



Reporting Period: 7 - 10 November 2020

# Central America

## Tropical Storm Eta

### Humanitarian

### Situation Report No. 2

unicef   
for every child

## Highlights

- As of 10 November, although Tropical Storm Eta had left Central America, countries are still facing its widespread direct and indirect impacts. While damages and humanitarian needs are still being assessed, at least 3.3 million people have been affected across seven countries, among them around 1.2 million children.
- Nearly 115,000 people have been evacuated to shelters (including some 44,000 children), part of them are gradually returning home but many will stay in shelters for a longer period of time. The situation in shelters is a great concern considering the potential overcrowding, and the latent risk for COVID-19 transmission in a context where ensuring preventive measures is extremely challenging.
- Ensuring that children and families in shelters and communities affected have access to basic services including protection, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, health, nutrition, education and early childhood development, among other, is a priority. Reinforcing preventive practices and risk communication, remain critical components of the response.
- UNICEF Country Offices (COs), with partners, have started providing support to address urgent needs of the most vulnerable children. In Honduras, over 9,000 children are benefiting from improved conditions in shelters, including provision of mental health support and basic items. In Nicaragua, among other items, UNICEF is procuring 6,000 family hygiene kits and cleaning supplies for health facilities, and 600 kits for psychosocial support in shelters, and over 34,00 people have been reached with prevention messages. In El Salvador, UNICEF has distributed hygiene kits for 200 children and families in shelters, and a 2,500-litre water tank was installed in a shelter. In Guatemala, UNICEF provides logistical support to teams deployed to monitor the situation of health services, and water treatment plants are available in affected municipalities.
- UNICEF continues gathering information on needs. Based on preliminary information, COs have estimated supply needs and started urgent procurement of key items.
- In response to the additional needs resulting from the impact of Eta in Central America countries, **UNICEF requires approximately US\$ 9.8 million to address urgent needs of at least 305,000 people, including 122,000 children**, in the most affected and disadvantaged communities. This estimated requirement may increase in the coming days as damage and needs assessments are conducted in affected areas, and more information is available regarding the situation and needs of children and families.

## Situation in Numbers



**Over 3.3 million**  
People affected in 7  
countries

(National authorities, 10 Nov)



**Approx. 1.2 million**  
Children affected in 7  
countries

(Est. based on National authorities,  
10 Nov)



**Over 114,000**

People have been in shelters  
in 7 countries

(National authorities, 10 Nov)



**Approx. 44,000**

Children have been in  
shelters in 7 countries

(Est. based on National authorities,  
10 Nov)

**UNICEF estimated  
funding requirement  
for urgent needs\***  
**US\$ 9.8 million**

*\*Preliminary funding requirement to address urgent needs. This amount may increase as damage and needs assessments are conducted in affected areas, and more information is available regarding the situation and needs of children and families.*

## Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

As of 10 November, Tropical Storm Eta had left Central America and was located off the coast of western Cuba,<sup>1</sup> leaving heavy rains and minor damages in the island. Meanwhile, countries in Central America are still facing the widespread direct and indirect impacts left by Eta in its wake. Damages and humanitarian needs are still being assessed across these countries, nevertheless available data indicates that over 3.3 million people have been affected across seven countries, among them around 1.2 million children (see table). Thousands of families have lost their homes and livelihoods, many of them had already been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, nearly 115,000 people have been evacuated to shelters (including some 44,000 children), part of them are gradually returning home but many will not be able to return soon as their houses and communities are not safe.

With large population groups living in shelters, the risk of COVID-19 spread is latent. Ensuring availability of safe water, availability of personal protective equipment (PPE), implementation of biosafety protocols, social distancing, and other measures, will be challenging in the shelters' context. Reinforcing preventive practices, risk communication and minimum health, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, at both shelter places and affected communities, remain critical components of the response. Moreover, the prompt rehabilitation of water and sanitation systems is crucial to prevent a worsening of the situation. The risk of a surge in population movements, including internal displacement and cross-border migration, is also compounding the current situation.

Population affected by the impacts of Hurricane/Storm Eta in Central America								
	Belize	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	Panama	TOTAL
No. of people affected*	60,000	325,000		372,946	2,592,637		3,332	3,353,915
No. of children affected**	21,120	123,500		148,805	985,202		1,266	1,279,894
No. of deaths*		2	1	45	52		17	117
No. of missing persons*				96	8		62	166
No. of people in shelters*	158	855	2,264	16,596	44,684	47,297***	3,034	114,888
No. of children in shelters**	45	325	684	6,622	16,980	18,919	1,153	44,727

\*According to official sources by the time of drafting this report, see information below for details.

\*\*Estimated by UNICEF, according to population distribution in country.

\*\*\*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.

### BELIZE

According the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), up to 60,000 people may have been affected by floods throughout the country, including an estimated 21,120 children. Over 40 communities have been affected,<sup>2</sup> mainly along the Mopan, Macal, Belize and Sibun rivers. Rural communities in Cayo and Belize districts are the hardest hit.

As of 8 November, NEMO reported that over 150 people, of whom 45 are children, were occupying six of the 19 opened shelters in Cayo, Belize and Stann Creek districts. In addition, over 500 families are temporarily displaced, staying with family or friends. Flood warning is still in effect for Cayo and Belize districts.

Major flooding continues as waters continue to rise, although weather has started to improve as Eta moved away from Belize. NEMO advised that, although water levels are decreasing in the west, Cayo district continues facing severe flood conditions. The receding water is rising higher in the Belize River Valley and on the highways affecting communities in its path. The Macal and Mopan rivers (Cayo District), rose more than 29 feet inundating every village from Arenal to Roaring Creek. The capital city of Belmopan, San Ignacio Town (Cayo district) and Dangriga Town (Stann Creek district) experienced disruptions in water services. Power supply was impacted as well in San Ignacio, rural Cayo and Belmopan. There were major interruptions of the road networks in the Cayo and Belize districts, including bridges and highways.

### COSTA RICA

On 5 November, red alert was declared in eight municipalities. The indirect effects of Eta in Costa Rica have left widespread floods and damages across most of the country. At least 58 related incidents have been reported, including localized floods, landslides and critical damage to roads, bridges and water infrastructure, mostly in the southern, central and northern pacific areas. As of 8 November, authorities reported 325,000 people affected (approx. 123,500 children) either directly or indirectly,<sup>3</sup> two people have died, 133 persons had been rescued, 247 persons had to be relocated to safer grounds and a total of 185 adults and 84 children have received outpatient treatment. After a maximum number of 1,580 vulnerable people was reported in 44 shelters on 6 November, as of 8 November the number dropped to 855, this number is expected to continue decreasing in the coming days as families return to their homes.

<sup>1</sup> NOAA / NHC, 'Tropical Storm Eta Public Advisory #41A', 10 November 2020, 12:00 pm CST.

<sup>2</sup> Including: 13 in Cayo district, more than 20 in Belize district, 7 in Stann Creek district.

<sup>3</sup> CNE Costa Rica, 'Informe de Situación No. 8 Emergencia por Huracán ETA (noviembre 08- 2020) Hora: 17:00 horas', 8 November 2020.

Authorities, UN and other international organizations are monitoring the situation closely and will activate support in case of gaps, as per agreements with the government.

## EL SALVADOR

In El Salvador, the red alert state remains in place for the entire country, mandating preventive evacuations in areas of high risks for flooding and/or landslides. Several rivers have surged overflowing riverbanks, including river Lempa, however preventive evacuations undertaken by the government have been effective in safeguarding lives in communities at risk. The risk of landslides and rockfall persists.

National authorities report one casualty, and 2,264 people remain preventively in 56 shelters activated by the Government of El Salvador.<sup>4</sup> The ministry of education temporarily suspended all distance learning activities, classes will resume on 11 November. In addition, initial assessments estimate losses to the agricultural sector exceeding US\$1,1 million, affecting the livelihoods of bean growers.

As the storm gradually diminishes its influence over El Salvador, the Intertropical Convergence Zone remains on the coasts of Central America, favouring the accumulation of humidity and the occurrence of moderate to intense storms in the coastal zone and the central and northern mountain range of the country.

## GUATEMALA

A state of calamity was declared on 7 November in ten departments: Izabal, Petén, Alta Verapaz, El Quiché, Chiquimula, El Progreso, Santa Rosa, Jutiapa, Zacapa and Huehuetenango. Tropical depression Eta continues generating abundant humidity in the country. Moderate to heavy rains and temporary drizzles have caused floods and landslides, being the most affected Izabal, Petén, Alta Verapaz and El Quiché departments. The National Coordinating Office for Disaster Reduction (CONRED)<sup>5</sup> reports 936 incidents, 372,946 people affected (approx. 148,000 children), 16,596 people in shelters, 45 people dead, 96 missing persons, 92,837 people evacuated, and 104,171 people who have received assistance. Moreover, damages in infrastructure include 21,593 houses with severe or moderate damages, 11 roads and 18 bridges destroyed, and 238 schools damaged. CONRED continues responding through deployed immediate reaction teams, focusing efforts on rescue operations and distributing supplies in affected communities (food assistance, hygiene and cleaning kits). The Government of Guatemala is conducting assessments on the immediate and reconstruction needs in the affected departments.

## HONDURAS

The countrywide red alert remains in place. As of 9 November, official sources<sup>6</sup> report 2,592,637 people affected (approx. 985,000 children), 498,864 families affected, 44,684 people in shelters, eight missing persons; 52 people dead - from which at least eight were children, 18,035 families (90,104 people) have been evacuated. In addition, 68 communities are currently completely isolated due to road damages.<sup>7</sup> Among the affected, at least 105 cases of children separated from their parents have been reported.<sup>8</sup>

Damages have been reported in 12 out of 18 departments, 27 municipalities are critically affected mainly in Cortés, Gracias a Dios and Yoro departments.<sup>9</sup> Supporting people in shelters, providing them with basic supplies and protective equipment to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread, are among the most urgent priorities.

## NICARAGUA

According to the preliminary report from the damage assessment by the Government of Nicaragua,<sup>10</sup> at least two million people have been exposed to the storm effects, mainly in North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region, Triángulo Minero, Nueva Segovia, Jinotega and Chinandega areas. A total of 71,145 people have been evacuated, and 47,297 people have been hosted in 325 shelters since the start of the emergency. Damages in infrastructure include: 1,890 houses destroyed, 8,300 houses with partial damages, 16 health facilities and 45 educational facilities affected, and 49,273 houses affected by disruption of electricity. Authorities estimate that damages amount to US\$172 million, while recovery needs amount to US\$36.4 million. To address the needs of families in shelters, at risk of food insecurity, authorities estimate a US\$2.9 million requirement.

Government entities continue working in clearing debris and restoring basic services in the most affected municipalities, namely Bilwi, Bonanza, Rosita and Siuna. Around 2,335 families from 14 communities were recently evacuated due to rising levels in the Coco river. The number of people in shelters is decreasing as families are gradually returning to their houses. According to reports by the ministry of education (MoE) as of 9 November, 11 schools were being used as shelters, classes will resume in all schools in the affected departments, except for the North Caribbean where 80 per cent of schools will resume activities.

<sup>4</sup> Gobierno de El Salvador, 'Reporte de emergencia climática', 8 November 2020, 7:30 pm local time, <<http://emergencia.marn.gob.sv>>.

<sup>5</sup> CONRED, 'Consolidado de incidentes – Fenómeno tropical ETA', 10 November 2020, 12:30 local time.

<sup>6</sup> COPECO, 'Reporte de estadísticas de incidentes causados por el Huracán ETA', 8 November 2020, <[http://sigmof.icf.gob.hn/?page\\_id=7426](http://sigmof.icf.gob.hn/?page_id=7426)>, accessed 10 November 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Idem.

<sup>8</sup> Reports by Dirección de Niñez, Adolescencia y Familia (DINAF), as of 7 November 2020.

<sup>9</sup> OCHA, 'Honduras: Tormenta Tropical Eta – Municipios afectados', 7 November 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Gobierno de Nicaragua, 'Evaluación de daños e intervención inmediata sobre efectos del Huracán Eta', 9 November 2020, <<https://www.el19digital.com/articulos/ver/titulo:109479-resumen-preliminar-sobre-danos-provocados-por-el-huracan-eta-en-nicaragua>>

## PANAMA

On 4 November, heavy rains brought on by the storm Eta impacted heavily the western provinces of Panama causing significant damages to infrastructure and human loss. On 6 November, the government activated the National Operations Committee to attend the emergency. The state of emergency was declared on 7 November in seven provinces. As of 8 November, official sources<sup>11</sup> reported 3,332 people affected (approx. 1,266 children), of which 3,034 were in temporary shelters, 62 missing persons, 17 people dead (including three children), 833 people evacuated and rescued, and 168 persons remained isolated in communities out of reach.

There is scarce information available on the needs of children, but it is estimated that around 40 per cent of the affected are children. Damages on infrastructure have been reported across several provinces, with official reports registering 608 houses affected, damages in 25 access roads and six bridges, this has challenged the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Due to the impact of the storm, particularly in vulnerable communities, the government allocated US\$100 million to respond to the needs in the affected areas, activated 29 temporary shelters, and is coordinating search and rescue missions and aid delivery to those affected by the storm. The ministry of health is conducting COVID-19 testing at the temporary shelters and is providing people with basic supplies to prevent the spread of the virus. A comprehensive impact assessment of the disaster on children and their needs is required.

## Summary Analysis of Programme Response

### BELIZE

As part of the ongoing COVID-19 response, agreements and workplans with partners already address response activities, as it relates to risk communication messages on WASH and nutrition counselling for pregnant and lactating mothers, and caregivers of young children. Emergency response activities will address service delivery for WASH and nutrition hampers following a request from the National Emergency Management Organization for food packets and water. An agreement is being finalized with the Belize Red Cross and the Belize City Council to establish child friendly spaces.

At the request of the ministry of health, the CO is also procuring supplies for the affected communities, including PPE, blankets and bed sheets, and plastic tarpaulin.

Initial Situation Assessment released by NEMO on 8 November, indicates that some 60,000 affected people, could have immediate needs of food assistance, access to safe water and shelter.

### EL SALVADOR

#### WASH

UNICEF has distributed 200 family hygiene kits, and 200 hygiene kits for children in shelters, through the Emergency Operations Center of Civil Protection, benefiting 200 children in shelters. In addition, a 2,500-litre water tank was installed in a shelter in Nejapa. With partners (PROVIDA, ACUA and CORDES), UNICEF is prepositioning additional WASH supplies for families and children at shelters and affected communities. UNICEF has initiated the procurement of additional hygiene items, disinfectants, soap and PPE for shelters. The WASH cluster, led by UNICEF, remains active.

#### Child Protection

UNICEF had pre-established agreements with leading national organizations (Red Cross, Servicio Social Pasionista, Fundasil or ACISAM) to provide psychosocial support for children and families affected by COVID-19, and tropical storms Amanda and Cristobal. Under these agreements, Red Cross, Fundasil and the Servicio Social Pasionista are providing psychosocial support to population affected. The CO, together with WFP, has distributed information to affected populations in shelters, including on helpline phone numbers for PSS, supported by UNICEF. The child protection sub-cluster is activated under UNICEF leadership, and is monitoring the situation focusing on violence against children, including gender-based violence (GBV) and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS).

#### Communication for Development (C4D)

C4D materials have been distributed in shelters with information on hygiene practices, COVID-19 and arboviruses prevention, through implementing partner PROVIDA. Additional materials have been produced on nutrition, prevention of violence and GBV, promotion of hygiene, and psychosocial support, to be delivered in shelters and affected communities.

UNICEF continues disseminating preparedness messages, and promoting helplines for psychosocial and psychological support, through social networks and websites.

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<sup>11</sup> Centro de Operaciones Nacionales, Gobierno de Panamá, 8 November 2020.

## **GUATEMALA**

### **Nutrition**

UNICEF will support nutrition counselling for pregnant and lactating women and caregivers of young children, to prevent acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. This support will be adapted to the COVID-19 context. Nutrition support teams will also perform weight and height measurements in children. UNICEF will support printing of communication materials on nutrition, water and sanitation in the context of COVID-19.

### **WASH**

In locations under the Eta threat, UNICEF had pre-positioned three water treatment plants available for immediate response in Izabal, Petén and Alta Verapaz departments. Two plants with capacity for 2,000 litres/hour each, and a third plant with capacity for 5,000 litres/hour. Under UNICEF leadership, the WASH cluster continues monitoring the situation.

### **Health**

UNICEF provides logistic support to the ministry of health for the mobilization of teams from the ministry's supervision, monitoring and evaluation unit. These teams are being deployed to monitor the situation of health services in the affected departments. The CO is acquiring hygiene kits and PPE for schools that might be used as shelters, to ensure compliance with biosafety protocols.

### **Child Protection**

Depending on the evolution of needs, the CO will procure additional PPE and, in the event that shelters were to be set up for more than three days, will assess the possibility of providing equipment or recreational material for psychosocial care of girls and boys, as well as installing separate bathrooms for girls and boys.

## **HONDURAS**

### **WASH**

Children affected are exposed to the risk of waterborne diseases, ensuring that all children have sufficient access to safe water and hygiene services is a priority. With this in mind, among the UNICEF-led WASH cluster, ten organizations have planned activations by redirecting funds for the provision of hygiene kits, mobile hand-washing stations, gathering sectoral information on damages, supplies for water treatment, messaging on hygiene habits, mobilization of water purification plants and tanker trucks, water quality analysis, containers for safe water storage, and risk communication.

While data on damages and needs in the WASH sector is limited, reports by sector stakeholders indicate that access to WASH services has been interrupted, this is particularly concerning considering the high numbers of people in shelters. For instance, in San Antonio municipality (Cortés department), cases of waterborne diseases (i.e. hepatitis) have been reported among people in shelters. Access to WASH services in this municipality has dropped considerably, around 71.7 per cent of the population currently has inadequate access to services, from 0 per cent reported prior the emergency. In San Pedro Sula, one of the most affected cities, the water service provider informed that the provision of services has been disrupted due to turbidity of water sources and power outages, the service is being restored up to 60 per cent of its capacity.

Among the main current needs in the sector are monitoring and provision of access to safe water (ensuring quantity, quality and continuity) for consumption and for personal hygiene in shelters and in affected communities, as well as access to hygiene and sanitation services in homes and in shelters. Special focus should be in areas where services have been interrupted, due to the great potential for water-related diseases, with special attention to COVID-19.

UNICEF has re-programmed available flexible thematic funds for the WASH response, with focus in shelters in affected municipalities currently covered by UNICEF programmes, and stands ready to scale up actions when/where required.

### **Education**

A total of 490 educational kits for children are currently pre-positioned with partners, available to be distributed. Through active agreements, additional kits will be delivered in the most affected communities.

### **Child Protection**

UNICEF provided immediate support for the set-up of emergency shelters in the hard-hit coastal cities of Puerto Cortés, Omoa, La Ceiba, Portrerillos, El Progreso, Choloma and Villanueva, benefiting 9,129 girls, boys and adults. This support included providing technical guidance on applying protection principles for shelter organization, ensuring supervision by qualified municipal staff, providing key messaging on Violence Against Children (VAC) and GBV prevention, and information on referrals to protective services, provision of emergency MHPSS through youth volunteers under the guidance of UNICEF co-funded municipal mental health employees, and providing basic humanitarian necessities such as food, clothing, EPP and bedding.

UNICEF has rapidly reoriented project funds to enable the Honduran Red Cross to provide immediate emergency mental health and psychosocial support services in the three largest shelters in Tegucigalpa, reaching 539 girls and boys. UNICEF also supported the mobilization of child protection teams from DINAF, the national child protection agency, to monitor and identify protection needs in various shelters in San Pedro Sula and La Lima. A total of 106 separated children were identified and are currently under protective care while their caretakers are located.

UNICEF is also coordinating quick changes in projects and strategies with several local partners in order to channel resources for immediate child protective and GBV prevention services, for children and families in the most marginalized communities of San Pedro Sula (Rivera Hernandez) and Choloma (Chamelecón), where gaps in access to services have been identified.

The child protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR) is activated under UNICEF leadership. UNICEF and 13 CP AoR partners are focusing their efforts on providing immediate relief in shelters, including psychosocial support, protection services to affected families and children, and information to shelter coordinators on ensuring protection of girls, boys, women and other vulnerable groups. UNICEF is also part of the GBV sub-group, where partners are coordinating provision of services for GBV survivors in temporary shelters, at community level, as well as advocating for continuity of services for GBV survivors by central and municipal authorities. Collectively, these organizations are helping a population of 27,800 children and adults displaced by Eta, throughout the north coast and western part of the country, including the hard-to-reach Gracias a Dios department.

### **Social Protection**

Within the framework of current alliances, UNICEF can support the current national and local social assistance structures to help the households hardest hit by the pandemic; structures that could be used for specific support to the territories hardest hit by the hurricane.

UNICEF will promote coordination between the social protection and the humanitarian cash coordination systems, with a focus on children. Through a recent partnership with WFP, UNICEF provides nutritional advice for local governments.

### **Communication for Development (C4D)**

UNICEF will promote five key messages on community and shelter care, with emphasis on safe water, and will produce five human interest stories from affected communities. A 25-minute special on the impact of Eta on children will air on a local news channel. A report on communications in times of emergency, and a public survey on the impact of and response to Eta will be prepared. Key messages on COVID-19 care in post-Eta times will be published in a national newspaper.

## **NICARAGUA**

### **WASH, Health**

According to reports by the National System for Prevention, Mitigation and Attention to Disasters (SINAPRED), 30 per cent of the water distribution systems in the country have been damaged. Based on this, an estimation of damages to latrines, wells and water supply systems has been conducted for the most affected communities of the Caribbean Coast, Jinotega, Nueva Segovia and Madriz, leading to an estimation of 6,024 affected wells and 18,475 latrines damaged. In addition, 3,414 systems that use pumping and 6,534 systems of water supply by gravity need to be repaired.

UNICEF is procuring 6,000 family hygiene kits, including menstrual hygiene kits, that include water storage buckets; and 90 cleaning kits for health units and maternity homes. Alcohol gel is also included in both type of kits. In addition, rigid tanks are being procured for 30 shelters, as well as personal protective equipment (PPE) for 1,000 community health workers. UNICEF will install 120 hand washing stations for adults and children, in strategic locations in health units and maternity homes.

Communication material for the prevention of COVID-19 and elimination of vector breeding sites, including in Miskito language, is being produced.

### **Education / Early Childhood Development (ECD)**

UNICEF is procuring tents, educational and recreational kits to be distributed in temporary learning spaces, when/where required. In addition, UNICEF is available to provide technical support to partners conducting education actions in the field.

UNICEF is acquiring early childhood play kits to serve 300 children under 6 years of age, from the most affected communities. With partners from the World Movement for Children group (Movimiento Mundial por la Infancia -MMI), UNICEF will support children and adolescents, to facilitate their immediate access to learning, in order to complete the 2020 school year. The option of remedial classes between December 2019 and January 2020, is also being considered.

### **Child Protection**

The ministry of family reports that families in shelters have received psychosocial support, and authorities have supported safe return home, for those leaving the shelters.

UNICEF is procuring 1,200 family kits with hygiene items and other supplies for child protection and COVID-19 prevention activities. In addition, 600 kits are being procured for psychosocial support in shelters. In collaboration with the Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University (BICU), UNICEF is preparing to implement a proposal for child friendly spaces activities in the active shelters and in communities (in churches), targeting 2,000 children and adolescents in Waspam, Bonanza and Bilwi municipalities. These activities will be conducted by 40 to 50 volunteers who will be trained by UNICEF and partner.

## Communication for Development (C4D)

Communication material for the prevention of COVID-19 and elimination of vector breeding sites, included in Miskito language, is being prepared by UNICEF.

The CO has designed a Communication for Development plan to respond to the information needs and has developed a media plan to position UNICEF's response to the hurricane, at national and international level and to keep the media permanently informed through press releases and digital content.

Since the start of the hurricane threat, the CO has disseminated messages focused on encouraging families to implement the protection measures indicated by the official institutions, reaching 34,000 people directly so far. New communication messages on WASH, health, child protection and education are being developed, in the context of the situation that families are facing in the aftermath of the hurricane. These will be disseminated through radio and other traditional media, to reach out the most affected communities.

## Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF Country Offices (COs) across the sub-region are monitoring the situation, in coordination with authorities and partners. Governments are leading the monitoring of the situation, evacuations, rescue operations and response to localized emergencies, through national disaster response agencies.

In countries in the path of Eta, UNICEF COs have pre-positioned supplies and capacity for immediate response during the first hours. Nevertheless, additional resources, including funding, staff and supplies will be required to scale up the response in view of the actual impact and the governments' response capacity. COs are currently preparing preliminary response plans and budgets, which are being revised as new information on the impact and needs is available.

Given the current COVID-19 context and the latent risks in shelters and vulnerable communities, across its response actions, UNICEF will ensure the implementation of biosafety protocols and the availability of personal protective equipment for affected people and frontline workers.

In **Nicaragua**, the governmental response is coordinated by the National System for the Prevention, Mitigation and Attention of Disasters (SINAPRED). The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the United Nations Emergency Team (UNETE) are monitoring the situation in communication with national authorities and are ready to provide support in case of a request from the national government. UNICEF priorities are WASH, education in emergencies, early childhood development (ECD), child protection, including GBV, and risk communication.

In **Honduras**, response efforts are coordinated by the National Contingency Coordination Agency (COPECO). The government, UN and organizations comprising the humanitarian network are supporting COPECO in conducting a multisectoral assessment of damages and needs, for which results will be presented by mid-November. The WASH Cluster and Child Protection AoR, with UNICEF coordination support, are responding to the Government's request for technical assistance in the appropriate setup of temporary shelters for population under evacuation. UNICEF has also activated the Early Childhood AoR and is ready to activate the Education Cluster, if required. UNICEF also participates and contributes to Health Cluster, led by PAHO. UNICEF is also participating in the recently activated Shelter Cluster, coordinated by OIM, and is supporting efforts for mapping shelter's needs, in collaboration with the Association of Municipalities of Honduras (AMHON), a strategic partner of UNICEF. In this Cluster, IOM, UNICEF and UNHCR are coordinating technical support to AMHON to gather information on the priority needs in shelters, reported by local governments of the most affected municipalities and thus complement the information provided by COPECO.

UNICEF geographical focus includes the departments that have been prioritised by COPECO, according to exposure to floods. UNICEF Honduras Country Office has already reallocated a limited amount of resources for the humanitarian response and is in constant communication with main donors to prepare for reallocation of funds as the humanitarian situation evolves, to achieve accomplishment of the Core Commitments for Children. UNICEF has prepared a 60k Humanitarian Joint Programme Document to deliver humanitarian support to children (and families) in shelters. In addition, UNICEF Honduras has been pre-selected as recipient of a donation from Government of Korea, through Korea office and Supply Division, and has ordered 33,300.00 KF94 face masks to support partners and shelters attending the emergency.

The red alert in **El Salvador** remains in place. The Civil Protection System is activated, along with Technical Sectorial Commissions, including the Technical Health Commission. UNETE and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) are activated and monitoring the situation. The government of El Salvador is providing assistance to the government of Guatemala and Honduras to respond to the crisis. National authorities are participating in HCT. WASH, Protection, Food Security and Nutrition, and Health sectors are activated to respond to the emergency, led / co-led by UNICEF. National sectoral authorities and NGOs also participate in these clusters. UNICEF is coordinating efforts with line ministries, local governments, and NGOs through the cluster system, to strengthen coordination, avoid duplication and identification of synergies.

In **Guatemala**, CONRED leads the governmental preparedness and response efforts. The HCT is active and monitoring the situation, with participation of national authorities. Five clusters have been activated by the Resident Coordinator: WASH, Health, Food Security, Shelter and Protection. UNICEF is coordinating and co-leading WASH, Education and Nutrition Clusters, and the Child Protection AoR. UNICEF CO participates in UNETE and the HCT and maintain coordination with CONRED.

In **Belize**, the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) has been active in putting in place preparedness measures, based on the measures implemented earlier this year during other tropical storm threats. The UNETT has been activated and meeting regularly. Partners are on standby, ready to support in case of need and depending on the scale of impact.

In **Costa Rica**, the UNCT and the UNETE are monitoring the situation in close coordination and communication with national authorities. The UN is ready to provide support in case of request from the national government. All humanitarian support requests are officially channelled to the Resident Coordinator, by the Technical Advisory Committee for International Assistance (CATAI) of the National Emergency Commission. On 6 November, the UNETE, with the participation of UNICEF, had a meeting with the National Emergency Commission (CNE) to assess the situation and needs of humanitarian support. The CNE informed that a potential request for support would prioritize PPE and hygiene supplies, mental health and psychosocial support services, support for epidemiological surveillance in shelters, safe water and water purifying kits, and risk communication for affected communities and shelters.

**UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO)** provides technical support to COs' teams, and monitors closely the situation in communication with COs and partners. 'Virtual teams' have been activated in LACRO to provide remote on-hands support to COs. Sectoral coordination mechanisms have been also activated at regional level.

The **Regional WASH LAC Group**, co-led by UNICEF and PAHO, has published two Eta-specific Bulletins. The WASH LAC Group produced rapid WASH assessment forms to be carried out by partners in schools, communities, shelters and health facilities. All of the assessments were transferred to Kobo for mobile-based assessment. Assessments were also developed and tailored, for example for the WASH Sector in Nicaragua. Specific tools to support coordination in Nicaragua and El Salvador were prepared along with dashboards. Other tools are being prepared.

The regional **Education in Emergencies (EiE)** team has been in close contact with all COs, there are concerns regarding the use of schools as shelters. At regional level, EiE and Child Protection teams are in conversations with IOM and IFRC to join efforts in mapping shelters, especially those set up in schools, along with information collection and exit strategy design to ensure schools are used for education activities.

The Regional **Health** team has supported COs to assess the need for health interventions in the response plans, and costing and estimating medical supply needs for people in need in the affected countries, in close coordination with HQ. There is an increasing concern on how health needs may increase due to the pressure on health systems as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The regional **Nutrition** team has provided COs with preliminary guidance on key steps to take at the beginning of the emergency, specifically in the areas of infant and young child feeding. The team has also developed a planning tool to forecast needs for of nutrition supplies, and is exploring options for extended technical support. Once the specific needs of nutrition response are identified at country level, the regional team will work to mobilize additional nutrition support as needed.

The **Child Protection (CP)** team has provided tools for needs assessment, checklists on protection issues that should be considered in shelters, guides for the inclusion of a child protection approach in shelters, and supports the preparation of supply plans. At the regional level, the CP Subgroup has held meetings with the regional groups for shelters and education to promote clear messages regarding the inclusion of a child protection approach.

The **Social Protection** team has provided guidance on the assessment of social protection readiness, toolbox for cash transfer in emergencies and lessons learned from recent cash transfer programmes experiences in Guatemala and El Salvador, among other resources. A mechanism for supporting the design of cash-based interventions has been established, involving technical advice from the Regional Offices and HQ.

**C4D** LACRO launched an internal web page with C4D / Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) in Emergencies, which includes guides, materials, and good practices of RCCE gathered from other countries in the region, initially focuses in hurricane response, to be gradually expanded to other natural threats. Training on RCCE was provided to staff and partners, giving continuity to the initiatives to strengthen capacities in C4D, RCCE and Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP) underway in the region.

In terms of supplies, LACRO is working with the COs to define the set of supplies needed for the immediate response, looking to serve these needs from UNICEF's Panama hub as much as possible, including the free-of charge provision of close to 15,000 high thermal blankets. Country supply plans are being prepared.

## Human Interest Stories and External Media

Preliminary prevention messages for personal security during a hurricane have been disseminated among relevant sectoral stakeholders, including the private sector, via email and social media at national and regional level. High quality [photos and videos](#) from Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and other affected countries have been collected and shared with media, partners, donors and UNICEF National Committees in support of fundraising efforts.

### EL SALVADOR

UNICEF CO has been active in producing content for social media on its response to the emergency. UNICEF efforts have been also featured by national media.

Social media links:

- <https://twitter.com/UnicefSV/status/1324522541038424064>
- <https://twitter.com/UnicefSV/status/1324844679582699526>

Media links:

- <https://elsalvadornews.com.sv/gabriela-de-bukele-junto-a-cooperacion-internacional-entregan-kits-de-higiene-a-afectados-por-el-paso-de-eta/>
- <http://ultimahora.sv/despacho-de-la-primera-dama-entrega-kits-de-higiene-para-ninas-ninos-y-adultos-afectados-por-eta/>
- <https://informatvx.com/destacadas/ministra-de-educacion-verifica-atencion-psicologica-en-albergue-de-nuevo-cuscatlan/>

## HONDURAS

UNICEF has issued and disseminated communication products on the effects of Eta on children, including an article with [Reuters](#) and a [human interest story](#) in Puerto Cortés, one of the most affected municipalities.

Social media links:

- Human interest stories: [Karla and her family were forced to evacuate their house to save themselves from the floods caused by Hurricane ETA in Honduras](#)

Media links:

- Further coverage on Eta citing Honduras CO Representative Mark Connolly in [Reuters](#), [Guardian](#), [SKY News](#), [Independent](#)

## NICARAGUA

UNICEFF Nicaragua, in collaboration with LACRO, has disseminated [images](#) of the impact of Hurricane Eta on the lives of children and adolescents on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua. UNICEF has been featured in media such as [BBC](#) and El País, and interviews and appearances in national and international media are planned.

In the coming days an audiovisual team will travel to communities such as Bilwi, Puerto Cabeza and Waspam to conduct a series of interviews and life stories, focusing on the situation of communities on the week after. The team will also collect images of the main effects on the infrastructure.

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