

UNICEF Humanitarian Action 2010

COLOMBIA

SITUATION UPDATE

The longstanding armed conflict in Colombia of over 45 years continues to be the cause of a protracted humanitarian crisis leaving hundreds and thousands of people displaced, as well as causing social and political polarisation with the marginalisation and targeting of specific groups and uneven economic growth. Notwithstanding the advances in the integrated approach of humanitarian assistance for children affected by natural hazards and complex emergencies, many gaps and needs persist, owing to the magnitude of the emergencies and their extensiveness throughout Colombia. During the first six months of 2010, the consequences of the armed conflict have been especially harsh for children, who are continuously victims of recruitment, indiscriminate attacks and sexual violence, displacement, confinement, anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance accidents and threats. Estimates of the number of children participating in illegal armed groups range from 8,000 according to the Ministry of Defence, to 11,000 according to non-governmental sources.

As a result of fighting, internal displacement continued in the first half of 2010, contributing to a total of 3,303,979 persons registered as IDPs since 1997, making it the country with the largest IDP population after Sudan. In 2009, there were 285,946 new internally displaced persons, 144,446 of them being children and adolescents (73,480 boys and 70,966 girls).¹

In 2009, the Government accepted that Colombia is the country most affected by landmine and UXOs in the world and has paid increased attention to the prevention of accidents, assistance to victims and demining efforts. Official government statistics show a cumulative total of 8,329 victims between 1990 and March 2010, including 787 children, of which 182 were killed. During 2009, 117 people died as a result of accidents with landmines and UXOs, and there were 33 reported child victims of landmines. Between January and April-May 2010, 132 children who were separated from illegal armed groups joined the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare's (ICBF) protection programmes (85 boys and 47 girls). The indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines by the illegal armed groups continues. Over the first three months of 2010, five boys and one girl have been killed or seriously injured by mines, adding to the 48 child victims in 2009.²

Since the beginning of the rainy season in April 2010, the National Disaster Prevention and Response System reported 118,708 persons already affected by heavy rains and flooding, landslides, avalanches, wind storms and forest fires.³ In addition, in early June, a sanitary emergency was declared in Cauca region with increasing cases of water-borne diseases affecting children. UNICEF is currently undertaking a mission to assess the situation.

KEY RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

Since the beginning of the year, a total of 61,372 children and adolescents (56 per cent boys and 44 per cent girls) have been participating in activities to prevent the involvement in illegal armed groups in 21 departments. 107 children who separated from illegal armed groups joined the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare's (ICBF) Hogar Gestor Protection Programme supported by UNICEF.⁴

Up to 3,922 girls, 4,000 boys and 800 pregnant and lactating women in the Colombian Pacific Coast region affected by violence, displacement and other complex emergencies this year, benefited from complete care in health, nutrition, education and protection using a comprehensive response approach. Strategies applied with parents and children's caregivers, along with the deployment of community health workers, improved the impact on home health care practices, vaccination and nutrition. In prioritized municipalities, 550 families improved their access to safe water and sanitation. These activities were implemented in close cooperation with World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization, World Food Programme, and other humanitarian organizations in the framework of the IASC.

A national platform on education in emergencies was organised in April to build capacities of education officials and humanitarian workers on emergency response and risk reduction. The Education in Emergencies model developed by the national Working Group has been implemented in a rural school affected by floods and internal displacement

¹ Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social; www.accionsocial.gov.co.

² Programa Presidencial de Acción Integral contra Minas; www.accioncontraminas.gov.co/estadisticas/estadisticas.html.

³ National Disaster Prevention and Response System; www.sigpad.gov.co.

⁴ Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF); www.icbf.gov.co.

benefiting some 1,200 children. An additional 8,240 children affected by natural hazards and complex emergencies have been assisted with critical supplies including school-in-a-box education kits, recreational kits, and school tents in child-friendly spaces. Training sessions for teachers have been implemented to improve quality of education for these children.

Humanitarian assistance in food, nutrition and protection was provided to 375 indigenous children and their families affected by armed conflict in rural communities, and 9,000 indigenous children under five years and their families have received support for early child development in the frame of the International Child Development Programme (ICDP).

A total of 695 teachers in 125 schools are carrying out Mine Risk Education activities, with technical support from UNICEF, and 10,128 children and adolescents were sensitized and informed about safe practices for preventing accidents with landmines. A total of 695 teachers in 125 schools are carrying out Mine Risk Education activities, with technical support from UNICEF.

KEY CHALLENGES

In many municipalities and rural areas, emergencies hamper access to comprehensive protection and basic services of health, nutrition, education and water and sanitation for children and their families. The challenges are to strengthen national and local capacities for risk reduction, preparedness emergency response and early recovery, and provide technical assistance and financial support in order to fulfil the rights of children and adolescent when emergencies occur. In the context of a significant increase in the cases of recruitment of children into armed forces, another main challenge is to urgently scale up activities to prevent child recruitment.

INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

UNICEF coordinates the Technical Secretariat of the monitoring and reporting mechanisms (MRM) Task Force which was established in the framework of UN Security Council Resolutions 1612 and 1882. UNICEF actively participates in the emergency response to natural disasters, in coordination with the other agencies of the UN Emergency Country Team. UNICEF leads the Basic Services Cluster (comprising of sub-groups on Education, Health, Water and Sanitation and Food) of the Interagency Cooperation Mechanism and participates in the Clusters on Protection and Early Recovery, and leads the Education in Emergencies Working Group.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Colombia's total HAR requirements amount to US\$6 million, of which only \$503,328 or 8 per cent has been received as of mid-year. Emergency assistance funding needs are crucially needed to ensure an integrated response in support of children and their families in the event of natural disasters, particularly floods.

Funds received against the HAR 2010 (US\$)				
Sector	Original 2010 HAR requirements	Revised HAR requirements	Funds received	Funding gap
Health and Nutrition	1,000,000	1,000,000	162,990	1,037,010
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	800,000	800,000	340,338	454,954
Education	900,000	900,000	0	900,000
Child Protection	3,100,000	3,100,000	0	3,400,000
HIV/AIDs	200,000	200,000	0	200,000
Total*	6,000,000	6,000,000	503,328	5,991,964

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

EMERGENCY PROGRAMME PRIORITIES: JULY – DECEMBER 2010

Health and Nutrition

- The primary health care of 30,000 children will be improved from the distribution of critical, life-saving relief supplies (including oral re-hydration salts and de-worming treatment) for all children from 12 to 59 months, as well as a basic "basket" of medicines for community level treatment of diarrhoea, respiratory diseases and micronutrient deficiencies in children under five and pregnant women.

- Community-level good practices for health and nutrition of 40,000 children and pregnant and lactating women affected by the emergency will be promoted, including exclusive breast feeding for infants under six months and complementary feeding from six to 24 months
- Ten thousand infants and young children at risk of malnutrition, and pregnant and lactating women, will receive micronutrients (in accordance to the Joint Statement by WHO, WFP and UNICEF).

Water and Sanitation

- Chemicals for safe water and water quality control equipment will be provided, as well as systems for improving water quality for 8,000 families.
- Sixty schools affected by natural disasters will receive basic sanitation supplies.
- An additional 10,000 families will be supported in adopting and using culturally adapted good sanitation and hygiene practices.

Education

- Technical tools and methodologies will be provided for 1,200 teachers working in the areas most affected by the conflict and/or natural disasters
- Ten thousand school kits will be provided to children living in areas most affected by the conflict and/or natural disasters, along with the rehabilitation of 60 schools and provision of supplies to 30 temporary classrooms.

HIV/AIDS

- Around 30,000 families affected by the armed conflict or natural disasters will receive information on prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

Child Protection

- Child protection activities for the prevention of recruitment of children by Armed Groups, will be supported, expanding the coverage of the projects to a total of 120,000 children and adolescents.
- A total of 40,000 children and their families will benefit from support to the National Mine Action Programme to expand its cooperation in Mine Risk Education.