

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 2022 general budget of the European Union

AMOUNT: EUR 146 146 210

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2022/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annexes¹ is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO²'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

Seventh modification – 7 December 2022

The humanitarian situation in Colombia has been deteriorating throughout the year due to factors such as armed violence and natural disasters, in addition to serious structural problems and the ongoing consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, in 2022 the number of people in need has increased by one million to reach 7.7 million. The main factors leading to this situation are the following:

Competition between non-State armed groups (NSAGs), criminal groups and the military has worsened in 2022, and the homicide rate across the country is increasing. More seemingly stable regions are being dragged back into a cycle of conflict. As of December 2022, OCHA reported over 3°400 actions of violence perpetrated by ANSAs and affecting more than 3 million people. At the national level, some 1 478 people have been killed in 2022. This represents an increase of 18% compared to the same period of 2021. Moreover, so far in 2022, roughly 100 000 people have been affected by confinement (73.3% increase compared to 2021) and around 108 000 people have been victims of mass displacement events (49.3% increase compared to 2021). Overall, 2.3 million people have faced mobility restrictions, including on access to basic services.

Moreover, Colombia is facing a surge in the number of people affected by natural hazards such as the La Niña phenomenon (rainfall volumes are estimated between 20% and 40% above historical averages throughout the country), now in its third consecutive year, affecting at least 900 000 people so far in 2022.

An increase in poverty is also expected in Colombia as a result of rising food prices, loss of employment and impact of natural hazards. The number of people in global food insecurity has doubled between 2019 and 2022. According to the FAO and WFP 2022 State of Food Security and

¹ Technical annex and thematic policies annex

² Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

Nutrition in the World report, more than 21.5 million people in Colombia are food insecure (41.6%). By 2023, an estimated 7.1 million people will have food security and nutrition needs (WFP).

In order to respond to this emergency, EUR 3.2 million are added to this HIP. The funds will allow addressing the most urgent needs thanks to the provision of multi-sectorial assistance to the most vulnerable, to face the humanitarian consequences of internal conflict dynamics and violence and to cover unmet needs of newly displaced populations and host communities, with a focus on protection (in particular with a focus on indigenous and afrocolombian communities) and access to basic services, including health, education, emergency water, sanitation and hygiene, and non-food items.

Sixth modification – 21 September 2022

The Russian war against Ukraine aggravates the existing food insecurity and livelihood of the most vulnerable groups, especially migrants, refugees and indigenous groups which are suffering from discrimination and living in the informality throughout the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean region. Beyond increasing the needs, it also makes the cost of existing operations more expensive (food support, fuel, logistics etc).

Particular strong impacts on food security are noted in the context of the Venezuela crisis (regionally and inside the country) as well as in Central America's Dry Corridor countries (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua). Most of the countries in the region heavily rely on imports from Russia and Belarus for food, fuel and agricultural inputs (fertilizers). Food prices have increased in the region because of a shortage of Ukrainian and Russian wheat on the global market and as a consequence of the increase in the cost of fuel and freight. This rising inflation, especially in Venezuela, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua will mechanically decrease the purchasing power of the most vulnerable. LAC GDP growth estimations for 2022 have decreased by 12% according to UNCTAD. Therefore, the war has an aggravating effect on an already dire humanitarian context in a region that is highly exposed to climate change and natural disasters, conflict/violence and multiple socio-economic vulnerabilities in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The humanitarian situation triggered by the crisis in **Venezuela**, the epicentre of the biggest humanitarian crisis in the region, continues to deteriorate and the displacement of vulnerable Venezuelans continues. The number of people in need inside Venezuela continues to grow, with some 18 million people in food insecurity inside the country according to the local platform HUM Venezuela. According to the Venezuelan Federation of family farmers, 75% of the food in Venezuela is imported. The local production of fertilizers represents only 10% of the needs, and there is a high dependency on Russia for this item. The situation compromises the already weak capacities of the national government to provide any type of assistance. This will also impact the 6.8 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees who fled their country. Eighty four percent of them are hosted in the neighbouring countries (with Colombia hosting some 2.5 million) and are substantially relying on humanitarian aid for securing basic needs & short term livelihoods. According to 2022 UNHCR-IOM Regional Migration Response Plan (RMRP), the projected number of migrants could reach 8.9 million people by the end of the year. Regionally, according to the UNHCR-IOM RMRP, there are some 6.9 million food insecure people. The cumulated impact of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine severely deteriorates the situation, with high inflation rates in some of the countries.

In **Central America** maize prices increased sometimes by as much as 60% (compared to December 2021) as in the case of Honduras. The impact on food security is driven also by fuel prices (more than 25% increase in Guatemala since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine) that also impact secondary agricultural sectors such as fertilisers' production and cost. The region has seen a skyrocketing increase for fertilisers' prices, which play a role in the harvest cycle this year, as well as in the final consumer price. The situation is similar in El Salvador, which was already facing inflation before the Ukraine crisis and is totally dependent on import for wheat and crude oil. All these aspects have increased the needs and the number of those affected by food insecurity in a region where, already prior to the war in Ukraine, there were 8.2 million people facing food insecurity in the Dry Corridor countries.

In order to respond to this emergency, EUR 35 million are added to this HIP. The funds will allow addressing the most urgent needs, both inside and outside Venezuela (in particular in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) and in the Dry Corridor countries of Central America, mainly in the sectors of food assistance and nutrition, and associated sectors such as health, WASH and protection. Multi-sector projects including a food assistance component can be considered. Cash interventions will be considered where possible.

Fifth modification – 05 August 2022

This modification is intended to transfer **EUR 13 986 210** to be allocated to the IFRC pilot Programmatic Partnership action (ECHO/-AM/BUD/2022/91000) 'Accelerating local action in humanitarian and health crises', including **EUR 1 100 000** for a Programmatic Partnership regional flexibility result.

Fourth modification – 27 July 2022

The Venezuelan humanitarian crisis continues worsening. After more than 6 years of crisis, Venezuela's GDP per capita is now at the level of Haiti, with less than USD 1,500. According to the Humanitarian Venezuela platform (data from late 2021), 18.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance inside the country (against 7.7 million referred to in the draft 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan). Public services are largely inexistent as is the capacity of the State to provide the minimum social safety nets. The minimum wage is USD 28, and the average salary is around USD 90, while the basic monthly food basket amounts to around USD 450.

The impact of the war in Ukraine is adding a considerable strain on the economy in Venezuela and in the region in terms of soaring food and fuel prices, hyperinflation and delays in the delivery of essential goods.

Given the difficult economic and employment situation in neighbouring countries, the remittances of Venezuelan migrants are insufficient to sustain the dependents –notably children– who remained in Venezuela. In this context, and because of the duration of the crisis, humanitarian partners are reporting an increase in negative coping mechanisms leading to cumulative protection risks, particularly for minors and elders. Indigenous populations across the country, traditionally confronted to a situation of exclusion and with very limited access to social services, even prior to the crisis, continue to be among the most affected and vulnerable.

The outflow of Venezuelan refugees and migrants remains one of the largest displacement crises in the world. To date, over 6.1 million have left their homes, of which 5 million are in the Americas. Many have lost all sources of income, exposing them to destitution, homelessness, exploitation, and abuse.

According to the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) 2022, 8.4 million people are in need of assistance in the region (Venezuelan migrants and refugees as well as host communities), 92% of which are hosted in Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Chile. According to the R4V platform, the number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean increased by 90,000 people between January and May 2022, and the outpour continues, with poorer and less educated people fleeing the country. Venezuelans are now the first nationality to cross the Darién gap between Colombia and Panamá.

In order to respond to this emergency, EUR 12 million are added to this HIP. The funds will allow addressing the most urgent needs, both inside and outside Venezuela, mainly in the sectors of protection and health. Mixed migrants in transit or stranded would be supported through cash and protection interventions to ensure that their needs are minimally covered along the displacement route. A contribution to the Venezuela Humanitarian Fund is also foreseen.

Third modification – 28 April 2022

Subject to a severe socio-economic crisis and a complex political scenario, the humanitarian situation in Haiti has dramatically deteriorated in the last months. Further assistance is now required to support an extremely fragile population and avoid the funding gap enlarges even further.

The 14 August 2021 earthquake, (and the 16 August tropical storm Grace) not only caused 2.250 deaths, 12.000 wounded, extensive damages to public structures, such as hospitals and schools, and left thousands of persons without shelter and with limited health and WASH services but also damaged the crops and destroyed the food production infrastructure.

Moreover, the impact of the recurrent economic disruptions linked to armed gang violence and the fuel blockages of November and December as well as poor harvests due to below-normal rainfalls reported in the last months, have led to an increase in food prices that continue to reduce the purchasing power of the poorest households and their ability to access food.

Finally, the impact of the War in Ukraine further aggravates an already dire humanitarian situation directly and immediately as well as over the medium term directly through its impact on the prices of strategic imports – food and fuels. Over the long term through the downstream impact of rising oil prices and disruption on energy and fertilizers production, , as reported by OCHA³.

As a result of it the recent released Humanitarian needs overview for Haiti (March 2022) estimates that the population in need of food assistance will still increase to 4.6 million in the coming months and could reach 6.2 million end 2022. In terms of comparison, the IPC Survey published in September 2021 indicated that the number of people in need of food assistance was of 4.4 million. The February

³ Impacts of the Ukraine Crisis at the Country-level Synthesis of Analysis by the UN Resident Coordinator System March 2022

2022 IPC update shows that for the period from March to June 2022, 1.32 million people (13% of the population analysed) are classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 3.18 million people (32%) in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

In order to respond to this emergency, EUR 5 million are added to this HIP. Based on former ECHO operations, it is estimated that with an amount of EUR 5 million it will be possible to cover the essential food needs of at least 90 000 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 2022 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.

Second modification – 9 March 2022

The Darien Gap is a perilous mountainous jungle, scarcely populated, located at the border between Colombia and Panama with very limited State presence. In 2021 over 133 000 people (of which at least 80 000 Haitians and 15 000 Cubans) crossed this area in dramatic conditions, more than the 11 previous years combined. Out the 133 000 people reported, 22% were children.

Furthermore, the number of crossings has further increased in 2022, with about 150 daily arrivals. In January 2022, 4 442 persons arrived to the reception centres and a total 5 867 migrants until 8 February 2022. This is a significant increase compared to the figures of January 2021. Considering the instability in the region, the flux is expected to keep on increasing with people reported on the move as far South as from Chile.

Those trying to cross have no access to food, water, health or any service. Protection risks are extremely high and include family separation, violence, and death. One of the most critical aspects is the presence of subversive and paramilitary groups perpetrating physical, psychological, and sexual violence. Moreover, the migratory flux has a deep impact on the local indigenous populations.

The EUR 1 500 000 allocated will provide a response to the increased and unmet humanitarian needs caused by these record numbers of trans-continental and extra-continental mixed migratory flows, namely in terms of protection, WASH, health, and coordination.

First modification – 19 January 2022

Countries in Central America and Mexico (CAM) are confronted with a high level of vulnerability due to the combination of different factors that include, among others, high exposure to natural hazards as well as the consequences of pervasive violence and forced displacement.

The region's Dry Corridor (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua) is particularly vulnerable to climate shocks and droughts, triggering some 8.2 M people to suffer from high levels of

acute food insecurity (IPC 3 and 4). Combined impacts of COVID-19 and hurricanes Eta and Iota further aggravated the situation. Moreover, the prevailing violence is causing humanitarian and protection needs similar, in nature and scale, to those in conflict areas: forced displacement, restrictions of movement, sexual and gender-based violence, etc. The overlap of all these crises means that more than 8.3 million people across El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are currently requiring humanitarian assistance⁴.

Against this background the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg contributed EUR 1 000 000 to the European Commission in order to reinforce the response to the challenges previously mentioned. More precisely the funds allocated will respond to the most urgent needs of vulnerable populations, namely in terms of protection for people affected by violence and food security.

1. CONTEXT

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region presents several complex emergencies, including the internal and regional impact of the crisis in Venezuela, the humanitarian consequences of the non-international armed conflicts in Colombia as well as pervasive violence in Haiti and Central America and Mexico. Moreover, the region witnesses an important transit of refugees and migrants attempting to reach the United States and Canada in what can be defined as an increasingly visible phenomenon of transcontinental mixed migration. People on the move are obliged to cross borders through often specific hotspots where conditions are dramatic. This is the case of the Darien gap between Colombia and Panama, crossed daily by several hundreds of people exposed to extremely high protection risks and stranded during long periods in overcrowded, unsafe, and unsanitary conditions.

Violence and armed conflicts are a major threat to populations in Colombia, Venezuela, Haiti, Central America and Mexico. The LAC region hosts 43 of the 50 most violent cities in the world⁵. LAC is the most affected region worldwide by the COVID-19 pandemic, that has subsequently aggravated every aspect of the on-going humanitarian crises in the region. Furthermore, LAC countries and territories rank among the most natural hazard-prone in the world, aggravated now by the consequences of climate change. Nearly 75% of the 654 million LAC inhabitants live in at-risk areas, which exacerbates their vulnerability.

DG ECHO has identified high humanitarian needs in Colombia, Venezuela, Haiti, Central America and the Caribbean, as well as amongst people on the move and Venezuelan displaced people in 16 countries across the region⁶. 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.

⁴ Humanitarian Needs Overview issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in August 2021.

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

⁶ Colombia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago (TT), Aruba, Curaçao, Costa Rica, Argentina, Paraguay, Panama, Uruguay, Mexico.

	Colombia	Venezuela	South America ⁷	Caribbean ⁸	Haiti	Central America & Mexico (CAM) ⁹
INFORM Risk Index¹⁰	5.4/10	4.5/10	4.3/10	4.3 / 10	6.3/10	4.7 / 10
Vulnerability Index	6.1/10	3.4/10	3.7/10	3.7 / 10	5.4/10	4.6 / 10
Hazard and Exposure	6.9/10	6.0/10	4.2/10	4.5 / 10	6.4/10	4.9 / 10
Lack of Coping Capacity	3.8/10	4.6/10	4.3/10	5.2 / 10	7.2/10	4.5 / 10
Projected conflict risk	8.3/10	8.4/10	-	0.7	8.2	4.1/10
Uprooted People Index	10/10	5/10	-	-1.66	1.6/10	6/10-
Natural Disaster Index	6.5/10	6.1/10	-	-4.60	7.0/10	6.5/10-
HDI Ranking¹¹ (Value)	83 - (0,767)	96 - (0,726)	-	-	170 - (0,51)	-
Total Population ¹²	50.3 M	28.5 M	343.2 M	33.0 M	11.3 M	172.2 M
	Colombia internal conflict	Venezuela internal	Venezuela regional	Caribbean (excl. Haiti)	Haiti	CAM
Global Crisis Severity Index¹³	4/5	4/5	4/5	-	3.9/5	3-4/5
Humanitarian Conditions	4/5	4/5	4/5	-	4/5	2.5/5

1.1 Venezuelan crisis

Venezuela's socio-economic and political crisis continued unabated in 2021, with severe humanitarian consequences. Reliable official data on the situation of Venezuelan population is limited, but reports by local organisations show a dramatic deterioration in the overall living conditions, including in terms of access to basic services, compounded by the effects of the pandemic. *Hum Venezuela*¹⁴ reports that in June 2021, 64.4% of people had lost their living conditions irreversibly. This aggravated crisis has exacerbated exposure to risks and have increased internal displacement of very vulnerable people who had been “left behind”. In particular, protection risks linked to internal forced displacement associated with rural and urban violence, such as sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation, abuse, forced recruitment of children, have worsened and are now even more challenging to respond to.

Governments of the LAC countries affected by the crisis report more than 4.6 million forcibly displaced Venezuelans in the region¹⁵, out of the 5.9 million uprooted worldwide. These Venezuelans face appalling protection risks along the migratory routes and at least 2 million remain in irregular status. By September 2021, only 2.6 million Venezuelans had access to temporary residency permits and less than 75 000 were recognized as refugees in the region¹⁶.

⁷ Includes the following countries: Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Brazil

⁸ Excluding Haiti

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

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

¹¹ UNDP, Humanitarian Development Index (HDI)

¹² World Data Atlas

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

¹⁴ Forum of Venezuelan Humanitarian NGO's.

¹⁵ Of which 1.8 million in Colombia, 1.2 million in Peru and 0.45 million in Ecuador.

¹⁶ <https://www.r4v.info>

As a direct consequence of COVID-19, most displaced Venezuelans lost their formal and informal sources of income and were victims of evictions, facing severe obstacles to find safe housing solutions. As soon as lockdown measures were lifted, the flow of vulnerable people fleeing Venezuela increased again in 2021. The risk of politization and attempts of humanitarian aid manipulation by political actors remain an issue with NGOs operating under tighter control and in stressful conditions.

1.2 Colombia

Armed non-state actors have taken advantage of COVID-19 mobility restrictions to expand their social and territorial control. The implementation of the peace agreements with the FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*) still faces important challenges, despite some progresses reported. The emergence of multiple armed non-state actors has increased the complexity of the security context, exacerbated humanitarian needs and displacements while, at the same time, hampering humanitarian access. This is the situation especially on the Pacific Coast, the North-West and border areas. The flow of Colombian refugees into Ecuador represents also a humanitarian concern.

Colombia is hosting around 1.8 million displaced Venezuelans. At the end of 2020, the Government announced the Temporary Protection Status for displaced Venezuelans (ETPV) living in Colombia. While by August 2021 more than one million Venezuelans have requested the status, important barriers hamper its effective implementation. Those Venezuelans arriving after the regularisation deadline (January 31st 2021), remain in irregular situation with extremely limited access to services and solutions.

Finally, COVID-19 has spread exponentially in Colombia, with close to 5 million total cases registered as of end of August 2021 according to the National Institute of Health. Health and humanitarian crises overlap geographically and fuel each other.

1.3. South America

With more than 36 million cases and 1.13 million deaths reported at the end of August 2021, South America has been one of the regions more severely affected by COVID-19 worldwide. The pandemic has been particularly harsh for specific vulnerable groups such as migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities living in remote lagging areas.

In the Amazonian basin between Brazil, Colombia and Peru, COVID-19 has been out of control for large periods during the last year. In the indigenous region of the Gran Chaco, between Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, the pandemic has added to the protracted droughts and the precarious situation of indigenous populations, leading to a humanitarian crisis with 1.3 million people in need¹⁷.

The massive loss of livelihoods has led to a critical situation in the Andean countries, with more than seven million people becoming severely food insecure only in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia¹⁸. This situation has fueled xenophobia and has further deteriorated the already precarious conditions of the millions of migrants and refugees coming from Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba and other regions, provoking secondary flows of people wandering irregularly between countries in a desperate search of income. Only in the Darien Gap between Colombia and Panama the number of people strained, trying to enter

¹⁷ UN-OCHA

¹⁸ WFP figures August 2021

into Panama in their journey to the North has passed from around 25 000 people in 2016 to over 75 000 reported so far in 2021. The above described critical increase of vulnerability multiplies the risk of humanitarian crises and civil unrest in a sub-region highly exposed to natural hazards, instability and inequality.

1.4 Central America and Mexico (CAM)

CAM combine a high exposure to natural hazards and epidemics, with complex socio-economic and political tensions, social unrest, and endemic poverty. In addition, several countries within the sub-region become transit and destination areas for continental and extra-continental refugees, asylum seekers and migrants¹⁹. Climate change, protracted droughts, rapid unplanned urbanisation and systemic institutional weaknesses and corruption exacerbate the existing vulnerabilities, resulting in an increase of displacements, food insecurity and protection risks.

In most countries of the sub-region, pervasive organised violence exerted by armed groups, and the subsequent State response cause high death tolls²⁰ and generate humanitarian consequences identical, in nature and scale, to those identified in non-international armed conflict areas. The main risks include 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, situation in Nicaragua, where social unrest erupted in 2018, is marked by increased repression, human rights violations and a continuous decrease of the humanitarian space. So far, 110 000 Nicaraguan refugees have fled to Costa Rica, overwhelming its response capacities²¹.

In 2021, the region still endures the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions, as well as the aftermath of hurricanes Eta and Iota, further undermining existing coping capacities. In the Dry Corridor of Central America the hurricanes came on top of successive climate shocks over the past years, causing one of the most severe droughts in recent history.

1.5 Haiti and the Caribbean

At the beginning of 2021, 4.4 million Haitians were already in need of humanitarian assistance, suffering from a large scale food crisis. Political upheavals, social tensions, insecurity, climate hazards and other factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have contributed to the further deterioration of the coping capacities of the already vulnerable population. Overall situation was aggravated following the earthquake affecting the South Western part of the island, which affected 800 000 people. Since June 2021, violence and territorial disputes between armed gangs in the urban area of Port-au-Prince have increased significantly, with more than 19 000 IDPs registered facing severe protection threats and serious humanitarian access constraints.

In the **Caribbean** the entire population of 45 million people is highly exposed to natural hazards, including stronger tropical storms, hurricanes, earthquakes, longer lasting droughts, and volcanic eruptions, now aggravated by the effects of climate change. The coastal areas, where over 70% the population and most of the critical infrastructure are located are particularly vulnerable. Furthermore, socioeconomic inequality and poverty, high population density, rapid urbanization, mixed migration

¹⁹ Panama remains mainly a country of transit for continental and extra-continental displacement.

²⁰ Insight Crime, *2020 Homicide Round-up*, 2021, <https://insightcrime.org/news/analysis/2020-homicide-round-up/>.

²¹ UNHCR, *UNHCR calls for more support for Nicaraguans forced to flee*, April 2021, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2021/4/6079cd184/unhcr-calls-support-nicaraguans-forced-flee.html>.

flows, mostly from Venezuela and Haiti, and statelessness (the Dominican Republic hosts the biggest caseload in the Americas) are exacerbating vulnerabilities, protection and humanitarian needs. Several ongoing outbreaks of communicable diseases (Dengue, Zika, etc.) were already reported when the COVID-19 pandemic started. Pandemic socio-economic crisis has provoked a dramatic increased in food insecurity: 10 million people moderately food insecure and 1 million severely food insecure, namely in the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

2.1 People in need of humanitarian assistance

	Venezuela	Colombia	South America ²²	Caribbean (excl. Haiti)	Haiti	Central America & Mexico (CAM)
Total People in Need	14 900 000²³ Trend ²⁴ : <input type="checkbox"/>	10 800 000 Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	10 025 000 Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	1 364 000 Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	5 150 000 Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	9 700 000 Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>
Food insecure people	13 100 000 (HumVenezuela ²⁵) Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	9 600 000 people (WFP) Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	1 830 000 people (RMRP 2021) Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	10 000 000 people (WFP) Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	4 400 000 (WFP) Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	8 200 000 ²⁶ (HNO, Nicaragua) Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>
People affected by natural hazards	> 2 000 000 people potentially affected	236 500 requiring assistance (HNO 2021)	> 2 000 000 people potentially affected	> 2 000 000 potentially affected	Up to 500 000 potentially affected	> 2 000 000 people potentially affected
Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers	120 000 returnees in 2020; 67 671 Colombian people of concern in Venezuela (UNHCR) Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	2 080 000 Venezuelans; 1 870 000 pendular migrants; 980 000 returnees (RMRP 2021) Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	2 374 000 Venezuelan migrants and refugees (R4V Aug.2021) 112 846 Colombian in Ecuador Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	195 800 Venezuelan 150 000 stateless and 1- 2 million Haitian migrants Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	New routes through SA and CA. Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	912 779 asylum seekers and refugees worldwide from CAM (UNHCR) ²⁷ 370 907 returnees (IOM) ²⁸ Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>
IDPs	Recurrent displacements to border areas Trend: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	450 700 (HNO 2021) Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable		19 000 IDPs Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>	1 749 700 (IDMC) ²⁹ Trend: <input type="checkbox"/>

2.1.1 Refugees, migrants, internally displaced and confined populations

According to UNHCR, there are more than 18.4 million³⁰ forcibly displaced people in the region including populations fleeing from pervasive violence, armed conflicts, socio-economic and climatic crises. COVID-19 has fueled those crises.

²² Excluding Colombia and Venezuela

²³ Source: HumVenezuela: platform of Humanitarian Venezuelan Civil Society Organisations. 2020 HNO refers to 7 000 000 people.

²⁴ Trends: upwards in 2021 compared to 2020; downwards in 2021 compared to 2020

²⁵ 9 300 000 people according to WFP 2019.

²⁶ UN OCHA, <https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/el-salvador-guatemala-honduras-humanitarian-needs-overview-summary-humanitarian>.

²⁷ UNHCR, <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=YYgb0x>

²⁸ IOM, Deportaciones, <https://primi.iom.int/es/movimientos-migratorios/deportaciones>

²⁹ IDMC, https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/img/png_download/GRID21_NDs_GlobalMap.png.

³⁰ UNHCR 2020 report on Forced Displacement

In **Colombia**, according to UN OCHA, over 6.7 million people remain in dire need of protection and other types of humanitarian assistance. IDPs and vulnerable local populations are particularly exposed to protection risks. Forcibly confined communities, in particular Afro-Colombian and indigenous populations are the most affected by the conflicts. Colombia also hosts vulnerable populations requiring protection assistance among the 1.8 million Venezuelan refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, around one million returnees, and two million circular migrants crossing regularly the Colombo-Venezuelan border. In **Venezuela**, forced displacement has left significant numbers of children, people with disabilities and elderly alone, exacerbating their vulnerabilities and hindering their capacities to cope. In the **rest of South America**, the humanitarian needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are similarly acute. Peru has become the second major host country for Venezuelan diaspora with over one million people (500 000 of them being asylum seekers³¹). Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina also host a significant number of Venezuelans. The coordination platform for the response to the Venezuelan migration crisis (R4V) estimates that over 50% of Venezuelans in the region are in an irregular situation, with no prospect of improvement nor access to durable solutions.

The complex humanitarian situation in **CAM** is triggered by spirals of violence and forced displacement within the region. In 2021 UNHCR reports 912 779 asylum seekers and refugees from CAM worldwide³². In addition, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) documents more than 1.7 million IDPs³³. In the sub-region it becomes increasingly difficult to obtain international protection, due to increasingly restrictive asylum policies and misinformation. In total, 370 907 Mexicans and Central Americans were deported in 2020³⁴. Returnees struggle to re-integrate their communities, as they often face pervasive violence, retaliation, discrimination and exclusion.

In the **Caribbean**, nearly half million stateless and asylum seeking people, as well as 1 to 2 million displaced Haitian, live in extremely vulnerable conditions, the majority in the Dominican Republic. Humanitarian crises in Haiti and Cuba are leading to a drastic increase of migration flows. The R4V platform reports that the 195 800 Venezuelan refugees and asylum seekers are living in the region, including 114 500 in the Dominican Republic, 24 000 in Trinidad and Tobago, and 23 300 in Guyana³⁵. Venezuelans are facing serious integration and regularization barriers, lack access to social services and are often exposed to human rights violations, trafficking, exploitation and abuse.

In **Haiti**, the deteriorating overall socioeconomic crisis coupled with increasing levels of violence has resulted in forced displacement as well as numerous deaths and injuries. It is estimated that 1.5 million people are affected with more than 19 000 people internally displaced. These populations lack access to basic services, including access to food, protection, safe water and sanitation, and are exposed to

³¹ RMRP 2021.

³² <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/60b638e37/global-trends-forced-displacement-2020.html>

³³ IDMC, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/database>.

³⁴ IOM, Deportaciones, <https://primi.iom.int/es/movimientos-migratorios/deportaciones>.

³⁵ This figure represents the number of Venezuelan asylum seekers, refugees and migrants reported by host governments with serious estimations as government sources do not account for people without a regular status. The total number of people in need of humanitarian and protection assistance is much higher.

high levels of violence. Children, elderly, women and single-headed households are particularly exposed to abuse, exploitation and violence, including sexual and gender-based violence.

2.1.2 People in need of food security and nutrition

COVID-19 has triggered an unprecedented crisis in terms of food security in LAC. According to WFP, the number of severely food insecure population has grown from approximately 3.5 million in March 2020 to 12.3 million people in August 2021³⁶.

In Venezuela at the end of 2019, WFP reported 9.3 million people in need of food assistance inside the country. Other sources estimate that this number can be more than 14 million nowadays. According to latest figures available, 84.4% of the population reported failures in food access and 82.7% indicated not having any savings or income. **In Colombia**, according to the 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, there are 3.5 million acutely food insecure people, and 73% of the 1.8 million Venezuelan migrant and refugee population was severely food insecure in 2020. **In the rest of South America**, the situation tends to be equally dramatic, with approximately 7.6 million people severely food insecure in the Andean region³⁷, out of which half a million are refugees and migrants.

In CAM, there is a total of 8.2 million food insecure people, including 500 000 in Nicaragua³⁸. An estimated 4.4 million people in **Haiti**, or nearly 40 per cent of the population, are already facing high acute food insecurity, including 1.2 million classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). An estimated 217 000 children suffer from moderate-to-severe acute malnutrition, a situation the earthquake's impacts are likely to exacerbate.

In the Caribbean COVID-19 pandemic has dramatic impacts on livelihood, food security and resilience. In Cuba, the pandemic aggravated a compromised food and nutrition security already affected by blockades, floods and drought leading to the most severe crisis since early nineties. In the Eastern Caribbean, the CARICOM surveys show that 2.7 million people are food insecure. In the Dominican Republic, WFP reports that 35.5% of households are moderately food insecurity (3.8 million people) and 2.7% severely food insecure (300 000 people).

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, which exposes them to further risks of exploitation, abuse and forced recruitment. **In Colombia**, children have specific protection needs in relation to their exposure to all types of risks linked to conflict contexts, 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). **In the rest of South America**, the challenges faced by displaced children are multiple: six out of ten are currently out of school and over 1.2 million of them in urgent need of education in emergency assistance. **In Northern Central America** (that includes Guatemala, Honduras & El Salvador) **and in**

³⁶ WFP survey carried out in Cuba, Haiti, Caribbean territories, Dominican Republic, Central America, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia.

³⁷ WFP August 2021 : Ecuador (2.1 Million), Peru (4 Million) and Bolivia (1.3 Million).

³⁸ UN-OCHA HRP published in August 2021

some states of Mexico communities most affected by violence, the risks for children and youngs include infiltration of gangs in schools, forced recruitment, sexual and gender-based violence, extortion and threats, exploitation and abuse. From 40% to 50% of children living in neighbourhoods with presence of criminal armed gangs do not have access to education³⁹. Forced displacement and migration is also leading to ruptures in education. Almost 30% of asylum seekers and migrant in CAM are children, of which 15% are unaccompanied. 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 pandemic. The effects of the 2021 earthquake hinder the return to some normalcy to around 500 000 children's lives, including returning them to their classrooms. Among the main preliminary identified needs in the aftermath of the earthquake, the priority ones remain rebuilding or rehabilitating school infrastructures, providing WASH, equipping classes with desks as well as teachers and students with pedagogical and school material.

In the **Caribbean**, the education system is heavily affected by both mixed flows of population, diseases outbreaks and natural hazards, exposing children and adolescents to a wide range of threats. Children on the move have little or no access to education, while legal, financial and language barriers combined with discrimination, xenophobia and fear of deportation limit the number of students enrolled and retained in hosting education systems.

2.1.4 People affected by natural hazards

From 1997 to 2017, the LAC region has accounted for one out of every four disasters in the world, largely as a result of climate-related events. The relatively adequate levels of human and economic development across the LAC region, which used to mask large pockets of extreme poverty, widespread inequalities and exclusion⁴⁰, have largely regressed since 2020. Vulnerabilities are increasing, also as consequence of global climate change, while the region presents 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 locations where high frequency of natural hazards is combined with the consequences of conflicts and violence. The vulnerability of populations affected by violence and/or forced displacement, poor and marginalised communities (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, resulting in greater humanitarian needs both quantitatively and qualitatively. COVID-19 has further aggravated the overall situation. Vulnerable and marginalised groups, including 522 indigenous ethnicities and more than 18 million refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are particularly hit and bear the brunt of this deterioration.

³⁹ 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/>.

⁴⁰ 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, an effective protective environment is key for people on the move. The lack of documentation and limited access to asylum and regularization processes remain a key barrier to access basic services and social care mechanisms. The regional and national protection information management systems throughout the humanitarian responses remain weak. However some positive developments have been also noticed in the region such as the introduction in Colombia of the Temporary Protection system.

In **Venezuela**, 2.4 million people are in need of protection assistance, according to the conservative estimates from the latest Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Based on the results of UNHCR participatory assessment with communities, the main protection needs are related to pervasive violence and armed conflict; sexual and gender-based violence and abuse (affecting particularly women and girls); human trafficking, especially labour and sexual exploitation (of which 70% of victims are women and girls); forced recruitment and forced labour of children and adolescents; family separation, particularly in border and mining areas. Qualitative and inclusive protective spaces and services for girls and boys are needed, as well as psychosocial support and case management for victims of violence, abuse and exploitation.

In **Colombia**, there is strong documented evidence of protection risks, especially in rural and ethnic communities. Mental health and psychosocial support, legal assistance, prevention of violence, community-based protection mechanisms, family tracing and reunification, and case management are the main needs. In **South America**, the predominance of irregular displacement makes legal assistance, registration and protection against violence a priority amongst refugees and migrants. The rise in secondary movements which are not followed nor documented requires a closer monitoring to better prevent and respond.

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. Northern Central America ranks amongst top five regions globally with highest rates of female homicides, and the prevalence of both non-partner sexual violence and intimate partner violence is also significant (11.9% and 29.5% respectively for women between 15 and 69⁴¹). COVID-19 has increased the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and femicides⁴². The arrival of returnees is also expected to increase, resulting in new protection and assistance needs.

In **Haiti**, violence has increased as a consequence of inter-gang and police confrontations that are concentrated in the metropolitan area, resulting in frequent human rights violations, physical and sexual exploitation, abuse and violence, as well as forced recruitment. In addition, the pandemic has exacerbated these vulnerabilities, with 426 496 children in need and 816 751 gender-based violence survivors at risk, among others. Among the affected people, many Haitian returnees, in particular from Dominican Republic, are also in need of protection. Mental health and psychosocial support, safe spaces to respond to stigmatisation, case management and prevention of violence are among the most

⁴¹ WHO, Global Health Observatory data repository, <https://apps.who.int/gho/data/view.main.IPVGBDREGION?lang=en>.

⁴² IRC, June 2020, <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/irc-data-shows-increase-reports-gender-based-violence-across-latin-america>

urgent protection services. In the **Caribbean**, the exacerbated risks of populations affected by mixed migration flows increase the need for psychosocial support, legal assistance, comprehensive case management of sexual and gender-based violence survivors, victims of trafficking, and children and boys victims of exploitation and abuse. In the Dominican Republic, access to civil documentation as well as to basic services, and mitigation of statelessness risks are particularly needed.

2.2.2 Food security, nutrition, health and WASH

Movement restrictions and border closure caused widespread loss of income, livelihood disruptions and important limitations on access to basic services, therefore increasing exponentially food insecurity, particularly of forcibly displaced and vulnerable populations. By the end of 2020 the number of people living in poverty reached 230.9 million, representing 37.3% of LAC population. In Venezuela and Haiti the lack of reliable nutritional surveillance hampers the reliability of available nutritional data.

In **Venezuela**, the most acute needs are identified in the nutrition sector, along with water and food 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 groups, migrants, stateless people, asylum seekers and refugees, who are usually not supported by Government systems, are met in an integrated manner, considering that most of them have lost their livelihoods and are facing severe food insecurity. In **CAM**, food assistance for vulnerable communities affected by protracted drought and by the aftermath of hurricanes Eta and Iota is needed as a matter of priority, especially where local government response and external support are insufficient and where impacts are expected to negatively affect vulnerable populations in the mid-term. 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 pandemic, the health system was already under heavy strain as a result of several factors, including the departure of health personnel, 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 recurrent. Supporting the emergency services (including childbirth) of local health structures, plus the supply of safe drinking water and retaining qualified health staff in the health facilities, is urgently needed. The context in terms of WASH is dramatic with 74.6% of the country population reporting irregular access to water. This situation increases public health risks and malnutrition.

In departments affected by the conflict in **Colombia**, the absence of State institutions has led to a deterioration of the health indicators, among others aspects. The most frequent health needs of people living in rural areas relate to infectious (41%) and chronic diseases (22%), mainly because people have no 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 **South America**, the pandemic has impacted on the continuity of and access to essential health services that

were already overwhelmed, affecting in particular the refugees and migrants, as well as indigenous population.

In **Haiti**, water and sanitation are sectors largely uncovered, that are being exacerbated by the 2021 earthquake in the southern peninsula and the impact of displaced population in urban areas, both in need of emergency humanitarian interventions providing safe water and proper sanitation. Waste management also remains an issue with large amounts of waste both from rubble and humanitarian interventions. Additionally epidemics remain a serious threat for the most vulnerable Haitians, the risk of cholera recrudescence being still high. Liquid and solid waste management issues further increase the risk and spread of infectious and vector borne disease. In the **Caribbean**, mothers' and children's deteriorated health conditions, reduced routine vaccination and a growing risk of malnutrition and outbreaks of communicable diseases are elements of serious concerns. Similarly deteriorated livelihoods and severe food insecurity, notably in the Dominican Republic and Cuba, are among the most acute humanitarian needs. The populations trying to recover from recent disasters still require a comprehensive assistance.

2.2.3 Education in emergencies

In the LAC region around 63 million of girls and boys have lost an average of 156 school days from March 2020 to June 2021, and more than 3 million children at risk of dropping out of school definitively⁴³.

In **Venezuela**, existing obstacles to access education (i.e. unaffordable costs, insufficient daily food/nutrition intake, lack of water, teachers, materials, transportation) coupled with COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the authorities and insufficient distant learning capacities exacerbate protection and education 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. Over-age, lack of recognized certificates of learning while away from their community, and economic hardship, hinder their chances to continue their education. Education systems in host countries are mostly under strain, and the needs are heightened in areas with prevalence of indigenous populations. In **South America**, the acute proneness to natural hazards must be tackled by integrating meaningfully disaster preparedness and Safe School approach in the educational system, in order to ensure relevant contingency planning, early action, and to be able to bring children and adolescents back to school the quickest possible in the aftermath of an emergency.

In **Colombia**, the education system is severely affected by the armed conflicts and violence, 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 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants presence, which exacerbates the pressure on the education system and accentuates the risk of forced recruitment into armed groups.

In **CAM**, UNICEF estimates that 4.4 million children are in need of educational support⁴⁴. Honduras,

⁴³ UNICEF, 2021 <https://news.un.org/es/story/2020/03/1471822>

⁴⁴ UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/media/87461/file/2021-HAC-Mexico-Central-America.pdf>

Guatemala and El Salvador are amongst the countries with the highest levels of violence in the world, despite being not engaged in active armed conflicts. The urgency to find flexible and temporary education modalities, as well as strengthening protection of children, stands as essential to ensure access to qualitative learning for refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and deportees/returnees.

The education system in **Haiti** is extremely fragmented, lacks technical qualitative expertise, and highlights major socio-economic barriers. Children have been unable to attend school for months due both to the political and security challenges as well as the ongoing pandemic. Preliminary assessments of the 2021 Earthquake indicate extensive damage and destruction across schools, just weeks before they are due to re-open⁴⁵. Access to inclusive, safe and quality education systems remains a main challenge also in the **Caribbean**, in particular for displaced children. The education system is heavily affected by both mixed flows of population and natural hazards, exposing children and adolescents to severe protection risks and school drop-outs. Furthermore, in consideration of the proneness of Caribbean countries to natural disasters, planning for school safety and ensuring that the identified preparedness measures are understood and effectively implemented persists as a priority.

2.2.4 Disaster Preparedness and vulnerability to natural hazards

The overall context is characterized by increased meteorological and epidemiological risks and hazards including the impact of climate change, intensification of the La Niña and/or El Niño phenomena, desertification, irregular rainfall and an increase in the intensity and frequency of tropical storms and cyclones. The region accounts for more than 53% of global economic losses and 46% of global disaster losses from climate-related disasters over the last two decades. The Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and especially coastal communities, are also very vulnerable to rising sea levels⁴⁶.

Humanitarian needs in LAC are related to exposure to multiple, often combined, hazards, and limited response capacity. Support is needed for vulnerable communities (such as ethnic and indigenous groups) and institutions, to enhance their preparedness and to turn national and regional strategies into actions. The recurrent cumulative impact of small-scale disasters in the region, compounded by the pandemic multiple epidemic waves, undermines national and communities' resilience; with urban slums, schools and health structures presenting a particularly high level of vulnerability. The strong intensification of population movements is not sufficiently integrated into the existing social protection, emergency preparedness and response mechanisms. This is particularly relevant considering that many of the areas hosting migrants and refugees are urban slums exposed to both natural hazards and violence. The underlying risk factors including poverty and socio-economic disparity, inappropriate land use and tenure and unplanned rapid urbanisation, 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.

⁴⁵ Reports from the three most affected departments cite the total destruction or severe damage to 308 school infrastructures, affecting an estimated 100 000 children and teachers

⁴⁶ UNDRR, 2021. Regional Assessment Report on Disaster Risk in Latin America and the Caribbean. Challenges in disaster risk reduction and progress towards the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) targets . <https://rp-americas.undrr.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/RAR%202021%20%28ENG%29.pdf>

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 the region have expanded the existing, although limited, social protection schemes to address the basic needs of the most vulnerable populations. In total 209 programmes were activated, 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).

In **Venezuela**, the capacities of the authorities to provide assistance continued to decrease in 2021, and only emergency services slightly improved through international humanitarian support. The major national safety net providing food to millions of people (CLAP)⁴⁷ further declined in 2021, with less frequent distributions and smaller quantities, covering less than 60% of the population receives it every 3 months or once a year⁴⁸. Several **countries hosting Venezuelan diaspora** have set up a technical group (the 'Quito Group') aiming at coordinating their migration policies, working on joint initiatives and raising international funding to support the integration of Venezuelan migrants. However, public services in host countries do not seem ready to cope with enormous numbers, and national safety nets have so far failed to compensate for the impact of lockdown measures.

In **Colombia**, national and sub-national structures (as the National Risk Management Unit -UNGRD) are regularly overwhelmed by multiple, and often overlapping, hazards. Regarding the assistance to conflict victims, the limited capacity and resources of the National Victims Unit (UARIV), the lack of full recognition by authorities, along with difficult access to conflict areas, represent major challenges 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.

In **CAM**, national and local capacities to respond to natural hazards and food insecurity remain limited, even if some progress has been recorded in Guatemala and El Salvador, which creates openings for more robust international 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

⁴⁷ Comités Locales de Abastecimiento y Producción (Local Committees for Supply and Production)

⁴⁸ ENCOVI 2021

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. In the August 2021 earthquake, national response was quite reactive on the activation of the emergency coordination center and facilitating the coordination of humanitarian actors. Although limited in resources, there has been an improvement in terms of coordination, information sharing and better framing international support. In the **Caribbean**, institutional capacities often needs to be complemented by regional and international support when disaster strikes. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)⁴⁹'s support to National Emergency Management Organizatons is essential in time of disaster. However, the insufficient integration of Cuba and the Dominican Republic in regional mechanisms remains a challenge.

3.2 International Humanitarian Response

Country/crisis	Venezuela	Venezuela migration crisis	Colombia (excl. Venezuela migration)	Central America & Mexico	Haiti	Caribbean
Appeal	HRP –June 2021 (incl C-19) - USD 708.1 M)	RMRP 2021 - USD 1.44 B	HNO/HRP April 2021 (incl C-19)- USD 174 M	HNO / HRP 2021 USD 222 M – Honduras; USD 156 M – El Salvador; USD 210 M - Guatemala	HRP 2021 USD 235.6 M Haiti Flash Appeal USD 187.3M	RMRP 2021 - USD 40.7 M UN COVID Related appeals for Cuba (USD 76.9M), or Dominican Republic (USD 40.8M)
Nb of people targeted	4.5 M	3.3 M	1.4 M (HRP 2021);	1.8 M	1.5 M	129 000 RMRP 2021
Funding level	24.4 %	27.6% (July 2021)	14.7% (HRP 2021);	N/A	15.8%	6.58 %, RMRP 2021 June 2021
Donors	EU/ECHO, US, Spain, Sweden, CERF, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, Korea, Japan,	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	US, EU/ECHO, Canada, UK, Japan Spain, Germany, Netherlands

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 has been the case for Venezuela, Haiti and Colombia.

In **Venezuela** the coordination is now well developed, with the cluster system in place, as well as

⁴⁹ The regional inter-governmental agency for disaster management in the Caribbean Community

regular donor meetings led by DG ECHO, and with both an international NGO forum and a national one. 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. In **Colombia**, OCHA office has been transformed into a Humanitarian Advisory Team under the new Resident Coordinator office. Those changes are more symbolic as in substance the structure and staffing remain the same. For the first time, in 2021 Colombia HRP has been endorsed by the government and appears in the Global appeal.

In **CAM**, a regional Humanitarian Needs Overview⁵⁰ covering El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, while omitting Nicaragua and Panama, was published by OCHA in August 2021. Of a total population of 33.2 million, 13 million are affected by the humanitarian crises and 8.3 million persons are in need of humanitarian assistance. Three HRPs aim at responding to the crisis in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador with USD 588 Million.

In **Haiti** the earthquake has reactivated the Health, Shelter, WASH, Protection, Food security and Education clusters, although sectoral working groups were already established and working for almost all sectors. DG ECHO participates in the Humanitarian Country Team. In the **Caribbean**, the international community focuses on development assistance. As such, the UN Country Teams are in charge of coordination.

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. In the Caribbean, UK DFID, Canada, USAID and Spain are leading donor together with the international financial institutions 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 (Inter-American Development Bank), donors are geared towards fund adaptation to COVID-19 and reconstruction processes through loans and credits.

Throughout the region, the level of funding of the appeals remains low ranging from 29% for the HRP for Venezuela which was released mid-October, to 34% for the regional RMRP. In the Caribbean, donors (essentially International Financial Institutions) are geared towards fund adaptation to COVID-19 with some (US, Japan, UK, Canada, Netherlands, Spain, France) contributing to Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction.

3.3 Operational constraints

3.3.1 Access/humanitarian space

Humanitarian access has become a real constraint in many parts of the region, where either restrictions imposed by authorities or the presence and control of armed non state actors prevent the delivery of aid to vulnerable populations.

⁵⁰ UN OCHA, <https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/el-salvador-guatemala-honduras-humanitarian-needs-overview-summary-humanitarian>.

In **Venezuela**, the risk of instrumentalisation of humanitarian operations by different political actors remains high. Moreover the lack of a conducive administrative framework and the pressure exerted against INGOs and Venezuelan civil society have further hindered the capacity of humanitarian organisations to intervene. In this context, humanitarian diplomacy efforts remain crucial while trying to secure access and operating conditions for humanitarian organisations, namely INGOs. Moreover, security constraints and widespread violence affect also the delivery of assistance, especially in border areas and mining zones of Bolívar State.

In **Colombia**, constraints are related to new armed groups and FARC dissidence occupying territories, which are restricting the humanitarian space in some areas (Pacific Region, Catatumbo, Guaviare, Meta and Caquetá). In 2020, 57% of humanitarian actors in Colombia experienced access restrictions, with armed conflict being the first cause. In 2021, during the widespread protests and blockages, a large number of humanitarian missions had to be postponed or cancelled.

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 decreasing tolerance premises. Both Nicaragua and Guatemala approved legislation negatively affecting NGOs. In Nicaragua, certain DG ECHO partners had their legal status revoked and were forced to cease their operations.

In **Haiti**, constraints to humanitarian activities are mainly related to the deterioration of the security context. The territorial control of gangs is hampering humanitarian access to displaced population in some urban areas of Port au Prince. Also the south connection from the Capital is often restricted due to gang confrontations. Disrupted logistics capacities during and in the immediate aftermath 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 during the last two years: both UN and international NGOs have managed to increase their technical humanitarian staff. In 2020 and 2021 the pressure and harassment against INGOs and civil societies organisations continued. Over time, DG ECHO's support has contributed to build and strengthen the capacities of Venezuelan organisations.

In **Colombia**, most humanitarian actors have more 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.

Absorption and operational capacities of DG ECHO partners are considered relevant in protracted situations such as **Haiti or CAM**. 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**, together with the hindrances mentioned as regards humanitarian space and the security-

related constrains humanitarian actors are affected by shortages of supply and import difficulties, which have a direct impact in the cost of operations. In **Colombia**, logistical constraints and remoteness of conflict-affected areas increase the cost of operations, mainly in regions with no road access. In **Cuba**, a number of stakeholders have been politicizing humanitarian crisis and assistance, while Government maintain a strong control over the implementation of humanitarian interventions.

4. HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

DG ECHO will seek humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus opportunities with different EU funding instruments and encourage partners to also consider this aspect. DG ECHO has involved its counterparts in the other EU services in the elaboration of this HIP, its priorities, and the identification of nexus opportunities. Likewise, EU Delegations in the region included DG ECHO in their identification of priorities under the new EU multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027 and in accordance with EU priorities. In this framework sectors such as the linkages between DP actions with longer term interventions funded by INTPA or the position of vulnerable populations currently assisted by DG ECHO in the longer term interventions aiming to promote sustainable development, job creation and access to basic services will be a priority.

In **countries of the region hosting displaced Venezuelans**, 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 thus responding to the call of host governments for international cooperation to relieve their overwhelmed public services. This is envisaged along a number of axes: 1) Supporting the institutions that provide refugees and migrants with documentation, social protection and basic services; 2) Advocating with host countries' governments to provide refugees and migrants with access to basic services and social protection; 3) Contributing to social inclusion and reduction of xenophobia 4) New initiatives that facilitate the economic and social integration of vulnerable migrants and refugees (budget support and blending under the Latin America Investment Facility are expected to contribute in this sense); 5) Supporting the Quito Process, including through the *Group of Friends*.

Venezuela is a challenging context for pursuing development cooperation. With State institutions in the process of collapsing and in view of the lack of bilateral framework, it is difficult to build national capacities and to invest in rehabilitation of infrastructure. Despite these challenges, DG INTPA has identified three priority areas (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. The 2021 call for proposal on “rehabilitation of public services” emphasized the need to link with on-going or recent DG ECHO actions.

In **Colombia**, a closer collaboration with other donors focuses on building resilience for conflict-affected populations attended by DG ECHO through durable solutions for IDPs and victims of violence. The objective is to overcome the main barriers to socio-economic integration in the three contexts: return, relocation and local integration in urban areas. 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 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.

CAM: The current humanitarian context 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, namely in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Panama.

In Haiti, DG ECHO is working to achieve coherent and complementary planning, programming and financing with increased cooperation and coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actors. With the objective of achieving tangible results and reducing the risk of scattering limited resources, DGs ECHO and INTPA focus on specific areas, materializing the joint HDP in key issues such as geographical concentration in the Food security sector.

In the **Caribbean**, during new emergencies, DG ECHO focuses on emergency health, shelter, food and water as well as protection needs. This assistance is usually enhanced gradually by development interventions, with INTPA focusing on housing reconstruction for low-income families, rehabilitation of infrastructures, livelihoods, basic services and State functions with budget support allocations and shock absorption mechanisms including Disaster Risk Insurances. Strong synergies between DG ECHO and other EU-supported actions are allowing the implementation of a comprehensive EU approach on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA).

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

5.1 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, risk informed preparedness and environmental considerations, mainstreaming of protection, gender (including mitigation of risks of Sexual and Gender Based Violence), 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.

Mainstreaming of protection, gender, age and disability inclusion based on a comprehensive risk analysis, will be a pre-condition for selection. This includes taking into account strategies to prevent risks of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and appropriate measures ensuring inclusion of people with disabilities in proposed actions.

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 platforms⁵¹ to address basic needs through the most relevant and cost-efficient approach, preferably cash transfers when feasible. Should new 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.

In **Venezuela**, DG ECHO will prioritize actions based on people's vulnerabilities, focusing on specific sectors and responding in limited geographical zones. Most vulnerable groups, notably pregnant and lactating mothers, children with protection and education issues, IDPs and those left behind, elderly, people with disabilities and indigenous communities, will be prioritised. Sector-wise, Health, Nutrition, Education in Emergency, Protection and Shelter will be the main focus, with Coordination as transversal sector and WASH and Food Security as support sectors of intervention. 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. The geographical coverage will prioritise large urban settlements, such as Caracas, Maracaibo, Valencia, and Barquisimeto, and border States with Colombia, Brazil, Aruba and Trinidad & Tobago (Zulia, Táchira, Apure, Amazonas, Bolívar, Falcón, Sucre and Delta Amacuro). DG ECHO partners will be asked to continue supporting national organisations to increase their humanitarian response capacities and enhance access for the most affected populations. To that end, information management and humanitarian diplomacy shall be reinforced, in order to better assess the specific needs and enlarge the humanitarian space for all humanitarian actors.

For **the Venezuelan regional crisis**⁵², 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 related to the provision of legal support, management of most critical cases including the provision of cash and shelter, legal assistance for regularization and access to services, prevention and assistance for victims of gender-based violence and human trafficking) and health (treatment of life-threatening acute conditions, referral and case management system as well as mental health and psychosocial support for violence victims, and sexual and reproductive health care).

In **Colombia**, the strategy will focus on responding to urgent/critical unmet humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations affected by armed conflicts and violence, notably recently displaced people and secluded communities, prioritizing 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. Efforts to improve the information management structure in Colombia will be favoured for advocacy and evidence-based interventions.

⁵¹ Shared beneficiary databases across programmes, to maximise impact and reduce targeting errors.

⁵² See footnote n. 3 for the potential geographical coverage. Flexibility in response setups and geographical coverage will be in any case preserved in order to respond to an evolving environment, marked also by high levels of exposure to natural hazards.

In **South America**, disaster preparedness interventions will seek to address identified gaps aiming to support vulnerable population exposed to double and triple affectations. Actions will focus on specifically vulnerable groups, such as indigenous communities, displaced populations and people suffering from violence, including ecological and climate-change issues. Strengthening information management capacities to assess and monitor the humanitarian crises, integration of the protection principles in disaster preparedness and support disaster preparedness in the education sector will be prioritised.

CAM: The envisaged response will focus on four axes: a) Addressing critical needs of most vulnerable victims of organised violence and social unrest, through strengthened protection response capacities and relief assistance, including mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) information gathering and evidence-based humanitarian advocacy; b) Providing tailored multisector humanitarian assistance for forcibly displaced people and other people on the move; c) Food assistance and short to medium-term livelihood recovery, reducing food insecurity while helping to build resilience in the framework of relevant nexus strategies, while raising awareness on the prevailing food crisis through FSN⁵³ information systems; d) Disaster Preparedness actions aiming at improving capacities on multi-hazard preparedness at local, national and regional level. Early-action and response, including social protection mechanisms will be reinforced. Actions will integrate protection and crisis preparedness, particularly in violence affected areas. Efforts will be encouraged to enhance information and evidence-based forecasts. The strategy will seek additional leverage with the Programmatic Partnership thematic support through IFRC aiming to reinforce DRM systems as well as to strengthened the response capacity to the impact of population displacement movements in the region.

Haiti: Continue 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, 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 also be strengthened. Furthermore, protection actions such as prevention and response to violence, exploitation and abuse will be encouraged, incorporating also MHPSS components if needed. In response to the impact of August 2021 earthquake a particular attention will be paid to the health and education sectors.

Caribbean: DG ECHO 2022 Disaster Preparedness and Resilience strategy aims at covering gaps in terms of preparedness and response capacities and strengthen communities, local, national and regional institutions' resilience. In close relation with EU services and coordination with other donors, this strategy supports the Caribbean Comprehensive Disaster Management strategy with a particular attention to protection and inclusiveness as well as the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, notably in term of food insecurity and social protection shock-responsiveness.

In terms of **Disaster preparedness** the overall focus in LAC will be on regional and national multi-

⁵³ Food Security and Nutrition

hazard preparedness for response and early action, while exploring synergies with EUCPM and nexus opportunities and Team Europe's instruments. The global aim of DP actions in the region is to create better-prepared communities and institutions to face natural and manmade hazards and risks, including diseases outbreaks, 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 grass root communities, 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. Priority will be given to empowering the most exposed communities with highest risk indicators and lowest coping capacities.

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) as well as, in support of Government institutions, to consider EU Civil Protection Advisory Missions, which have proven to be very important and useful in the region, but remained partly underutilised, as countries were not sufficiently familiar with the instruments and the services that could be provided.