Caribbean Hurricanes

Between 6 and 10 September 2017, Hurricane Irma, the most powerful hurricane ever recorded over the Atlantic, caused devastation and extensive breakdown of the essential services in the Caribbean countries, putting some 1.36 million people in need of immediate assistance, with more than 339,000 children in need of assistance. In subsequent days, Irma has been followed by Hurricanes Jose and Maria, likely increasing the number of fatalities. These hurricanes have caused wide-ranging damages in Anguilla and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands (BVI), St Maarten/St Martin, US Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos, Cuba and Haiti. Barbuda has been rendered inhabitable due to Irma, with 95% of buildings destroyed or damaged, and residents evacuated to Antigua. In both Anguilla and St. Maarten, over 90% of buildings and schools suffered damage. In Cuba, the government estimates that over 215,000 houses have been destroyed or damaged and that some 2,200 schools have been damaged. Logistical challenges for response are enormous with the affected islands spread over the Caribbean and the impact of the devastation on the children remains significant.

Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF’s current focus is ensuring the immediate relief to affected populations through the provision of and access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies; prevention of the outbreak of water-borne diseases, particularly cholera; ensuring the reopening of early childhood development (ECD) facilities and schools and the establishment of temporary learning spaces where necessary; provision of psychosocial support for children; ensuring access to child protection services and necessary information on preventing harm, violence and health related risks in post-emergencies; and supporting the participation and engagement of families, children and adolescents in recovery efforts. UNICEF will continue to support government counterparts, and leverage established partnerships at national and regional levels, as well as mobilize global level networks for rapid response support. Regional partners include: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA); Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS); Caribbean Development Bank (CDB); development partners: international and national NGOs and the UN System. It is envisaged that all interventions will be integrated into the respective multi-country or country programmes of cooperation to support long term recovery, sustainability and resilience.

Results to Date

UNICEF rapidly deployed staff to support the joint needs and damage assessments across hurricane affected islands, except in Cuba where these have been undertaken by the government. To date, in the Eastern Caribbean, UNICEF has distributed prepositioned supplies (tents, family hygiene kits, recreational equipment, school and ECD kits) and is coordinating movement of additional supplies as necessary with CDEMA. UNICEF’s communication activities to affected communities is focused on the need for child protection in emergencies. Stay-safe, health, and child protection messages have been sent via UNICEF’s messaging platform (U-Report) across the region. UNICEF is also providing psychosocial support to children through existing networks. UNICEF Cuba quickly worked to provide WASH supplies, psycho-social support, hygiene messaging, and the rehabilitation of schools. In Haiti, UNICEF with partners supported multi-sectoral assessments and provision of emergency supplies to those affected in the north, with an emphasis on safe water. Ongoing surveillance and rapid response to cholera alert has been increased in response to Irma, to prevent the outbreak of water borne diseases. Prepositioned plumpy-nut has been distributed to provide supplementary nutrition to affected children. The distribution of school kits is underway for children in the most affected schools of the northwest.

2017 Programme Targets

WASH

• 37,000 children regain access to appropriate WASH facilities/services and hygiene promotion in schools, temporary learning spaces and their families access hygiene kits.
• 610,000 people regain access to safe water and hygiene.
• 300,000 people reached with prevention and response for the outbreak of water borne diseases.

Child Protection

• 33,000 children access psychosocial support in schools, community centres and temporary shelters.
• 100% of shelters have functional warden systems in the most affected communities.
• 37,000 children access information and gain basic skills on preventing harm, violence and health related risks in emergencies.
• Over 1,000 children access interim care, family reunification services, support to go to school and other livelihood support.

Education

• 30,000 children of school age, and 7,500 children <5 have access to safe and protective learning spaces equipped with appropriate education materials.
• 30,000 children benefitting from school-based disaster risk reduction activities.
• 142,500 children have access to individual education materials.
• 76,500 children of school age have access to rehabilitated safe learning spaces.
• 10,000 children have access to rehabilitated safe learning spaces equipped with learning materials.

Total people in need: 1,366,081
Total children in need (<18): 339,709
Total people to be reached in 2017: 996,396
Total children to be reached in 2017 (<18): 305,566
Funding Requirements

UNICEF is in urgent need of US$ 13.5 million to meet the humanitarian needs of children and vulnerable families affected by the numerous hurricanes that have devastated the Caribbean. These critical funds will help support the wellbeing of affected children and adolescents, and will help restore a sense of normality in their lives. Given the complexity and breadth of the crisis, including the impact of subsequent hurricanes, flexible resources at the regional level are essential to responding where the needs are greatest.

<table>
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<th>Sector</th>
<th>Eastern Caribbean</th>
<th>Cuba</th>
<th>Haiti</th>
<th>Regional Office</th>
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<td>8,130,000</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
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<td>13,500,000</td>
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* includes Early Childhood Development

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1 Hurricane Irma: Regional Response plan for the Caribbean region  
2 Includes both Dutch and French side of the island  
3 Hurricane Irma: Regional Response plan for the Caribbean region  
4 Hurricane Irma Regional Humanitarian Situation Report No.3 (Sept 14)  
5 Hurricane Irma: Regional Response plan for the Caribbean region  
6 Cuba OCHA SitRep  
7 Of the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos, Dominica, Haiti and Cuba. Figures may change as assessments following Hurricane Maria are compiled.