

# UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION COLOMBIA IN 2009



Core Country Data	
Child Population (thousands) (National Census, 2005)	15,187
U5 mortality rate 2007 ( <i>The State of the World's Children 2009</i> )	20
Infant mortality rate 2005 (National data from the Ministry of Social Protection – 2005)	15.9
Maternal mortality (National data from the Ministry of Social Protection, 2006)	73.1
Primary school enrolment ratio, 2000–2007, net, boys ( <i>The State of the World's Children 2009</i> )	89
% U1 fully immunized, DPT3 (National data from the Ministry of Social Protection, 2006)	93.5
% population using improved drinking-water sources (1) (National Census, 2005)	83.4
% HIV/AIDS prevalence (UNAIDS, 2005)	0.6
% U5 suffering moderate and severe malnutrition 2005 (Demographic and Health Survey 2005)	7

(1) This figure refers to the proportion of population covered with water facilities (aqueduct). The survey does not have registers indicating whether other sources of water are secure or not.

Colombia has been affected by more than four decades of violence generated by illegal armed groups, and is especially vulnerable to natural disasters deriving from its geographic conditions. UNICEF is working in close coordination with other UN agencies and within the framework of the humanitarian coordination processes to respond to the needs of children and their families affected by these situations. In 2009, UNICEF's assistance will reach 248,000 children and their families as part of its humanitarian action.

Summary of UNICEF Emergency Needs for 2009*	
Sector	US\$
Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons	2,500,000
Emergency Assistance	1,000,000
Humanitarian Mine Action	750,000
Prevention of Child Recruitment and Protection of Children Demobilized from Armed Groups	1,200,000
<b>Total**</b>	<b>5,450,000</b>

\* Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women as outlined above. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use those funds to support other underfunded emergencies.

\*\* The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7 per cent. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

## 1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN

Colombia suffers from a long internal armed conflict. Even though there has been significant change in the dynamics of this situation of violence in recent years, the conflict still affects a large part of the population. During 2008, armed fighting between the illegal armed groups and the Colombian military forces escalated in different areas of the country, affecting many communities in South and West Colombia.

Internal displacement is the most evident humanitarian consequence of this situation. Based on official records, 1,976,970 persons have been internally displaced over the past 10 years – of which 2 per cent are indigenous people and 5.5 per cent Afro-descendants.<sup>1</sup> Official data indicate that 48 per cent of the displaced are women and 36 per cent children.<sup>2</sup> However, as per unofficial data, there are an estimated 3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Colombia today. According to preliminary estimates, more than 83,900 persons have been displaced during the first semester of 2008.<sup>3</sup>

The presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) represents a grave and growing concern in Colombia. Official government statistics show a cumulative total of 7,204 victims between 1990 and 26 September 2008, with approximately 38 per cent of all victims being civilians and 10 per cent casualties<sup>4</sup> being children.

There are no official estimates on the number of children recruited by illegal armed groups, although the recruitment of under-18-year-olds is common practice among all these groups.<sup>5</sup> The average recruitment age is estimated at 13 years. A total of 3,786 children have been formally demobilized from illegal armed groups since 1999.

Colombia's geographic and climatic conditions make it particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. During the first nine months of 2008, 713,980 persons were affected by earthquakes, flooding, landslides or storms with high winds.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2008

Coordination of humanitarian action among UN agencies and main international and national actors has significantly improved in 2008, with a UN Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (ICC) established at national and regional levels.

**Assistance to internally displaced persons.** UNICEF has continued carrying out humanitarian response mainly directed at families that have been forcibly displaced or are at high risk of displacement, as well as at communities severely affected by armed conflict. The programme includes integrated interventions addressing crisis recovery and capacity-building/development to dealing with and overcoming crises. UNICEF Colombia has supported the provision of health-care services and education for approximately 60,000 children and adolescents in communities with high levels of violence and destruction deriving from the conflict. Research has been carried out jointly with the World Food Programme (WFP), the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) on the health conditions of the indigenous communities of the Chocó that are totally or partially isolated by the armed conflict. Although preliminary information has not yet been completed, it shows that a large-scale, joint intervention will be necessary in the zone.

**Emergency assistance.** On 7 December 2007, the Government appealed for emergency assistance from the United Nations System to respond to flooding in the region of La Mojana. Based on this appeal and the information provided by the Directorate of Disaster Prevention and Response (DPAD), the UN Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) prepared coordinated response proposals for the most affected zones. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), WFP and UNICEF, with support from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), prepared requests for rapid response grants from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) to provide food aid (WFP), shelter (IOM), and water and basic sanitation (UNICEF). As part of UNICEF's response, the water, sanitation and hygiene conditions of 4,441 families in 56 rural communities, including a school population of 3,887 students and teachers from urban areas, were improved in La Mojana and the lower Chocó Departments (northern Colombia). UNICEF provided assistance in the areas of health,

1 Registro Único de Población Desplazada, Acción Social, Presidencia de la República, febrero 2007.

2 Percentages sourced from Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social y la Cooperación Internacional (June 2002-31 May 2006).

3 Registro Único de Población Desplazada. Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social y la Cooperación Internacional.

4 Of the total 6,426 victims, 2,198 were civilians.

5 *Informe Defensorial sobre niñez vinculada a grupos armados ilegales*, Defensoría del Pueblo de Colombia, 2006. (Ombudsperson's report on the situation of children associated with illegal armed groups).

6 Dirección de Prevención y Asistencia a Desastres (National System for Disaster Prevention and Response).

nutrition, education and protection for 8,500 (45 per cent coverage) child and adolescent victims of the floods and earthquakes that hit the country as of May 2008. Ten temporary classrooms, education kits, teaching aids, impregnated mosquito nets and filters to improve the quality of water were distributed. Teachers and community health workers were trained to provide integral attention to children (thus ensuring the continuity of school activities), including psychosocial support, early detection of risks, promotion of healthy habits and hygiene and environment care in emergency situations.

**Humanitarian mine action.** UNICEF is currently supporting mine action activities in the most contaminated municipalities of the departments of Antioquia, Cauca, Nariño, Bolivar, Sucre and Chocó through mine-risk education (MRE) programmes that include the training of trainers and direct intervention in affected communities. During 2008, almost 40,000 people have been provided with knowledge on how to protect themselves and others against the dangers of landmines and UXO in their daily lives.

UNICEF and its partners have developed community-based methodologies for Municipal Needs Assessment and for relevant MRE data collection (using a specifically designed methodology) as well as a participatory design for MRE activities and materials at the community level. Early 2009, UNICEF will apply a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey, in conjunction with the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the Presidential Programme for Mine Action. This baseline data will assist the mine action sector in planning and programming activities, as it will provide a better understanding of how communities interpret the threat of explosive devices and the mechanisms they use to protect themselves.

**Prevention of child recruitment and protection of children demobilized from armed groups.** UNICEF has supported and promoted activities to prevent the recruitment of children by illegal armed groups, especially in indigenous communities and in populations with high levels of violence generated by illegal armed groups. It has also supported strategies for the reintegration and protection of demobilized adolescents. In 2008, UNICEF has developed programmes aiming at the prevention of recruitment in 18 of the most affected departments, benefiting 57,798 children and adolescents. Since the launch of the programme, 258 out of a total of 529 demobilized children (48 per cent) have participated in the family setting modality 'Hogares Gestores' (Foster Homes) (30 per cent boys, 70 per cent girls). UNICEF has supported the creation by the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF) of eight departmental units for the care of demobilized children. A Task Force is being established, with acceptance of the Government of Colombia, to monitor child recruitment and other grave child rights' violations under Security Council Resolution 1612.

### 3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2009

#### Coordination and Partnership

UNICEF's humanitarian action is implemented in close coordination with the other UN agencies in Colombia, within the framework of the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee. Partnerships have been established with national, local and non-governmental organizations. The Catholic Church and indigenous communities of different ethnicities have been strategic partners of UNICEF.

#### Linkages of HAR with the Regular Programme

The 2008–2012 Country Programme will contribute to ensure that Colombian children live in a country where state and society guarantee the full realization of their rights, social inclusion and non-violence as established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The new programme has four components: child survival and development; quality education, adolescent development and prevention of HIV/AIDS; protection and humanitarian action (which includes all activities related to the protection of children and women in natural or complex emergencies); and evidence-based public policies.

In 2009, UNICEF's humanitarian action will focus on the protection of children and adolescents affected by the armed conflict, aiming to strengthen their protective environments and to provide an institutional response based on local public policies and specific national policies. UNICEF will work jointly with the National System for Disaster Prevention and Attention to strengthen national response to natural disasters with special emphasis on the protection of children and adolescents. UNICEF's planned humanitarian action will benefit a total of 248,000 children.

### **Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (US\$ 2,500,000)**

Some 48,000 displaced persons, host communities and impoverished persons will benefit from the following key activities:

- Provide psychosocial care, through the 'Return to Happiness' methodology, to 15,000 forcibly confined or displaced children;
- Procure school kits for 5,000 children forcibly confined or displaced;
- Provide temporary water and sanitation solutions for 3,000 forcibly confined or displaced families (approximately 15,000 people);
- Identify 20,000 displaced children and register them in civil birth registries;
- Provide basic health assistance (integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI) strategy) and nutritional supplementation to 5,000 indigenous children forcibly confined or displaced by the armed conflict in Chocó Department.

### **Emergency Assistance (US\$ 1,000,000)**

Some 50,000 persons, particularly children and women, will be reached through the following key activities:<sup>7</sup>

- Construct/rehabilitate wells and adequate sanitary facilities in 40 schools for approximately 4,000 children;
- Provide 3,000 school kits for children affected by natural disasters;
- Rehabilitate/construct water and basic sanitation systems for 5,000 families affected by natural disasters;
- Provide psychosocial care through the 'Return to Happiness' methodology to 5,000 children affected by natural disasters.

### **Humanitarian Mine Action (US\$ 750,000)**

A total of 75,000 persons living in areas where there is high risk of landmine/UXO-related accidents will benefit through the following key activities:

- Share information among 75,000 people on the dangers of landmines/UXO and the adoption of safe behavioural practices; train teachers in five departments to disseminate mine-risk education messages;
- Provide support to approximately 80 per cent of all new civilian landmine/UXO survivors<sup>8</sup> on routes to access health care and claim their rights;
- Train public servants and those in charge of landmine survivors' attention on legal procedures governing victim assistance in five departments.

### **Prevention of Child Recruitment and Protection of Children Demobilized from Armed Groups (US\$ 1,200,000)**

Some 75,000 children associated with armed groups and/or at risk of recruitment are targeted through the following key activities:

- Support/implement activities to prevent the association with and recruitment into illegal armed groups of 75,000 children living in areas with high level of violence generated by armed groups, providing technical support to the National Plan for the Prevention of Involvement of Children in Armed Groups in 50 municipalities, and implementing specific interventions with local counterparts in the most conflict-affected areas (this strategy will strengthen children's protective family, educational and community environments, in order to prevent their recruitment by illegal armed groups);
- Consolidate and institutionalize the modality of social/family reinsertion of children demobilized from armed groups called '*Hogares Gestores*' (Foster Homes);
- Establish a recognized system of signs indicating schools as protected humanitarian spaces to prevent their use by legal or illegal armed groups;
- Develop a system to monitor the situation of children affected by the armed conflict, as per Security Council Resolution 1612;
- Facilitate awareness-raising and train 60,000 military and police personnel on international humanitarian law, children's rights and procedures for receiving children demobilized from illegal armed groups.

<sup>7</sup> An average of approximately 750,000 persons is affected by natural disasters in Colombia each year. Of these, 44 per cent are less than 18 years old. UNICEF's estimates are sourced from the National System for Disaster Prevention and Attention.

<sup>8</sup> In 2007, there have been 191 civilian victims. As of 26 September 2008, 146 new victims have been registered.