

## **HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**The full implementation of this version of the HIP is conditional upon the necessary appropriations being made available from the 2021 general budget of the European Union**

AMOUNT: EUR 144 000 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2021/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annexes<sup>1</sup> is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO<sup>2</sup>'s partners and to assist in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

### **0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP**

#### **Third modification: 05 July 2021**

Cases and deaths related to COVID-19 continue to increase unstopably in the region. As of today there are more than 37 million cases registered and over 1.2 million deaths from COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

COVID incidence is particularly critical in South American countries, with Colombia reporting the highest number of confirmed cases and deaths per day, followed by Brazil and Argentina. Intensive Care Unit occupancy exceeds 95% in many cities of these countries. Of the 10 countries around the world with the highest daily death rates per capita, 7 are now in South America. Brazil and Peru show the highest cumulative mortality rate per million people. The epidemiological situation looks currently alarming in Argentina, Colombia and Dominican Republic. In the last month, more than 5 million new cases and 250 000 deaths have been registered, which represents a 25% increase of deaths in only a month.

The situation is especially acute for vulnerable groups who are often excluded from access to health services and social protection schemes established by governments. This is the case of the more than 16 million people displaced in the region as well as the stateless, and indigenous populations living in lagging territories suffering from lack of basic services and malnutrition rates that almost triple the national averages.

In order to address this situation EUR 16 000 000 will be added to this HIP. With these additional funds ECHO will be able to provide health assistance to extremely vulnerable populations (including displaced populations in the Caribbean), reinforce WASH-related activities, strengthen

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<sup>1</sup> Technical annex and thematic policies annex

<sup>2</sup> Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

local capacities in terms of surveillance and detection, as well as to support complementary activities in terms of nutrition and food assistance.

### **Second modification: 17 May 2021**

In Venezuela, the humanitarian situation has continued to deteriorate sharply, severely aggravated by the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19. Food insecurity levels have rocketed up since 2019, when around 9.3 million Venezuelans were food insecure according to the WFP Assessment. The country is identified as one of the most severely affected worldwide according to the 2021 WFP-FAO Call to avert famine in the world issued on 15 March 2021. In March 2021 FAO and WFP released a Hunger Hotspots report, calling upon the international community to scale up humanitarian assistance to meet the most urgent needs in Venezuela, in view of the severity of the food crisis. According to estimates by local humanitarian organizations there are at least 14.8 million people in urgent need of food assistance. WFP has recently reached an agreement to launch a school feeding operation in the country.

The internal crisis continues to trigger an outflow of Venezuelans into other countries of the region. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), more than 5.5 million Venezuelans left to other countries by March 2021. According to the regional platform Response for Venezuelans - R4V, there are more than five million people requiring food assistance in the region including migrants, refugees and host communities.

In order to address the humanitarian consequences of these new developments, an additional amount of EUR 40 000 000 will be allocated from the European Union's Solidarity Emergency Aid Reserve after approval of the relevant request by the Budgetary Authority.

This additional funding will be used to provide urgent assistance to the most vulnerable people (both inside Venezuela and across the region, including host communities) who are requiring urgent food, nutrition and nutrition-related services (notably health and WASH). Food assistance interventions, especially to displaced Venezuelans, will include both in-kind and cash/voucher delivery modalities. Interventions in other sectors, notably health, nutrition, protection, education, water, sanitation and hygiene will be also supported and will be geared towards addressing the prevailing food insecurity and malnutrition in a comprehensive manner.

### **First modification – 5 March 2021**

Food insecurity degraded in Haiti during 2020 and the estimated population in need of food assistance in 2021 is 4.4 million<sup>3</sup>, about 40% of the population in the country, up from 4 million in 2020. Needs have increased quickly and the situation of the most vulnerable households has further deteriorated. About one third of urban households and 42% of rural households are estimated to be in need of food assistance. There is an increase in the number of people in an

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<sup>3</sup> OCHA, aperçu des besoins humanitaires Haiti, Mars 2021 :  
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/haiti/document/ha%C3%AFti-aper%C3%A7u-des-besoins-humanitaires-2021>

emergency situation (IPC 4) from 0.9 million (in August 2020) to 1.2 million<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, the humanitarian situation in Haiti has worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, tropical storm Laura and socio-political events including an increase in violence. These events have exacerbated the country's dire economic situation, reducing the purchasing power of a large part of the population.

In order to respond to this emergency, EUR 8 million are added to this HIP. Based on former ECHO operations, it is estimated that with an amount of EUR 8 million it will be possible to cover the essential food needs of at least 130 000 people in most affected and vulnerable areas. In particular, funds will enable DG ECHO to continue its response to urgent food and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable households in 2021 through emergency food and cash assistance and nutrition services in rural and urban areas. Lifesaving nutritional support will be provided to severely malnourished children under 5 years of age.

Synergies with longer term interventions funded by DG INTPA will be sought in order to address the crisis in the short and the longer-term. Advocacy towards international donors will be reinforced.

## 1 CONTEXT

This HIP covers response to man-made disasters, natural hazards and epidemics, as well as disaster preparedness (DP) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). It focuses on the internal and regional impact of the crisis in Venezuela, the humanitarian consequences of the internal conflict in Colombia, and keeps a watch to monitor man-made disasters and natural hazards in Central America, South America, Haiti and other Caribbean countries. It also allows response to new crises in countries with limited capacity to cope, and/or where national or local capacities are overwhelmed. This HIP can potentially cover all Latin American and Caribbean countries.

LAC countries rank among the most natural hazard-prone in the world, exposed to volcanoes, earthquakes, droughts, floods, landslides, and yearly cycles of major tropical storms and hurricanes. The 2020 LAC INFORM Risk index update shows that ten countries have a very high risk of disasters and humanitarian crises: Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Dominican Republic (D.R.), Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Nearly three-quarters of the 654 million LAC inhabitants live in at-risk areas and one-third in highly exposed areas. Recurrent natural hazards have a high human and economic cost, affecting highly urbanized societies marked by very large inequalities. The increase in volume, severity and complexity of meteorological events is likely to affect more populations with significant socio-economic costs.

Manmade factors contribute substantially to risk exposure. Violence is a major threat to populations in Colombia, Venezuela, Haiti, Central America and Mexico and exacerbates their

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<sup>4</sup> Analyse IPC de l'insécurité alimentaire aiguë août 2020 – Juin 2021 :  
[http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC%20Haiti%20AcuteFoodSec%202020Aug2021June%20French.pdf](http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC%20Haiti%20AcuteFoodSec%202020Aug2021June%20French.pdf)

vulnerability to all kinds of hazards. The LAC region hosts 43 of the 50 most violent cities in the world.<sup>5</sup> Forced displacement affects more than 12 million people across the region.

By mid-2020, the LAC region became the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to increased poverty, inequalities, instability, and strained health systems. The pandemic has aggravated every aspect of the on-going humanitarian crises in the region. Movement restrictions and border closure caused widespread loss of income and livelihood disruptions, stretching coping capacities and exponentially increasing food insecurity. Remittance flows to the region are projected to fall by 19.3% in 2020 and beyond. By the end of 2020 the number of people living in poverty will reach 230.9 million, i.e. 37.3% of Latin America's population.<sup>6</sup>

DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2020 identified high humanitarian needs in Colombia, Venezuela, Haiti, Central America and the Caribbean, as well as amongst Venezuelan refugees and migrants in 16 countries across the region<sup>7</sup>. The vulnerability of the populations affected by the crises in Central America and Haiti is assessed to be very high. Forgotten crises have been identified in Haiti, Central America and Colombia.

	Colombia	Venezuela	South America <sup>8</sup>	Caribbean (excl. Haiti)	Haiti	Central America & Mexico (CAM) <sup>9</sup>
<b>INFORM Risk Index<sup>10</sup></b>	5.4/10	4.5/10	4.3/10	3.3 / 10	6.6/10	5.1 / 10
Vulnerability Index	6.1/10	3.4/10	3.9/10	2.6 / 10	7/10	7.4 / 10
Hazard and Exposure	6.9/10	6.0/10	4.5/10	3.9 / 10	5.5/10	4.1 / 10
Lack of Coping Capacity	3.8/10	4.6/10	4.6/10	3.8 / 10	7.5/10	4.7 / 10
Projected conflict risk	8.3/10	8.4/10	-	-	7.5	-
Uprooted People Index	10/10	5/10	-	-	5/10	-
Natural Disaster Index	6.5/10	6.1/10	-	-	5.6/10	-
<b>HDI Ranking<sup>11</sup> (Value)</b>	79 (0,761)	96 (0,726)	-	-	169 (0,503)	-
Total Population <sup>12</sup>	50.3 M	28.5 M	343.2 M	33.0 M	11.3 M	172.1 M
	Colombia internal conflict	Venezuela internal	Venezuela regional	Caribbean (excl. Haiti)	Haiti	CAM
<b>Global Crisis Severity Index<sup>13</sup></b>	4/5	4/5	4/5	-	4/5	3-4/5

<sup>5</sup> Igarape Institute (<https://igarape.org.br/estudio-latinoamerica-es-la-region-mas-violenta-del-mundo/>)

<sup>6</sup> Within this group, the number of people in extreme poverty is projected to rise by 28.5 million (from 67.7 million in 2019 to 96.2 million in 2020), equivalent to 15.5% of the total population ECLAC's Special Report COVID-19 N. 5, [Addressing the growing impact of COVID-19 with a view to reactivation with equality: new projections](#)

<sup>7</sup> Colombia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago (TT), Aruba, Curaçao, Costa Rica, Argentina, Paraguay, Panama, Uruguay, Mexico.

<sup>8</sup> Includes the following countries: Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Brazil

<sup>9</sup> Includes the following countries: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico, Costa Rica and Panama.

<sup>10</sup> INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters

<sup>11</sup> UNDP Humanitarian Development Index (HDI)

<sup>12</sup> World Data Atlas

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.inform-index.org/Global-Crisis-Severity-Index-beta>

Humanitarian Conditions	4/5	4/5	4/5	-	4/5	2.5/5
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## 1.1 Venezuelan crisis

Venezuela’s socio-economic and political crisis continued unabated in 2020, with severe humanitarian consequences. Reliable official data on the situation of Venezuelan households are limited, but reports and studies by local organisations show a dramatic deterioration in the overall living conditions, compounded by the effects of the pandemic. As a direct consequence of COVID-19, most Venezuelan migrants lost their informal sources of income and their accommodations, which triggered the voluntary return of some 110 000 people, part of whom remained stranded at the borders. However, a new wave of migration started as soon as lockdown measures were lifted, with a projection of 200 000 new departures in the last quarter of 2020. The crisis has caused a sharp reduction in remittances from abroad, forcing more people to resort to survival migration. Despite their openness to accept Venezuelan migrants, main host countries have been completely overwhelmed by the unprecedented influx of population. The Cartagena Declaration<sup>14</sup> is not fully applied, and a large part of refugees and migrants are in need of assistance.

## 1.2 Colombia

The announcement by a group of FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) leaders to resume combat in 2019, despite the Peace Agreement of 2016, along with the cessation of peace talks between ELN (Ejército liberacion Nacional) and the Government have reignited internal conflicts, with humanitarian consequences that have remained generally unacknowledged and unattended to by State authorities. Restrictions to mobility, threats on civilian populations and armed curfews hinder safe access to basic services by entire communities, especially on the Pacific Coast, the Northwest and border areas with Venezuela and Ecuador, where an increasing number of armed actors converge and coexist with drug cartels from Mexico. The flow of Colombian refugees into Ecuador, due to extreme violence in the south of Nariño and Putumayo departments, represents a growing humanitarian concern. This complex humanitarian context is aggravated by the presence of 1.8 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees, of which at least 56% without regular status, by the country’s exposure to natural hazards and, in 2020, by heavy socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. COVID-19 has expanded exponentially in Colombia, with 3.6 million total cases expected by end 2020, according to the National Institute of Health. The different crises overlap and feed each other: the conflict-affected areas are also those with large concentrations of Venezuelan migrants exposed to violence, forced recruitment and exploitation, and also the most disaster prone. This overwhelms the capacities of scarcely resilient host communities and local institutions.

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<sup>14</sup> The Cartagena Declaration is a regional non-binding instrument for the protection of refugees adopted in 1984 and incorporated into national laws and state practices of fourteen Latin American countries.

### 1.3 Central America and Mexico (CAM)

The region combines high exposure to natural hazards and epidemics, endemic poverty, complex socio-economic and political situations, social unrest and pervasive violence. Climate change, protracted droughts, rapid unplanned urbanisation and chronic institutional weaknesses exacerbate the existing vulnerabilities, resulting in food insecurity, disaster risks and protection threats.<sup>15</sup> In several Mexican states, pervasive organised violence exerted by armed groups, and the subsequent State response, cause homicide<sup>16</sup> and generate humanitarian consequences identical in nature and scale to those identified in conflict areas, namely forced displacement, restrictions of movement, sexual and gender-based violence, (child) forced recruitment and severe barriers to accessing basic services and livelihoods. At the same time, the under-reported situation in Nicaragua, where social unrest erupted in 2018, is marked by increased human rights violations. 110 000 Nicaraguan refugees have so far fled to Costa Rica, overwhelming its capacity<sup>17</sup>. The Dry Corridor, which extends through Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, has endured successive climate shocks over the past six years, exacerbated by the El Niño phenomenon, causing one of the most severe droughts in recent history, and by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. An addendum to the Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020 published by OCHA in May 2020 forecasts an increase in poverty, vulnerability and inequality levels<sup>18</sup>, due to soaring food prices, loss of income and decreased remittances.

### 1.4 Haiti

2019 was marked by protracted social tensions and civil unrest, and the political impasse has continued in 2020, compounded by COVID-19. Overall, the Haitian currency (gourde) lost more than 40 % of its value against the USD between June 2019 and June 2020. Price inflation skyrocketed with dramatic effects on the purchasing power of the most vulnerable households. Unaffordable food prices resulting also from the effects of protracted drought on local agriculture, along with structural deficiencies in basic services, and the absence of a comprehensive plan to redress the economic situation, have led to violent demonstrations. Weak rule of law combined with the erosion of social norms significantly expose vulnerable populations to physical and sexual violence, exploitation and abuse. With the departure of the UN mission (MINUJUSTH) in October 2019, political violence and criminal activities have escalated - a trend which is expected to continue in 2021 in connection with the expected elections. The migratory outflow is on the rise, which exposes vulnerable Haitians to further risks including statelessness and forced repatriations. Against this background, the food and nutritional situation has worsened dramatically, and is projected to deteriorate over the period March-June 2021. The

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<sup>15</sup> NTCA includes Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador.

<sup>16</sup> UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide*, 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet2.pdf>. While homicide rates have been decreasing in most parts of the world, they have been increasing with accelerating speed in Central America. It was the sub-region with the highest average homicide rates in 2017 (25.9 per 100 000 inhabitants). El Salvador has the highest rate with 62.1, followed by Honduras with 41.7. However, the level of violence in certain cities is largely above the national average e.g. in San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa (Honduras) with 113 and 91 respectively, and in Guatemala City (91).

<sup>17</sup> UNHCR, *CBI COVID-19 Fact Sheet-Costa Rica*, April 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/costa-rica/unhcr-cbi-covid-19-fact-sheet-costa-rica-april-2020>

<sup>18</sup> UN OCHA, *Panorama de las Necesidades Humanitarias El Salvador, Guatemala y Honduras 2020, Addendum: Impacto de la COVID-19* (31 May 2020), <https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/panorama-de-las-necesidades-humanitarias-el-salvador-guatemala-y-honduras-2020-0>,

outbreak of COVID-19 has exposed the structural fragility of the Haitian health system and confirmed the country’s dependency on external aid for responding to emergencies.

## 1.5 Caribbean

In the Caribbean, the concentration of population (over 70%) in coastal areas, where most of the critical infrastructure is located, makes the sub-region particularly vulnerable to climate-related disasters, including outbreaks. Therefore, Disaster Preparedness remains essential for increasing resilience. The region is also marked by migration from Venezuela and from Haiti, which has important humanitarian consequences.

## 2 HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

### 2.1 People in need of humanitarian assistance

	Venezuela	Colombia	South America (excl. Colombia and Venezuela)	Haiti	Central America & Mexico	Caribbean
<b>Total People in Need</b>	<b>7 000 000</b> (HNO 2020)  14 900 000 (Civil Society) <sup>19</sup>  Trend <sup>20</sup> : ↑	<b>8 320 000 incl.</b> 3.22 million people affected by Venezuelan crisis (migrants, refugees, returnees, host communities). (HNO&RMRP 2020)  Trend: ↑	<b>2 100 000</b> <b>affected by Venezuelan crisis.</b> (RMRP 2020)  Trend: ↑	<b>5 100 000</b>  (HNO 2020)  Trend: ↑	<b>5 342 000</b> Including 142 000 people affected by the Venezuelan crisis (HNO & RMRP 2020)  Trend: ↑	<b>190 000</b> Affected by the Venezuelan crisis (RMRP 2020)  Trend: ↑
<b>Food insecure people</b>	9 300 000 people of which 3 200 000 severely food insecure (WFP 2019)  (13 100 000 according to HumVenezuela 2020)  Trend: ↑	10 000 000 people, of which 3 000 000 severely food insecure (WFP) ; 1.44 million (80% of the 1.8 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees)  Trend: ↑	1 790 000 people in need of food assistance (RMRP)  Trend: ↑	4 100 000 severely food insecure (WFP)  Trend: ↑	5 200 000 food insecure people (HNO) or 17% of the population in the Dry Corridor  Trend: ↑	2 900 000 food insecure people including 400 000 severely food insecure (WFP)  Trend: ↑
<b>People affected by natural hazards</b>	> 2 000 000 people potentially affected	973 400 potentially affected (HNO 2020)	> 2 000 000 people potentially affected	100 000 – 500 000 potentially affected	> 2 000 000 people potentially affected	> 2 000 000 people potentially affected
<b>Migrants, refugees,</b>	Approx. 80 000 Venezuelan	1 770 000 Venezuelans;	1 766 000 Venezuelan	1 to 2 million Haitian	533 897 <sup>21</sup> asylum seekers and	<b>190 000</b> Affected by

<sup>19</sup> Source: HumVenezuela: platform of Humanitarian Venezuelan Civil Society Organisations

<sup>20</sup> Trends: ↑ upwards in 2020 compared to 2019; ↓ downwards in 2020 compared to 2019

<sup>21</sup> UNHCR, <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5ee200e37/unhcr-global-trends-2019.html>.

<b>asylum seekers</b>	returnees ; 67 671 Colombian people of concern in Venezuela (UNHCR)  Trend: ↓	2 000 000 pendular migrants between Colombia and Venezuela; 600 000 returnees  Trend: ↑	migrants and refugees  112 846 Colombian people of concern in Ecuador  Trend: ↑	migrants mostly in D.R.   Trend: ↑	refugees worldwide from NTCA and Nicaragua (UNHCR) 276 606 <sup>22</sup> returnees (IOM) 1.9 million migrants in CAM <sup>23</sup>  Trend: ↑	Venezuelan crisis. 1- 2 million Haitian migrants mostly in DR.  Trend: ↑
<b>IDPs</b>	No estimates available	530 000 Trend: ↑	Not applicable	Not applicable	1336289 (IDMC) <sup>24</sup> Trend: ↑	Not applicable

### 2.1.1 Displaced and confined populations

In **Colombia**, over 5.5 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), out of a total 8 million Colombian IDP, remain in need of protection and other types of humanitarian assistance. IDPs and vulnerable resident populations, including at least 500 000 Colombian returnees, are in urgent need of protection, especially in areas where the State and local institutions do not have the capacity or the will to respond. Forcibly confined communities, in particular Afro-Colombian and indigenous populations are the most affected by the conflict. Colombia is also host to 1.8 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants, 680 000 returnees and more than two million circular migrants crossing regularly the Colombo-Venezuelan border, most of them requiring protection. In Venezuela, forced displacement has left significant numbers of children, people with disabilities and elderly people alone, exacerbating their vulnerabilities. In the **rest of South America**, the protection needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants are similarly acute. While Colombia is the first recipient country, Peru has become the first country of asylum for Venezuelans, with 482 571 applications. Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina are also in receipt of significant numbers of refugees/migrants. The coordination platform for the response to the Venezuelan migration crisis (R4V) estimates that over 50% of Venezuelans are in an irregular situation, with no prospect of improvement due to the negative outlook for Venezuela and increasingly restrictive measures in host countries, which increases the protection threats.

The complex humanitarian situation in **Central America and Mexico** leads to spirals of violence and forced displacement. At the end of 2019, UNHCR reported 1 068 482 persons forcibly displaced, that is 47% increase compared to 2018<sup>25</sup>. In addition, IDMC documents more than 1.3 million IDPs<sup>26</sup>. International protection becomes increasingly difficult to obtain due to more restrictive asylum policies enforced notably by US and Mexican authorities. In total, 276 606 mexicans and central americans were deported in 2019<sup>27</sup>, a 14% more than the previous year. Returnees and forced deportees struggle to re-integrate their communities, as they often face violence, discrimination and exclusion. In the **Caribbean**, up to 1.2 million migrant and displaced people live in extremely vulnerable conditions, of which approximately one million Haitians in Dominican Republic and thousands of displaced people of different origins across the

<sup>22</sup> IOM, Deportaciones, <https://primi.iom.int/es/movimientos-migratorios/deportaciones>.

<sup>23</sup> IOM: [https://migrationdataportal.org/data?m=2&sm49=13&i=stock\\_abs\\_&t=2019#](https://migrationdataportal.org/data?m=2&sm49=13&i=stock_abs_&t=2019#)

<sup>24</sup> IDMC, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/database>.

<sup>25</sup> UNHCR, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/cam/location?secret=unhcrestricted>.

<sup>26</sup> IDMC, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/database>.

<sup>27</sup> IOM, Deportaciones, <https://primi.iom.int/es/movimientos-migratorios/deportaciones>.

region. The Caribbean hosts around 184 400 people from Venezuela (of which 104 000 in the Dominican Republic, 17 000 in Aruba, 16 500 in Curacao, 24 900 in Trinidad and Tobago, and 22 000 in Guyana)<sup>28</sup>. Some national authorities are reluctant to address the needs of migrants and displaced, who usually do not benefit from social protection programmes.

### 2.1.2 *People in need of food security and nutrition*

**Venezuela:** At the end of 2019 WFP reported 9.3 million people in need of food assistance inside the country. In June 2020, 84.4% of the population reported failures in food access and 82.7% indicated not having any savings or income. In **Colombia**, the number of Colombians affected by food insecurity has tripled from 2019 to 2020, reaching 6.2 million according to latest UN estimates. 55% of households had to reduce the number of meals per day in 2020 while the ratio of food insecurity among refugees and migrants has increased from 55% to 95% following the COVID-19 confinement, according to WFP estimates. In the **rest of South America**, the livelihood of most Venezuelan migrants and refugees has severely deteriorated. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, 62% of them had already reported not having enough food to eat. In **CAM**, the Global Report on Food Crises 2020 indicates that in the Dry Corridor there are 4.4 million food insecure people (IPC Phase 3 or above)<sup>29</sup>. These data are likely to be underestimated, also because the impact of COVID-19 in the food sector has not been assessed yet. In **Haiti**, a total of 4 million people (42% of the total population) are food insecure, according to the latest IPC analysis. 33% is facing an acute food crisis (IPC phase 3: 3 083 497 people), and 9% are in a food emergency (IPC phase 4: 905 471 people). In the **rest of the Caribbean**, lockdowns exponentially increased food insecurity. The latest Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey<sup>30</sup> suggests that 2.9 million people could be food insecure compared to 1.2 million in April, of which 400 000 severely food insecure.

### 2.1.3 *Children and Youth*

In **Venezuela**, up to 70% of school-aged children, i.e. 2.7 million children, are not attending schools on a regular basis as they must contribute to the family's income generation, which exposes them to exploitation and abuse. In Colombia, children have specific protection needs in relation to the conflict, particularly due to a sharp increase in child recruitment (+113% in 2020 compared to 2019). School closure during the pandemic has affected 12.8 million students (UNESCO), exposing children and adolescents to gender-based violence and forced recruitment. In the **rest of South America**, the challenges faced by migrant children are multiple: 1.2 million of them are in need of education. In the **Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA) and in some states of Mexico** violence is having a huge impact on children and youth, threatening their safety and hampering their access to education. In the communities most affected by violence, the risks for students are severe, such as infiltration of gangs in schools, forced recruitment by armed

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<sup>28</sup> This figure represents the sum of Venezuelan migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers reported by host governments. It does not necessarily imply individual identification, or registration of each individual, and may include a degree of estimation, as per each government's statistical data processing methodology. As numerous government sources do not account for Venezuelans without a regular status, the total number of Venezuelans is likely to be higher.

<sup>29</sup> FSIN, *Global report on food crises*, 2020:

[https://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC\\_2020\\_ONLINE\\_200420.pdf](https://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC_2020_ONLINE_200420.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> CARICOM, WFP - July 2020

groups, sexual gender-based violence, extortion and threats. 40% to 50% of children living in neighbourhoods with presence of criminal gangs do not have access to education<sup>31</sup>, while dropout rates in secondary education reach 43%. In **Haiti**, the socio-political crisis affected over 3 million school children in 2019, and in 2020 the education impact has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. Specific vulnerabilities are identifiable in the country, in particular children heads of household, domestic workers, unaccompanied and separated children and children with disabilities. In the rest of the **Caribbean**, the education system is heavily affected by both mixed flows of population and natural disasters, exposing children and adolescents to a wide range of threats. Children on the move have little or no access to education, while discrimination, xenophobia and fear of deportation limit the number of migrant students enrolled and retained in education systems.

#### *2.1.4 People affected by natural disasters*

Relatively good levels of human and economic development across the LAC region mask large pockets of extreme poverty, widespread inequalities and exclusion<sup>32</sup>, vulnerabilities and low coping capacities. The most vulnerable households are often the most affected, particularly in informal settlements in urban areas as well as in remote regions and in situations where high frequency of natural disasters is combined with the consequences of conflicts and violence. The vulnerability of populations affected by violence and/or forced displacement, poor and marginalised (notably urban poor and ethnic minorities) tends to increase after each disaster, exacerbating negative coping strategies.

## **2.2 Description of the most acute humanitarian needs**

Over the past few years, the humanitarian landscape in LAC has undergone a critical transformation, with rising complex crises and forced displacement affecting the humanitarian needs both quantitatively and qualitatively, and particularly in protection terms. COVID-19 has added to this scenario. The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC) forecasts that the region will experience a -9.1% fall in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while the WFP estimates a 269% increase in acute food insecurity by end 2020. Job losses, reduction in remittances, and lower purchasing power will severely affect a region that already before the pandemic was experiencing the quickest food security deterioration worldwide. Vulnerable and marginalised groups, including 522 indigenous ethnicities and the more than 10 million refugees and migrants in the region, will be particularly hit.

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<sup>31</sup> NRC, *Una generación fuera de la escuela*, 2019, <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/violence-has-pushed-thousands-of-children-in-honduras-and-el-salvador-out-of-school/>.

<sup>32</sup> According to the World Economic Forum's Inclusive Development Index (IDI) 2018, although income inequality has diminished in 14 out of the 16 Latin American countries, the region still accounts for 11 out of the 25 developing economies with the highest levels of income inequality. Cf. <https://www.weforum.org/press/2018/03/high-levels-of-inequality-putting-latin-america-s-future-generations-at-risk/>

### 2.2.1 Protection

**In the whole region**, protection is a key need for migrants and refugees, notably the provision legal aid and counselling, civil documentation, information on rights and procedures enabling them access to public basic services and social protection mechanisms. COVID-19 lockdown measures have triggered hunger, domestic violence and evictions, which expose the population to further protection threats.

In **Venezuela**, 2.6 million people are in need of protection assistance, according to the latest Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Women and girls represent around 70% of victims of trafficking and exploitation and are at higher risk of gender-based violence. Based on the results of UNHCR participatory assessment with communities, the main protection needs are related to violence and armed conflict; sexual and gender-based violence and abuse; human trafficking, especially labour and sexual exploitation; recruitment and forced labour of children and adolescents; family separation, particularly in border and mining areas. Qualitative and inclusive protective spaces and services for children are needed, as well as psychosocial support and case management for victims of violence, abuse and exploitation. In **Colombia**, there is strong evidence of protection risks, especially for rural, ethnic communities and for women and children, in relation to the activity of armed groups. Psychosocial support and legal assistance, along with prevention of violence, protection mechanisms and case management are the main needs in these situations, taking into account specific vulnerabilities linked to gender, age and diversity. 84% of the victims of sexual violence in armed conflict are children and adolescent girls. In **Central America and Mexico**, victims of armed violence, including displaced persons and confined communities, require first and foremost protection to meet the immediate needs. The northern triangle of Central America is among the top five globally for rates of female homicides, and the prevalence of both non-partner sexual violence and intimate partner violence is significant (11.9% and 29.5% respectively for women between 15 and 69<sup>33</sup>). COVID-19 has augmented the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and femicides<sup>34</sup> and triggered larger-scale human rights violations in prison and detention centres. Displacement trends are expected to intensify with the reopening of borders. The arrival of deportees and returnees is also due to increase, resulting in new protection and assistance needs. In **Haiti**, violence has increased as a result of social unrest and is concentrated in the metropolitan area, resulting in more frequent human rights violations, physical and sexual exploitation and abuse. According to the latest HRP, the population in need of protection increased by 49% in 2020 compared to 2019. Many Haitian returnees report a deterioration of their psychosocial wellbeing in relation to protection threats. A phenomenon of stigmatisation of the victims of violence has triggered a repetition of violence leading, in some cases, to the need for relocation of these victims. The pandemic has exacerbated vulnerabilities, with 426 496 children in need and 816 751 gender-based violence survivors at risk, among others. Displaced people, vulnerable groups, people with specific needs, returnees and deportees, and victims of violence need protection services.

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<sup>33</sup> WHO, Global Health Observatory data repository, <https://apps.who.int/gho/data/view.main.IPVGBDREGION?lang=en>.

<sup>34</sup> IRC, June 2020, <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/irc-data-shows-increase-reports-gender-based-violence-across-latin-america>

### 2.2.2 *Food security, nutrition, health and WASH*

In Venezuela, Haiti and in the Northern Corridor, nutritional surveillance has been identified as a gap that hampers the reliability of available nutritional data. In **Venezuela**, the most acute needs are identified in the food and nutrition sectors, along with water supply and health services for the most vulnerable. In **South America and the Caribbean**, there is a need to complement social protection systems so that the most pressing needs of vulnerable migrants and refugees are met in an integrated manner, considering that most of them have lost their livelihoods. In **CAM**, food assistance for vulnerable communities affected by protracted drought is needed as a matter of priority, where local government response and external support are insufficient. In **Haiti**, the essential food needs of people in IPC 3 and 4 in most affected areas must be addressed as a priority, in particular during the 2021 lean season. Life-saving nutritional support is equally required for severely malnourished children under 5 years of age. The collapse of the health system in **Venezuela** has led to a critical situation in terms of access to medical services and public health. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the health system was already under strain as a result of several factors, including the departure of health personnel, disruptions to the primary healthcare system and hospital infrastructure, water and electricity shortages, lack of drugs and medical supplies. According to HumVenezuela 7.9 million people were suffering from acute health issues prior to COVID-19. Diphtheria, malaria and yellow fever outbreaks are ongoing. Supporting the emergency services of local health structures is urgently needed, as well as retaining qualified health staff. The situation in the WASH sector is dramatic with 74.6% of the country population reporting irregular access to water, and 85.7% reporting significant reduction of the quantities of water distributed. The lack of water supply in appropriate quality, quantity, continuity and pressure, combined with challenges in garbage collection, sewage and drainage systems, and limited vector control activities, increases public health risks and malnutrition. In departments affected by the conflict in **Colombia**, the absence of State institutions has led inter alia to a deterioration of the health indicators. The health sector requires tremendous support from humanitarian actors in those areas, due to structural lack of national investment in medical infrastructure, personnel and supplies. The most frequent health needs of people living in rural areas relate to infectious (41%) and chronic diseases (22%), mainly because people are prevented access to health services. Mother and child health including sexual and reproductive health are amongst the top priority of the sector. Prevention and treatment of sexual and gender based violence has become a primary need during the pandemic. Anxiety disorder, depression and post-traumatic syndromes caused by direct violence and displacement will need to be more systematically addressed. In Colombia as well as in the rest of **South America**, the pandemic has impacted on the continuity of and access to essential health services that were already overwhelmed, affecting in particular the refugee and migrant population. In **Haiti**, epidemics remain a serious threat for the most vulnerable Haitians, the risk of cholera recrudescence being still high. This is linked to limited funding resources for maintaining rapid WASH response capacities and to diminished access to safe water, sanitation and health care. The latest HRP estimates that 1.4 Millions people do not have access to WASH minimum standards and identifies urgent needs in this sector.

### 2.2.3 *Education in emergencies*

Throughout the region, school closure and connectivity problems have made distant education impossible during the pandemic (UNESCO), negatively impacting on the education and protection

of vulnerable children and adolescents. In **Venezuela**, existing obstacles to access education (e.g. unaffordable costs, insufficient daily food/nutrition intake, lack of water) exacerbate protection needs of children. While education is free and universal in all **countries hosting Venezuelans**, access by migrant children is constrained by lack of appropriate documentation, limited resources to pay complementary fees, xenophobia and discrimination, and in some cases language barriers. Education systems in host countries are mostly under strain. In **Colombia**, the education system is largely affected by the armed conflict, particularly in relation to an increasing presence of landmines and to forced displacement. Institutions and schools in Colombia lack the capacities to respond to children's education needs, especially in conflict affected areas and in areas with large migrant presence, which exacerbates the pressure on the education system. The education system in **Haiti** is extremely fragmented, lacks technical qualitative expertise, and highlights major socio-economic barriers. Despite a strong demand for education from families, high education-related costs are the main reason for non-enrolment or education discontinuity, along with inadequate infrastructure and shortage of learning materials. Access to inclusive, safe and quality education systems remains a main challenge also in the **rest of the Caribbean**, in particular for displaced children. School safety is an issue in disaster prone areas, requiring further investment.

#### *2.2.4 Disaster Preparedness and vulnerability to natural disasters*

The most acute humanitarian needs in LAC are related to exposure to multiple, often combined, hazards, high vulnerability and limited response capacity. Support is needed for vulnerable communities and local institutions, to enhance their preparedness and to translate national and regional strategies into actions. The recurrent cumulative impact of small-scale disasters in the LAC region is considerable and affects community resilience. The strong intensification of population movements, triggered by economic and political crises, is not systematically reflected, and thus integrated, in existing social protection, emergency preparedness and response mechanisms. This gap needs to be addressed. Cities are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and natural hazards, including extreme weather events and sea level rise. The underlying risk factors including poverty, inappropriate land use and tenure, unplanned rapid urbanisation and socio-economic disparity further contribute to increase disaster risks. Finally, urban settings are vulnerable due to their dependency on complex and interconnected systems of infrastructure, services, communications and social interactions. The strengthening of emergency logistics and telecommunication, of coordination, including civil-military, of information management, and early warning, is still needed to improve disaster response.

### **3 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND COORDINATION**

#### **3.1 National / local response and involvement**

Capacities of local and national institutions are uneven in the region, and their response often needs to be complemented or reinforced by international support. Local civil society is generally strong in most countries and plays a fundamental role when it comes to assessing needs, providing services locally or advocating for people's rights. The increasing importance of Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management (DRR/DM) resulted in the development of policies, laws and regulations across the region, not supported, however, by adequate financial

and human resources. Some governments are more able now to respond to localised events, but large-scale disasters generally overwhelm national capacities, and many areas remain unassisted.

In response to COVID-19, governments in Latin America and the Caribbean expanded the existing, although limited, social protection schemes to address the basic needs of the most vulnerable populations. In total 209 programmes were activated in LAC, of which 77% directed to social assistance (through cash or in-kind distributions) and 23% to other components, such as social care and social insurance. However, this represents only 0.7% of the regional GDP, covering 15% of the total needs (USD 47 average spending/capita). Also, no adaptation of existing schemes occurred in Venezuela and Haiti. The capacities of the Venezuelan authorities to cater for the needs of the people continued to decrease in 2020, and only emergency services slightly improved through international humanitarian assistance. The major national safety net providing food to millions of people (CLAP)<sup>35</sup> further declined in 2020, with less frequent distributions and smaller quantities, covering less than 50% of the population. Several host countries have set up a technical group (the ‘Quito Group’) with the aim of coordinating their migration policies, work on joint initiatives and raise international funding to support the integration of Venezuelan migrants. However, public services in host countries do not cope with overwhelming numbers, and national safety nets have so far failed to compensate for the impact of lockdown measures. In **Colombia**, national and territorial governments have been several times overwhelmed by multiple types of hazards often overlapping each other. In terms of assistance to conflict victims, lack of local capacity and resources, denial of the crisis by State authorities, along with difficult access to conflict areas, represent a major gap to the full implementation of the relevant legal framework (‘Victims Law’). In areas controlled by non-state armed groups, only humanitarian organisations are able to assist the communities. National and local ombudsmen (“*personerías*”) are one of the few resources to which victims of violence have access, but are themselves a target for armed groups. In **CAM**, national and local capacities to respond to natural disasters and food insecurity remain limited, even if some progress has been recorded in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, which creates openings for more robust international response. In Nicaragua there is no available information regarding crops losses: national authorities do not recognise the crisis and provide no response. In terms of response to the humanitarian consequences of pervasive violence, only Honduras and El Salvador now recognise the protection needs of victims of violence and forcibly displaced persons, but lack capacity and resources to react. In Nicaragua, recent cuts in national budgets for health, education and social services compound an already dire access to populations in need and limit further the provision of assistance. In **Haiti**, national capacities to cope with shocks still show large gaps, although some progress was noticed after the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria (2017) and after the earthquake of October 2018. National response to the 2019-2020 food security crisis has been virtually non-existent.

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<sup>35</sup> Comités Locales de Abastecimiento y Producción (Local Committees for Supply and Production)

### 3.2 International Humanitarian Response

Country/crisis	Venezuela	Venezuela migration crisis	Colombia (excl. Venezuela migration)	Central America & Mexico	Haiti
Appeal	HNO / HRP – released in July 2020 (incl C-19) <b>USD 762.5 M</b>	RMRP updated July 2020 (incl C-19) <b>USD 1.41 bn</b>	HNO/HRP March 2020- <b>USD 209 M</b> C-19 response plan July 2020 <b>USD 283 M</b>	HNO March 2020 Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador No regional HRP HRP C-19 for Guatemala <b>USD 105.5 M</b>	HRP 2020 revised June 2020 (incl. C-19) <b>USD 472 M</b>
Nb of people targeted	4.5 M	4.11 M	8.5 M (HRP); 5 M (C-19)	5.2 M	2.3 M
Funding level (30/09/2020)	8.9%	27%	15% (HRP); 10% (C-19)	N/A	16.3%
Donors	EU/ECHO, US, UK, Sweden, CERF, Germany, Norway, Switzerland	US, EU/ECHO, Canada, Japan, Spain, Germany, Sweden	USA, EU/ECHO, UAE, Japan, Switzerland, Canada	US, EU/ECHO, Switzerland, Canada	US, EU/ECHO, CERF, Canada, Switzerland

The humanitarian aid architecture in LAC varies depending on the nature of the crisis. The existence of a Humanitarian Response Plan is normally combined with the presence of OCHA, of a Humanitarian Country team as well as of regular donor coordination meetings. This is the case for Venezuela, Haiti and Colombia. In Venezuela the coordination is now well developed, with the cluster system in place, as well as regular donor meetings led by ECHO, and with both an international NGO forum and a national one. In Colombia, the aid architecture is dual with UNHCR/IOM coordination the refugee/migrant response and coordination for the internal crisis being led by OCHA (whose presence in the country is however at risk).

For Central America and Mexico, and for the Caribbean other than Haiti, there is no specific humanitarian coordination at country level. OCHA coordinates from its Panama office and holds regular meetings with donors on Central America on a bi-monthly basis. As concerns the Venezuelan migrant and refugee crisis, a regional coordination platform (R4V –Region for Venezuela) is co-led by UNHCR and IOM in Panama, and complemented by national platforms in the main host countries.

Donor coordination and response in the countries which are at risk of natural disasters, but with no substantial permanent humanitarian presence tends to be of a development nature.

The main donors for DRR in Central America are: AECID (Spanish Development Cooperation Agency), JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency), Taiwan, COSUDE (Swiss Development Cooperation Agency) as well as USAID/OFDA; and in the Caribbean, they are DFID (UK cooperation), Canada, AECID, USAID/OFDA, the World Bank Group, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the EU. In South America, the level of financing for DRR by international donors has been decreasing in recent years. There are still some initiatives funded by COSUDE, OFDA and the IADB, but generally, donors are geared towards fund adaptation to COVID-19 and reconstruction processes through loans and credits. In Central

America, FAO and WFP requested USD 72 million from the international community in 2019 in order to provide food assistance for 700 000 people in the Dry Corridor (95.8% underfunded). UNHCR has published an appeal to address the protection needs of 200 000 displaced in Central America for a total amount of USD 47 million (94.6% underfunded). Additionally, UNHCR Costa Rica requested USD 5 million through an inter-agency rapid response plan in order to address the needs of Nicaraguans asylum-seekers and refugees. Throughout the region, the level of funding of the appeals remains low ranging from 8.9% for the HRP for Venezuela which was released in mid-2020 only, up to 27% for the regional RMRP which is still low.

### 3.3 Operational constraints

#### 3.3.1 Access/humanitarian space

In **Venezuela**, operational and administrative difficulties and limited availability of qualified humanitarian staff affect humanitarian aid delivery. Due to security reasons, the border areas with Colombia in receipt of large numbers of migrants and the mining areas of Bolivar are among the most difficult to work in<sup>36</sup>. In **Colombia**, constraints are related to new armed groups and FARC dissidence occupying territories, which are restricting the humanitarian space in some areas (e.g. Pacific Region, Catatumbo, Guaviare, Meta and Caquetá). In **Central America**, violence and social unrest complicates access for humanitarian partners. Some areas remain off-limits, such as ultra-violent urban neighbourhoods, cities or provinces controlled by armed groups. In Nicaragua, access has been reduced as humanitarian actors are under strict surveillance of national authorities while working under variable tolerance premises. In Honduras and Nicaragua, with the upcoming presidential elections, further social unrest is foreseen, which could constrain implementation of humanitarian actions. In the **Caribbean**, major disasters, socio-political instability and possible tensions between Haiti and the Dominican Republic could disrupt projects implementation. With a marked external dependency, Caribbean nations are vulnerable to the interruption of fragile supply chains. In Cuba, where Government institutions manage the implementation of humanitarian interventions, field access and independent external monitoring of actions will continue to be a requisite for ECHO-funded assistance. In **Haiti**, constraints to humanitarian activities are mainly related to the deterioration of the security context. Disrupted logistics capacities during and in the immediate aftermaths of disasters can make assessments and response difficult everywhere in the region.

#### 3.3.2 Partners (presence, capacity), including absorption capacity on the ground

In **Venezuela**, absorption capacity has largely increased in 2019-2020: both UN and international NGOs have managed to augment their technical humanitarian staff. Over time, DG ECHO's support has contributed to build and strengthen the capacities of Venezuelan organisations. Humanitarian expertise and capacities in countries hosting Venezuelan migrants and refugees are uneven, due to lack of a humanitarian tradition in some of them, or to limited absorption capacities or limited diversity of partners. In **Colombia**, most humanitarian actors have more

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<sup>36</sup> DG ECHO has circulated a guidance note for partners, addressing the specific operating conditions in Venezuela.

than 20 years of experience assisting conflict victims and a well-rooted presence on the ground, but in some cases lack international experience. The humanitarian scene has evolved since 2018, with the arrival of several new organisations, mostly NGOs, to attend the needs of Venezuelan migrants. On the other hand, the possibility that some humanitarian organisations dealing with conflict victims be invited to leave the country could represent a new challenge in Colombia. In the **Caribbean**, the absorption capacity of international partners, and their operational capabilities remain consistently higher than the funds available. Strategic partners, including UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement and international NGOs, have a good presence overall, with national offices and adequately qualified staff.

### 3.3.3 *Other*

In **Venezuela** there is a high risk of politicisation of humanitarian operations, by both parties to the conflict. With the start of the COVID-19 crisis, both parties gave signs of willingness to ensure results for the benefit of the population. In this context, sticking to the core humanitarian principles is of the essence in order to secure access and acceptance. Security constraints, shortages and import difficulties will undoubtedly maintain high the cost of operations. In **Colombia**, logistical constraints and remoteness of conflict-affected areas can increase the cost of operations, mainly in regions with no road access.

## 4 HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

In **Venezuela** there are different challenges for achieving sustainable goals in terms of recovery or development. With State institutions in the process of collapsing, it is difficult to build national capacities and to invest in rehabilitation of infrastructure. On the other hand, local capacities have increased, and a relatively strong civil society has developed in recent years. DG DEVCO has identified three priority areas for 2020 (Food Security, WASH and support to Human Rights defenders) which can be complementary to humanitarian funding in the Nutrition, Food Security, WASH and Protection sectors. Specific synergies on water management and access issues have been identified through joint-assessment initiatives bringing together international actors and local civil society. Different EU programmes supported by DG ECHO, DEVCO and IcSP will cooperate in these areas.

For **countries of the region hosting displaced Venezuelans**, the magnitude of the challenges requires action far beyond humanitarian assistance. Host governments have repeatedly called for international cooperation to relieve their overwhelmed public services (e.g. education, health, documentation). EU cooperation instruments offer possibilities of complementarity with humanitarian assistance by promoting the social and economic inclusion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in their host countries and communities. This is envisaged along a number of axes:

- 1) Supporting the local and national institutions which provide refugees and migrants with documentation, social protection and basic services (e.g. Ombudsmen, migratory services, Refugee Offices, municipalities, medical services, education, etc.).
- 2) Advocating with host countries' governments to provide refugees and migrants with access to basic health, education services and social protection (on the model of the dialogue on EU health sector support in Peru).
- 3) Contributing to social inclusion and reduction of xenophobia, scaling up current Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) interventions.
- 4) New initiatives that facilitate the economic and social integration of the most vulnerable migrants and refugees (budget support and blending under the LAIF- Latin America Investment Facility are expected to contribute in

this sense). 5) Ensuring that EU funding for COVID-19 response and recovery systematically integrates vulnerable migrants and refugees. 6) Supporting the Quito Process, possibly confirming the EU engagement to lead the Group of Friends of the Quito Process.

In **Colombia**, recent developments related to COVID-19 may result in new converging priorities between DG ECHO and DEVCO, as is already the case for the response to the migration crisis. As far as the conflict dimension is concerned, closer collaboration will be sought on durable solutions for IDPs and victims of violence, allowing to overcome the main barriers to socio-economic integration in the three contexts of return, relocation and local integration in urban areas (i.e. property rights, investment in key infrastructure, access to basic services). This implies the inclusion of conflict affected population in peace building and rural development projects. Complementarity between Education Cannot Wait (ECW) actions and Education in Emergency actions (EiE) supported by DG ECHO will be critical to optimise the impact of both programmes in Colombia. Key Colombian institutions in charge of assistance to conflict victims and disaster management lack resources to operate: joined-up EU efforts to build and strengthen their capacities at local and national level could have a critical impact. The scope of any such actions might be expanded to strengthen the civil society's capacity to enter into dialogue with State institutions for advocacy purposes. The protection of conflict-affected populations, and in particular of social leaders, is already a joint EU priority: synergies will be strengthened to maximise the impact, and expanded to interventions on prevention and response to gender-based violence and protection of children at risk of recruitment in conflict areas.

**Central America and Mexico** - Maximisation of synergies among EU programmes is all the more relevant in view of limited complementarities with other humanitarian donors in Central America, particularly after the sharp reduction in US funding to the region in recent years. The current humanitarian context in Central America allows for relevant links with EU development cooperation. Complementary actions with different EU development programs are already being promoted, notably in disaster preparedness and food security, at national and regional level, and in the response to the spillover of the Nicaraguan crisis in Costa Rica. On migration, further synergies could be sought at country level, in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico and Panama.

**Haiti** - Coordination and synergies with actions funded by DEVCO and other development donors are pursued notably in the WASH and food security sectors, for which joint humanitarian-development programming is ongoing. Reinforcing the livelihoods of Haitian households and enhancing their resilience to future shocks will remain the focus of the EU Delegation Food Security and Nutrition programming, in the framework of the joint ECHO-DEVCO nexus strategy. COVID-19 has confirmed the WASH sector as one of the clearest nexus opportunities.

In the **rest of the Caribbean**, development partners, international financial institutions and resilience investments tend to replace, consolidate and scale up efforts previously undertaken by humanitarian donors. Strong synergies between DG ECHO and other EU-supported actions are allowing the implementation of a comprehensive EU strategy on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). Concerted programming and joint field missions with DEVCO and other donors such as US, Canada and UK are systematically taking place in the aftermath of disasters.

**Disaster Preparedness (DP) and response:** during new emergencies, DG ECHO focuses on emergency health, shelter, food and water needs. This assistance is usually enhanced gradually by development interventions, with DEVCO focusing on housing reconstruction for low-income

families, rehabilitation of energy infrastructure, livelihoods, basic services and State functions with budget support allocations and shock absorption mechanisms.

## **5 ENVISAGED DG ECHO RESPONSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF HUMANITARIAN AID INTERVENTIONS**

### **General considerations for all interventions**

The humanitarian response shall be compliant with EU thematic policies and guidelines that are described in detail in the HIP Policy Annex. For instance, mainstreaming of protection, gender (including mitigation of risks of SGBV), age, and disability inclusion should be duly reflected in all proposals.

Furthermore, the increasingly negative consequences of environmental degradation and climate-related challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to impact humanitarian crises and the provision of humanitarian assistance for the foreseeable future. For these reasons, in their proposals partners are requested to follow an all-risks assessment approach, to contemplate measures to reduce the environmental footprint of operations and to factor in as appropriate the COVID-19 dimension.

### **5.1 Envisaged DG ECHO response**

Against the backdrop of growing humanitarian needs and limited funding for the region, DG ECHO will support common, integrated and targeted approaches and inter-operable beneficiary platforms<sup>37</sup> to address basic needs through the most relevant and cost-efficient approach preferably cash transfers when feasible. In light of the risk profile of the region, disaster preparedness and protection shall be mainstreamed in all humanitarian assistance programmes. Should new natural disasters occur in the region, with a high humanitarian impact overwhelming the local capacity to respond, DG ECHO may adapt this HIP and/or use its Emergency Toolbox to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable victims.

**Venezuelan crisis** - DG ECHO strategy in **Venezuela** will keep focusing on most vulnerable groups, notably children under 5, pregnant and lactating mothers, children between 5 and 18 with protection and education issues, as well as elderly, people with disabilities or other specific needs. Internal forcibly displaced people and those "left behind" will be prioritised. The geographical coverage will prioritise large urban settlements, such as Caracas, Maracaibo, Valencia, and Barquisimeto, and border States such as Zulia, Táchira, Apure, Amazonas and Bolívar (Falcón and Sucre for protection needs). Sector-wise, health and nutrition services, food security, WASH, protection, education in emergencies and coordination will be supported. Schools have been identified as strategic community places to support children and their families through the provision of quality education, safe and protective environments, socio-emotional learning and psychosocial support, and to improve access to other services such as food, water and sanitation. DG ECHO partners will be required to continue supporting national organisations

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<sup>37</sup> Shared beneficiary databases across programmes, to maximise impact and reduce targeting errors.

to increase their humanitarian response capacities and enhance access the most affected populations. To that end, coordination and information management will be reinforced, as well as humanitarian diplomacy to enlarge the humanitarian space. **Within the region**<sup>38</sup>, DG ECHO will continue to respond to the needs of people on the move, at transit points and during the first phase of arrival in destination countries. The assistance will focus on the most vulnerable cases and will be tailored to the different needs identified, including protection (information linked to the provision legal support, management of most critical cases, prevention and assistance for victims of gender-based violence and human trafficking) and health (treatment of life-threatening acute conditions, referrals for cases requiring a higher level of health care, case management for high need cases as well as mental health and psychosocial support for violence victims, and sexual and reproductive health care). Components oriented to prevent and control epidemics as well as to alleviate their consequences will also be considered.

**Colombia** – The strategy will focus on responding to urgent/critical unmet humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations affected by armed violence, notably recently displaced people and secluded communities, focusing on areas where national authorities are unable to address the needs and where no development actions are feasible at present. Assistance and protection to Colombian refugees in neighbouring countries will also be supported. Advocacy and coordination will be pursued to articulate efforts and raise awareness, also regarding the victims' right to government assistance. Complementarity and articulation between partners is encouraged in order to provide an integral analysis and comprehensive responses. In this regard, efforts to improve the information management structure in Colombia will be favoured for advocacy and evidence-based interventions. Coordination amongst humanitarian actors is essential in this forgotten crisis with evolving and neglected humanitarian needs. Other types of response will be based on assessed needs and identified gaps in national response.

**Central America and Mexico** - The envisaged response will focus on three axes: a) Addressing critical needs of most vulnerable victims of organised violence and social unrest, through strengthened protection response capacities and relief assistance, information gathering on protection needs and evidence-based humanitarian advocacy; b) Food assistance and short- to medium-term livelihood recovery and protection, reducing food insecurity while helping to build resilience in the framework of relevant nexus strategies, raising awareness on the prevailing food crisis and anticipating humanitarian aid interventions through FSN<sup>39</sup> information systems strengthening; c) DP actions promoting multi-sectoral approaches for improving rapid response and early action capacities, advancing urban preparedness, mainstreaming post-crisis displacement and violence, and supporting regional coordination to integrate multi-hazard risks into DP. Efforts will be encouraged to enhance information and evidence-based forecasts while strengthening links with EU Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCPM). Special attention will be given to actions fostering synergies between humanitarian and development initiatives in relevant sectors (food security, nutrition and resilience, disaster preparedness).

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<sup>38</sup> See. footnote n. 3 for the potential geographical coverage. Flexibility in reponse setups and geographical coverage will in any case be preserved to take account of an evolving environment, and of natural hazard exposure.

<sup>39</sup> Food Security and Nutrition

**Haiti** - Addressing the most urgent food and nutrition needs of most vulnerable households, with specific attention to under-five children, and in particular during the 2021 lean season, will be at the centre of DG ECHO strategy for 2021, through direct and unconditional nutrition-sensitive emergency food assistance at the most difficult times of the year. Humanitarian coordination and information management systems will be addressed as a priority. Local and national capacities for contingency planning, preparation, coordination and management of emergencies will be strengthened. Furthermore, prevention and response to violence, exploitation and abuse will be encouraged, to address the needs of the most vulnerable people, notably women, children and youth, elderly, displaced people, people with disabilities and other specific needs. Protection projects to respond to the increased need of urban populations exposed to armed groups's activities and socio-political violence will remain a priority.

**Disaster Preparedness (DP)** - The focus of DP will be on regional and national multi-hazard preparedness for response and early action, while exploring synergies with EUCPM and nexus opportunities with other EU instruments. The overall aim of DP actions in the LAC region is to create better-prepared communities and institutions to face natural and manmade hazards and risks, including epidemic outbreaks as COVID-19, thus reducing mortality and protecting the livelihoods of the most vulnerable.

The strategy and vision are to uphold the interrelations between DP, emergency and resilience actions with civil society organisations as well as local and national authorities. At institutional level, Civil and Military coordination and a Civil Protection approach to State response will be promoted, including through increased technical support from the EUCPM. Priority will be given to empowering the most exposed communities with highest risk indicators and lowest coping capacities. Preparedness for response and early action will be pursued through: 1) Risk-based and anticipatory actions such as Rapid Response Mechanisms, emergency logistics preparedness, social protection shock responsiveness, and Crisis Modifiers to allow shifting to “emergency-type” interventions if needed. 2) Preparedness in conflict and fragile settings, implying the integration of victims of conflict in national preparedness and response protocols as well as displacement patterns, inclusiveness and protection issues. 3) Climate and environmental resilience as outbreak preparedness, innovation and green technology for effective response. 4) Urban preparedness to multiple hazards and resilience in larger cities.

DG ECHO contributes to the dissemination and implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Wherever possible, DG ECHO will focus on gaps identified from recent disasters, unaddressed risk, allowing to further progress on a ECHO-DEVCO joint regional DRM strategy. Actions should link with EU funding where possible, as well as with global campaigns such as Resilient Cities, Safe Schools and Safe Hospitals. The integration of the private sector (including through public-private partnerships) and citizen-led initiatives in DP will be promoted.

## **5.2 Other DG ECHO interventions**

The Emergency Toolbox HIP may be drawn upon for the prevention of, and response to, outbreaks of Epidemics. Under the Emergency Toolbox HIP, the Small-Scale Response, Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT) and Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) instruments may also provide funding options.

There is also room for enhancing the use and activation by LAC countries of the **EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)**, which has proven to be very important and useful in the region, but has remained partly underutilised, as countries were not sufficiently familiar with the instrument and the services that could be provided.