Category 5 Hurricane Patricia made landfall at 18.09 pm (00:09 GMT) on Friday 23 October 2015 on the Pacific coast of Mexico. Rated as the biggest storm ever in the northern western pacific, it had wind gusts of up to 380 km, and a 10 km diameter. By 24th October it had reduced its intensity to a Tropical Storm dissipating over the highlands of Zacatecas states but is still causing heavy rains.

The preparedness of the population and rapid deployment of Mexico’s National Protection System to get people out of harm’s way was crucial in saving lives. Within 24 hours civil protection authorities initiated field assessment in two states. So far there have been no reports of casualties or of major impact on infrastructures. The impact on outlying communities remains to be verified. A full evaluation of all schools in affected area is underway, but damage has not been reported. On Monday 27 October the vast majority of the 3.6 million children, whose schools were closed preventively on 23 October in the states of Michoacan, Colima, Jalisco and Nayarit, should be returning to school. By 24th October 59 shelters remained opened, for 500 people, but these are expected to be deactivated by Sunday 25th.

Communities in Guerrero, Michoacán, Colima, Jalisco, Nayarit, Zacatecas, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas states, have been alerted to remain extremely vigilant in relation to the impact of the heavy rains brought in Patricia’s wake, and the risks of flashfloods, landslides and mudslides impacting the most vulnerable communities on hillsides.

UNICEF has been in close coordination with civil protection and local government through formal and informal means, and awaits the results of continued assessments of impact in affected areas, and specific requests for support. Throughout the emergency UNICEF transmitted public service information on several social media.

**Humanitarian leadership and coordination**

Preparedness and response efforts were coordinated at all times by Mexico National Civil Protection System. Headed by the President, it brings together all sectors (including security forces) and levels of government (federal, state and municipal) together with civil society and the private sector, through the National Emergency Committee.

Within the UNCT, the Emergency Committee UNETE was called by the Resident Coordinator, who maintained contact with the National Emergency Committee through the Foreign Ministry. Six Flash Notes were issued. With confidence in its own capacity, Mexico did not activate the Cluster System.
Summary Analysis of the Programme response and lessons learned

There are significant lessons to be learned for Mexico and other countries about the dividends of decided investments in emergency preparedness by a well-articulated national civil protection system with an emphasis on risk management and preparedness. Another key factor was the extensive use of social media and radio with child related messages before, during and after the emergency to reduce risk.

MCO signed a new cooperation agreement with the National Protection System on 20 October 2015, focusing on risk reduction and building resilience with the participation of children and adolescents, and ensuring appropriate attention to them in emergencies, through training in all five regions of the country. The new agreement will allow the scaling up of ongoing activities to build capacity for DDR school plans, psychosocial support to children, and the use of Rapid FTR for family reunification. This can now be applied to areas affected by Hurricane Patricia.

Further work on protocols within the UN Country Team is needed.

Communications for Development (C4D)

Throughout the emergency UNICEF transmitted public service information on various social media, with messages targeted to families and children.

Supply and Logistics

In anticipation of major impact, UNICEF MCO implemented processes for local procurement of 550 School in a Box sets, 170 Recreation Kits. These negotiations will result in LTAs for prepositioning of supplies.

Media and External Communication

UNICEF issued a press release on 24th October recognizing the effectiveness of Mexican Government preparedness and response. It emphasized the need for continued vigilance in relation to possible landslides in vulnerable hillside communities. It also focused on the particular needs of children in emergencies, and reiterated that UNICEF was always available to support through its experience and tools related to psychosocial support to children, but also education water and sanitation should it be needed.

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Humanitarian Strategy

Civil Protection, army and navy personnel were rapidly deployed to coastal areas. In Jalisco state alone, 28,000 tourists (7,000 foreigners and 21,000 nationals) were evacuated. Over 1, 075 temporary shelters, many of them occupying schools, with a capacity for 340,000 people were made available in the four states of Michoacán, Colima, Jalisco and Nayarit. By Saturday 24th October 89 shelters were still in operation for 500 people and were expected to be closed by Sunday.