Caribbean Hurricanes

Between 6-10 September 2017, Hurricane Irma, a category 5 hurricane - the most powerful ever recorded over the Atlantic - caused devastation and an extensive breakdown of essential services across several Caribbean countries, putting an estimated 1.36 million people in need of immediate assistance, including more than 339,000 children. Hurricane Irma was followed by Hurricane Maria, another category 5 hurricane. These hurricanes have caused wide-ranging damage in Anguilla, Barbuda, Dominica, British Virgin Islands, St Maarten/St Martin, US Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Haiti. Barbuda sustained particularly extensive damage, with 95 per cent of buildings destroyed or damaged, forcing an evacuation of residents to Antigua. Virtually the entire population of Dominica suffered direct damage with impacts on housing, livelihoods, safe water supplies and other basic utilities. In Anguilla and St. Maarten, over 90 per cent of buildings and schools suffered damage. The Government of Cuba estimates that over 215,000 houses have been destroyed or damaged and 2,200 schools damaged. The logistical challenges of the emergency response are enormous given the spread and depth of the impact across so many affected islands, upon which the impact of the Caribbean Hurricanes on children is significant.

Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF’s current focus is to provide immediate relief to affected populations through: provision of, and access to, safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies; prevention of the outbreak of water-borne diseases, particularly cholera; support for the reopening of early childhood development (ECD) facilities and schools, and the establishment of temporary learning spaces where necessary; provision of psycho-social support for children; access to child protection services and necessary information on preventing harm, violence and health-related risks in post-emergencies; provision of cash transfers to cover basic needs for the poorest children and, support in the participation and engagement of families, children and adolescents in recovery efforts. UNICEF continues to support government counterparts, to leverage established partnerships at national and regional levels, and to 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 & national NGOs; and, the UN System. It is envisaged that all interventions will be integrated into 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 joint needs and damage assessments across the hurricane-affected islands, except in Cuba where these were undertaken by the government. To date, in the Eastern Caribbean, UNICEF distributed prepositioned supplies (tents, family hygiene kits, recreational equipment, school and ECD kits), and is coordinating the movement of additional supplies as necessary with CDEMA. UNICEF’s communication activities to affected communities are focused on the need for child protection in emergencies. Additionally, stay-safe, health, and child protection messages have been sent via UNICEF’s U-Report messaging platform across the region. UNICEF is also providing psycho-social support to children through existing networks. UNICEF Cuba quickly worked to provide WASH supplies, psycho-social support, hygiene promotion, and the rehabilitation of schools. UNICEF Haiti and 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 alerts have been increased in response to the hurricanes to help 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 of Haiti.

Humanitarian Action for Children

Total people in need: 1,427,801
Total children in need (<18): 358,230
Total people to be reached in 2017: 1,036,717
Total children to be reached in 2017 (<18): 324,087

2017 Programme Targets

WASH
- 52,700 children have access to WASH services, hygiene promotion and hygiene kits in schools/temporary learning spaces
- 647,500 people regain access to safe water and hygiene supplies/services and as needed sanitation
- 300,000 people reached with prevention/response for outbreak of water borne diseases
- 37,500 people benefited from improved drinking water system.
- 20,000 people provided with solid waste management for households/communities

Child Protection
- 51,500 children access psycho-social support in schools, community centres and temporary shelters
- 37,000 children have information and basic skills on preventing harm, violence and health related risks
- 1,000 children access interim care, family reunification services, support to schooling and livelihood

Education
- 37,500 (pre)school aged children have access to safe learning spaces equipped with education materials
- 137,500 children receive individual education materials
- 86,500 children of school age have access to rehabilitated or temporary safe learning spaces

Social Protection
- 6,000 children receive emergency cash transfers in Dominica

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Funding Requirements

UNICEF has increased the funding requirement from US$ 19.7 million to US$20.9 million to meet the humanitarian needs of children and vulnerable families affected by the Caribbean Hurricanes including the addition of emergency cash transfers to children in Dominica. These funds will help support the health and well-being of affected children and adolescents, and will also help to restore a sense of normalcy in their lives. Given the level of devastation in Dominica, humanitarian actions are foreseen for a longer period, and will be followed by recovery actions such as the rehabilitation of water and sanitation services in educational spaces, provision of adequate solid waste management mechanisms, improvement of water systems and the provision of emergency cash transfers to cover basic needs of affected families in Dominica. Given the complexity and breadth of the crisis, flexible resources at the regional level are essential to effectively respond where the needs are greatest.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Eastern Caribbean</th>
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<th>Haiti</th>
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<td>Cross Cutting / Coordination</td>
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<td>8,130,000</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
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<td>20,900,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Includes Early Childhood Development

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1 Figures may change as sectorial assessments following Hurricane Maria are compiled
2 Hurricane Irma: Regional Response Plan for the Caribbean region
3 Includes both Dutch and French side of the island
4 Hurricane Irma Regional Humanitarian Situation Report No.3 (Sept 14)
5 Hurricane Irma: Regional Response plan for the Caribbean region
6 Cuba OCHA Situation Report
7 Figures may change as sectorial assessments following Hurricane Maria are compiled.
8 Each WASH response component will be implemented according to each country’s context and aligned with the response provided by each government and other humanitarian partners

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