



## Urgent appeal for children and families affected by Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Central America

Hurricane Eta made landfall on 3 November on the northern Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, with 240 km/h winds. The storm continued moving slowly inland and left a trail of destruction across Central American countries. Heavy rainfalls led to catastrophic, life-threatening flash flooding and river flooding, along with landslides in areas of higher terrain in Central America, with a devastating effect on waterlogged lands already heavily impacted by the intense rainy season. Two weeks after impacting the sub-region, countries are still facing the widespread direct and indirect impacts left by Eta.

The extent of damages and humanitarian needs are still being assessed with access to some of the affected areas remaining challenging. Available data indicates that nearly 4.6 million people have been affected in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, among them around 1.8 million children. Thousands of families have lost their homes and livelihoods, many of them had already been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, some 125,000 people have been evacuated to shelters (including approx. 49,000 children), where many will have to remain for a longer period as their houses and communities are not safe.

In addition, there is now concern over a double disaster with a second storm in the Caribbean Sea. Hurricane Iota appeared as a catastrophic category 5 hurricane on 16 November, with a similar path to Hurricane Eta. Colombia's Caribbean islands, San Andres and Providencia, were the first hit by Iota, leaving unprecedented destruction, damaging 98 per cent of the Providencia island's infrastructure.<sup>ii</sup> On 17 November, Iota made landfall along the northeaster coast of Nicaragua with sustained winds of 250 km/h, leaving at least six people dead and 63,000 people<sup>iii</sup> forced to evacuate their communities once more, fearing for losing their lives, their houses and their livelihoods. Iota has caused heavy rainfall, leading to life-threatening flash flooding and mudslides in parts of Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Panama. Iota has affected not only many of the communities already impacted by Eta, but many additional ones.



**4.6 million**  
People affected by Eta



**1.8 million**  
Children affected by Eta



**3.4 million**  
People in need (due to Eta)

**1.3 million**  
Children in need (due to Eta)

**646,943**  
People to be reached\*

**327,605**  
Children to be reached\*

**UNICEF estimated funding requirement\***

**US\$42.6 million<sup>i</sup>**

*\*Preliminary targets and funding requirements, to be updated as damage and needs assessments are conducted in countries affected by Iota, and more information is available regarding the situation and needs of children and families.*

Population affected by the impacts of Hurricane/Storm Eta in Central America (as of 18 November)

Impact <sup>iv</sup>	Belize	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	Panama	TOTAL
No. of people affected	60,000	325,000		1,198,117	3,012,059	NA	3,815	<b>4,598,991</b>
No. of children affected	21,120	87,100		539,153	1,144,582	NA	1,450	<b>1,793,405</b>
No. of deaths		2	2	53	77	NA	19	<b>153</b>
No. of missing persons		-		96	8	NA	12	<b>116</b>
No. of people in shelters	158	855	399	17,324	56,899	47,297 <sup>v</sup>	2,527	<b>125,459</b>
No. of children in shelters	45	229	120	7,796	21,622	18,919	960	<b>49,691</b>
No. of shelters	19	44	13	141	543	325	32	<b>1,117</b>

## A situation compounded by other crises

Prior to Eta, COVID-19 cases were already peaking in some of the affected countries, with over 536,000 cases and 12,483 deaths as of mid-November.<sup>vi</sup> Children and families have been devastated by the humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, including the extended lockdowns, school closures, the cessation of essential economic activities, declining migrant remittances, rising violence against children and women, and disruptions in access to water and sanitation services and to key health services, including vaccinations for young children. It had been estimated that due to COVID-19, an additional two million people could fall into poverty in these countries,<sup>vii</sup> this could be further exacerbated by the impacts of Eta and Iota. Furthermore, prior the COVID-19 crisis, at least 5.2 million people in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras were already facing significant humanitarian needs related to migration flows, violence, internal displacement, food insecurity and poverty, which will only be further compounded by the effects of the hurricanes on those who were already vulnerable.<sup>viii</sup>

## Humanitarian needs

According to initial estimations by UNICEF, among those affected by Eta, at least 3.4 million people need urgent support, including 1.3 million children in the most affected communities in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. UNICEF is focusing its appeal on the most affected countries that are also likely to receive the impact from Hurricane Iota in the coming few days; thus needs are anticipated to increase further in these countries. This appeal will be revised depending on Hurricane Iota's impact.

Reports from the field have evidenced dire shelter conditions in some locations, including overcrowding, limited access to safe water and adequate sanitation infrastructure, lack of COVID-19 prevention measures (including sufficient personal protective equipment -PPE) and need for separated toilets / showers for women and girls. Cases of waterborne diseases (i.e. hepatitis) and other infectious diseases (incl. malaria falciparum) have been reported among people in shelters. Furthermore, incidents of gender-based violence and family separation have been identified among population in shelters. Ensuring that shelters provide a protective environment for children and families, including provision of minimum services, is among the current priorities for governments and humanitarian partners. This is particularly relevant foreseeing longer term stays due to the projected impact of Iota in these areas. Most of current shelters are located in schools, further challenging the reactivation of education activities and the timely reopening of schools. In affected communities, the restoration of basic services is also urgent, along with the reconstruction of homes and infrastructure, with a climate resilience lens.

Among the affected areas are very remote indigenous communities where physical access and language barriers challenge the relief efforts. The risk of a surge in population movements, including internal displacement and cross-border migration, given the dire situation of many affected families, is also compounding the current situation.

## UNICEF response

In countries in the path of Eta, UNICEF Country Offices (COs), through partners in the field, had pre-positioned supplies and capacity which enabled immediate response during the first hours.

- In **Honduras**, over 10,000 children are benefiting from improved conditions in shelters, including through the provision of mental health support and life-saving supplies; and 18,000 vulnerable families will receive in-kind social transfers by local governments with UNICEF support, 4,500 families have been reached so far.
- In **Nicaragua**, UNICEF donated WASH supplies that are being distributed by authorities, aiming at benefiting 15,000 families. More than 34,000 people have been reached with prevention messages. Additional 6,000 family hygiene kits and 600 kits for psychosocial support in shelters are being procured to be delivered in the coming days.
- In **Guatemala**, through authorities, UNICEF is distributing 1,900 personal hygiene kits, providing logistical support to teams deployed to monitor the situation of health services, and disseminating prevention messages via community radios in local languages. Water treatment plants were made available in affected municipalities.
- In **Belize**, UNICEF is providing supplies for the affected communities, including education kits to 120 families, along with PPE items, blankets and bed sheets, and plastic tarpaulin for 3,000 people

In addition to its response in countries in focus for this appeal, UNICEF is also responding in other countries in Central America that have been affected by the hurricane as part of their regular preparedness programme:

- In **El Salvador**, UNICEF has distributed hygiene kits for 200 children and 200 hygiene kits for families in shelters, and a 2,500-litre water tank was installed in a shelter. Additional supplies have been prepositioned in preparation for Iota impact, including 210 PPE kits, 265 hygiene kits for children and 275 hygiene kits for families.

People / Children in need (due to Eta)		
Country	People in need	Children in need
Belize	66,100	23,135
Guatemala	900,000	342,000
Honduras	2,300,000	874,000
Nicaragua	170,000	75,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,436,100</b>	<b>1,314,135</b>



©UNICEF/2020/El Salvador/Leiva. UNICEF staff preparing the donation of hygiene kits to be distributed to families and children in shelters.

- In **Costa Rica**, as per the government's request, UNICEF will provide PPE, WASH, child protection and communication for development services, targeting around 3,000 people.
- In **Panama**, UNICEF is providing technical assistance to line ministries for the implementation of child protection actions in Child Friendly Spaces, promotion of breastfeeding and nutrition in emergencies. In addition, UNICEF is providing over five tonnes of supplies including tarpaulin, water containers, tents, blankets and mosquito nets for migrant families and for those affected by the impacts of Eta and Iota in vulnerable border communities.

## UNICEF strategy

UNICEF response strategy is adapted to the needs in country and focuses in ensuring that children and families in shelters and affected communities have access to basic services including protection, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services– including Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), health, education and early childhood development, and prevention of gender-based violence (GBV). UNICEF will link its humanitarian action and development programming to strengthen policies and systems and enhance resilience of affected populations.

With large population groups living in shelters, the risk of COVID-19 spread is latent. Ensuring availability of safe water and adequate sanitation, PPE items, implementation of biosafety protocols, social distancing, and other measures, will be challenging in the shelters' context. Against this backdrop, reinforcing preventive practices, risk communication and minimum health, and WASH services, at both shelter places and affected communities, will be essential components of UNICEF's response. UNICEF efforts will complement actions of authorities and other partners working in providing food assistance and overall support in shelters.

UNICEF remains a key humanitarian and development partner in the affected countries, leading and facilitating coordination efforts among clusters and sectoral groups -particularly in WASH, nutrition and Child Protection. UNICEF is part of interagency mechanisms and its response plans are aligned with interagency priorities. By the time of this document, the Honduras Humanitarian Country team is preparing a joint Flash Appeal document, UNICEF requirements are in line with this joint appeal.

## Key planned results

Based on preliminary scenarios on the impact of Hurricane Eta, UNICEF plans to reach over 646,000 people, including 327,000 children, with lifesaving and gender-sensitive supplies and services, in shelters and communities, in the most affected and vulnerable areas. UNICEF works in collaboration and coordination with governments and partners, with initial focus in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. UNICEF planned coverage may expand to other countries in the region if needs increase. Targets and coverage will be revised in view of Hurricane Iota's impact.

People / Children to be reached		
Country	People to be reached	Children to be reached
Belize	13,614	5,550
Guatemala	135,000	51,300
Honduras	406,329	233,255
Nicaragua	92,000	37,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>646,943</b>	<b>327,605</b>

## Funding requirements

Under the regional humanitarian appeal,<sup>ix</sup> UNICEF is urgently appealing for US\$42.6 million for the next six months, to meet the most urgent humanitarian needs of children and families affected by Hurricane Eta in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. This funding requirement is provisional and subject to change, UNICEF is assessing the impacts of Hurricane Iota which will likely increase the humanitarian needs in these and other countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region. Without this funding, UNICEF will be unable to maintain and expand programme capacities in the field through pre-existing and new partnerships. As UNICEF's strategy is strongly linked with its regular development programming, it will address the urgent needs of the most affected, while also contributing to building more resilient and shock-responsive systems. In addition to country-level needs, a regional funding requirement is included to cover coordination, and technical and quality assurance support for country offices.

Funding requirements	
Sector	TOTAL
Nutrition	2,711,209
Health	1,388,523
WASH	30,854,673
Education / Early Childhood Development	2,296,800
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA	3,572,200
Social protection and cash transfers	1,263,000
Regional office technical capacity	500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42,586,405</b>



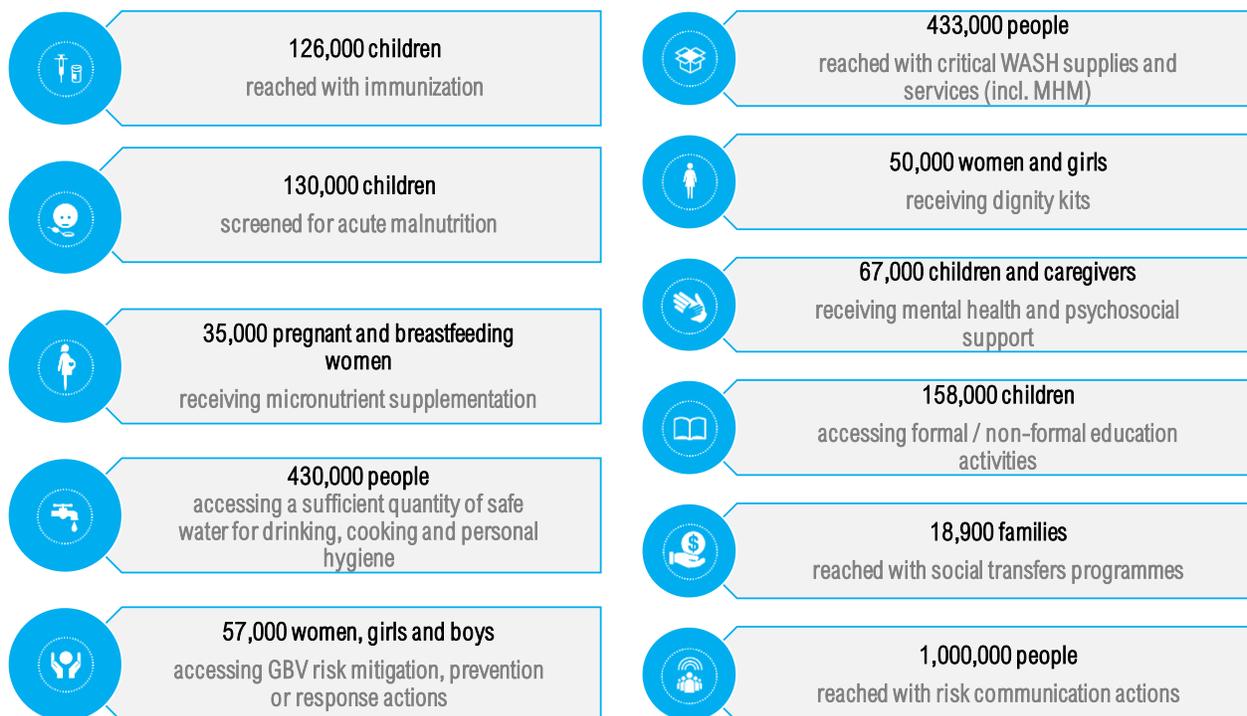
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*"What I would like the most now is to have a house, food, clothes, that's what I would like,"* says 13-year-old Jhon Dell, as he goes through the ruins that were left where his home used to be in the neighbourhood of El Muelle (Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua).

*"Families who lost their homes were stranded on roofs, blocked in inundated areas without electricity and cut off from the rest of their communities. Many are still being evacuated into shelters. We only expect needs to grow in the coming days as we are still far from having a full picture of the extent of damage across the region,"* said Bernt Aasen, UNICEF Regional Director a.i. for Latin America and the Caribbean.

## With your support...

With the required funding, UNICEF will be able to work with partners in delivering urgent support for children, women and families in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, that have been left in an extremely vulnerable situation after the impact of Hurricane Eta in their communities. UNICEF will support local and national governments, which capacities have been surpassed, in restoring and ensuring the continuity of services in the affected regions. UNICEF targets and coverage will be reassessed according to the humanitarian needs arising from the impact of Iota in the LAC region. UNICEF will be able to reach the following targets:



<sup>i</sup> This funding requirement will be revised after assessing the impacts of Hurricane Iota, and more information is available regarding the situation and needs of children and families.

<sup>ii</sup> El Tiempo, 'Devastadoras imágenes de Providencia tras paso de Iota', 17 November 2020, <<https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/vea-las-primeras-imagenes-de-providencia-tras-paso-de-huracan-iota-549485>>

<sup>iii</sup> La Prensa, 'Seis muertos y 63 mil evacuados en Nicaragua', 17 November 2020, <<https://www.laprensa.com.ni/2020/11/17/nacionales/2748939-iota-reporta-sus-primeras-victimas-dos-ninos-mueren-ahogados-en-carazo#:~:text=La%20primera%20dama%20y%20vicepresidenta,que%20hay%20en%20el%20pa%C3%ADs>>

<sup>iv</sup> According to official sources by the time of drafting this document. Figures for children affected and children in shelters are estimated by UNICEF, according to population distribution in country. Includes only data related to the impact of Hurricane Eta.

<sup>v</sup> Total number of people in shelters in Nicaragua since the beginning of the emergency. The current number is to be confirmed as families have started to return home.

<sup>vi</sup> Including Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Source: Johns Hopkins University Center for Systems Science and Engineering, 16 November 2020.

<sup>vii</sup> Including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Based on ECLAC, 'Addressing the Growing Impact of COVID-19 with a view to Reactivation with Equality: New projections', Special Report COVID-19 no. 5, ECLAC, 15 July 2020.

<sup>viii</sup> OCHA, 'Panorama de las necesidades humanitarias - El Salvador, Guatemala y Honduras', March 2020.

<sup>ix</sup> UNICEF, Latin America and the Caribbean Region Appeal – Humanitarian Action for Children 2020', December 2019, <<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/lac#download>>.