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Humanitarian Action for Children

unicef 

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Children are disproportionately affected by the unfolding economic and political challenges in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Frequent interruptions in electricity, limited transportation due to the lack of fuel and vehicle spare parts, and increased insecurity have undermined the ability of many Venezuelans to meet their most basic needs. For children, it has been increasingly difficult to access food and water and attend school regularly. Vaccine-preventable diseases, including measles and diphtheria, have re-emerged, and cases of tuberculosis, HIV and malaria are on the rise.¹ Some 6.8 million people are undernourished, and the prevalence of undernourishment is increasing, from 6.4 per cent in 2012–2014 to 21.2 per cent in 2016–2018.² At least 4.3 million people lack access to safe water, and 14 per cent of the population only receives water every 15 days.³ An estimated 1.3 million children are in need of protection, and 2.2 million children require access to education.⁴

Humanitarian strategy

In line with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and joint humanitarian action planning, UNICEF will continue to implement an integrated, multi-sectoral, inclusive response and expand its field presence to address the needs of Venezuelan children in 2020. UNICEF will increase access to clean water, basic sanitation and life-saving maternal and child health services; facilitate the prevention and treatment of all forms of malnutrition; enhance access to quality formal and non-formal education; incentivize professional cadres through conditioned cash transfers; provide prevention and response interventions to children affected by violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, including gender-based violence; and disseminate timely information to promote positive behaviour change. The response will also focus on providing life-saving supplies and services; strengthening monitoring and evaluation; establishing mechanisms for accountability to affected populations and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse; and building local technical capacities in partnership with authorities, civil society and other United Nations agencies. UNICEF leads the nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and education clusters and the child protection area of responsibility, and actively participates in the health cluster and gender-based violence area of responsibility. UNICEF's experience and strategic field presence will enable effective humanitarian assistance across the country.

Results from 2019

As of 31 August 2019, UNICEF had US\$6.7 million available against the US\$70.4 million appeal (9.5 per cent funded).⁵ Prior to this appeal, UNICEF Venezuela scaled up its interventions with a budget of US\$32 million (87 per cent funded) for activities conducted through June 2019.⁶ Working with 20 partners, UNICEF reached some 308,900 people, including over 157,000 children, with humanitarian assistance during the year. The operational context is still very constrained, with constant power cuts outside of Caracas, difficulties accessing fuel and security challenges that have restricted UNICEF's ability to access the most vulnerable children in some parts of the country. This has had a direct impact on health outreach activities, including vaccination efforts in remote rural areas. In addition, the number of local partners with sufficient humanitarian expertise and presence throughout the country is limited, which has delayed the implementation of some interventions, including individual or group mental health and psychosocial support activities. The financial crisis has decimated the number of suppliers and contractors in the country, which has challenged UNICEF's ability to contract qualified water infrastructure suppliers. To overcome these challenges, UNICEF will increase its direct implementation programming and monitoring activities in 2020.

Total people in need

7 million⁷

Total children (<18) in need

3.2 million⁸

Total people to be reached

2.6 million⁹

Total children to be reached

1.7 million¹⁰

2020¹¹ programme targets

Nutrition

- 14,331 children under 5 years affected by moderate acute malnutrition and 6,070 children under 5 years affected by severe acute malnutrition received treatment
- 688,100 children aged 6 to 59 months and pregnant and lactating women received micronutrient supplementation
- 155,563 caregivers receiving infant and young child feeding counselling for appropriate feeding for children under 2 years

Health

- 555,600 children under 5 years vaccinated against measles
- 246,900 newborns and pregnant women received neonatal and maternal life-saving services in UNICEF-supported facilities

WASH

- 2,000,000 people benefiting from access to safe water
- 1,443,000 people benefiting from access to safe sanitation

Child protection

- 270,000 girls and boys participating in individual or group mental health and psychosocial support activities
- 30,000 girls and boys supported through integrated child protection individual services
- 360,000 women, men, girls and boys reached with awareness activities on child protection issues, including gender-based violence and family separation

Education

- 27,000 out-of-school children aged 4 to 18 years accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- 1,180,000 children aged 4 to 18 years in schools receiving education materials

	Cluster 2019 targets (August – December)	Cluster total results (1-31 August) ⁱ	UNICEF 2019 targets (January – December)	UNICEF results (January – 31 August)
NUTRITION				
Children under 5 years affected by severe and moderate acute malnutrition (with or without complications) admitted for treatment	8,604	783	7,000	6,630
Children aged 6 to 59 months and pregnant and lactating women receiving micronutrient supplementation	153,406	5,279	150,000	108,942
Caregivers receiving infant and young child feeding counseling for appropriate feeding of children under 2 years	155,406	11,693	80,928	78,165
HEALTH				
Pregnant women and newborn babies receiving maternal/ neonatal life-saving services in UNICEF-supported facilities			172,797	27,858
Children under 1 year vaccinated against measles			536,097	283,877 ⁱⁱ
WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE				
People benefiting from access to safe water	1,713,318 ⁱⁱⁱ	83,846	800,000	352,479
People benefiting from access to safe sanitation	1,713,318 ^{iv}	679	577,000	0 ^v
People accessing basic information on hygiene and water treatment and conservation in the home			592,000	12,156
CHILD PROTECTION				
Girls and boys participating in individual or group mental health and psychosocial support activities	166,080	4,317	129,600	19,009
Women, men, girls and boys reached with awareness activities on child protection issues, including gender-based violence and family separation	316,800	28,356	172,800	52,302
Girls and boys supported through integrated individual child protection services ^{vi}	40,200	822	14,400	622
EDUCATION				
Children aged 4 to 18 years in schools who received education materials	820,000	13,179	680,000	75,627
Out-of-school children aged 4 to 18 years accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning	15,000	0	13,500	0 ^{vii}

^{*} Results are through 31 August 2019.

ⁱ The low results are due to the fact that the clusters were only activated in July and therefore only officially started to report in August.

ⁱⁱ The low results are due to the fact that the measles outbreak, which began in July 2017 with cases reported in all 23 states and the Capital District, has been progressively controlled. The last confirmed case was reported in Zulia in August 2019. As part of the national routine immunization programme, UNICEF has focused on vaccinating children under 1 year against measles.

ⁱⁱⁱ This figure represents the total beneficiary target of the WASH cluster for WASH activities in communities (water and sanitation, as the latter depends on the former). Over 90 per cent of households have toilets connected to sewerage or septic tanks that depend on water to function.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v There have been delays in the implementation of sanitation activities for three reasons: 1) the extended negotiation process with authorities to gain access to institutions, namely hospitals and schools; 2) the prioritization by authorities of interventions to improve access to clean water over safe sanitation; and 3) the limited number of local suppliers of cleaning and disinfecting products, resulting in extended procurement processes to assess and ensure quality, as well as extended offshore procurement. These activities started in September 2019.

^{vi} This is a new indicator for 2020 that refers to legal assistance, safe spaces and programmes and services for children who are victims of violence, including gender-based violence. Although not included in the 2019 appeal, integrated individual child protection services have been provided in 2019.

^{vii} Out-of-school activities are planned to start in November 2019.

Funding requirements

UNICEF is requesting US\$153.25 million to meet the humanitarian needs of Venezuelan children in the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach areas in 2020. These resources will allow UNICEF to provide life-saving and urgent protection, education, health, nutrition, and water and sanitation services in a complex environment with increasing operational challenges that hinder humanitarian efforts.¹² Without adequate and timely funding in 2020, UNICEF and its partners will be unable to address the critical humanitarian needs of Venezuelan children and families and will miss an opportunity to prevent the further deterioration of the situation and lay the foundation for a recovery phase.

Sector	2020 requirements (US\$) ¹³
Nutrition	12,745,000
Health	22,290,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	58,300,000
Child protection	14,400,000
Education	45,512,000
Total	153,247,000

¹ Pan American Health Organization, 'PAHO's Response to Maintaining an Effective Technical Cooperation Agenda in Venezuela and Neighboring Member States', 164th Session of the Executive Committee, Washington, D.C., 14 June 2019.

² Food and Agriculture Organization, 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019: Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns', FAO, Rome, July 2019.

³ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Humanitarian Response Plan Venezuela 2019', OCHA, 2019; and Catholic University of Andrés Bello, Central University of Venezuela and University of Simón Bolívar, 'Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Vida 2018', November 2018.

⁴ 'Humanitarian Response Plan Venezuela 2019'.

⁵ The 2019 appeal was released in August 2019 and covers a period of six months from July to December 2019. The US\$6.7 million raised against this appeal was mobilized in 2019.

⁶ UNICEF Venezuela expanded its programme activities and interventions through a scale-up plan with a budget of US\$32 million for activities through June 2019. This scale-up plan received US\$27.8 million, including US\$9.9 million raised in 2019 and US\$17.9 million carried forward from the previous year.

⁷ This figure is provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency needs and planning documents. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Venezuela: 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview' (draft), OCHA, October 2019.

⁸ Ibid. An estimated 51 per cent of children are girls.

⁹ This includes the highest targets in WASH, nutrition and education, without double counting the same age cohorts. An estimated 51 per cent of the total population are women/girls.

¹⁰ To avoid double counting, this figure includes 75 per cent of the nutrition target related to micronutrient supplementation of children and the education target. The number of children to be reached under health immunization interventions has not been considered as part of the total number of people and children targeted by the response due to the challenge of ensuring retention and the risk of double counting. An estimated 51 per cent of children are girls.

¹¹ Programme targets are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.

¹² Operational challenges due to the socio-economic and political instability include regular interruptions in electricity and communications services, lack of fuel, price fluctuations and increased insecurity affecting staff and organizational assets.

¹³ Figures are provisional estimates. Financial requirements are subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency appeals/planning documents

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