



Cuba Humanitarian Situation Report -1



SITUATION IN NUMBERS

October 3, 2016

2, 308, 566

Total child population

11, 238, 317

Total population

Highlights

- Hurricane Matthew is the first storm of the 2016 Atlantic hurricane season to present a real and considerable threat to Cuba, category 4 in the Saffir-Simpson scale and the strongest hurricane of the Atlantic since 2007.
- With 230 kilometres per hour winds, 943 hectopascal minimal central pressure, and forecasts of heavy rainfall, sea water penetration in the southeast and northeast coasts and 7 metre-high waves, Matthew remains a serious concern for the west of the island.
- At 6:00 am today Matthew was 525km south of Santiago de Cuba. It is expected that its effect will already be felt in all the western provinces, from Camaguey to Guantanamo by night today Monday 3rd October. These western provinces switched from Informative Phase to Alert Phase in the evening of Saturday 1st October, including evacuation measures in some specific coastal areas where floods and high waves are expected. From today at 09:00 am, they are in Cyclonic Alarm Phase, following the 3rd Informative Note. The rest of the provinces in the country remain in Informative Phase.
- The Head of State has called the population to contribute to all prevention efforts and to remain calm, following all local indications from the Civil Defense.
- Multiple messages from the Civil Defense are being broadcasted constantly through local and national media, as well as featured in national print media.

UNICEF's Preparedness with partners

UNICEF is in touch with partners, closely following all preparedness measures being led by the national government. It has also completed all critical internal preparedness measures such as: Business Continuity Plan revision; Mapping of potential partners (international NGOs in Cuba); Critical personnel and their roles have been assigned; The proposed critical supplies list and availability has been verified.

No further preparedness efforts from UNICEF are being required or needed at the moment.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The Hurricane Matthew, closing in to the south of Cuba – at 520 km south of Santiago de Cuba is expected to be much stronger and more destructive than Hurricane Sandy (2012).

All the western provinces in Cyclonic Alarm Phase (Camaguey, Las Tunas, Granma, Holguin, Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo) have their hospitals and health centers carrying out prevention work and all health personnel is on standby to provide attention to the population.

Evacuation centers have received orders to prepare conditions in Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo. A total of 250,000 people have been evacuated since Sunday 2nd October. Pregnant women in predicted affected areas have been transported to safe locations.

Recommendations to stock up food provisions has been made for the most affected provinces, like Guantanamo, where opening times for the acquisition of basic ration card goods has been extended to allow the population to stock up goods. Water trucks have been mobilized to to secure safe water distribution in all major urban areas, including the city of Bayamo, where it is expected that the river rises will affect the quality of drinking water.

In view of the possible creation of standing pools of water throughout the island, actions on vector control to prevent further spread of Zika and other mosquito-borne diseases have being undertaken.

Introducing the Cyclonic Alarm Phase as of today, October 3, starting from 09:00 am, the population in potentially affected areas have been instructed to remain indoors, while schools will remain closed from today and until the Cyclonic Alert Phase is lifted. Educational structures have been secured over the course of yesterday and today.

Social institutions, production sites and official organisms have strict orders of following their RRD protocols and are, since Saturday, securing resources and equipment to minimize damage. Since Sunday 2nd October intensive efforts are being made aiming at eliminating potential obstacles that could block the transit ways, river flows and sewage while measures have been taken to also prevent damage from the street illumination, fences and trees.

Cuba's Civil Defense (Estado Mayor de la Defensa Civil) information updates and prevention measures are reaching all the population throughout the country via the state owned traditional mass media.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination has been designated to the UN mechanism UNETE (United Nations Emergency Technical Team), to support preparedness efforts, conduct assessments of possible damage and needs as well as to plan relief efforts if required with the relevant ministries. In coordination with the UN Resident Coordinator Office, UNICEF is following updates and anticipating needs in a coordinated manner with the other UN agencies in the country. The Resident Coordinator is in contact with MINCEX, Civil Defense and OCHA. He informed the Cuban Government of the UN willingness to provide the necessary support.

Summary Analysis of Programme response

Awaiting assessments and specific requests from the sectors, especially relating to education and water, after the impact.

Communications for Development (C4D)

The Government is disseminating messages through the local media promoting the safety and protection of children before and after the disaster. Vector control messaging for Zika, Dengue and Chikungunya will be intensified.

Supply and Logistics

UNICEF Cuba CO has identified a list of critical items related to WASH and Education which are ready to be imported in order to be distributed to the affected areas if required.

Media and External Communication

All mass media in the country is producing clear civil protection messages which are providing information on both pre and post disaster protection mechanisms for the population, including children.

Security

Domestic flights to provinces have been cancelled and potential obstacles for transit ways, river flows and sewage have been given attention over the weekend. Dismantling of street illumination structures and fences as well as tree lopping has taken place to reduce risks. Despite the preventive measures already undertaken, there is still a high probability of limited access for local transportation.

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