



Humanitarian Action for Children

unicef 

Latin America and the Caribbean

A disaster-prone region, Latin America and the Caribbean was devastated in 2017, with more than 15.6 million people, including 8 million children, affected by natural disasters.¹ Hurricane Irma, the most powerful hurricane ever recorded over the Atlantic, followed by Hurricane Maria, left more than 1.4 million people—one third of them children—in need of humanitarian assistance in Cuba, Haiti and the Eastern Caribbean islands. Two major earthquakes shook Mexico in September, killing hundreds in an area where at least 7 million children live. Several countries in South America, particularly Colombia and Peru, were hit by heavy rains, causing floods and landslides and exacerbating the needs of already vulnerable children and their families. Children in the region have also faced the consequences of organized violence, forced migration and exploitation, with children making up 62 per cent of detected trafficking victims.² Latin America and the Caribbean is also the region most affected by Zika,³ and children are particularly vulnerable to health emergencies such as cholera and yellow fever. Despite significant progress in recent years, the humanitarian situation in 2017 illustrated the importance of strengthening emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction among authorities and partners across the region.

Regional humanitarian strategy

In 2018, UNICEF's Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office will continue to build its capacity and reputation as a reliable and effective partner for governments and humanitarian and development actors. The Regional Office will leverage its proven capacities in all areas of responsibility (water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education, health, nutrition and child protection), and will demonstrate leadership in risk analysis and resilience, with both preparedness and response capacity. A particular focus area will be enhancing human and financial resources, as well as humanitarian supplies and resource mobilization strategies and mechanisms. The Regional Office will consolidate its preparedness and response capacities by investing in field capacity through its regional response roster. Capacities to lead and coordinate preparedness and response across sectors will be enhanced through the identification and training of appropriate human resources, and by advocating for the elaboration and implementation of protocols and guidelines. Evidence gathering will be strengthened to support advocacy, resource mobilization and the collective efforts of the humanitarian community for child-focused preparedness and response. Country offices will be supported through training, planning and simulations for improved preparedness and response capacity. Based on its regional strategy, the Regional Office will also bolster supply and logistics capacities at both the regional and country levels. Cooperation with governments, regional disaster management bodies, academia, the social and private sectors and other innovative capacities will be mobilized to reinforce humanitarian action, and new sectoral areas, including social inclusion, will be incorporated to reinforce the humanitarian-development nexus and related linkages. The Regional Office will maximize regional opportunities for linking social protection efforts with both humanitarian and resilience work, and will continue to work with country offices to reinforce these by building a knowledge base and appropriate tools. Risk analysis will be strengthened through the adaptation and implementation of tools, setting the stage for the implementation of better risk-informed programming. Regional capacity for preparedness and response to health emergencies such as Zika will be strengthened, focusing on the implementation of tools and procedures in high-risk countries. The Regional Office will also work to expand the knowledge base of country offices on the impacts of climate change on children, as well as urban settings and gender-related issues, all from a child's rights perspective.

Results from 2017

As of 31 October 2017, UNICEF had US\$11.2 million available against the original US\$7.2 million appeal.⁴ Fundraising was scaled up in response to the emergencies in Mexico and Peru, and a dedicated Humanitarian Action for Children appeal was launched for the response to the Caribbean hurricanes.⁵ The funds received allowed the Regional Office to support the delivery of humanitarian assistance in response to emergencies, including in Mexico, Peru and the Caribbean. The regional response roster was activated and deployed critical staff to increase capacities in affected countries. A regional supply and logistics strategy was developed and during crisis responses, emergency supplies were distributed, including more than 22,000 mosquito nets and 3,000 family hygiene kits. A multi-sector response was implemented in 18 countries, comprising the provision of holistic care and support services to families affected by Zika, prevention support for high-risk groups, promotion of key prevention messages that reached over 170 million people,⁶ and the provision of non-clinical care and support interventions for 608 families. UNICEF programming in the region was strengthened through improved risk analysis, including the expansion of the INFORM Index for Risk Management⁷ and the incorporation of a disaster risk lens in results-based management trainings and planning processes.

Funding requirements

UNICEF is requesting US\$10,565,000 to sustain and intensify the aforementioned work and ensure that countries in the region are prepared to effectively respond to ongoing and potential emergencies. The Regional Office will maintain the regional response roster and strengthen capacities for disaster risk reduction, resilience building and preparedness, including in regard to health emergencies (e.g. Zika). The funding requirements reflect the resources needed to respond to crises in countries that do not have humanitarian appeals. This includes ongoing response efforts and additional funds required to strengthen coordination in the areas of UNICEF sector/cluster responsibility, as well as cross-sectoral initiatives.

Sector	2018 requirements (US\$)
Emergency preparedness and response	7,300,000
Disaster risk analysis and reduction, resilience building and climate change adaptation	2,500,000
Communication, information and knowledge management	240,000
Cluster/sector coordination and capacity building	525,000
Total	10,565,000

¹ Université Catholique de Louvain, Emergency Events Database, 25 September 2017; UNICEF situation reports; other local sources.

² United Nations Children's Fund, *Harrowing Journeys: Children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea, at risk of trafficking and exploitation*, IOM and UNICEF, September 2017.

³ World Health Organization ZIKV classification, available at: <www.who.int/emergencies/zika-virus/situation-report/classification-table.pdf>, accessed 20 November 2017.

⁴ Available funds include US\$8.7 million raised against the current appeal and US\$2.5 million carried forward from the previous year.

⁵ As of October 2017, UNICEF had received US\$9,765,000 against the original appeal of US\$20.9 million.

⁶ Results include people reached in 2016 and 2017 against the original target of 200 million people set in the global Zika appeal in *Humanitarian Action for Children 2017*.

⁷ The INFORM Index for Risk Management is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters. It provides a way of understanding and measuring the risk of humanitarian crises and disasters and the conditions that lead them to affect sustainable development. INFORM can help identify where and why crises and disasters are likely to occur so humanitarian actors can reduce risks, build people's resilience and prepare and respond better. It incorporates a set of risk indicators (hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities) that capture the realities of the Latin America and the Caribbean region. It can also contribute to the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals, among other frameworks. UNICEF's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, in collaboration with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), initiated the process of adapting and promoting INFORM at the regional, sub-regional and national levels in 2015. See: <www.inform-index.org/Subnational/LAC>, accessed 6 December 2017.

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