

UNICEF Humanitarian Action 2010

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



SITUATION UPDATE

In the early months of 2010, the Latin America and Caribbean region was dramatically hit by earthquakes both in Haiti and in Chile. The Haiti earthquake impacted the life of nearly 1.5 million children: more than 100,000 children lost their lives, several hundred of thousands more were injured, and more than one million of them were displaced. In addition to the severe physical, emotional and psychosocial impact of the catastrophe, affected children are now vulnerable to epidemics and malnutrition, child trafficking and other forms of exploitation. The damage and economic loss is estimated at more than 120 per cent of Haiti's 2009 gross domestic product (GDP) in a country with very low pre-earthquake development indicators. In this context, the achievement of millennium development goals becomes a serious, even impossible challenge without adopting new approaches to transform children's lives in Haiti.

The February 2010 Chile earthquake affected more than two million people, with partial or total destruction of 370,000 houses, more than 70 hospitals and thousands of schools. The total cost of estimated losses amount to 17 per cent of Chile's GDP. While reconstruction work is being undertaken, immediate needs for children are psychosocial support, water, sanitation and hygiene in shelters, as well as the sustainment of health and nutrition services and the provision of temporary education facilities.

As a start of the hurricane season, the tropical storm Agatha strongly affected many parts of Guatemala¹ from South-West to East, and central parts of El Salvador, leading to major destruction and flooding. In Guatemala, the aftermath of Agatha triggered several hundreds of casualties and affected about 400,000 people, of which more than 160,000 had to flee their house and seek refuge in shelters. There is high risk that this situation will further compound the nutritional crisis that is affecting the country since the end of 2009. With the return of the La Niña, there is significant

¹ Guatemala issued two Flash Appeals: on 6 March, of which UNICEF requested US\$6,676,800, and on 10 June, of which UNICEF requested \$1,575,147.

concern that the 2010 hurricane season, which can affect any country in Central America and the Caribbean, will be increasingly intense until November 2010.

During the first months of the year, flooding and landslides occurred in several regions of South America. In Brazil, this had posed significant threats to urban poor populations. In Colombia, pockets of armed conflict continue to trigger displacement and human rights abuses, including child recruitment and abductions especially against women and children amongst the indigenous populations.

KEY RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

In early 2010, regional office efforts have been centred in supporting the response to major emergencies in Haiti and Chile, which diverted to some extent from the full implementation of regular capacity building activities. Nevertheless, the UNICEF regional office continued to advocate for and assist emergency preparedness and response with UNICEF country offices and partners, including in Venezuela, Belize, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and others, and the development of disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies with a specific focus on the education sector through the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department's Disaster Preparedness Programme (DIPECHO)-funded programme. For instance, a regional training on education in emergencies and DRR was organised in Colombia in March 2010, involving government authorities and partners. In addition, the regional office strengthened its advisory role to country offices to engage in the initiation of multi-sector DRR strategies in support of governments, for example in Brazil.

UNICEF in the Latin America and the Caribbean region has actively worked to address the effects of the Haiti and Chile earthquakes and their impact on the most vulnerable children, adolescents and their families. In the first hours after the Haiti earthquake, the UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean regional office immediately mobilized to send emergency supplies from its regional hub in Panama, in addition to specialized human resources. The UNICEF regional office further provided programmatic support in the areas of the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs), especially in protection, health and education, and convened significant actors to work for the realization of the Transformative Agenda for Children² which was shared and agreed with the Global Movement of Children as a guiding reference document for changing children's lives in Haiti. The regional office led the efforts for the creation of the first operational base to support field operations based in Santo Domingo, and the development of the Haiti One Year Plan.

Humanitarian response to the Chile earthquake required targeted support and coordination efforts from UNICEF to complement the strategies of government authorities for short and medium term disaster response. The three focus areas are WASH, child protection and education, including a specific focus on psycho-social recovery of children and their return to school, all of which are accompanied by a communications strategy to ensure that key messages on children's rights are consistently broadcasted via television and radio media channels. In Guatemala, assistance to the government and population is being provided for child protection, including psycho-social support and attention to separated children, health emergency items, WASH assistance in shelters, and support to the assessment of education needs.

KEY CHALLENGES

The Haiti emergency constituted the principal focus of the Regional Office in Latin America and the Caribbean efforts in the first quarter 2010, and the Chile and Guatemala emergencies required specific attention and technical support from the regional office. All of these limited to some extent the implementation of the regular emergency preparedness capacity building program for other countries within the region. Nonetheless, the main preparedness, regional coordination and disaster risk reduction activities scheduled for the first half of 2010 have been carried out as planned.

INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

The UNICEF regional office in the Latin America and the Caribbean has been working in very close collaboration with regional partners, especially with the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) and the Spanish Agency for international cooperation and development (AECID) for the deployment of emergency supplies to the Haiti emergency. UNICEF has been a main actor in supporting coordination and information sharing within the regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Risk, Emergency and Disaster Task force for Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC) coordination mechanism, which convened special daily and bi-weekly coordination meetings to support Haiti and Chile earthquake response, and for the Guatemala emergency. The regional office contributed to several inter-agency missions, including the inter-agency contingency planning mission in Haiti.

² For additional information, please refer to the Haiti chapter of this Mid-year review.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Since the beginning of 2010, the regional office has used existing financial resources to ensure the continuity of the delivery of supplies, human resources and programmatic support to various large scale emergencies including Haiti, Chile and Guatemala. As all emergency contributions have been devoted directly to country level response and no resources allocated directly to the regional support mechanisms, the regional office urgently needs contributions to avoid the depletion of financial resources and ensure the continuation of its services. This is particularly urgent given the beginning of the hurricane season, including stock replenishment, maintenance of the emergency roster, and preparedness support to country offices, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean.

Urgent funding is also required to ensure UNICEF ability to undertake its cluster coordination responsibilities within the region. The existing gaps are the continuation of capacity building in the WASH sector, and the initiation of capacity building in nutrition and child protection sectors for which resources are still very limited or non-existent. The latter sectors are becoming pressing priorities given the drought and nutritional emergencies affecting several countries in the region, and continued child protection concerns exacerbated during and after emergency situations.

Funds received against the HAR 2010 (US\$)				
Sector	Original 2010 HAR requirements	Revised HAR requirements	Funds received	Funding gap
Emergency Preparedness and Response	800,000	800,000	0	800,000
Operational and Technical Emergency Support	500,000	500,000	0	500,000
Disaster Risk Reduction	500,000	500,000	0	500,000
Total*	1,800,000	1,800,000	0	1,800,000

*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

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- Support UNICEF country offices' emergency preparedness and response planning: The regional office will make full use of the revised Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies and Early Warning Early Action tools to increase country offices' capacities to respond to emergencies across the region, and ensure adequate cluster coordination roles. A specific focus will be given to move away from a "preparedness planning" approach and to foster an "actionable" preparedness process.
- Sustain support for WASH in emergency and cluster coordination mechanisms: The regional office will focus on implementation of the priorities set through the regional WASH platform, such as support to regional and national WASH in emergencies trainings (cluster coordination, hygiene promotion, etc.), maintenance of the roster of WASH specialists for immediate deployment, and adaptation of key WASH guidance.
- Increase capacity building on nutrition and protection in emergencies: In the second half of 2010, the regional office will undertake a stock-taking of nutrition in emergencies capacities in the region, and define a regional capacity-building strategy including the organisation of nutrition cluster trainings and adaptation of key material. Child protection mechanisms in emergencies will be strengthened through the work of the Protection regional Working Group under development, in the context of the Risk, Emergency, and Disaster Task Force Inter-Agency Workgroup for Latin America and The Caribbean (REDLAC).

Operational and Technical Emergency Support

- Sustain regional office operational support capacities: The emergency supply mechanism at regional office level will be maintained and mainstreamed to enable fast delivery of relevant emergency items in coordination with partners. The deployment of staff to provide technical support in the event of an emergency will be streamlined through the development of emergency rosters for all sectors, for use at inter-agency level through the REDLAC mechanisms.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

- Advocate for multi-sector disaster risk reduction strategies across the region: UNICEF will help country offices, partners and governments to incorporate DRR into their planning and practice in order to reduce vulnerabilities of women and children in emergencies. The focus will be on advocacy on children's rights in emergencies and support development of national capacities for providing emergency assistance, prevent risks and/or reducing underlying

risk factors, particularly in the Education sector. This will be accompanied with a strong communications strategy in line with global UN-ISDR and other partner's global campaigns.

- Assist Haiti recovery process, especially to include disaster reduction priorities: The regional office will contribute its technical expertise to assist the Haiti UNICEF Country Office and its partners to adapt guidance for disaster risk reduction and emergency response to the Haitian context, and ensure that they are fully integrated into the government recovery strategies at central and local levels.