

This report has been produced by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office for Belize and United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT), with the support of OCHA and humanitarian partners. The information in this report is based on official preliminary reports from the Government of Belize (NEMO) and Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). If required, an update will be produced within the next 24 to 48 hours, depending on the evolution of the situation on the ground and the information available from impacted areas.



Map Sources: UNCS, ESRI.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Map created in Aug 2011.

KEY MESSAGES

- Hurricane Iota has been responsible for an average 10-inches across the central and southern areas of Belize resulting in the recording of significant flood events across the country. This follows the flooding throughout Belize due to impact of Hurricane Eta approximately two weeks earlier.
- As of 20 November 2020, NEMO reported that 235 persons were currently in shelters throughout the country especially in the Belize Rural, Cayo, and Orange Walk districts. Operations were focused on relief to the affected population and cattle farmers.
- On 21 November, NEMO advised major flooding was affecting the entire country. Areas of significant flooding were in Corozal, Orange Walk, Cayo and Belize districts which was compounded by the fact the rivers were already at flood state due to Hurricane Eta and the water level was rising quickly.
- On 22 November, significant areas of the Corozal, Orange Walk, Cayo and Belize districts experienced severe flooding. Residents living along or near to these rivers are called upon to take the NEMO advisories seriously, specifically around moving to safer/higher ground and mitigating water contamination.

GENERAL UPDATE

- The newly elected Prime Minister, Honourable John Briceno, visited flood affected districts on 20 November 2020.
- As 22 November, 2020 there were no reported fatalities.
- Flood warning remained in effect for significant areas of the Corozal, Orange Walk, Cayo and Belize districts.
- Shelters: 288 persons were in 14 shelters in 3 districts. 57 people in two shelters in Orange walk, 42 persons in five shelters in Belize Rural, 88 persons in four shelters in Cayo district specifically in Calla Creek, 15 persons in one shelter in San Ignacio and 86 persons in two shelters in the village of More Tomorrow.
- Roads and Bridges affected: In the COROZAL DISTRICT, Caledonia, Sarteneja, Copper Bank, and Progreso roads are impassable and the Consejo road is inundated. In RURAL BELIZE DISTRICT the Boom/Hattieville Road and Bomba causeway are impassable for small vehicular traffic, the Crooked Tree causeway and the Boom Road in front of the Police Station are impassable. Santa Martha and Flowers Bank roads are only accessible to high vehicle. In CAYO the Low-Lying Wooden Bridge and the Iguana Creek Bridge are under water and in More Tomorrow Village, both roads were impassable. In STANN CREEK the Coastal Road is trafficable from Hope Creek to Gales Point. Drivers need to drive with extreme caution as culverts are being replaced due to ongoing construction of the highway. Numerous small wooden, concrete and hammock bridges are either destroyed or significantly damaged in the affected districts.

COORDINATION

- UNETT met on November 14,15,16,17,18, 2020 to discuss the potential impact, better understand the emerging needs and identify areas UN entities could support.
- OCHA's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean is providing remote support to UNETT Belize throughout its Humanitarian Advisor based in Mexico and with Information Management capacity from Panama.

PRIORITY SECTORS



HEALTH

- Health facilities remain open and operations. The Ministry of Health has not reported any negative impact by Iota.
- The main hospital, Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (KMHM), remains open.
- Prevention and control of vector borne diseases is anticipated, especially in areas affected by Iota.
- COVID-19 protocols are integrated into the shelters.
- RCCE key messages for maternal and child health are being disseminated both at facility and community level through health professionals and community health workers respectively.



EDUCATION

- Schools remain closed with distance and online learning ongoing.



NUTRITION

- A total of 2,000 hygiene kits are being distributed for breastfeeding women affected by Eta some of whom have been further impacted by Iota. In partnership between MoH and UNICEF, Communication for Development (C4D) messages to protect and promote breastfeeding are being developed in English and Spanish. The messages are focused on promotion of breastfeeding in the context of COVID-19, and on the importance and need to avoid the distribution of breastmilk substitutes to prevent disease, undernutrition and possibly death.



CHILD PROTECTION

- UNICEF has secured and will distribute PPE to support 75 child protection workers responding to communities in the flooded districts of Cayo, Belize, Stann Creek, as well as in shelters. UNICEF and the National Committee for Families and Children are conducting a rapid mapping exercise on Child Protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services available in 21 affected communities.



WASH

- Due to the ongoing COVID-19 emergency response, agreements and workplans with partners already address response activities, as it relates to risk communication messages on WASH and nutrition counselling for pregnant and lactating mothers and caregivers of young children. Emergency response activities will continue to address service delivery for WASH and nutrition hampers as a request has come in from the National Emergency
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Management Organization for food packets and water. The WASH Multi-sectoral Body, chaired by the Ministry of Health, continues to provide key communication messages on social media, radio and television to address measures for keeping safe in this pandemic and for treating water for safe use.

- In partnership with the National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC), UNICEF is currently distributing 120 family hygiene/nutrition kits (including fortified food), benefitting over 240 children in three underserved communities affected by the flooding, including Sarawee, Gales Point and Duck Run, located in the Stann Creek, Belize and Cayo districts respectively. These kits will also include 120 reusable pads for girls and information on WASH (including on menstrual hygiene management), healthy eating, COVID-19 prevention and child protection

NEEDS/CHALLENGES

- A list of supplies to support persons in shelters was received from the Red Cross by PAHO/WHO and this will be shared with the UNETT
- Water contamination due to overflowing water sources. Water contamination is a major threat to health. The public is advised by Belize Water Supply to store water, and that water in flooded areas must be treated before drinking.

UN RESPONSE

- **UNDP** is working with the Government of Belize to contribute approximately one quarter (25%) of its initial ask for food packets (250) and cleaning/ sanitation supplies (200) facilitating immediate response to impacted families.
- **IOM** has provided 200 food packs, water and clorox to support migrant families in shelters in the west and south of Belize.
- **WFP** has prepositioned food kits within the region and is available to provide additional technical assistance needed in emergency telecommunications and assessments and support to disaster-impacted populations through social protection and cash transfers.
- **UNFPA** will provide dignity kits based on needs arising from assessments.
- **PAHO/WHO** provided four pallets of PPEs in October 2020 following Hurricane Nana. Support following Hurricane Iota will focus on PPEs, cleaning supplies when needed, and support for vector control and risk communication on water borne and food borne diseases. Support is also being provided to the Red Cross based on the listing received to support the many hygiene and cleaning items for persons in shelters. PPEs will also be provided.
- **UNICEF** is providing the Ministry of Health (MoH) with technical and logistical support, including provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), raincoats, rubber boots, bedsheets and blankets to assist 3,000 women, children and healthcare professionals in the flooded districts of Cayo, Belize, Stann Creek, as well as in shelters. Aiming at contributing to disease prevention efforts, UNICEF is providing technical guidance through online trainings, phone calls and messages to 177 Community Health Workers (CHWs) and health professionals on the prevention of the spread of communicable diseases, and on management and referral of cases. Prior to hurricanes Iota and Eta, In collaboration with Ministry of Health, NCFC, Ministry of Education and other partners, UNICEF has successfully implemented Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) programmes on COVID-19 prevention, reaching some 200,000 people countrywide, including in the Eta affected communities, and carried out Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) trainings for 550 health professionals, including CW, who are currently responding to the emergency in the flooded districts. UNICEF is scaling up its partnership with the Belize Red Cross, aiming at increasing the outreach of the emergency response in place. Under this partnership, the Belize Red Cross is procuring additional 230 family hygiene/nutrition kits to be delivered to over 460 children in rural communities affected by Hurricane Eta in the Belize and Cayo Districts. The WASH cluster, supported by UNICEF, and chaired by the Ministry of Health, remains active.

USEFUL LINKS OR RESOURCES OF INFORMATION

Websites:

PAHO/WHO: www.paho.org/belize

UNFPA : <http://facebook.com/unfpa.caribbean>

UNICEF : <https://m.facebook.com/UNICEFBelize>

UNDP: www.undp.org / www.bz.undp.org

WFP: www.wfp.org

RELIEFWEB: <https://reliefweb.int/disaster/tc-2020-000220-hnd>

National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO): <https://www.facebook.com/National-Emergency-Management-Organization-NEMO-952810381436643>

Government of Belize Press Office Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/GOBPressOffice>

Office of the Director of Health Services Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/dhsbelize/>

Ministry of Health Belize Website: <http://health.gov.bz/www/>

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