

Thousands of children need assistance three months after Caribbean hurricanes – UNICEF

13 December 2017 – Three months after two category-5 hurricanes tore through the Caribbean, thousands of children across the region still need support, the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said on Wednesday.

“Even before the hurricanes hit, UNICEF was [on the ground](#), working with Governments and local partners to prepare communities and preposition humanitarian supplies for the areas at highest risk” said Maria Cristina Perceval, UNICEF Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

“These included life-saving supplies that were most needed during the immediate response when access to clean water, shelter and basic social services were scarce,” she added.

Irma, the most powerful hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic Ocean, caused extensive damage to the islands of the Eastern Caribbean, Haiti and Cuba.

Hurricane Maria then wrought additional damage across the region, with UNICEF estimating that together, they left 350,000 children in need of humanitarian assistance.

“Three months on, UNICEF is still on the ground in these countries and territories, working on programmes to support children and families in rebuilding their lives and returning to a sense of normalcy,” she added.

However, challenges remain, with many of the most vulnerable families still feeling the effects of the storms.

Over 35 per cent of Dominica’s children – particularly those in shelters – are still not enrolled in education activities, while in Antigua and Barbuda many families remain in shelters, unable to return home.

Working in collaboration with governments and non-governmental organizations, UNICEF has been providing immediate humanitarian relief and working to ensure longer term recovery and resilience.

“While life is returning to normal for many, children and families who have lived through these storms will need committed, sustained support to get their homes, communities and lives back on track,” maintained Ms. Perceval.

UNICEF and its partners are supporting communities through programmes focused on recovery and resilience in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, Dominica and Haiti.