

# THE AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN



## CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN

The devastations wreaked by natural disasters on children and women in several countries of the Latin America and Caribbean region in the past year have severely stretched existing coping mechanisms and response capacities. The disasters ranged from flooding, volcanoes, drought, sudden cold snaps and consecutive hurricanes, disrupting severely the lives of thousands of families. These natural phenomena combine with the ongoing man-made conflict and insecurity in Colombia and the spiralling state of emergency – both man-made and natural – in Haiti, highlight the urgent need for further enhanced preparedness and capacity-building of both staff and counterparts in the region.

This chapter focuses attention on the situation of women and children in Colombia (including its border countries) and Haiti, and seeks urgent support for the required action to develop the coping strategies of the poor communities in particular and reduce their vulnerability to extreme weather events, geophysical risks and other emergencies.

Latin America and the Caribbean is a region prone to diverse natural disasters. A number of countries hover on the brink of serious insecurity and the vulnerability of women and children is tested annually,

with the poor suffering worst. It is also a region where innovative monitoring and coordinating mechanisms are proving highly efficient, where United Nations reform and coordination is being embraced in order to effectively reach women and children, and where a serious search for lessons learned after each disaster is reflected in an improved response on the next occasion.

The year 2004 has proven particularly devastating for the women and children of Latin America and the Caribbean on several fronts. Colombia and Haiti continue to be our primary focus as the scale of the emergencies and risk to women and children has heightened over the past year, with the serious insecurity and humanitarian concerns requiring urgent and ongoing attention. At the same time, new emergencies have arisen: Caribbean islands were hit by hurricanes, the Central American nations were affected by flooding, and Andean countries have undergone various climate-related natural disasters. As documented in a May 2004 discussion paper by the UK Department for International Development (DfID), if the effects of climate on poverty are not recognized and managed, then gains made in development over decades will remain at risk to a few days of adverse weather. The message for Latin America and the Caribbean is clear: we cannot afford to ignore and not be fully prepared for climate risks.

### Colombia

The armed conflict in Colombia has gradually grown into a subregional haemorrhage, displacing millions within the country and hundreds of thousands to the countries across the border. In the countries surrounding Colombia – specifically, Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela – women, children and their families face conditions which threaten their rights, well-being and, in some cases, their very survival. In Venezuela, the border region has become a ‘no man’s land’ where Colombians cross in increasing numbers, and armed groups operate with relative impunity. There has been a marked rise in the number of kidnappings, extortions and murders in the past year, as well as armed clashes between Venezuelan authorities and unidentified Colombians. In Ecuador, authorities estimate there are some 250,000 undocumented Colombians and rising numbers of security incidents, violent acts and deportations. Militarization of the border has drawn guerrilla groups into Ecuador and pushed civilians out of frontier regions. The numbers of Colombians who have crossed into southern Panama is less than in the other countries, but the conditions there for women and children are just as precarious, if not worse. Fleeing from the Urabá Peninsula into the Darien, hundreds of refugees find themselves abandoned without identification, belongings or a means of subsistence in one of the most inhospitable regions of the Americas, where they are exploited and exist without the support of local authorities.

**"Colombia + 3" – UN Reform in Action.** Independent of the conflict that has riven Colombia for the past 40 years, the border regions constitute the poorest of the poor areas in each of the countries contiguous to Colombia, with the lowest human development indicators and the highest incidence of violence. These regions – e.g., Ecuador's Carchi, Panama's Darien and Venezuela's Alta Guajira -- also happen to be home to predominantly indigenous or afro-descendent populations, who already suffer structural exclusion. "Colombia + 3" was the name of a ground-breaking meeting held in Panama on 14-15 October 2004, bringing together top officers in Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela from each of the key UN agencies (UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, OCHA and UNICEF), along with representatives from headquarters and the UN Department of Political Affairs. For the first time, UN Country Management Teams from the conflict area shared information and did strategic planning about the actions to be taken to assist vulnerable populations affected by the burgeoning conflict.

### Haiti

The complex humanitarian emergency in Haiti for the past several years was further worsened in the first months of 2004 with social and economic unrest throughout the island, engendering widespread human rights violations of women and children, political killings and lawlessness. A contingent of 2,600 UN peacekeepers stationed in Haiti as part of MINUSTAH has thus far been unsuccessful in ensuring safety or security. Against this background of turmoil and violence, Haiti suffered two catastrophic floods, in the south-east near Mapou and Fonds de Verrette in May 2004 (1,400 dead) and in Gonaïves, Port-de-Paix and Cap Haïtien during Hurricane Jeanne in September 2004 (more than 3,000 dead or missing). The situation of women and children and respect for their rights, is bleak and extremely insecure.

Infant, under-five and maternal mortality rates have soared, malnutrition has increased, immunization rates are dangerously low, and an unacceptably low number of children have access to health care, potable water and sanitation facilities. The seropositive rate is estimated at no less than 6 per cent. In addition, increasing numbers of children fail to access basic education, where violence and exploitation of children is rising and children are increasingly being forced into child labour and are trafficked across borders.

### The Caribbean

The Caribbean subregion was wracked by intense storms during the hurricane season, adversely affecting many of the island states. Grenada was especially buffeted by Hurricane Ivan on 8 September 2004, which passed directly over the island and in only two hours caused 30 deaths, displaced 60,000 persons and damaged 90 per cent of all structures. The education sector suffered intense destruction, with school buildings damaged or destroyed; furniture, supplies and equipment lost; and the newly initiated academic year postponed. Ivan also affected the Bahamas, Cuba, the Cayman Islands and Jamaica and causing injuries, deaths and economic losses. Hurricane Jeanne sheared across the north of Dominican Republic and Haiti, provoking widespread flooding, deaths and destruction. Cuba, for its part, was badly affected by Hurricanes Charley and Ivan one month apart, collectively damaging 97,000 houses, 1,100 schools and 170 health-care facilities in the west of the island and affecting many more through the power cuts which ensued. This damage, on top of the persistent drought affecting the east of the island and the ongoing economic sanctions by the USA, have been extremely costly to Cuban society, putting pressure on the social services available to children.

### Other natural disasters

Localized emergencies also seriously impinged on the rights and well-being of children. In Argentina, the Chaco region of Bolivia and Paraguay, an area historically plagued by low rainfall, a serious drought has threatened children and their families anew with poor agricultural yields and low nutritional indicators. UNICEF and WFP raised the alarm following their joint visit to the Bolivian Chaco in September 2004, noting that the indigenous Guaraní communities of seven municipalities lost 90 per cent of their harvest due to poor rainfall in 2003 and 2004, prompting the Government to declare a state of emergency and request international assistance. The annual cold snaps which affect women and children in the Andean countries proved particularly lethal in 2004, taking dozens of lives in Peru and Bolivia. In other parts of the region, volcanic eruptions and seismic movements shook several nations along the Ring of Fire, with Ecuador suffering the most severe incidents. Rain-induced flooding, especially in Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama, caused several deaths, displaced portions of communities and disrupted schooling, affecting child health and household economies.

The remainder of this section contains country appeals for Colombia and Haiti, then summarizes regional support planned for humanitarian actions in 2005 and activities undertaken during 2004.

# UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

# COLOMBIA

## IN 2005



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

### Summary of UNICEF financial needs for 2005

Sector	US\$
Humanitarian mine action	650,000
Protection of child soldiers and prevention of recruitment	1,600,000
Humanitarian action for IDPs	1,150,000
<b>Total *</b>	<b>3,300,000</b>

\* The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 12 per cent. The actual recovery rate on individual contributions will be calculated in accordance with the Executive Board Decision 2003/9 of 5 June 2003.

## 1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN

As a consequence of 40 years of armed conflict, Colombia is facing a devastating humanitarian crisis. The conflict's impact on children and women is enormous. For instance, it has been estimated that about 7,000 children remain enrolled in non-State armed entities and an additional 7,000 children are involved as collaborators in urban militias (guerrillas and paramilitaries). Although these 14,000 children are still involved in illegal armed groups, it is important to underline that, from November 1999 to September 2004, a total of 1,931 children and adolescents were demobilized from these groups and have received assistance from the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme. This programme is supported by UNICEF, IOM and ILO-IPEC.

It is important to note that, even though the massive displacement of people has somewhat decreased over the last two years, the cumulative number of internally displaced people continues to grow, reaching (according to official figures) 2 to 3 million people being displaced over the past 15 years. There is an increase in the number of 'bordered' communities and in the 'under-registration' phenomenon. The displaced population often lives in fear (of violence or being moved again) with little respect to their human rights. It is estimated that 73 per cent of the displaced population are children and women, and 48 per cent are aged under 18.

Landmines are also posing a severe and growing humanitarian threat to the civil population. Over the past years, there has been a significant increase in local fabrication and use of anti-personnel mines by illegal armed groups, placing children and women at highest risk. Since 1990 to date, 34 per cent of the total civil victims have been children; and, of the 531 victims registered from January to August 2004, 8 per cent were aged 18. It is estimated that half of the towns in 31 of the country's 32 departments (covering 45 per cent of the country's territory) is affected by landmines.

### CORE COUNTRY DATA

(2002 UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED)

Child population (millions)	<b>17</b>
U5 mortality rate	<b>23</b>
Infant mortality rate	<b>19</b>
Maternal mortality ratio (2001)	<b>95.2</b>
Primary school enrolment ratio	<b>89</b>
Primary school enrolment ratio for girls	<b>88</b>
% U1 fully immunized (DPT3)	<b>84.9</b>
% population using improved drinking water sources (2001)	<b>Urban 91.7 Rural 11.8</b>
HIV/AIDS prevalence	<b>0.7</b>
% U5 suffering moderate and severe malnutrition	<b>1</b>

Source: *The State of the World's Children 2004*

#### **"Then we heard two shots"**



*"They arrived at night. They were five and were hooded. I remember they had soldiers' uniforms. They grabbed my sister Rocío and took her out of the house. They pointed a submachine gun at my parents and my two older brothers. We stayed locked in the house. Then we heard two shots. We stayed silent until my father said 'they killed Rocío'. My brother went out of the house. It was very clear but he didn't see anything."*

Four days later, Rocío's body was found at the corner of Raúl's school. *"At first it was hard to recognize her,"* said Raúl. The cause of this deadly incident was allegedly a debt to an illegal armed group. *"At least this is what the assassins said when they came back to my home to say they were sorry and recommended us to immediately leave the town."*

The family had no option, so they moved to another town where their living conditions have deteriorated significantly.

**Raúl, aged eight, Changuaní, Cundinamarca.**

Other effects of the conflict, primarily among the displaced population, are poor access to potable water, basic health and educational services, and an increase of HIV/AIDS cases. While national figures show school attendance improving these often hide gaps between urban and rural regions (which are most affected by the conflict). Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children in rural areas have much lower access to education than the national average.

## 2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2004

UNICEF humanitarian actions have focused on three main consequences of the Colombian armed conflict: IDPs, child soldiers and anti-personnel mines. Since 1996, in collaboration with the national and international entities, UNICEF has implemented innovative humanitarian interventions in regions severely affected by conflict. The strategy is mainly directed to families suffering from the effects of forced displacement or at high risk of displacement, and to those communities severely affected by armed conflict. Since mid-2000, UNICEF has supported the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme, as well as establishing an inter-institutional committee devoted to preventing children and adolescents' recruitment into armed groups and promoting their demobilization by advocating and accelerating the demobilization process. This committee includes governmental and non-governmental agencies. UNICEF began its humanitarian mine action programme activities in 1999 and these have been gradually expanded to date, reaching vulnerable citizens with public information, mine risk education and training, and community liaison activities. These activities have been accomplished with the collaboration and partnership of the Vice-President's Office and several NGOs.

### Humanitarian action for IDPs

UNICEF has implemented an integrated approach to education, health, water and sanitation, and psychological assistance, benefiting 66,000 children in 2003 and 2004. The main focus has been the revitalization of primary health-care services, support to pre-primary and primary schools. UNICEF has supported the provision of health and education to some 41,000 children in communities of the 38 seriously conflict-affected municipalities by building capacities to promote child development and basic education in the emergency context. This has included broad social mobilization, training exercises, supplies and physical reforms, which have ensured full construction of 10 new 'child-friendly' schools, and making six more schools 'child friendly' in Oriente Antioqueño. Primary health-care programmes, including nutritional education and food supplementation, have benefited 1,800 children and 850 women in Chocó. Vaccination and support to the cold chain have benefited some 100 children per month). In water and sanitation, quality control of existing water systems was improved while special, simplified water and sanitation systems were installed for some 1,000 families in temporary locations.

### Protection of child soldiers and prevention of recruitment

UNICEF has been supporting and promoting actions aimed at preventing the recruitment of children and adolescents into armed groups, as well as supporting strategies for their demobilization, protection and social reintegration. An innovative project was initiated in 2004 to foster sports and education for peace, and to help protect young people in vulnerable communities. This project has been developed in 40 municipalities with high rates of recruitment, and has benefited 19,000 children and adolescents. Other prevention programmes are being carried out, taking into account the different risk factors in communities where children are vulnerable to recruitment. UNICEF is also leading mass media information campaigns advocating for more programmes and projects to prevent recruitment of children. From November 1999 to September 2004, 1,931 children aged 10-18 have received assistance from the National Programme for Assistance of Violence Victims with UNICEF support. These programmes offer demobilized children and adolescents an integrated assistance package, which includes shelter, vocational training, formal education, preparation for social and family reintegration, health care, psychosocial care and legal protection.

Over the past two years, UNICEF and its partners have liberated 150 children and adolescents from illegal armed groups. UNICEF also promoted accelerated procedures for ratifying the Optional Protocol

on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, passed as Law 833 in 2003, as well as the handbook for its criteria and procedures (approved as a compulsory tool for judges and justice officers/operators). Technical assistance continued for comprehensive legislative reform and promotion of an organic law on children and adolescents.

### Humanitarian mine action

UNICEF and its counterparts started an informal dialogue with the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional) spokesperson to promote ELN's commitment to the humanitarian principles of the Mine Ban Treaty. With its counterparts, primarily in departments of Antioquia and Cauca, UNICEF has developed a training programme for local authorities and landmine survivors: 20 community leaders have been trained and are now responsible for multiplying the knowledge and strategy – and 100 local authorities have been trained in providing direct, integral support to landmine survivors in claiming the legal and health due to them by law. In Antioquia and Cauca, 26 municipalities are part of the mine risk education (MRE) programme developed by local counterparts and UNICEF. This includes: (a) municipal needs assessment; (b) MRE-relevant data collection (using a specifically designed methodology for this purpose); (c) municipal participatory action plans; and (d) participatory design of MRE activities at community level.

## 3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2005

### Coordination and partnership

The UN Country Team has two main working groups for humanitarian affairs: one, for displacement and other matters, headed by OCHA with active UNICEF participation, and the other devoted to anti-personnel mines, headed by UNICEF. The Office will continue to strengthen and participate in the inter-institutional committee dedicated to preventing child recruitment. UNICEF has also strengthened its coordination with allied entities which, with different functions and competencies, share the aim of defending child rights. These allies include other UN agencies; national, international and local organizations; governmental agencies; the Catholic Church; and communication organizations.

### Regular programme

The Country Programme for 2002-2007 has five main components: Basic Policies, Monitoring and Evaluation, Communications, Protection and Humanitarian Affairs. These are divided into subprojects according to age group (A Good Start in Life, Solid Bases for Citizenship, Adolescent Citizenship and Participation, and Special Protection). The Programme has two overall objectives: (a) the promotion and defence of children, adolescents and women's rights, and (b) the promotion of equity and social inclusion. Humanitarian action is focused in the most-affected conflict areas: Chocó, Urabá, Antioquia, Córdoba, Sucre, Cauca and Nariño.

The UNICEF humanitarian programme will continue to focus its efforts in three major phenomena: recruitment and demobilization of child soldiers; internal forced displacement; and anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance. Within these groups special attention will continue to be given to children, adolescents and women. The purpose of the humanitarian programme for 2005 is to directly benefit approximately 40,000 under-18-year-olds and 6,000 families and to reach more than 15 million people through social mobilization activities (on prevention of child recruitment/demobilization and anti-personnel mines).

### Protection of child soldiers and prevention of recruitment (US\$ 1,600,000)

Beyond advocacy for the immediate release of children and adolescents recruited in non-state armed groups, major interventions are needed in preparedness (in terms of sensitization, planning, organization of services to more than 2,000 demobilized children and adolescents) with appropriate opportunities for education and reintegration into society, and preventing future recruitment.

Recruited and demobilized children and adolescents – as well as at-risk children, adolescents and their families – will benefit from:

- Support actions for preventing the recruitment of children and adolescents into armed groups, by continuing and expanding existing projects (e.g., Football for Peace) and initiating new preventive projects in municipalities in the department of Cauca to benefit indigenous children and adolescents, local authorities and civil population – and to repeat such actions for 1,500 children and adolescents from Oriente Antioqueño and Córdoba;
- Lead mass media campaigns in to promote children's non-recruitment and demobilization;
- Distribute 5,000 posters (Universal Proclamation of Children who want Peace) among schools, local and regional agencies, national and international NGOs, as a sensitization strategy to prevent recruitment of under-18-year-olds;
- Support reintegration and rehabilitation of more than 1,931 demobilized children and adolescents through partnership with the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF), and of more than 40 adolescents in Specialized Assistance Centres;
- Create new Specialized Assistance Centres for demobilized children and adolescents;
- Contribute technical assistance to the comprehensive legislative reform and the promotion of an organic law on children and adolescents, as well as to strengthening public policies referring to humanitarian actions;
- Implement the Psychological Recovery Programme to create and strengthen Adolescents Network Organizations for 1,500 children and adolescents and 350 families in Córdoba;
- Develop and strengthen Adolescents Network Organizations through radio stations and adolescent-focused initiatives for 3,000 adolescents in Oriente Antioqueño.

#### Humanitarian action for IDPs (US\$ 1,150,000)

UNICEF humanitarian action in Colombia is facing difficulties because of a significant shortfall of about US\$ 483,600 in the 2004 budget IDP assistance. Currently, there are no funds to respond to any emergencies or to support projects that aim to assist this particular population. Subject to funds becoming available for 2005, children, adolescents and women from vulnerable communities should continue to benefit from these planned activities:

- Continue to provide integral assistance to displaced children, adolescents and families: psychological recovery, education, health and water and environmental sanitation;
- Provide integrated assistance to 3,600 children and adolescents, and 1,165 families affected by armed conflict in Oriente Antioqueño;
- Initiate integrated assistance for IDPs in Murindó–Chocó benefiting 1,000 children, 50 adolescents and 250 families, and provide support to community councils;
- Support provision of health and education to children and adolescents in vulnerable communities such as Chocó, Córdoba, and Antioquia;
- Initiate ethno-education in Cauca, along with other humanitarian actions (prevention, psychological recovery, mine risk education/prevention);
- Develop 'child-friendly' schools in regions affected by armed conflict, and train education managers, teachers and students in this strategy, emphasizing needs of vulnerable, displaced children;
- Mobilize local authorities and leaders to facilitate prompt integration of displaced children into local schools;
- Distribute recreational kits and school supplies to support educational work in Antioquia;
- Apply primary health-care programmes, including nutrition education, food supplementation and vaccination activities in new departments, such as Sucre and Bolivar, and strengthen current actions in Chocó, Antioquia and Córdoba; to benefit around 1,500 children and 900 women;
- Provide technical assistance to Health Secretariats, and local and regional functionaries in charge of executing preventive/assistance programmes for displaced communities, training approximately 200 functionaries per year;
- Provide nutritional assistance, primarily to HIV-infected displaced children and women;
- Strengthen community activities in reproductive and sexual health, for some 200 adults per year;
- As emergency preparation in case of future population displacement, prepare measures for water supply, sanitation for excreta disposal with appropriate technologies, and emergency shelters;
- Establish special, simplified water and sanitation systems in areas where people are temporarily located;
- Rehabilitation of existing water and sanitation systems.

**Mine action (US\$ 650,000)**

UNICEF will continue to give the highest priority to an accident prevention strategy. This is based on creation of mass awareness through the media and localized intensive support for planning and management of risk reduction to municipalities directly affected. The population in about 30 municipalities, who are vulnerable to accidents/incidents caused by anti-personnel mines and UXO will benefit from the following activities:

- Promote further dialogues with armed groups in order to promote their commitment to the humanitarian principles contemplated by the Mine Ban Treaty;
- Continue to implement the training and sensitization programme with local authorities and landmine survivors on comprehensive strategies to prevent landmine accidents and promote victims' access to their rights;
- Develop the MRE programme in new departments (Bolívar and Sucre), and strengthen its execution in Antioquia and Cauca.

## UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

# HAITI

## IN 2005



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### Summary of UNICEF financial needs for 2005

Sector	US\$
Health and nutrition	2,526,000
Water and environmental sanitation	2,074,000
Education	3,102,000
Child protection	672,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,374,000</b>

\* The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 12 per cent. The actual recovery rate on individual contributions will be calculated in accordance with the Executive Board Decision 2003/9 of 5 June 2003.

## 1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN

Over the past decade, economic recession, socio-political unrest and a spate of natural disasters in Haiti have gravely worsened the well-being and livelihood of children and women throughout the country. The departure of President Aristide from Haiti in February 2004 brought the country's socio-political crisis to a climax, eventually leading to the constitution of an interim government. Violence, insecurity, the complete breakdown of law and order and the collapse of the nation's physical and human infrastructure left a void where the rights of children and their caregivers have been constantly violated. Floods, landslides and droughts during the year, particularly in the South-west and in the North have led to the loss of more than 3,000 lives and affected some 350,000 people, marring any attempt at celebrations to mark the country's 200th year of independence.

### CORE COUNTRY DATA

Child population 0-5 years	<b>934,992</b>
U5 mortality rate	<b>123</b>
Infant mortality rate	<b>79</b>
Maternal mortality ratio (1980-99)	<b>523</b>
Primary school enrolment ratio	<b>54</b>
Primary school enrolment ratio for girls	<b>57</b>
% U1 fully immunized (DPT3)	<b>43</b>
% population using improved drinking water sources	<b>46</b>
HIV/AIDS prevalence (adult)	<b>5.6</b>
% U5 suffering moderate and severe malnutrition	<b>17</b>

Source: *The State of the World's Children 2004*

These recent events have imperilled an already precarious situation where infant, under-five and maternal mortality are the highest in the Western Hemisphere, at 80 per 1,000 live births, 119 per 1,000 and 523 per 100,000 respectively. The 2000 Demographic and Health Survey indicated an increase in malnutrition among under-five children: 200,000 suffer from chronic malnutrition, 42,000 from acute malnutrition and 160,000 are underweight. Some 37 per cent of children below one have been vaccinated, leaving the vast majority vulnerable to preventable childhood illnesses. Only 53 per cent of the population has access to basic health services. Only 46 per cent of the entire population has access to potable water. Access to safe sanitation facilities is even lower at less than 27 per cent. Recent reports estimate that 6 per cent of the population is seropositive.

Socio-political crisis, accompanied by heightened violence, reduced activities in the principal maternities by 20 per cent of normal functioning level, thereby aggravating the incidence of unmet obstetrical needs. Coverage in water and sanitation, previously as low as 46 per cent and 28 per cent respectively, has declined further. Half a million school-age children are excluded from obtaining basic education. Overall efficiency and only 10 per cent of primary schools are publicly run. In a highly disturbed school year, in the midst of entrenched poverty, enormous strains have been placed on families and communities. This is likely to swell the number of working children currently at 173,000 and child victims of trafficking estimated at 2,000 per year. A study conducted by UNICEF and partners in March 2004 illustrates the extent to which street/working children, and domestic child workers in particular, have met with increased violation and abuse of their rights. Vandalism of health facilities, schools and centres for vulnerable children have heightened the vulnerability of women and children, already subjected to irregular school participation, interruptions to the provision of food aid as well as the suspension of psychosocial support activities. Rape and other violent acts have invariably exposed girls and women to unwanted pregnancies and to the risk of HIV/AIDS.

The humanitarian crisis and recent political events have prompted a reorientation of aid activities where emergency operations have taken precedence over development initiatives. The disintegration of national structures and two natural disasters have pushed UNICEF into rethinking its strategies for reaching the growing number of children in particularly difficult circumstances. It was in this vein that revisions to activities, partnerships and funding possibilities became imperative in order to meet urgent needs in health/nutrition, education, water and sanitation as well as protection. Nonetheless, the interim Cooperation Framework elaborated by the interim Government and the donor community, provides the basis for tackling some long-term issues in the midst of an emergency situation.

The situation is especially acute in Gonaïves, which has always been the political driving force of the country. It was in this northern city that the struggle for Independence started as well as that which

overthrew the Duvalier and Aristide regimes. The devastating floods of 18 September affected more than 300,000 people and completely disrupted the life of the city.

## 2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2004

UNICEF responded immediately to the unfolding humanitarian crisis and the two natural disasters by seeking and joining forces with individuals, NGOs and institutions ready to address the urgent needs of Haiti's children. Participation in the two UN-led Flash Appeals permitted the outlining of priority actions and funding requirements amounting to US\$ 15.9 million out of a total of US\$ 66 million. To October 2004, and counting both Appeals, UNICEF has received more than 50 per cent of the expected amount.



Françoise who lives in Gonaïves benefits from a UNICEF-funded nutrition programme as do many others. Acute and chronic malnutrition has indeed existed in Haiti for decades due to various factors related to poverty.

Nevertheless, since the recent socio-political instability, armed conflict, insecurity in the country and natural disasters, the capacities of Haitian families to meet the needs of their children have substantially decreased. Although no data yet exists, it is believed that acute malnutrition affects nearly 5 per cent of Haitian children under five. Almost 52,000

children of this age group live in this extremely vulnerable condition with little or no hope of appropriate treatment without the support of the international community.

Also nearly 500,000 under-five children suffer from chronic malnutrition, affecting both their physical and mental growth. More than 5.4 million Haitians are considered to be in extreme food insecurity because of the various recent emergencies.

In education, 15,000 children benefited from a project 'Timoun Kè Kontan' ('Happy Children's Heart'). Beneficiaries were identified through selected schools in the most-affected conflict areas. Ten recreational and educational centres were organized in Petite Goave, Port-au-Prince, St Marc, Gonaïves and Cap Haitien. The children received psychosocial support for one month and 600 educators were recruited and trained in three disciplines (psychosocial support, art and play, sport) to help the children go back to school in a child-friendly educational environment. Moreover, through a partnership with private and public sectors and international cooperation, all eligible children will benefit from scholarships for 2004-2005. Public and private sectors in Haiti are joining this initiative to develop it into a long-term project that will allow impoverished children to go to school, and thus contribute to building a more stable society in Haiti.

In health, UNICEF distributed essential emergency drugs and equipment to two health centres in Fonds Verette and Mapou and 12 in Gonaïves and surrounding areas. More than 20 basic health kits were given to five health centres. Ten midwifery kits, five obstetrical kits, surgical material and equipment were also distributed to 10 maternal clinics in Northern Haiti for 200,000 of women of childbearing age. A nationwide rapid assessment of immunization services took place to ensure the functionality of the services and the cold chain. A large plan to re-install damaged cold-chain equipment was elaborated and implemented. Routine vaccines were delivered to Gonaïves to rapidly restart routine immunization activities. UNICEF conducted a measles campaign and vitamin A distribution. UNICEF also re-established four therapeutic feeding centres, run by partners, for severely malnourished under-five children in Mapou and Gonaïves, and one oral rehydration centre in Port-au-Prince.

In water and environmental sanitation, UNICEF delivered 100,000 sachets of 'PURE' (a mix of aluminium sulphate and calcium hypochlorite with instructions in Haitian Creole), 800 family hygiene kits and 120,000 litres of mineral water in half-litre bottles or 250 ml plastic bags for victims of the Gonaïves floods. With OXFAM, UNICEF rebuilt a water channel for 500 families who were victims of the Mapou floods. Carrefour-Feuilles, a neighbourhood with 200,000 inhabitants in Port-au-Prince, was cleaned and provided with community education.

For child protection, a study carried out with four NGOs described the effects of the political crisis on Haitian children and provided guidelines for programming in favour of children. Around 3,500 vulnerable children (street children, domestic workers, victims of violence) benefited from training in foster centres for vulnerable children and in schools attended by child domestic workers. Monitors and teachers were trained in psychosocial techniques to help vulnerable children in distress. In addition, at least 200 vulnerable children benefited from direct counselling sessions: as part of the programme, toys and games were distributed and two manuals were produced to help deal with vulnerable children. This programme has covered areas most affected by the political crisis: West, Artibonite, North and North-east. A project to give psychosocial support to child victims of violence and reduce violence among youth and children was implemented jointly with UNDP in Carrefour-Feuilles, one of the poorest and most violent slums of Port-au-Prince, and in Les Cayes City. UNICEF undertook the distribution of 6,000 hygiene kits, 50 first aid kits, 5 primary health-care kits, 375 pep kits, as well as providing medical supplies to 10 health centres which were trained and equipped to respond to the needs of some 375 rape victims. Financial support was provided to the Ministry of Women's Affairs to enable them to better coordinate and respond to women and girls affected by the violence. A new mobile medical clinic treated 1,500 street children. Almost 5,000 extremely vulnerable children received support through vocational training, education activities and empowerment strategies, including the organization of street children in Port-au-Prince by setting up an advocacy pressure group. To prevent cross-border child trafficking to the Dominican Republic, an advocacy and sensitization programme is ongoing to address and inform local leaders about the problems of child trafficking. The Ministry of Justice received financial support for the birth registration of victims of the South-west floods. Through Caritas and other NGOs, shelter centres were organized in Gonaïves. In collaboration with the Red Cross movement, a system of tracing abandoned children and orphans was set up in the aftermaths of the two natural disasters.

In Gonaïves, UNICEF is launching a plan to protect 40,000 under-five children and 8,000 pregnant women against the risks of malnutrition and to strengthen nutritional therapy units in health and education centres. UNICEF is also organizing nutritional recovery centres at community level.

### 3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2005

#### Coordination and partnership

UNICEF participated in the inter-agency coordination mechanism set up during the political crisis and in response to the two natural disasters. UNICEF was the focal point on education and on protection. It also took active part in elaborating the Interim Cooperation Framework. UNICEF also chaired the human rights working group. The study of the effects of the political crisis on children was done with several NGOs. The response to all emergencies was carried out with UN partners, international NGOs and national organizations.

#### Regular programme

The regular programme focuses on the right to life, development and protection, prioritizing key activities in the areas of health and nutrition, basic education and protection, all within the framework of UNDAF. The programme has had several adjustments in order to adapt strategies to the Interim Cooperation Framework and the complex and consecutive emergencies. The emergency funds requested below are for UNICEF's humanitarian action in Haiti.

The impact of the political crisis and the successive natural disasters has direct and indirect repercussions on children's well-being of in Haiti as the repercussions are both short- and long-term. Reducing the impact on children is essential during the crisis and in the aftermath.

In general terms, violence and natural disasters break up families and communities, and increase the possibilities of exploitation of children. Following the Haitian political crisis and both natural disasters, health conditions, access to education and general living conditions of most girls and boys have deteriorated. Public services have been disrupted and even stopped in the most-affected areas. Moreover, psychosocial effects on children and their families can be overwhelming if psychological and spiritual support is not given.

Following the floods in the South-west and in the North, the damage in terms of psychological effects is likely to be enormous given that the children were already suffering from the effects of the political crisis.

### Health and nutrition (US\$ 2,526,000)

Some 120,000 children and women will benefit from the following key activities:

- Essential emergency drugs and equipment will be provided;
- Essential drug supplies in five districts will be provided;
- Assistance to five therapeutic feeding centres and 10 supplementary feeding centres in Gonaïves and surrounding areas;
- Training of 100 health staff in treating severe malnutrition at national and local levels;
- Supporting implementation of a nutritional survey, assessment and evaluation, as well as elaborating and implementing a national malnutrition protocol;
- Procurement and distribution of vitamin A and worm-treatment medicines to all under-five children;
- Re-installation of cold-chain equipment nationwide and reinforcing routine immunization activities; a measles and tetanus campaign will be conducted in some areas with low coverage and in difficult access areas.

### Water and sanitation (US\$ 2,074,000)

- As in previous emergencies, immediate response will be concentrated at household level through a combination of actions (according to family needs, accessibility, etc.) by providing families with bottled water, bringing them treated water by truck or providing them with water purifiers (chlorine tablets, PURE);
- These actions will be accompanied by providing 20-litre jerry cans or other closed vessels to allow people to transport and store water in-house, thus preserving water quality;
- After responding to the immediate needs, rehabilitation of sanitary facilities in schools and health centres will be a priority.

### Education (US\$ 3,102,000)

- 'School-in-a-Box' kits for 20,000 primary school children will be distributed;
- Recreational kits and school supplies for 10,000 children will be distributed;
- Temporary shelters (tents, plastic sheeting) for schools for 10,000 children will be available;
- Training will be conducted for 1,000 primary school teachers in psychosocial support;
- Rehabilitate and build latrines in 50 schools in 10 localities;
- In Gonaïves and Mapou, support construction of 50 temporary school structures to accommodate 25,000 primary school children.

### Child protection (US\$ 672,000)

During 2005, with other partners, UNICEF will carry out an ambitious psychosocial programme for the most vulnerable children:

- At least 5,000 extremely vulnerable children will continue to receive support through reinforcement of the NGO working for them;
- An advocacy campaign, jointly with ILO, will be developed to help unpaid domestic girls;
- Tracing lost children, family reunification and psychosocial support will be provided for displaced families;
- Support will be provided to relocate and care for displaced families, including distribution of clothes, tents, plastic sheeting, hygiene kits, kitchen kits and kits to help families returning home;
- UNICEF will support ensuring that all families which have lost birth certificates are automatically provided with replacement certificates.

## THE AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL OFFICE (TACRO)

Regional Office financial needs for 2005	
Sector	US\$
Emergency preparedness	600,000
Capacity-building	450,000
Humanitarian advocacy	200,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,250,000</b>

\* Includes a maximum recovery rate of 12 per cent. The actual recovery rate on individual contributions will be calculated in accordance with the Executive Board decision 2003/9 of 5 June 2003.

### Role

Over the past four years, TACRO has built its capacity to respond to emergency situations in a timely, efficient and reliable manner, partly through ongoing support from a global programme between UNICEF and the UK Department for International Development (DfID). Internal mechanisms, such as the Emergency Support Group and periodic situation reports and monthly trends analyses, have raised the profile of humanitarian issues within TACRO and throughout the region. Conferences and capacity-building opportunities have raised awareness among staff and produced a strengthened team of cadres, capable of assessing and responding to sudden humanitarian emergencies.

During 2005, TACRO will consolidate this capacity through strategic actions in several areas: strengthening country office capacity to prepare for and mount a humanitarian response; providing rapid support for 'hot' emergencies with human resources, telecommunications systems, fund-raising and relief supplies; and working with sister agencies to ensure coordinated and coherent UN action. This will be partly achieved through DfID support, as well as from a new global partnership with ECHO, but additional support is required to carry out the following activities.

### Coordination/partnership

TACRO will continue to support the regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), sharing information and planning emergency response collectively within the UN system. The first meeting of the 'Colombia + 3' initiative, in particular, will be followed up by a series of strategic inter-agency planning sessions to ensure that TACRO's interventions in each of the four countries are coordinated and effective. The key alliances built up over the past four years, including the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), the Consultation on Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES) in Colombia, and the Coalition to Prevent the Use of Child Soldiers, will be strengthened through collaborative work and advocacy campaigns. TACRO will continue to organize and implement training for its partners in disaster preparedness and post-emergency psychosocial support techniques for children and families, in collaboration with the Latin American Centre for Emergency Medicine in Cuba (CLAMED).

### Focus

TACRO aims to build disaster preparedness capacity within its country offices and partners; to establish tools and systems to promote a rapid, effective response to sudden disasters; and to carry out targeted advocacy to ensure that the rights and well-being of children and women are protected in emergency situations.

### Emergency preparedness (US\$ 600,000)

- Strengthen early warning systems through strategic analysis and reporting;
- Participate in inter-agency evaluation missions with regional IASC;
- Emergency stockpile of common relief items in IFRC warehouse;

- Logistical and telecommunications inputs to mount initial emergency responses;
- Expanded data base of emergency and disaster indicators to enhance early warning.

#### Capacity-building (US\$ 450,000)

- UNDAC training for key regional and country office staff;
- Updating and maintenance of emergency rosters for programmatic and administrative skills, to enhance regional surge capacity to support country offices;
- Training of staff and partners in key emergency-related areas, such as humanitarian principles, Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning (EPRP), gender and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response SPHERE;
- Incorporation of risk awareness and preparedness into national education systems.

#### Humanitarian advocacy (US\$ 200,000)

- Major campaign on landmine awareness and prevention in key countries;
- Interregional meetings and action on children affected by conflict;
- Campaign in Colombia plus three border regions on child trafficking, HIV/AIDS, gender violence and related humanitarian issues;
- Advocacy in the Caribbean on risk management initiatives.

### KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2004

**Coordination:** TACRO was instrumental in establishing the first regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) of UN agencies in 2004, under the leadership of OCHA, which meets monthly for information exchange and strategic planning. TACRO continued to implement joint inter-agency assessment missions to evaluate imminent humanitarian emergencies. Key humanitarian partners include: the subregional risk management bodies (the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America, the Andean Committee for the Prevention and Response to Disasters, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Casa Alianza (the child protection organization in Central America), the Consultation on Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES) in Colombia and the Latin American Centre for Emergency Medicine in Cuba (CLAMED). TACRO strengthened its close working relationship with the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) regional disaster response unit, which demonstrated its value in a shared emergency supplies warehouse, joint logistical operations and common planning.

**Achievements:** TACRO supported humanitarian needs by providing technical assistance to country offices, training staff in emergency preparedness, reinforcing human resource capacity for emergencies, improving telecommunications support, working as part of the integrated UN system and promoting emergency exchanges. Key achievements included:

- Timely support to Caribbean nations affected by hurricanes in September 2004, including rapid deployment of emergency staff from offices within the region and despatch of first relief inputs to Grenada and Jamaica from regional stockpiles.
- Initiation and leadership of the psychosocial recovery programme in Grenada, following Hurricane Ivan, and in Paraguay, following an urban fire in Asunción.
- Promotion of a region-wide meeting on Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC) in Panama; a cross-regional exchange with Lusophone Southern Africa on CAAC; a subregional meeting in Central America on violence against children; and exchanges on psychosocial recovery.
- Providing tents, health kits, water tanks and other humanitarian relief items after the floods in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.
- Organizing the first subregional, inter-agency conference on humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected civilians in the 'Colombia + 3' border regions.
- Providing rapid technical advice and assistance to country offices facing emergencies, including Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Venezuela and most of the Caribbean.