Highlights

- Three weeks after Category-5 Hurricane Dorian carved a path of destruction across the Bahamas, it has been estimated that around 5,000 people remain in need of assistance, including around 2,200 people who remain on Abaco island. Nevertheless, thousands of children will need support to resume normality in their lives.
- The Government of the Bahamas announced the transition from Immediate Response to Recovery operations. Most of international humanitarian partners will be gradually winding down activities, while few agencies will continue providing support over the coming months.
- Based on findings of field assessments and coordination agreements with government and partners, UNICEF is putting in place a response plan in support of the Government of the Bahamas’ recovery efforts. UNICEF’s contribution comprises actions in Child Protection, Education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).
- Through UNICEF-supported activities, over 300 children living in shelters received psychosocial support (PSS). In addition, 65 school counsellors, psychologists and pre-school teachers have been trained to provide PSS in the learning environment.
- Through the United States Fund for UNICEF, private funds for a total of US$ 1 million have been raised and will be critical to boost the overall response.

**24 September 2019**

- **14,000**
  Estimated No. of people displaced.
- **10,000**
  Estimated No. of children that need access to safe and protective learning opportunities.
- **2,184**
  No. of people in need in Abaco, among the remaining population on the island (OCHA 20 September 2019).
- **1,957**
  No. of people in government-led shelters (NEMA, 20 September 2019).

**UNICEF estimated funding needs:**

**US$ 3.8 million**

Funding Status (in US$)

- Current estimated needs: US$ 3.8M
- Funding gap: $2.8M
- Funds received in 2019: $1M
Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

It is estimated that over 14,000 people have been displaced due to the devastation caused by Category-5 Hurricane Dorian in Grand Bahama and Abaco islands of the Bahamas. A total of 52 fatalities have been confirmed and over 1,300 persons remain missing.\(^1\) Access to accurate data on the number of people affected, evacuated and missing has been challenging as among the affected many left the affected islands by different means to the US and other islands in the Bahamas. It has been estimated that around 5,000 people are in need of sustained humanitarian assistance, including around 2,200 people who have not left Abaco island. Nevertheless, thousands of children will need support to resume normality in their lives, mainly those displaced who need to be integrated in new schools and host communities, and those with special protection needs.

Between 13 and 14 September, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres visited New Providence and Abaco islands, to witness the destruction left by Hurricane Dorian. The SG recognized the efficient response of the Bahamian Government and the Bahamian society and acknowledged the need for intensified support of the international community to the reconstruction efforts.\(^2\)

While authorities are looking at more permanent alternatives to the use of shelters, at least 1,957 people remained in 11 government-led shelters, nine in New Providence and two in Grand Bahama, as of 20 September.\(^3\) According to results from a first round of its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) exercise in New Providence shelters, IOM found that shelters had sufficient food supplies, safe drinking water and health services, while improved water and sanitation facilities as well as non-food items where the main gaps in some shelters.\(^4\) Restoration of operations in airports and seaports is in progress in the affected islands, and authorities report that piped water access had been restored for approximately 67 per cent of the population in Grand Bahama while only 10 per cent of Abaco's population has access to piped water.\(^5\)

On 16 September, the Government of the Bahamas announced the operation's transition from Immediate Response to Recovery.\(^6\) Most of international humanitarian partners, military and rescue missions, as well as donors will be gradually winding down activities by the last week of September. A few agencies will continue providing support over the coming months including damage assessment, debris removal, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and other protection-related assistance.

Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is providing overall leadership of the response and has established a total of 14 Emergency Support Functions (ESF), stationed in the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) at the NEMA headquarters in Nassau, this structure has been replicated in Grand Bahama and Abaco. OCHA and a diverse range of partners, including but not limited to, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Pacific Disaster Center (PDC), US Coast Guards and Army, USAID and a range of other stakeholders are providing support to NEMA in each of the ESFs.

UN and NGOs coordination fora have been established and sectoral coordination is organized by the Government with UN agencies’ support. In collaboration with the Ministry of Social Services, UNICEF is co-leading the coordination of the Child Protection ESF sub-working group - under the Protection ESF - and providing technical leadership and support to all relevant child protection humanitarian actors, to ensure that child protection and social services minimum standards developed by the Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development are observed and guide the humanitarian response. UNICEF is also part of the IASC Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) reference group for the Bahamas response, and the GBV coordination sub-working group. For GBV coordination, UNICEF will provide technical support on addressing the specific needs of child survivors and will be filling other capacity gaps. The Education Working Group has been established, co-led by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and UNICEF.

UNICEF and PAHO support the Water and Sewerage Corporation (WSC) in coordinating the WASH groups at national level in Nassau, and at sub-national level in Grand Bahama and Abaco islands.

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Humanitarian Strategy

Based on findings of field assessments, and according to coordination agreements with government and partners, UNICEF is putting in place a response plan in support of the Government of the Bahamas’ line ministries. The main components of UNICEF’s contribution are:

- **Child protection**: UNICEF aims at strengthening existing national and local child protection and social protection systems, and supporting the acceleration of vulnerable children and their families access to child protection services in New Providence, Abaco and Grand Bahama islands. Main interventions will include: strengthening of key child protection case management mechanisms and support to accelerate social services and delivery of child protection interventions; provision of community-based psychosocial support services for all affected vulnerable and at-risk children; support interventions to prevent violence and strengthen multisectoral response for survivors of GBV, sexual exploitation and abuse; and reinforcing capacity of authorities for sectoral coordination.

- **Education**: UNICEF will contribute to strengthen the capacity of the national education system for school-based psychosocial support (PSS), addressing prominent protection issues, and resulting in established psychosocial plans for schools (within safety plans inclusive of socio-emotional, wellbeing and physical safety).

- **WASH**: Focus will be on supporting sector coordination at national and sub-national level, including information management, to ensure the effective and efficient use of the resources deployed by government, private and humanitarian actors. In addition, UNICEF will provide critical emergency supplies to fill the gaps of implementing partners.

UNICEF has deployed a total of 15 experts, including WASH, Education, Child Protection, Emergency Coordination, Communication, GBV and Operations professionals. By 20 September, seven staff remained in the Bahamas supporting the implementation of the response plan, selection of a dedicated team is undergoing to ensure sustainability of the implementation phase.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

**WASH**

The Grand Bahama Port Authority (GBPA) announced the successful restoration of water pumping throughout the island on 18 September, although some repairs are still needed. This will reduce the need for water trucking to serve the population in Grand Bahama. Meanwhile, WASH supplies delivered to Mercy Corps\(^7\) are supporting drinking water production and distribution activities, benefiting four clinics and around 5,000 people in four communities.

While recovery activities are in progress, some challenges remain including the identification of providers of supplies (i.e. toilets), WASH needs assessments at household level via transect walks, incorporating sanitation issues in the response/recovery priorities.

**Education**

The process of registration of displaced children into the education system - led by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in collaboration with UNICEF - has reached approximately 2,200 children evacuated from Abaco and Grand Bahama, and work is underway to issue these children official letters of enrolment in schools in Nassau.

Equipping children to cope with the emotional distress caused by the emergency, is a core priority for UNICEF. In collaboration with MoE and IsraAID, 65 school counsellors and school psychologists, including 25 pre-school teachers, have been trained in Nassau schools over the past two weeks. This activity contributes to improve the psychoeducational programme in schools while reinforcing local capacities.

In addition, supplementary recreation supplies have been procured to support children in 42 public schools in Nassau to host children evacuated. These items comply with the specifications of the MoE, and its distribution are underway.

UNICEF will work with Global Emergency Relief, Recovery & Reconstruction (GER3) to support repair works in four schools in Grand Bahama - among them is the Beacon School for Special Needs, to ensure these are recovered and safe to reopen with capacity for 2,000 students. UNICEF, the MoE Facility Manager, the District Superintendent and GER3 conducted comprehensive assessments of affected schools in Grand Bahama in order to inform the reparation works. This is part of UNICEF’s support to the Grand Bahama Education Department efforts to reopen schools in the coming two weeks.

UNICEF joined the CDEMA’s Detailed Disaster Sectoral Assessment (DDDSA) on the education situation in Abaco, results will be available in upcoming reports.

\(^7\) As reported in previous SitReps, distributed supplies include six collapsible water tanks (5,000 litres capacity), 1,000 jerry cans for 500 families, 100 packs of water purification tablets.
Child Protection

Considering the devastation and social disruptions caused by Hurricane Dorian in Abaco and Grand Bahama islands, some 10,000 boys and girls and their caregivers, including those in host communities, are in need of child protection and social services, including psychosocial support. In addition, cases of unaccompanied and separated children have been identified and documented by the Department of Social Services. Interventions to address family separation, family tracing and reunification are underway. The availability of real-time data and data management to inform child protection in emergencies programming remains a critical need.

Through UNICEF-supported activities, with IsraAid, over 300 children and caregivers living in shelters managed by the Department of Social Services, received culturally relevant psychosocial support services to address the psychological effects and social disruptions caused by the disaster.

UNICEF is supporting the efforts of the Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development and its Department of Social Services, to register and document some 400 girls and boys with child protection concerns displaced to Nassau, to determine their social and protection needs.

Media and External Communication

A dedicated landing page on UNICEF’s global website was opened with information on the situation and UNICEF’s response, including a compilation of the latest multimedia assets developed. Additional multimedia material was produced, with the highlights of a photo essay, mentioning UNICEF’s work alongside the Government, UN and other partners such as IFRC and IsraAid, as well as a video testimony with children from Marsh Harbour, on Abaco Island. The video was widely disseminated and replicated by several international broadcast media. These and other materials, including UNICEF’s work in Child Friendly Spaces and the documentation of the Secretary General visit, were disseminated through social media channels. UNICEF’s teams in Bahamas and Regional Office conducted interviews with international media, such as BBC, Al Jazeera, Sky News PBS, Brut, Washington Post and El Pais, amongst others.

Funding

UNICEF is requesting US$ 3.8 million to respond to the needs of children and their families following Hurricane Dorian, with focus on Child Protection, Education and WASH sectors, to support the Government’s recovery work. Thanks to rapid fundraising efforts by the United States Fund for UNICEF, US$ 1 million have been received to support the overall response to Hurricane Dorian. UNICEF had advanced US$ 500,000 from its Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) loan mechanism to fund deployments, relief items and initial activities in the field.

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</table>

* Estimated funding requirements as of 20 September 2019.

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