Highlights

- As a result of the implementation of the United States’ Migration Protection Protocols (MPP) - also referenced as “Remain in Mexico” policy), Matamoros has become one of the main points of entry, receiving thousands of migrants who remain in this city, while waiting for their asylum process in the United States. Up to December 2019, 17,121 persons had been returned to Matamoros, under MPP, of which 5,644 were children. (Source: National Migration Institute).

- There are two main spaces where migrants stay: a camp near the border river and a temporary shelter in the city (Alberca Chavez). An estimated 2,400 people are staying in these spaces (2,200 in the camp and 200 in Alberca Chavez), of which approximately 700 are children. (Source: National Migration Institute).

- On 29-31 January, UNICEF staff visited Matamoros on a mission to conduct a rapid assessment of children’s and women’s needs.

- UNICEF’s response is focusing on child protection and a small WASH intervention. The first and immediate response was to establish child-friendly spaces in the MPP locations and provide psycho-social support for children.

UNICEF’s Response and Funding Status

**Situation in Numbers**

- 700 children in need of humanitarian assistance*
- 2,400 people in need*

*(Data from Government of Mexico and MSF survey, December 2019)*

UNICEF Appeal 2020

US$ 500,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kits distributed</th>
<th>0%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding status</td>
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<td>Psychosocial support</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding status</td>
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</table>
Funding Overview and Partnerships
The Mexico Country Office estimates that US$ 500,000 are needed to respond to the situation in Matamoros and Tapachula, of which US$ 375,000 are needed for child protection and US$ 125,000 are required for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) support. By the time of this report, no funds had been received against this requirement. UNICEF has made available a temporary loan for US$ 300,000 from the internal Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) for immediate Child Protection support in Matamoros.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs
In the context of the ongoing migrant crisis in Central America and Mexico, the United States’ (US) Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) began its implementation on 19 July 2019 in Matamoros, one of the most active MPP points of entry (POE). Some 17,121 persons had been returned to this POE under the new US MPPs as of December 2019, of which 5,644 were children (see Map 1). Daily returns had dropped by December 2019 (50-70 compared to 100–200 in previous months). The remaining persons, waiting to cross the Mexico-US Border are staying in a camp located by the river and the plaza (Puente Nuevo) where they are receiving support from NGOs (mainly from the US - Team Brownsville, Angry Tías y Abuelas, Resource Center, Catholic Charities, Global Response Management) including stall showers, small tents, food and health services.

According to the latest statistics by Migration authorities, there is currently a concentration of 2,200 MPPs (Migrant Protection Program) in Matamoros, and 200 in a sports stadium or shelter (Alberca Chavez). Additionally, there are more than 500 internally displaced Mexicans arriving daily. While local authorities have been overstretched in terms of their support to both camps, UN agencies (IOM, UNHCR), ICRC and US-based NGOs have been providing humanitarian aid and resources. However, additional efforts are needed to improve and streamline inter-agency coordination and the relation with different NGOs and religious charities.

Recent findings from a mission by UNICEF Mexico observed that children in both camps suffer from a high level of anxiety and fear of abandonment and are, at times, left with strangers while parents go to work. Many mothers are also stressed to leave their children unattended. According to different local actors and NGOs on the ground, levels of violence and disputes have increased among children and adolescents specifically in the Main Camp. A number of families separate from their children and send them alone across the border, assuming that if children are classified as “unaccompanied”, their entry to the US will be easier and faster. There is no census of the total number of people, including families with children, accompanied and unaccompanied children and adolescents to date.

During the month of January, UNICEF Mexico Country Office deployed a team to Matamoros to roll out the response plan to address children and adolescents needs. The first response has concentrated on protection issues, ensuring the adequate storage and delivery of supplies for the child friendly spaces and enabling the safest conduct of program delivery through building acceptance among authorities, local actors and communities.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response
UNICEF’s response plan focuses on protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse in shelters and in the encampment, as well as providing safe spaces and psychosocial support. Distribution of WASH dignity kits is underway, in coordination with UNHCR.

Child Protection
To date, UNICEF has launched activities to address the most urgent Child Protection needs. The first and immediate response was to establish child-friendly spaces in the MPP locations and provide psycho-social support for 88 children in Alberca Chavez and approximately 600 in the Camp (El Campamento). UNICEF team has been also working on supporting inter-agency coordination (with UNHCR and IOM) while ensuring a focus on children and adolescents while providing guidance on camp management to ensure implementation of child friendly standards and services. There are also plans to monitor the situation and strengthen the protection pathway in coordination with all key actors.
WASH
Based on an inter-agency coordination decision, UNICEF will also be distributing hygiene kits for 150 families in the Alberca Chavez shelter to ensure minimum standards of cleanliness and sanitation.

Supply and Logistics
The supply and logistics unit has played a significant role in fulfilling and responding to UNICEF’s programmatic interventions in El Campamento and Alberca Chavez by ensuring the timely delivery of supplies for an estimated period of 3 months. UNICEF has provided 5 Early Childhood Development and 15 psychosocial kits for the implementation of child friendly spaces and psychosocial support for more than 680 children in the camp and in the shelter. It has also managed to secure the items in two warehouses and developed a user-friendly stock count. A wider portfolio of supplies is likely to be considered as further areas of intervention are being planned by UNICEF specifically in terms of hygiene kits distribution and education in emergencies.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy
In Matamoros, the municipal authorities have maintained a minimum level of inter-institutional coordination that has not been sufficient for humanitarian relief. In December 2019, the national migration authority (INM) built a large structure on the soccer field that had been designated by the City of Matamoros and the NGOs as a shelter site. Since then, some showers and portable toilets have been installed while there have been efforts to move the returnees’ tents to this new location. However, the migrants are unwilling to move to another location, fearing deportation. There are serious security concerns in Tamaulipas and migrants are unwilling to be displaced from the bridge, where they receive services including legal counselling and information from US side. Also, many of the US-based NGOs are reluctant to work beyond Matamoros for security reasons, which also means that the migrants will receive little or no assistance if they are relocated.

Considering the wide range of organizations involved in the response - including local authorities, local NGOs and US NGOs, and UN agencies – coordination has been challenging. Aiming at improving communication and coordination mechanisms, UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, the Resident Coordinator and ICRC have requested a high-level meeting to advocate for strengthened government support to coordination, and to offer UN support on this endeavour.

Human Interest Stories and External Media
The country office issued a press release which had extensive coverage in both national and international media:

During the last field mission, staff from Communications collected human-interest stories will be released thorough UNICEF channels.

Next SitRep: 6 March 2020

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## Annex A

### Summary of Programme Results - Matamoros

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Overall needs</th>
<th>2020 target</th>
<th>Total results*</th>
<th>Change since last report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Protection</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of child protection cases referred to authorities as per the referral pathways</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children receiving psychosocial assistance in child friendly spaces;</td>
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<td>700</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WASH</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of hygiene kits distributed</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Given that the response has just started, there is no consolidated information on progress yet.

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## Annex B

### Funding Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Funds available</th>
<th>Funding gap</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanitarian resources received in 2020</td>
<td>Resources available from 2019 (Carry-over)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Child Protection</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WASH</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* * Given that the response has just started, there is no consolidated information on progress yet.