change will be improved by strengthening national health and nutrition surveillance capacities, especially in regards to the drought in Central America, particularly Honduras, which has been exacerbated by El Niño / La Niña. LACRO will focus on the development of a social protection framework for emergencies and common strategic actions with programme sections to reinforce capacities for communication, resource mobilization and inter-sectoral work. Finally, LACRO emergency work will make an effort to link upstream policy work with a strong field presence and continuous dialogue and interaction with communities, children and vulnerable populations.

Results in 2016

As of 31 October 2016, UNICEF had received US\$5.16 million against the US\$6.65 million appeal (78 per cent funded).⁹ Over the course of the year, LACRO provided monitoring, technical assistance, oversight and human resource surge to ensure sector coordination and response to emergencies in the region, including the Ecuador earthquake, El Niño and La Niña conditions (drought, heavy rains, flooding and intense storms in numerous countries) and Hurricane Matthew in Haiti and Cuba. UNICEF addressed forced displacements and violence by strengthening coordination mechanisms, implementing information systems and integrating violence prevention with a child protection perspective in education systems. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, UNICEF developed preparedness actions and focused its programme on addressing the impact of the deteriorating socio-economic situation on children. Nineteen country offices participated in a multi-sectoral training and simulation as part of a humanitarian capacity building initiative, which includes the regional rapid response roster and strategic supply planning. These have proven to be key factors contributing to effective emergency response. The Regional Office integrated disaster risk reduction by adapting tools such as the INFORM index at multiple levels and initiating a cross-sectoral approach aligned with the priorities of the Sendai Framework. LACRO is also managing the cross-sectoral/multi-country Zika response cell. Finally, the Regional Office continued to lead the sectoral coordination of humanitarian actions in the region.

Funding requirements

UNICEF is requesting US\$7.2 million for LACRO to sustain and intensify the above-mentioned work. This funding will ensure effective and coordinated response and preparation for ongoing emergencies in the region, including the rapid response roster, and will strengthen UNICEF capacity in the region for disaster risk reduction, resilience building and risk analysis. Funding may also be used to respond to situations in the region that are not specifically included in *Humanitarian Action for Children 2017* and may not benefit from inter-agency flash appeals to respond to small- or medium-scale emergencies. Funding will furthermore be used to improve coordination in areas of UNICEF sector/cluster responsibility, as well as communications, information and knowledge management and advocacy. Finally, funds will be allocated to strengthen implementation of the regional Grand Bargain and the commitments related to the Sendai Framework.

Sector	2017 requirements (US\$)
Emergency preparedness and response	3,500,000
Disaster risk analysis and reduction, resilience building and climate change adaptation	3,000,000
Communication, information and knowledge management	225,000
Cluster/sector coordination and capacity building	475,000
Total	7,200,000

¹ United Nations Children's Fund, *The State of the World's Children 2016: A fair chance for every child*, UNICEF, June 2016.

² Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'LAC Humanitarian Bulletin September – October 2016', OCHA.

³ United States Geological Survey, 'M 7.8 – 27km SSE of Muisne, Ecuador', 16 April 2016, <<https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/eventpage/us20005j32#executive>>, accessed 28 November 2016.

⁴ Tropical Cyclone Matthew made landfall near Les Anglais (south-western Haiti) on 4 October 2016 at 11 a.m. UTC, as a Category 4 hurricane, with maximum sustained winds of 230 kilometres per hour (European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations). See also Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, '2016 Flash Appeal Haiti', OCHA, October 2016.

⁵ United Nations System in Cuba, 'Cuba Plan of Action Response to Hurricane Matthew', OCHA, October 2016.

⁶ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Hurricane Matthew Situation Report No. 2', OCHA, 4 October 2016.

⁷ Pan American Health Organization, 27 October 2016.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Available funds included funding received against the current appeal of US\$3.37 million and the US\$1.79 million carried forward from the previous year.

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