



Children in Caserío Calún 1, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. As El Niño deepens drought, UNICEF-supported health and nutrition teams are reaching communities at risk of acute malnutrition. (7 July 2026)

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Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1

Reporting Period
11 June – 18
September 2026

Latin America and Caribbean Region – El Niño Multi-Country Preparedness and Response

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 11 June 2026, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) declared El Niño conditions, which are expected to reach very strong intensity between November 2026 and January 2027.¹ Across Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), impacts are expected to vary considerably by location. Drought and extreme heat are anticipated across the Central American Dry Corridor,² the Caribbean and parts of South America, while the Pacific coasts of Mexico, Central America and South America, face heavy rainfall, flooding and landslides during an above-normal hurricane season.
- UNICEF's preliminary regional estimates indicate that 86 million people, including 25.8 million children, are exposed to El Niño-related hazards across LAC. Of these, up to 30 million people, including 9 million children, are at risk of humanitarian need, with an estimated 5 million children at heightened risk across 11 high-priority countries.³
- UNICEF and partners continue to prepare and respond accordingly. In Central America, CERF-funded Anticipatory Action is delivering nutrition and WASH support in the Dry Corridor, and offices in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Mexico are scaling up drought response. In South America, Country Offices have activated emergency teams, updated contingency plans and pre-positioned supplies ahead of the rainy season, while Caribbean countries are strengthening water management, early warning and community preparedness.
- El Niño requirements are being consolidated under UNICEF's 2026 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for LAC.⁴ UNICEF is seeking early, predictable funding to sustain access to essential services and reach children before the worst impacts arrive.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS



86,000,000
people exposed to El Niño-related hazards⁵



25,600,000
children exposed to El Niño-related hazards⁶



30,000,000
people at risk of humanitarian need⁷



9,000,000
children at risk of humanitarian need⁸

FUNDING STATUS (IN US\$)**

** Funding available includes: funds received in the current year; carry-over from the previous year; and repurposed funds with agreement from donors

SITUATION OVERVIEW



Juana, 34, checks her drought-hit maize crop in La Lagunilla, Jalapa, Guatemala. CERF-funded anticipatory action is helping families detect and prevent acute malnutrition early. (19 August 2026)

El Niño is the warm phase of the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon, which in LAC typically brings drier and hotter conditions to Central America, the Caribbean and northern South America and heavy rainfall to the Pacific coast of South America. NOAA declared El Niño conditions on 11 June 2026, and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) gives a probability of over 90 per cent that they will persist into early 2027, with strong or very strong intensity between November 2026 and January 2027, comparable to the events of 1982–83, 1997–98 and 2015–16.⁹ Historical analysis of these episodes confirms protracted drought in the Dry Corridor and the Caribbean and severe flooding on the Pacific coasts, with lasting consequences for food security, nutrition and access to essential services, and this El Niño is unfolding in a context of record-high global temperatures, high fuel and fertiliser prices and constrained humanitarian financing.¹⁰

UNICEF's preliminary regional estimates indicate that 86 million people, including 25.8 million children, are exposed to El Niño-related hazards across Latin America and the Caribbean. Of these, up to 30 million people, including 9 million children, could face humanitarian needs, with an estimated 2.7 million children at heightened risk across 11 high-priority countries including Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela. Impacts will not be confined to these countries, and priorities may shift as the conditions of the phenomenon evolves.¹¹

Central America and Mexico – In the Dry Corridor, below-normal rainfall, an early and extended mid-season dry spell¹² and above-average temperatures have compromised the Primera, the first maize and bean harvest of the year, and put the Postrera, the second harvest starting in August, at risk. El Salvador recorded its driest August since 1971 and declared a nationwide red alert for drought on 25 August, while Honduras declared a national emergency on 19 August and placed 103 municipalities under red alert, with water rationing in Tegucigalpa.¹³ In Guatemala, around 3 million people were already in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+) at the start of the year. In Honduras, 1.8 million people, 18 per cent of the population, are projected in Phase 3+ through October.¹⁴ Panama also declared a national state of emergency on 25 August after flooding on its Caribbean coast. On the Pacific coast, Mexico has been hit by seven tropical systems, including the landfall of Tropical Storm Boris in June.

The Caribbean – Long-term drought established since late 2025

across the Eastern Caribbean, Jamaica and eastern Cuba is expected to deepen into the 2026–27 dry season, compounding Cuba's socio-economic crisis and Haiti's food crisis, while an intense heat season peaks in August and September.¹⁵ The Atlantic hurricane season is forecast below normal, though warm Caribbean waters keep the risk of rapid intensification high.

South America – Ecuador raised its El Niño alert to red nationwide, and Peru declared a state of emergency in 22 of 24 regions ahead of a coastal flood season expected between November 2026 and April 2027. Colombia, Venezuela and Bolivia face falling reservoirs, water and power rationing and elevated wildfire risk, and in the Amazon basin, drought is expected to lower river levels and cut off riverine and Indigenous communities across northern Brazil, Bolivia, Peru and southern Venezuela, where the Orinoco and Amazon basins also face a high risk of forest fires; the State of Amazonas declared a preventive climate and environmental emergency in June.¹⁶ In the south of the continent, successive storms in Chile in July caused 13 deaths and destroyed or severely damaged more than 3,400 homes, while 16,196 people were directly affected.¹⁷ And southern Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay are preparing for above-normal rainfall and flooding in the La Plata Basin.

Several contextual factors compound these hazards and are being factored into UNICEF's preparedness and response. Electoral processes in Ecuador and recent changes of government in Colombia, Bolivia and Peru coincide with the period of greatest impact and will require additional attention to ensure continuity in preparedness planning, coordination and local emergency functions. Not all governments are expected to request international assistance, so UNICEF is planning its support accordingly. Insecurity in some coastal and border areas, fuel shortages and transport disruptions may constrain access and raise supply costs. In Panama, despite flooding on the Caribbean coast, low water levels in the canal watershed have already led the authorities to reduce daily transits, with further cuts possible if the drought deepens.¹⁸ Meanwhile, reduced OCHA presence in several countries places a greater coordination burden on UNICEF and its partners.

FUNDING OVERVIEW AND PARTNERSHIPS

El Niño requirements are being consolidated under UNICEF's 2026 Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal for the LAC region, which requests US\$53.8 million for disaster preparedness, Anticipatory Action and emergency response and was 45 per cent funded as of 30 June 2026.¹⁹

Funding is uneven across the region. In the Central American Dry Corridor, anticipatory financing is in place: the region's first collective anticipatory drought plan, facilitated by OCHA with the Governments of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, released US\$10.5 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) on the June rainfall forecast, with UNICEF implementing nutrition and WASH components in all three countries, and United States funding through the OCHA-managed pooled funds is also supporting drought response in Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.²⁰ Education, however, is not currently covered by these OCHA funding mechanisms, leaving a critical gap in anticipatory financing to protect education continuity and prevent learning loss and children leaving school. Outside the Dry Corridor, very limited pre-arranged financing is available for the South America and the Caribbean countries, while UNICEF COs are preparing for El Niño scenarios with core resources alone against requirements that are already substantial.²¹

UNICEF is mobilising additional resources to support preparedness and Anticipatory Action ahead of the expected peak of impacts: a proposed allocation of US\$1.5 million in Global Humanitarian Thematic Funds submitted to the Emergency Programmes Division,

prioritising Peru, Ecuador, Cuba, and Haiti and establishing a regional fund that releases pre-agreed payouts when forecast triggers are reached; a request under the Emergency Programme Fund to bridge liquidity for pre-positioning; forecast-based activation of crisis modifiers in European Commission projects in Ecuador, Peru and the Amazon basin; and bilateral engagement with the United States, the European Union, Canada, Japan and other donors.

Without early, flexible funding, UNICEF will be forced to respond after impact, at higher cost and with fewer children reached, in a season expected to be the most severe the region has faced in decades. UNICEF therefore calls on donors to provide flexible, predictable and timely contributions now, so that supplies can be pre-positioned, essential services sustained and children reached before the worst impacts arrive.

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION



La Lagunilla, Jalapa, Guatemala. Through CERF-funded anticipatory action, caregivers of children under five learn to spot signs of acute malnutrition and monitor nutrition at home. (19 August 2026)

Since El Niño conditions were declared in June, governments across the region have led preparedness and response through their national disaster risk management systems, and UNICEF has supported them within these structures and through the United Nations coordination architecture in each country.²²

Government preparedness – National emergency or red alert declarations are in force in Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama and Peru; Guatemala and El Salvador are also covered by the CERF anticipatory framework, and Bolivia and Chile by earlier states of emergency. UNICEF is planning its support accordingly.

UN coordination – Resident Coordinator-led humanitarian networks in Ecuador and Peru, Humanitarian Country Teams in the Caribbean, Bolivia, Colombia and Haiti, and United Nations Emergency Technical Teams in Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama are coordinating joint risk analysis, contingency planning and the division of sectoral responsibilities among agencies. In Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, where OCHA has no country presence, the Resident Coordinators' Offices lead an established inter-agency coordination structure built around the CERF Anticipatory Action frameworks and the Regional Humanitarian Pooled Fund, with joint prioritisation of municipalities, agreed sector leads and shared targeting and monitoring for the drought response.

UNICEF sector leadership – UNICEF leads or co-leads WASH in all affected countries; nutrition in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Colombia and Haiti;

education in Peru, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Colombia and Haiti; and the child protection sub-sector or area of responsibility in Honduras, Ecuador, Colombia, Haiti and Chile, as well as the CDEMA regional WASH and education thematic groups. At the regional level, LACRO convenes the LAC Humanitarian Network, participates in OCHA's civil-military coordination and Anticipatory Action groups and recently organised an Emergency Preparedness session during the Deputy Representatives event in Panama in early September, and is planning a session for all Country Office Representatives ahead of the Regional Management Team meeting in Peru in October.

SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED SECTORAL NEEDS

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

The most immediate threat to children is nutritional. Across the Dry Corridor, the loss of the Primera and the anticipated failure of the "Postrera" coincide with the lean season, when household stocks are exhausted and families depend on markets where maize and bean prices have risen by 20 to 40 per cent.²³

In Guatemala, the combined effects of El Niño and the recurrent vulnerabilities of the Dry Corridor are expected to increase the cases of children and women at risk of acute malnutrition. An estimated 209,965 children under five across 70 climate-vulnerable municipalities, 41,652 pregnant women and 35,701 lactating women are at risk of acute malnutrition, substantially exceeding projections made at the beginning of 2026.²⁴ In Honduras, approximately 15,000 children under five are projected to be at risk of acute malnutrition across the 103 municipalities affected by the Dry Corridor and El Niño. This projected deterioration is already emerging in some areas: over the past two months, three municipalities declared an increased caseload of acute malnutrition compared to previous years, with prevalence reaching around 5% global acute malnutrition (GAM).

In Haiti, an already severe nutrition situation is projected to deteriorate further during the 2026–2027 El Niño period. The latest IPC Acute Malnutrition analysis (September 2026) estimates that 253,725 children aged 6–59 months will suffer acute malnutrition between June 2026 and May 2027 and 25,750 acutely malnourished pregnant and breastfeeding women. The nutrition situation is expected to deteriorate further between December 2026 and May 2027, overlapping with the expected El Niño impact period, with many more areas (from 3 to 29) projected to face serious or critical levels of acute malnutrition.²⁵ A second wave of health risk follows the rains: flooding on the Pacific coast, in Panama and the Caribbean will drive dengue, leptospirosis and diarrhoeal disease, higher temperatures are extending the range of Aedes mosquitoes to communities without prior immunity and the Pan American Health Organization has warned that flooding places some 756 hospitals in the region at risk.²⁶ Power rationing threatens cold chains in Venezuela and Cuba, where there are challenges in immunisation coverage and extreme heat raises the risk of heat illness among young children and pregnant women.



La Lagunilla, Jalapa, Guatemala. With CERF-funded anticipatory action, caregivers learn to track their children's growth at home and practise handwashing and complementary feeding. (19 August 2026)

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Water scarcity runs through every drought-affected sub-region. Reservoirs supplying Tegucigalpa have fallen to 30 per cent of capacity, Cuba's are at their lowest since 2015 with 2.6 million people already facing interrupted water services, an estimated 4.3 million people in Colombia could face high or very high water shortages, and water pumping in Venezuela depends on a power system losing its main hydroelectric inflow.²⁷ Interior and rural communities in the Eastern Caribbean, Guyana and Suriname that rely on rainwater and shallow wells face the longest interruptions. As water becomes scarce, households store it in unprotected containers and turn to unsafe sources, increasing diarrhoeal disease and mosquito breeding, and the burden of collection falls on women and girls. Water scarcity will also undermine the quality of care in health facilities, where safe water is essential for infection prevention, safe childbirth and nutrition treatment, and the ability of schools and learning centres to remain open and provide a healthy learning environment. On the Pacific coast, flooding will contaminate sources and inundate latrines in dense coastal settlements, driving waterborne disease in the weeks after impact.

CHILD PROTECTION

Drought and flooding intensify protection risks where poverty, violence, displacement and migration already converge. As incomes collapse, households may adopt negative coping strategies including child labour and withdrawal of children from school, and drought has historically driven labour migration from Central America and Mexico, exposing children to separation, trafficking and exploitation along migration routes.²⁸ Several of the countries most exposed to El Niño, including in Central America's Dry Corridor, Colombia and Ecuador, are also reporting the recruitment and use of children by organized criminal groups. This puts children's lives at risk in the region with the highest child and adolescent homicide rates in the world.²⁹ Flood-driven displacement in Ecuador, Peru and Panama will bring children into collective shelters where gender-based violence and separation risks rise, in coastal Ecuador where armed violence already limits access to services and in Haiti where displacement sites are under armed-group pressure. Specialised child protection capacity is thin in the most exposed areas, and psychosocial distress among children and caregivers is expected to increase.

EDUCATION

In previous El Niño years, schools were among the first services to close. Around 22 per cent of schools in Peru are in flood-risk zones, and more than 9,000 schools in Ecuador, 74 per cent of the national total, are on the exposed coast.³⁰ Flooding damages school infrastructure, disrupts access routes and leads to schools being used as temporary shelters, extending closures beyond the immediate emergency. In drought-affected areas, water shortages disrupt school sanitation, hygiene and feeding programmes, while extreme heat can reduce attendance, concentration and learning by more than 20 per cent, particularly in classrooms without adequate ventilation and cooling.³¹ Children may also withdraw from school as households resort to work, migration or other coping strategies. These risks are particularly acute in Central America and the Caribbean, where drought and agricultural stress further affect water availability, food security and children's ability to attend school.

Education-sector preparedness is advancing but remains uneven. Contingency plans in Peru and Ecuador rely on virtual and distance-learning modalities, yet recent evidence from across LAC shows that remote learning excludes children in rural, indigenous, Amazonian, Andean and other low-connectivity communities, especially where households lack internet, devices or adequate support. More broadly, plans in several contexts give greater attention to school infrastructure and physical safety than to continuity of learning, and education is not fully reflected (or even absent) in national emergency planning in several countries, which prioritise immediate response and infrastructure recovery over services for children. This gap is becoming more critical as education budgets and humanitarian funding for education decline.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

The impacts of El Niño will push additional vulnerable children and their families into poverty or deeper into poverty, due to loss of employment – particularly where agriculture employs most of the workforce – agricultural and livestock losses, and rising food and fuel prices that erode purchasing power.³² These economic effects can cause additional child deprivations as families face difficult trade-offs in costs of food, in relation to health costs, child labour, and more. These impacts are not only immediate for children but can have lasting impacts on longer-term nutrition and learning. National cash-transfer systems in most affected countries are not designed to rapidly expand to newly affected families or increase transfers in a response to a shock. Undocumented and migrant households are often excluded from national safety nets in parts of Central America and the Caribbean, and in countries already facing severe socio-economic constraints, such as Cuba, Haiti and Venezuela, any additional shock will further strain the systems families depend on. Therefore, multipurpose humanitarian cash, delivered through or alongside government systems, will be needed during the peak months.

UNICEF STRATEGY AND ANTICIPATORY ACTION



Roel measures the arm of his daughter Ilenia, 4, in La Lagunilla, Jalapa, Guatemala, applying skills from CERF-funded training to detect acute malnutrition early at home. (19 August 2026)

UNICEF bases its response on the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and works through national systems allowing UNICEF to reach scale by strengthening government services while retaining the ability to deliver directly where systems are overwhelmed. Since El Niño conditions were first forecast in the second quarter of 2026, UNICEF has moved from monitoring to preparedness and, in the Dry Corridor and several other countries, to early response, concentrating on nutrition, WASH, health, child protection and education.

At the Regional Office – LACRO produced a country-by-country estimation of El Niño exposure and expected people in need, maintains a risk, Anticipatory Action and readiness tracker updated with Country Office inputs in June and August and disseminated WMO, CIMH and NOAA forecasts to all offices through a Community of Practice in June.³³ Emergency preparedness plans for all 24 Country Offices were reviewed in July, and recent simulation exercises have been conducted in Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Suriname.³⁴ Early-response supplies are pre-positioned in the Panama regional warehouse and the Caribbean Regional Logistics Hub in Barbados, with regional long-term agreements available to Country Offices.³⁵ LACRO conducted internal and external briefings, including for the United States Government and the European Commission, on the regional outlook and published an investment case for child-centred El Niño and hurricane preparedness.³⁶

Central America and Mexico – Anticipatory Action has begun under the region's first collective framework for drought, facilitated by OCHA with the Governments of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, for which the CERF released US\$10.5 million on the June rainfall forecast, with UNICEF implementing the nutrition and WASH components in all three countries.³⁷ In Guatemala, UNICEF's US\$800,000 component is delivering nutrition and WASH actions in the Dry Corridor through community and municipal food security councils, with more than 5,100 children and women screened for acute malnutrition and 8,240 people given access to safe water by mid-year,³⁸ and the response is scaling up through the Regional Humanitarian Pooled Fund to cover 28 priority municipalities across all funding streams.³⁹

In Honduras, UNICEF delivers WASH and nutrition under Anticipatory Action in 16 municipalities of El Paraíso and Francisco Morazán, two of the five departments the IPC projected to deteriorate through October, and provides the analysis for the National Drought Committee's municipal prioritisation.⁴⁰ With Regional Humanitarian Pooled Fund support, UNICEF and partners

have reached 72,899 children and women with primary health care, screened 13,734 children for acute malnutrition and provided safe water to 3,896 people by mid-year.⁴¹ In El Salvador, nutrition and WASH supplies under Anticipatory Action are pre-positioned for 29 primary health facilities; 3,526 children under five and 1,326 pregnant and breastfeeding women have been screened as of 17 August 2026, nutrition supplies have been distributed to prioritised health facilities for micronutrient supplementation (MMS) and the treatment of moderate and severe acute malnutrition, and 60 health professionals have been trained on the child wasting management protocol.⁴² In Nicaragua, UNICEF supports the National Water Authority and Ministry of Health with water-system maintenance, community water committees, therapeutic food and WASH in 27 schools and 22 health centres, and is preparing an inter-agency El Niño plan through the United Nations Emergency Technical Team and has been allocated US\$200,000 in Global Humanitarian Thematic Funds for drought preparedness in the Dry Corridor.⁴³ In Mexico, UNICEF has trained emergency institutions in all 32 states and has programmed US\$150,000 for response on the Pacific coast and in the southern Dry Corridor.⁴⁴

The Caribbean – Cuba continues to sustain water, health, education and child protection services under a response plan extended from Hurricane Melissa, including solar-powered pumping and chlorination to keep water flowing during outages.⁴⁵ Jamaica and the Dominican Republic are readying rapid assessments and drought scenarios while maintaining hurricane-season pre-positioning.⁴⁶ The Eastern Caribbean is expanding water storage in priority schools in Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and adapting heat and drought messaging.⁴⁷ Guyana is updating regional disaster risk management plans with drought triggers and training teachers in more than 30 schools; Suriname is installing rainwater harvesting in interior communities, has trained 35 district officials and has pre-positioned supplies for 1,500 people.⁴⁸ Belize supports the Beat the Heat campaign, and in Haiti cholera and lean-season nutrition preparedness continue within the ongoing response.⁴⁹

South America – Ecuador and Peru have led the shift to intensive preparedness. UNICEF Ecuador activated its Emergency Management Team in May, has pre-positioned some US\$500,000 of supplies with 24-hour delivery commitments in affected territories, holds retail and airlift agreements for direct delivery to the coast, is finalising nine contingency partnership agreements and a costed contingency and supply plan and has developed a multisector assessment tool and canton-level risk dashboard.⁵⁰ In Peru, UNICEF has pre-positioned 2,000 WASH, breastfeeding and education kits and 10 tents in the north, holds WASH and education long-term agreements and an air transport agreement shared with Ecuador, is developing child-focused risk scenarios with the national risk assessment centre, has trained local officials in the five most exposed regions and is advocating for the inclusion of child services in the Government's single command for El Niño.⁵¹ The two offices have agreed to share supplies, suppliers, tools and partners when the scale of the emergency exceeds one office's capacity.

Colombia has a contingency plan for WASH, health and nutrition and gender-based violence prevention in five departments, targeting 40,000 people with WASH through partners already present;⁵² Bolivia is establishing a community-based early warning system in Amazon Indigenous territories and an integrated drought and wildfire scenario;⁵³ Brazil joined the Amazonas State Emergency Operations Centre to plan pre-positioning and extended early warning coverage to 47,321 Indigenous people;⁵⁴ Venezuela is preparing water-treatment and power-resilient cold-chain options alongside the earthquake response;⁵⁵ and Argentina and Uruguay are reviewing preparedness against the La Plata flood forecast.⁵⁶ In Chile, where July's frontal systems left 13 dead and 16,196 directly affected, UNICEF supported the Government-led response with child

protection monitoring and technical assistance to the Undersecretariat of Children.⁵⁷

Country Offices are quantifying the surge and supply a sustained response will require. Ecuador has mapped staffing needs by phase and Peru has identified critical profiles for a response expected to last four to five months, and both, with Honduras, Nicaragua and the Caribbean offices, flag limited pre-positioned stocks and gaps in nutrition and WASH supplies as their most pressing constraints at a time when Supply Division and the Panama hub are committed to eight ongoing responses.⁵⁸ LACRO is consolidating these requirements to organise regional surge and supply support in advance and is working with offices on last-mile delivery through retail, airlift and local partner arrangements. Subject to funding, UNICEF plans further anticipatory measures for the September to October window: pre-positioning of supplies in northern Peru and coastal Ecuador before November, scaled nutrition surveillance and treatment through the second harvest season in the Dry Corridor, water storage and continuity solutions for schools and health facilities in the Caribbean and Colombia, power-resilient water and cold-chain solutions in Venezuela and Cuba, forecast-based activation of crisis modifiers with the European Commission in Ecuador, Peru and the Amazon basin, and an additional preparedness allocation and Emergency Programme Fund request with the Emergency Programmes Division.⁵⁹

HAC APPEALS AND SITREPS

- Latin America and Caribbean Region Appeals
<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/lac>
- Latin America and Caribbean Region Situation Reports
<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/lac/situation-reports>
- All Humanitarian Action for Children Appeals
<https://www.unicef.org/appeals>
- All Situation Reports
<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/situation-reports>

NEXT SITREP: 26 OCTOBER 2026

ENDNOTES

1. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Climate Prediction Center, ENSO Diagnostic Discussion, 11 June 2026, and probabilistic ENSO intensity forecast, May 2026; World Meteorological Organization, El Niño/La Niña Update, 2 June 2026.
2. The Central American Dry Corridor is the drought-prone strip running along the Pacific side of Central America through Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, where most rural households depend on rain-fed subsistence farming of maize and beans.
3. Based on the preliminary regional estimation of El Niño-related hazard exposure by the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO), September 2026; see the Situation in Numbers endnotes for methodology and high-priority countries. The regional analysis is specific to this El Niño event, its expected duration to early 2027 and the municipalities forecast to face the most severe impacts and represents a subset of the broader exposure analysis based on UNICEF's Global Child Hazard Database and Children's Climate Risk Report 2026. All figures are estimates and may change as the phenomenon evolves.
4. United Nations Children's Fund, Humanitarian Action for Children 2026: Latin America and Caribbean Region (Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response), December 2025, available at <https://www.unicef.org/media/177246/file/2026-HAC-LAC.pdf>. This report covers all countries in the region affected or expected to be affected by El Niño; humanitarian needs in Colombia, Haiti and Venezuela are addressed under separate standalone Humanitarian Action for Children appeals, and funding figures therefore do not include resources for those countries.
5. Based on the preliminary regional estimation of El Niño-related hazard exposure by the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO), September 2026, covering all Country Offices in the region. Exposure was estimated using official national population estimates, humanitarian country team joint analyses for El Niño, the Global Child Hazard Database and GeoSight's Children's Climate Risk Report 2026 exposure layers in the Emergency Preparedness Platform 3.0. The analysis focused on people living in municipalities classified in the highest severity classes for rainfall deficit (drought) or excess rainfall (flooding) forecast this season in association with El Niño, with sub-national selection for large countries such as Brazil. The regional analysis is specific to this event, its expected duration and the most severely affected areas, and represents a subset of the broader country-level exposure estimates in the Global Child Hazard Database. Of the 86 million people exposed, 47.1 million live in the 11 high-priority countries. All figures are estimates and may change as the phenomenon evolves.
6. Children under 18 estimated at 30 per cent of the exposed population, the approximate regional share of population under 18. Of the 25.8 million, approximately 14 million are in the 11 high-priority countries.
7. Estimated as 30 per cent of the exposed population, as a proxy for the most vulnerable groups, or from IPC Phase 3+ projections (Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras), official estimates (Colombia: Equipo Humanitario País; Peru: national government) and Country Office estimates (Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua) where these exist. Of the 30 million people at risk, 16.5 million are in the 11 high-priority countries.
8. Children under 18 estimated at 30 per cent of the people at risk, consistent with the method used in the 2026 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for the region. Of the 9 million, approximately 5 million are in the 11 high-priority countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela, identified by LACRO on the basis of El Niño hazard exposure, pre-existing vulnerability and humanitarian presence, and consistent with the inter-agency ENSO priority and monitoring countries for the region with the addition of Bolivia. Impacts will not be confined to these countries; no two El Niño events are alike, and priorities may shift as the phenomenon evolves.
9. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Climate Prediction Center, ENSO Diagnostic Discussion, 11 June 2026, and probabilistic ENSO intensity forecast, May 2026; World Meteorological Organization, El Niño/La Niña Update, 2 June 2026.
10. Inter-Agency Global ENSO Analysis Cell, El Niño Status and Humanitarian Outlook, updated 22 June 2026.
11. Based on the preliminary regional estimation of El Niño-related hazard exposure by LACRO, September 2026; see endnotes 5 to 8 for methodology and high-priority countries.
12. Known locally as the *canícula*, the dry spell that interrupts the Central American rainy season for two to four weeks between July and early August. In El Niño years it tends to begin earlier, last longer and coincide with higher temperatures, causing crop losses in rain-fed agriculture.
13. Dirección General de Protección Civil de El Salvador, declaratoria de alerta roja por sequía meteorológica y agrícola, 25 August 2026; Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales de El Salvador, boletín climático, 2 September 2026; Comisión Permanente de Contingencias (COPECO), boletines de alerta roja, 19 and 26 August 2026.
14. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Guatemala acute food insecurity analysis, early 2026; Unidad Técnica de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (UTSAN/SAG), Honduras: Análisis de Inseguridad Alimentaria Aguda de la CIF, noviembre 2025 – octubre 2026, published 10 June 2026, available at https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Honduras_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Nov2025_Oct2026_Report_Spanish.pdf. The second projection (August–October 2026) assumed a 55–60 per cent probability of transition to El Niño conditions.
15. Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology, Caribbean Climate Outlook Newsletter, July to September 2026, and Heat Outlook for July to December 2026; Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Haiti acute food insecurity analysis, September 2025 to June 2026.
16. Consejo de Gabinete de Panamá, Resolución de Gabinete N.º 102-26, 25 August 2026; Oficina de Coordinación de Asuntos Humanitarios, América Latina y el Caribe: El Niño 2026–2027, June 2026; Governo do Estado do Amazonas, decreto de situação de emergência climática e ambiental preventiva, June 2026; Servicio Nacional de Prevención y Respuesta ante Desastres de Chile (SENAPRED), situation reports, 18 to 24 July 2026.
17. Consejo de Gabinete de Panamá, Resolución de Gabinete N.º 102-26, 25 August 2026; Oficina de Coordinación de Asuntos Humanitarios, América Latina y el Caribe: El Niño 2026–2027, June 2026; Servicio Nacional de Prevención y Respuesta ante Desastres de Chile (SENAPRED), situation reports, 18 to 24 July 2026.
18. Panama Canal Authority, Advisories to Shipping, July–September 2026, <https://pancanal.com/en/maritime-services/advisory-to-shipping/>; Al Jazeera, 8 September 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/9/8/panama-canal-may-cut-ship-traffic-further-as-el-nio-strengthens>
19. As of 30 June 2026, US\$24.3 million of the US\$53.8 million requirement was available, including US\$12.0 million carried over from 2025; see UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Region, Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1, 26 August 2026, available at <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/lac/situation-reports>. Figures will be updated in the next report.
20. OCHA, América Latina y el Caribe: El Niño 2026–2027, June 2026. In line with guidance from the UNICEF Humanitarian Financing team, contributions received through the United States–OCHA pooled funds and other grants attributed to the 2026 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for the LAC Region (Children on the Move and Armed Violence) are reported under that appeal, including where they support drought and El Niño-related activities, and are not reflected in the funding figures of this report. CERF allocations are attributed to the respective inter-agency frameworks.
21. UNICEF Country Office inputs to the Regional Readiness Tracker, June and August 2026. Requirements identified to date include US\$17.5 million for Cuba's response plan, US\$2 million for drought preparedness in Nicaragua and US\$1.96 million for Colombia's contingency plan (reported under Colombia's standalone appeal); Ecuador and Peru are costing contingency plans against the largest expected caseloads in the region.
22. UNICEF Country Office inputs to the Regional Readiness Tracker, June and August 2026; Ecuador–Peru El Niño preparedness call, 27 August 2026; LAC Humanitarian Network check-in, 27 August 2026.
23. Famine Early Warning Systems Network, Central America Food Security Outlook, June 2026 to January 2027; Oficina de Coordinación de Asuntos Humanitarios, América Latina y el Caribe: El Niño 2026–2027, June 2026.

24. Equipo Humanitario de País de Guatemala, Guatemala: Análisis conjunto preliminar sobre posibles impactos humanitarios del fenómeno El Niño, September 2026, available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/guatemala-analisis-conjunto-preliminar-sobre-posibles-impactos-humanitarios-del-fenomeno-el-nino-septiembre-2026>
25. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Haiti analysis, September 2025 to June 2026; UNICEF Haiti and Bolivia Country Office risk analyses, Emergency Preparedness Platform, 2026.
26. Pan American Health Organization, Dengue epidemiological situation in the Region of the Americas, epidemiological week 28, 2026, and public health situation analysis on El Niño 2026–2027, July 2026.
27. Comisión Permanente de Contingencias (COPECO), 19 August 2026; Equipo Humanitario País Colombia and 3iS, Predicción de impactos por desarrollo de El Fenómeno del Niño 2026–2027, 19 June 2026; UNICEF Cuba and Venezuela Country Office risk analyses, 2026.
28. Inter-Agency Global ENSO Analysis Cell, El Niño Status and Humanitarian Outlook, Annex A, June 2026; UNICEF Country Office risk analyses, Emergency Preparedness Platform, 2026.
29. PAHO, UNICEF, Violence Against Children in Latin America and the Caribbean, January 2026
30. UNICEF Peru and Ecuador Country Offices, El Niño preparedness briefing, 27 August 2026.
31. Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology, Heat Outlook for July to December 2026.
32. UNICEF Country Office risk analyses, Emergency Preparedness Platform, 2026; Oficina de Coordinación de Asuntos Humanitarios, June 2026.
33. UNICEF LACRO, LAC Humanitarian Network Community of Practice on Hurricane Season and El Niño 2026, 4 June 2026; Regional and Country Risk, Anticipatory Action and Readiness Tracker, El Niño 2026/2027, August 2026.
34. UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Region, Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1, 2026 Humanitarian Action for Children, 26 August 2026 (Regional Office overview).
35. UNICEF LACRO, When hazards converge: El Niño and hurricane season preparedness investment case, 28 August 2026.
36. UNICEF Quarterly Horizon Scan No. 7, El Niño special edition, 24 August 2026; UNICEF LACRO, Ecuador–Peru El Niño preparedness call, 27 August 2026.
37. Oficina de Coordinación de Asuntos Humanitarios, América Latina y el Caribe: El Niño 2026–2027, June 2026. CERF allocations under the framework: Honduras US\$4 million, Guatemala US\$4 million, El Salvador US\$2.5 million.
38. UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Region, Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1, 2026 Humanitarian Action for Children, 26 August 2026; UNICEF Guatemala Country Office, Anticipatory Action update, August 2026.
39. UNICEF Guatemala Country Office, presentation to the LAC Humanitarian Network monthly check-in, 27 August 2026.
40. UNICEF Honduras Country Office, Regional Readiness Tracker, June 2026; Oficina de Coordinación de Asuntos Humanitarios, June 2026. UNICEF-specific targets under the Anticipatory Action to be confirmed by the Country Office.
41. UNICEF Honduras Country Office, Regional Readiness Tracker, June 2026; UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Region, Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1, 26 August 2026 (Honduras); Unidad Técnica de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional, Análisis CIF Honduras, June 2026. Results supported by the Regional Humanitarian Pooled Fund are reported under the 2026 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for Children on the Move and Armed Violence, in line with Humanitarian Financing guidance; they are described here for completeness and are not counted against the Disaster Preparedness appeal.
42. UNICEF El Salvador Country Office, Anticipatory Action update, 17 August 2026; UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Region, Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1, 26 August 2026 (El Salvador).
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44. UNICEF Mexico Country Office, Regional Readiness Tracker, August 2026.
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51. UNICEF Peru Country Office, presentation to the Ecuador–Peru El Niño preparedness call, 27 August 2026; Regional Readiness Tracker, June 2026.
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56. UNICEF Argentina and Uruguay Country Offices, communication to LACRO Emergency Unit, September 2026.
57. UNICEF Chile, Severe Weather and Flooding Emergency, Humanitarian Situation Reports No. 1 (23 July 2026) and No. 2 (28 July 2026).
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59. UNICEF LACRO Emergency Unit, El Niño preparedness proposal to the Emergency Programmes Division, September 2026.