

Guatemala

“Not being able to get one’s head above water” captures the overwhelming nature of Guatemala’s emergency conditions during 2010. Not only does the country continue to be severely affected by erratic rains as a result of the El Niño phenomenon but in 2010, Tropical Storm Agatha and the Pacaya volcanic eruption caused damages and losses of around US\$1.5 billion in the country, affecting 911,000 people; nearly 4 per cent of the population.¹ The irregular rains and unusually high temperatures have negatively affected crop production, heightening the population’s food insecurity and leading to high levels of malnutrition.² Structural vulnerabilities in Guatemala, including limited land planning processes, poor economic and territorial development and the decline of the existing ecosystems pose challenges to effective disaster recovery and preparedness.

UNICEF is requesting US\$2.65 million for its planned humanitarian work in Guatemala during 2011. This request is prompted by the extensive nature of the emergency in the country. The complex situation of women and children cannot be overlooked and requires immediate and full funding. In compliance to the organization’s Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF will continue to work along with the Government of Guatemala, NGOs and cluster partners to provide a response to more than 100,000 children and women living in areas affected by natural disasters.

UNICEF’s focus will include improved access to health and nutrition services, as well as safe water, sanitation and hygiene campaigns and supplies. The organization will also concentrate on improving the response to education in emergencies, child protection and HIV/AIDS. Specifically, UNICEF will provide support to the Ministry of Education in the preparation of school safety plans, drills, disaster risk reduction and education in emergency activities to reinforce the education cluster approach, including school materials, furniture, and textbooks. UNICEF will establish and strengthen shelters and temporary housing in safe areas to improve child protection systems and will provide the necessary assistance and support to young people affected by HIV/AIDS.

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN

Poverty in Guatemala is one of the leading causes of chronic malnutrition. While over half of the country lives in poverty, the rates are even more dramatic for the indigenous population and children.³ Approximately 75 per cent



of indigenous people are considered poor, compared to 36 per cent of non-indigenous people. Among children, 59.2 per cent of those under age 18 live in poverty and 19 per cent live in extreme poverty.

Chronic malnutrition is a serious ongoing concern for children in Guatemala. It affects 49 per cent of the population under age 5.⁴ The gaps between urban and rural areas are considerable; while in rural areas the chronic malnutrition level is 52 per cent, in urban areas it is 29 per cent. Only 50 per cent of children 0–5 months old are exclusively breastfed.⁵ Chronic malnutrition is aggravated in times of floods, drought and other natural disasters, as crops are lost and family income decreases.

Access to basic social services such as health, safe water and sanitation is disrupted and school attendance is limited in emergencies. Not surprisingly, Guatemala continues to be one of the countries in the region with the highest mortality rate during the drought season.

The situation of children exposed to violence in Guatemala is dramatic. In 2009, 533 violent deaths were reported, as well as four children killed monthly by stray bullets. These figures increased during 2010. The General Prosecutor reports an estimated 8,000 cases of sexual abuse committed against children each year.⁶

In the area of health, 1,300,000 boys, girls and adolescents do not have access to health services.⁷ Only 78.7 per cent of the population has access to safe water sources and just 54.5% has access to sanitation services.⁸



CORE COUNTRY DATA

Population (thousands 2009)	14,027
Child population (thousands 2009)	6,834
U5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births, 2009)	40
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births, 2009)	33
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births 2008)	110
Primary school enrolment ratio (net male/female, 2005–2009*)	97/94
% U1 fully immunized (DPT3, 2009)	92
% population using improved drinking-water sources (2008)	94
HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (% aged 15–49, 2009)	0.8
% U5 suffering from moderate and severe wasting (2003–2009*)	–

Source: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2011*.

*Data refer to most recent year available during the period specified.

In terms of education, in 2009 the net enrolment levels were low: pre-primary 56.63 per cent; primary 98.33 per cent; secondary basic 39.36 per cent; diversified 21.02 per cent.¹⁰

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2010

UNICEF received US\$1,424,695 for its work in Guatemala, which represents 15 per cent of the US\$9,362,310 requested through two Flash Appeals. While full funding would have made it possible to provide humanitarian assis-

tance to more children and women, the funding received helped to improve the welfare of those affected by the multiple emergencies in the country. UNICEF activities during 2010 were achieved as a result of the funding received from Guatemala's participation in two Flash Appeals: (1) Food and nutrition insecurity caused by the drought of 2009–2010; (2) Meet emergency needs resulting from Tropical Storm Agatha and the eruption of the Pacaya volcano.

Many lives were saved as UNICEF and partners provided timely humanitarian support. Approximately 500 children with severe acute malnutrition from the departments of Baja Verapaz, Chiquimula, El Progreso, Escuintla, Jalapa, Retalhuleu, Sololá, Suchitepéquez and Zacapa were treated with ready-to-use therapeutic food provided by UNICEF. Brigades of nutritionists from the ministry of public health conducted nutritional assessments in shelters and affected communities and provided timely treatment. Educational material on feeding practices for children under age 2 was distributed to 10,000 households. Some 10,000 measuring strips to assess mid-upper arm circumference were provided and used to evaluate children in shelters and affected communities. In addition, powdered multiple micronutrients were provided to treat 20,000 children.

To reduce the spread of waterborne diseases, UNICEF provided water tanks and centrifugal pumps for cleaning wells, along with portable latrines, pit latrines, containers for household water storage, calcium hypochlorite, personal hygiene kits and garbage bags. It is estimated that these efforts benefited around 123,500 people (21 per cent of the affected population: 17,000 boys, 15,000 girls and 91,500 women) in shelters and in the most-affected communities.

In response to the Pacaya and Agatha emergencies, new cases of diarrhoea were treated through the timely distribution of 40,000 sachets of oral rehydration salts and 26,000 bottles of cotrimoxazole. These supplies were provided to 6,588 boys, 7,245 girls and 7,231 women (2 per cent of the total population affected).

In addition, 900 recreational kits were distributed to 15,000 children (6 per cent of the total children affected) in shelters and at the community level to prevent the risks of sexual abuse and exploitation. Some 500 children were registered and protected in shelters with their families. Twenty-five girls who were victims of abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking were given shelter in the specialized residential care home "El Refugio de la Niñez" (The Children's Shelter). In addition, 115 psychologists received training on how to provide psychosocial support using the Return to Happiness methodology, which benefited 2,500 children.

In 50 schools (representing 10 per cent of those schools affected by the various emergencies) 3,300 girls and 2,700 boys had the opportunity to resume classes when UNICEF distributed backpacks with school supplies and materials.

HUMANITARIAN ACTION: BUILDING RESILIENCE

"We were left with nothing; now my husband will have to struggle for us to survive. The food that we receive is barely enough to distribute among the entire family," said Marisela Quin Ordóñez, mother of two children, living in the community of Las Marias where Tropical Storm Agatha destroyed homes and crops in Guatemala in 2010.

For over two months, Marisela and her family have been living along with 90 other families in temporary shelters established by the Government of Guatemala in the settlement of Las Marias, in Patulul, Suchitepéquez. These families share basic services, such as sanitation facilities, a kitchen, dining room and bedrooms. They receive food provided by the Government as well as international aid.

In response, the Food and Nutrition Security Programme of the Guatemalan Ministry of Health – with support from UNICEF and the World Food Programme – have carried out nutritional activities, such as distributing and promoting adequate use of multiple micronutrients powder and encouraging proper hygiene and hand washing, with the overall goal of improving the nutritional status of children under age 5 and pregnant and lactating women. The creation of peer groups among mothers has encouraged breastfeeding and complementary feeding and has promoted healthier diets.

PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2011

UNICEF will have a positive impact on the lives of more than 100,000 children in the most-affected regions and communities (departments of Baja Verapaz, Chiquimula, El Progreso, Escuintla, Jalapa, Sololá, Suchitepéquez and Zacapa). Guatemala is among the 10 most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change impacts. This statement has been confirmed by the emergency situations which affected the country in the last couple of years (nutritional crises, the eruption of the Pacaya volcano, the impact of Tropical Storm Agatha and unexpected heavy rains) that left children and families with unresolved humanitarian needs. UNICEF, along with other UN agencies, key partners including Action Aid, Plan International and World Vision and local NGOs, will continue to provide their support to the Government to respond to those most affected by these natural disasters.

NUTRITION (US\$1,000,000)

UNICEF will continue to provide immediate assistance to children with severe acute malnutrition. The work will encompass prevention and support strategies to help combat the deterioration of their nutritional status and provide treatment for those in need. The following interventions will benefit an estimated 22,000 children:

- UNICEF will strengthen and reinforce a nutritional surveillance system for emergency situations.
- 660 children with severe acute malnutrition will receive treatment, to support a full recovery and sustained health.
- Combat the effects of malnutrition. Around 22,000 children and women in rural areas will receive micronutrients through fortified food, supplements or multiple micronutrient preparations.
- Training of 500 health staff, community workers and

mothers to improve feeding practices of infants and young children.

- 22,000 children will receive vitamin A supplementation.

HEALTH (US\$200,000)

UNICEF's efforts will be directed towards improving community-based approaches for preventive and curative health actions and promoting immunization for 5,000 children.

- UNICEF will ensure that 90 per cent of children between 12 and 23 months old in shelters and affected communities receive routine life-saving vaccinations.
- Children will receive essential health services in a sustained manner, with adequate coverage.
- 5,000 children will receive deworming medications.
- Children will receive essential supplies for home health care.
- 40 per cent of the affected population will receive antibiotics, iron and folic acid.
- 90 per cent of those people affected by emergencies will receive key education and health promotion messages.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) (US\$800,000)

The overall goal in this area is to provide safe drinking water, proper sanitation services and healthy hygiene education and tools to an estimated 25,000 children affected by drought, floods and other disasters.

- UNICEF in joint collaboration with the ministry of health, Catholic Relief Services, Oxfam and Water for People, will provide access to safe drinking water for 25,000 children in communities.

- 90 per cent of the affected population will be provided with appropriate, safe, sanitary toilets and hand-washing facilities.
- 80 per cent of the affected population is aware of the proper handling and use of water resources at the household level, including adequate excreta disposal. To help prevent waterborne diseases, in particular diarrhoea. Healthy personal hygiene will be promoted, particularly among children and women.
- Establishment of 100 WASH hygienic facilities in schools and shelters.

CHILD PROTECTION (US\$300,000)

UNICEF, in joint collaboration with the Government of Guatemala, will assist in the development and roll-out of a child protection system in areas affected by the emergencies. At least 25,000 children in emergency-affected areas will have a mechanism to protect them against violence, abuse and exploitation

- Ensure that violations to the rights of children and women affected by emergencies are monitored, recorded, reported, followed-up and appropriately addressed.
- Strengthening of the existing government structures and programmes will ensure that the separation of children from their families is avoided and that care is provided within a family context.
- Provide information and training to governmental staff to help prevent exploitation and abuse of children and women, including gender-based violence, in emergency situations.
- 150 government staff will receive training on how to provide psychosocial support to the affected children and their caregivers.

EDUCATION (US\$300,000)

UNICEF will ensure that 25,000 girls and boys in areas affected by emergencies have temporary learning spaces to guarantee the continuity of their education, as well as access to fundamental information for their own welfare.

- Over 25,000 children in preschool and primary school age will benefit from school materials (furniture and textbooks).

- 300 safe learning spaces will be made available for 12,500 children.
- Children and teachers affected by humanitarian crises will have access to psychosocial services.
- Training will be provided to 300 psychologists and teachers to provide psychological support.

HIV AND AIDS (US\$50,000)

UNICEF, the ministry of health and UNAIDS will joint efforts to strengthen the capacity communities vulnerable to emergencies in order to reduce exposure to HIV infection in humanitarian crises and to meet the needs of those affected HIV and AIDS.

- UNICEF will increase from 10 to 70 percent of those people in the affected departments who receive information on HIV prevention, care and support.
- Approximately 400 children will receive information services on HIV prevention, care and treatment during humanitarian crises.

1. Government of the Republic of Guatemala, Evaluation of damages, sectoral losses and needs estimates caused by disasters in Guatemala from May to September 2010, Guatemala City, 2010, pp. 21 and 27.
2. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Guatemala – The Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture], ECLAC, Mexico, June 2010, p. 1.
3. Total number of beneficiaries may not equal the sum of beneficiaries per sector, due to overlap in services provided to individuals.
4. National Survey on Living Conditions (ENCOVI 2006). Guatemala: National Statistics Institute. <http://www.inec.gov.gt/descargas/ENCOVI2006/PRESENTACION.pdf>. Slides 19, 20 and 47.
5. 2008–2009 National Maternal and Child Health Survey, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT413.pdf p. 7.
6. Ministry of Health, National Mother-Child Health Survey 2008-2009 (Ensmi 2008-2009 preliminary report). Ministry of Health, Guatemala, 2009. http://www.inec.gov.gt/descargas/ENSMI/2008-2009/Informe_ENSMI_2008_2009.pdf p. 44.
7. Annual Report General Prosecutor 2009, Guatemala City, p. 82. <http://www.mp.gob.gt/images/mp/memorialabores/memoriamp2009.pdf>
8. Integrated Health-Care Service System. Annual report 2008, p. 51.
9. http://www.segeplan.gob.gt/2.0/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=472&Itemid=472. ODM 7, p. 31.
10. http://www.segeplan.gob.gt/2.0/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=472&Itemid=472. ODM 2, p. 17.
12. Total number of beneficiaries may not equal the sum of beneficiaries per sector, due to overlap in services provided to individuals.

UNICEF EMERGENCY FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR 2011		ESTIMATED BENEFICIARY NUMBERS ¹²		
By sector	US\$	Total per sector (all beneficiaries)	Boys	Girls
Nutrition	1,000,000	22,000	10,300	11,700
Health	200,000	5,000	2,250	2,750
WASH	800,000	25,000	11,200	13,800
Child protection	300,000	25,000	12,400	12,600
Education	300,000	25,300	12,600	12,400
HIV and AIDS	50,000	400	225	175
Total	2,650,000	102,700	48,975	53,425