Highlights

• Hurricane NANA (category one) made landfall in southern Belize, between Dangriga and Placencia, between 11:45 pm, Wednesday 2 September, and 4:00 am on Thursday, 3 September 2020.

• Rainfall totals of 2-4 inches with isolated amounts of 6 inches were estimated over southern and central Belize with the likelihood of flash floods.

• At least 4,085 people have auto-evacuated to shelters, most of them in Toledo District in the south, with 2,079 persons.

• There are no reports of causalities and/or major injuries. Initial reports suggest that Stann Creek District is more affected than Toledo. Buildings, crops and infrastructure received varying degrees of damage.

• As of 3 September, the “All Clear” has been issued for the entire country.

• The Storm has since been downgraded to a Tropical Depression as it moves further inland and now over northern Guatemala with possible rainfall and rising water in the coming days.

• The storm hits at a time of significant spike in COVID-19 positive cases, from 48 at the end of July to 1,101 by 2 September, with children being the most affected.

• UNICEF, as part of the United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT), has offered support to the Government and activated its preparedness and response procedures in health, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and protection sectors.
Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Assessments are still ongoing in the affected areas. It has been estimated that some 22,372 persons, including 9,396 children under the age of 18 and 2,625 under the age of five, are at risk in the Red Alert areas and a proportion of them has been directly affected. Details of actual affected population will be shared in a next update.

Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination

- The Government of Belize is leading the response to the emergency through the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO). Response so far seems to fall within the capacity of the Government and, as such, there is no request for international support. However, UNICEF and partners remain on standby to respond to some specific institutional requests expected in the course of the next few days.
- The United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT), already activated for COVID-19, under the leadership of the RC/HC has held three meetings since 1 September 2020 on UN preparedness and has coordinated the response with the participation of OCHA Region of Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) and WFP (Barbados).
- UNICEF participates in UNETT and is in contact with relevant government institutions and civil society partners involved in the emergency response at national and subnational level.

Summary Analysis of Program Response

Health, Nutrition and WASH

- There is an imminent risk of an increase in COVID-19 cases due to the evacuation of the population to shelters. Due to this situation, measures for the protection of the population and frontline workers are being reinforced to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, including provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) like face shields, sanitizers, masks and hygiene items.
- UNICEF has been implementing infection prevention and control training programs with its health partners in the country, this activity will continue to be rolled out and will be scaled up in the areas where the shelters are located and for frontline healthcare workers.
- UNICEF Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) plans and messages for COVID-19 have integrated areas that have been affected by Hurricane Nana with due gender and vulnerability considerations.
- In preparation for a hurricane, Belize Country Office (CO) developed information material for shelter administrators to prevent violations of the International Code on Breastfeeding, provides lactating councilors with information and advice as needed, and promotes age appropriate breastfeeding and other proper feeding practices for families coming to the shelters.

Education

- In Belize schools are used as shelters. The new school year commenced in August, however due to the spike in COVID-19 cases, distance/online learning remains the modality on a national level, pending flattening the curve of the current surge in COVID-19 cases.
- UNICEF is on standby to support training of frontline line service providers with a package of interventions including psychosocial support as well as basic health, hygiene and nutrition promotion. This is in addition to ongoing actions already being implemented in the COVID-19 emergency response.

Child Protection

UNICEF and NEMO developed and launched earlier this year a detailed protocol for the integrated protection of children and adolescents in emergency and disaster situations. Capacity building for the
roll out is underway, which is crucial to both COVID-19 and hurricane response. UNICEF remains on standby to provide the following response actions if required:

- Prevention and response to violence, especially sexual violence against girls, boys, adolescents and women in affected communities, with messages on how to identify and report violence.
- Provision of psychosocial support to children and affected populations, by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).
- Provision of hygiene and recreation kits by CSOs.
- Ensure children and families have access to basic social services (food, registration services, VAC services) and assistance without discrimination.
- Ensure that children in the justice sector have access to services and prevent avoidable arrests and deprivation of liberty.

Safety and Security Post Hurricane NANA

National security agencies, along with the Belize National Police Department, have safety and security situations under control. Safety and security risk threats remain low and manageable. The National Law enforcement agencies have increased personnel and operations in areas of concern, such as the flooding and the restrictions of movement on the southern highway and remote roads in the south of the country. NEMO is presently engaged in Damage and Needs Assessment in the Hurricane stricken zones, but so far unconfirmed reports indicated the worst impact was on banana plantations. Utilities companies have been deployed to the impacted areas to ensure there is electricity, water and telecommunications services for the residences. All relevant safety and security agencies are in continuous collaboration to mitigate and prevent potential crime and violence.

Funding

Depending on the findings of needs assessments, UNICEF could immediately redirect approximately US$ 50,000 from existing emergency resources or from its regular programme.

For more information please see

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